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Important note to Autosport readers

The first issue of Autosport magazine appeared on 25 August 1950 and has continued to cover the rich breadth of motorsport ever since, from Formula 1 to club racing. We know from your kind messages that you have enjoyed our recent efforts to both follow the developing situation regarding the impact of the coronavirus and to look back at some of the sport's best stories.

Unfortunately, the economic realities of the COVID-19 lockdown mean that the decision has had to be made to temporarily pause production of the magazine as of this edition. We plan to return in time for the Formula 1 season, which F1 CEO Chase Carey has suggested will start in July.

Subscription payments will be frozen. For example, if you have nine months left on your subscription you will still have that time left when the magazine resumes. It is a pause. But your access to the premium content isn't interrupted.

Our leading writers will continue to work for Autosport.com, where we will boost our content, including articles on national motorsport. We will also be offering a range of benefits to our subscribers – please go to www.autosport.com/covidprint.

Autosport magazine subscribers will also be granted a free three-month access period to Motorsport.tv.

I would like to thank all the members of staff, who have maintained their customary high standards in difficult circumstances, and who produced seven issues of the magazine from home.

I'd also like to thank you, the reader, for your interest and support. I have received many messages in recent weeks thanking us for our continued efforts on the magazine and I am only sorry that we will not be able to do so for the coming weeks. We had many articles lined up, some of which will now appear on Autosport.com and some of which will be set aside for the magazine's return later in the year.

In the meantime, I wish everyone well at this very strange time. Stay safe.





Kevin Turner
Editor
kevin.turner@autosport.com



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Glenn Dunbar/Motorsport Images

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Hamilton will get a nasty bump if he tries his crowdsurfing shenanigans again this year

BRITISH GRAND PRIX CLOSED TO

FORMULA 1

Silverstone has confirmed that this year's British Grand Prix will be a behind-closed-doors event if the race is able to take place on 19 July. With government restrictions still in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the circuit announced on Monday that it would not be able to welcome any fans to the race.

"We have left this difficult decision for as long as possible, but it is abundantly clear given the current conditions in the country and the government requirements in place now and for the foreseeable future, that a grand prix under normal conditions is just not going to be possible," managing director Stuart Pringle wrote in a letter to ticket holders.

"Our obligations to protect the health and safety of everyone involved in preparing and delivering the event, our volunteer marshals and 'race makers', and of course, you, the amazing fans, means that this is the best, safest and only decision we could make."

Silverstone confirmed that all ticket holders would be offered either a full refund or the option to transfer their ticket to next year's race. Thousands of free tickets are also set to be given away to NHS and other key workers for the 2021 British GP.

Pringle said there was no set deadline for deciding on the running of the race behind closed doors, but was encouraged by the latest push from the government to open talks with national bodies over how live sport would return once the pandemic was over.

"Racing behind closed doors, that would be entirely subject to government rules," Pringle said. "But it's very encouraging that the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport at the weekend indicated that they are keen to start a dialogue between medical officials and people in sport to see what might be done to achieve that. We are working together with Formula 1 and the medical officials to see how we can do that for some kind of British Grand Prix behind closed doors."

Silverstone's announcement came just hours before F1 revealed its first proper plans for the 2020 season, sticking to its ambition for a 15-18 race schedule that would be completed before the end of the calendar year.

F1 has targeted the Austrian Grand Prix on 5 July to be the season opener following the cancellation of the French Grand Prix at Paul Ricard, which was also confirmed on Monday. It was the 10th F1 race to be called off in 2020.

The Austrian Grand Prix would be the start of a run of European races, likely to take place behind closed doors, through July, August and into September. This would be followed by races across Asia and the Americas in October and November before concluding the season in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi in December.

"We expect the early races to be without fans but hope fans will be part of our events as we move further into the schedule," said Liberty Media boss Chase Carey. "We still have to work out many issues like the procedures for the teams and our other partners to enter and operate in each country.

"The health and safety of all involved will continue to be priority one and we will only go forward if we are confident we have reliable procedures to address both risks and possible issues. The FIA, teams, promoters, and



SPECTATORS

other key partners have been working with us throughout these steps and we want to thank them for all their support and efforts during this incredibly challenging time. We also want to recognise the fact that the teams have been supporting us at the same time that they have been focusing enormous and heroic efforts to build ventilators to help those infected by COVID-19."

The possibility of hosting multiple races at one track remains strong — with the Red Bull Ring and Silverstone both leading candidates to do so — as F1 requires eight races across three continents to classify as a world championship. Barcelona and Imola have also thrown their hats into the ring to host races, potentially behind closed doors. Any fewer than 15 races would result in broadcasters receiving a partial refund for their fee.

Officials in Austria are working hard to try to put procedures in place for the race to take place, including testing people in the local Spielberg area and making preparations for the paddock personnel. But they would still have to comply with strict guidelines on entering and exiting the country, which would require all attending the race taking a COVID-19 test.

Racing Point chief Otmar Szafnauer said he thought it was realistic to get the season started in Austria. "If Austria do a very good job as a country to contain the spread of the virus into July, and there's testing available for all of the Formula 1 employees or participants to actually test, I think it's plausible to put on a race in early July," he said. "If by sometime in June, we say, 'Yes, it's on, it's happening, we're safe to go', I think all the teams will be able to make it, no problem."

LUKE SMITH



Ferrari draws ire of rivals over budget-cap stance

FORMULA 1

Ferrari has said that it will not accept any further reduction in Formula 1's proposed budget cap, and hinted that any progress in that direction could mean it enters additional racing series.

Amid growing tensions between Ferrari and rival teams about the scale of a reduction in the $175million budget cap coming into force next year, the FIA then stepped into the debate by making it clear that under certain circumstances it could now accept majority approval for rule changes.

Up until now, the terms of F1's International Sporting Code meant that any changes for 2021 made at this stage required unanimous support from the teams. But in light of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and growing fears about the financial impact on competitors, the FIA has given itself the power to step in and make changes with majority support, if it feels that such tweaks "safeguard" the championship.

A new updated clause in the Sporting Code regarding rule changes states: "In exceptional circumstances, and if the FIA considers that the change in question is essential for the safeguarding of the Championship, cup, trophy, challenge or series concerned, the agreement of the majority of the Competitors properly entered shall suffice."

A budget cap of $175million set before the coronavirus crisis was accepted as being too high, and there had been a consensus on a revised figure of around $150m. Following that, there were teams in favour of more dramatic reductions — something some big teams do not favour because it will force them to make widespread job cuts.

One idea discussed was to set the level at $145m next year, and then reduce it to $130m for 2022, but that proposal did not get unanimous approval.

Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto (above) insists that the $145m is the minimum his team could accept. "The $145m level is already a new and demanding request compared to what was set out last June," he told *The Guardian*. "It cannot be attained without further significant sacrifices, especially in terms of our human resources. If it was to get even lower, we would not want to be put in a position of having to look at other further options for deploying our racing DNA."

Ferrari favours a two-tier cost cap solution, where manufacturer teams, or those supplying customers with car parts, are allowed greater spending than others. But it is an idea that has not won universal support, as McLaren currently favours a budget cap as low as $100m, and fears anything more puts the existence of teams at risk.

McLaren boss Zak Brown has accused Binotto of "living in denial" and says that his comments "don't stack up".

JONATHAN NOBLE



Le Mans could be pushed back as far as November

LE MANS 24 HOURS

The prospect of the Le Mans 24 Hours being pushed back further has been raised by Pierre Fillon, president of race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest. He hasn't ruled out a date in October or November should it not be possible to hold the World Endurance Championship double-points round on its rescheduled date of 19-20 September.

"If at the end of July the authorities tell us [it is] impossible in September but 100% possible we can do it in October or November, of course, we would do that," said Fillon in an exclusive interview for Autosport's #thinkingforward series. "It would not be the same 24 Hours we are used to, but we are professional and we have great drivers."

Fillon highlighted the uncertainty surrounding the resumption of motor racing as a global health crisis develops. He pointed out that the ban on mass gatherings in France is at present due to end on 15 July, while in Germany and Belgium it has been extended to the end of August.

WEC boss Gerard Neveu, who also took part in the #thinkingforward interview, said that the priority for the series was ensuring that Le Mans goes ahead. "If you think of the walls of our house, Le Mans is clearly the central pillar of all sportscar programmes," he stated. "So you must protect the main pillar if you want to maintain your house."

Le Mans could go ahead behind closed doors without spectators, according to Fillon. "It's an option," he said. "In fact, at this time, nobody knows what will happen in September. The question is, are we able to organise an event with more than 100,000 people? I don't know the answer.

"Option one is that we're allowed to run our event with fans, maybe with some constraints like masks and so on. The second option is we have no more than 5000 people, or something like that. That's a good option for TV but not good for the fans who want to attend. And option three is that it's impossible to organise the Le Mans 24 Hours at all. For sure, we hope that is not the option! But, at this moment, we cannot exclude that."

There has been no further comment from the WEC on the rearranged Spa round set for 15 August, before the end of the Belgian lockdown. It has so far adopted a wait-and-see approach, pointing out that the situation could change over the next three months.

The new LMDh regulations, due to be announced over the SuperSebring IMSA/WEC double-header in March, should be out within two weeks, according to Fillon. "We're just finalising small details," he said. Neveu added that the ACO and IMSA are on the "final approach" with the new rules.

Fillon stressed the importance of the success of the new category that will allow cars from the IMSA SportsCar Championship to race in the WEC from 2022. "Following the crisis we have no choice, we have to succeed with this project," he explained. "It's very important for the future of sportscars. For me, it's vital."

Listen to Pierre Fillon and Gerard Neveu in conversation with James Allen and Charles Bradley on the Autosport **#thinkingforward** podcast. autosport.com/podcast

Audi pulls out; is DTM doomed?

DTM

The DTM looks doomed in its current format following Audi's announcement on Monday that it will quit the series at the end of 2020, meaning only BMW remains.

Rumours have abounded over the winter – since before the coronavirus pandemic – that Audi was weighing up its DTM future. Its missive blamed the current crisis, as well as saying that Audi would concentrate on Formula E and its customer racing projects. It added: "We're investigating other progressive motorsport formats for the future."

DTM chief Gerhard Berger – previously stung by Mercedes' end-of-2018 pullout and the one-year-and-out Aston Martin project – then issued a statement that pulled few punches.

"I deeply regret Audi's decision to withdraw from the DTM," said Berger. "While we respect the board's position, the short-term nature of this announcement presents ITR [the DTM promoter], our partner BMW and our teams with a number of specific challenges.

"Given our common association, and the particular difficulties we all face during the COVID-19 pandemic, we would have hoped for a more united approach. This decision worsens the situation, and the future of the DTM now very much depends on how our partners and sponsors react to this decision. Nevertheless, I fully expect Audi to undertake its planned exit properly, responsibly and in full partnership with ITR."

German motorsport folk hero Hans Stuck, the 1990 DTM champion and former president of the DMSB governing body, had already advocated the series switching to GT3 cars. "Are these very special [DTM] cars really the right way, or couldn't we change cars from a certain year on and use GT3 cars for example?" he said.

MARCUS SIMMONS AND SVEN HAIDINGER



Domenicali calls for reshaping

FIA



FIA Single Seater Commission president Stefano Domenicali has urged motorsport to use the current coronavirus-enforced hiatus to reshape itself for the future.

Rising costs on the FIA single-seater ladder from Formula 4 to Formula 2 have forced increasing numbers of drivers into other disciplines of the sport, particularly GT racing, and ex-Ferrari F1 boss Domenicali — who took over his FIA role in 2015 — believes this must change.

"I see this as an opportunity for the motorsport industry to reshape," said Domenicali in an exclusive interview for Autosport's #thinkingforward series of podcasts. "There's no doubt that motorsport will be an essential part into the future, but short term we need to revisit the level of investment and maybe the level of technology and the number of championships. And maybe also the attitude of the manufacturers; whether to be a supplier to privateer teams or involved as a constructor. These are discussions that need to be made immediately because it's fundamental that we keep the momentum, even if the disruption is massive.

"Everyone is focused on the top-level series like F1, Formula E and international GTs but, speaking as president of the FIA Single Seater Commission, we are thinking of the right decision for F4, F3, F2 to restart and when this will be possible; what can be done to reduce costs further and to make sure that this 'formula world' can be still attractive for the future."

"We are really working in these weeks to make sure we can present to the FIA World Council in June ideas that we were discussing but always postponing because the system was accepting it, when the [economic] situation was really good. Now we need to take it on board, knowing that if we miss this slot it would be criminal. "

Italian F4 has already confirmed that the introduction of the new Tatuus chassis, featuring the halo safety device, will be delayed until 2022. Other championships using the same car — most notably the German — will likely also need to keep the current Tatuus through 2021, as there is a high crossover of participants between some of the European series.

"We will delay the introduction of new updated technology to help keep the teams alive," said Domenicali. "Everyone is trying to keep the championships alive in the second part of the season but we also need to identify the cut-off time when we need to concentrate completely on 2021."



SRO/PECKS-1VIER

GT classic to run mainly in darkness

SPA 24 HOURS

The Spa 24 Hours is set to take place late in the autumn this year. The centrepiece round of the GT World Challenge Europe, postponed earlier this month from its traditional slot on the last weekend of July, has now been rescheduled for 24-25 October.

The new date for the double-points GTWCE Endurance Cup event means a much larger proportion of the race will be run under the cover of darkness. There will be just 10 hours between sunrise and sunset, compared with the 15.5 at the end of July.

GTWCE organiser the Stephane Ratel Organisation said in the statement announcing the move that the "unique aspects of competing in autumn will also be celebrated", while insisting that it is "fully focused on ensuring that the 2020 Total 24 Hours of Spa upholds its reputation as the world's premier GT race".

The pre-event test days for the Belgian classic have been set for 29-30 September, while the SRO-run GT4 European Series, the Lamborghini Super Trofeo and TCR Europe have been confirmed as support events.

GARY WATKINS

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BTCC commits to August start

BTCC

Nine rounds, from the beginning of August to mid-November, are included on a new British Touring Car Championship calendar that could get going behind closed doors depending on goverment restrictions amid the coronavirus-crisis fallout.

Series organiser TOCA released the revised 2020 schedule on Monday, and it has lost one round — the intended inaugural BTCC visit to the Silverstone International Circuit, which hosted last month's series Launch Day. It is bookended, as per the original pre-pandemic fixtures, by an opener at Donington Park (above) and a Brands Hatch Grand Prix finale.

When asked whether spectator-free races were potentially on the cards, TOCA chief Alan Gow told Autosport: "Obviously that's entirely in the hands of the government, but if we have to then we will. That goes without saying. I'm sure our fans would rather watch the BTCC on ITV than not watch the BTCC at all."

TOCA is working on contingency plans to limit the amount of team staff attending races, should government restrictions on size of gatherings be in place at the beginning of August. It is understood that approximately 1500 people work at BTCC events across that series and its five regular support championships. After consultation with the teams, it estimates 10 people per car necessary to get their machinery on the track, plus the driver. Traditionally, teams number 40 per car, including hospitality, catering and non-essential on-site technical staff such as data engineers.

"If the British Grand Prix gets the go-ahead to run behind closed doors then we won't have a problem at all — I don't know how many thousands of people they have working!" said Gow. "We can cut it to suit, and we have already started drawing up plans to limit the number of working personnel the teams have."

MARCUS SIMMONS

BTCC CALENDAR

ROUND	VENUE	DATE
1	**Donington Park National**	2 August
2	**Brands Hatch Indy**	9 August
3	**Oulton Park Island**	23 August
4	**Knockhill**	30 August
5	**Thruxton**	20 September
6	**Silverstone National**	27 September
7	**Croft**	11 October
8	**Snetterton 300**	25 October
9	**Brands Hatch GP**	15 November

IN THE HEADLINES

KENSETH REPLACES LARSON

Matt Kenseth, the 2003 NASCAR Cup champion, has been drafted in at Chip Ganassi Racing to replace Kyle Larson, who was sacked by the team and given an indefinite ban by NASCAR for a racial slur during an *iRacing* stream. "I can't say racing was even on my radar two weeks ago," said 48-year-old Kenseth, whose last full-time ride was in 2017. "After spending some time thinking about it and all the unique circumstances surrounding all of us, it just seemed the timing and the opportunity was perfect to come back."

NEWMAN FIT FOR RETURN

Another NASCAR veteran, Ryan Newman, has declared that he is fit to return to action in his Roush Fenway Racing Ford as soon as the Cup season resumes, following the head injury he sustained in his terrifying end-of-race Daytona 500 flip. "I'm thankful for all the people and support that I've got – friends, family, you name it – that have prayed for me and given me this multitude of miracles that has given me this opportunity to get back in the seat," he said.

NASCAR'S PREDICAMENT

The state of North Carolina has extended its stay-at-home order until 8 May – which is a bit of a problem for NASCAR, because most of its teams are based there, despite Republican senators lobbying the Democrat governor to relax restrictions. The NASCAR season therefore remains on hiatus, even though tracks in other states have offered fan-free events.

NORDSCHLEIFE REOPENS

Good news for those of you who can get to the Eifel mountains: the Nurburgring Nordschleife reopens today (Thursday), even though Germany has a ban on mass gatherings. Laps can be bought online or via an app scanned at the entrance gate. Could it mean some sneaky GT3 testing in coming weeks?

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Divila had a Nissan involvement stretching back to the 1990s

RICARDO DIVILA 1945-2020

OBITUARY

Ricardo Divila did it all: the Brazilian engineer, who has died aged 74, worked across just about every racing discipline over a period of more than 60 years. He may be best known for designing a run of Fittipaldi Formula 1 cars in the 1970s, but his time with the team was just one chapter in the story of an amazing career that stretched from the Maserati 250F to the Nissan DeltaWing and beyond.

Divila, who was christened Richard at the behest of his English mother but by law required a Brazilian name on his birth certificate, had further stints in F1 with Ligier, Fondmetal, Minardi and Prost. Yet to many he is best remembered working for Nissan, and for a shorter period Toyota, in Super GT and Formula Nippon in Japan, and for his work at the Le Mans 24 Hours with machinery as diverse as the De Cadenet-Lola Group C car and the Nissan GT-R LM NISMO.

He also brought his talents to Formula Ford, Formula 3, Formula 2, Formula 3000, CART and IndyCar, Super Touring, and sportscar racing in all its diverse forms. And that's not to forget the 10 years working in Brazil before making it to Europe alongside Emerson Fittipaldi in 1969.

And he did it all with a boundless and infectious enthusiasm that helped


SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

An F1 team's drawing office in 1976… Divila at work in Fittipaldi 'cupboard'

him get the most from his drivers. That love of our sport quite often gave him a relentless schedule: it seemed for a while that he lived on aeroplanes in the years that he was active in Japan. But Divila dismissed the idea that he was some kind of workaholic. Rather, he once told this author, he was the "laziest man out there". It was just that he was "addicted to mechanical porn". His greatest achievement, he reckoned, was "getting paid to do something I love".

Divila loved technology. The first Fittipaldi, the FD01 of 1975, was far from the conservative machine that you might have expected from a rookie team trying to design, develop and, crucially, build an F1 car in Brazil. It had pullrod suspension at the front, a rarity at the time, and even employed primitive data-acquisition. Years later, his inquiring mind was piqued by Ben Bowlby's Deltawing project, and he was thrilled that Nissan brought him in to evaluate the concept for an entry into the 'Garage 56' slot at Le Mans in 2012. Three years after that he was equally passionate about the front-wheel-drive Nissan LMP1 and its mechanical hybrid system.

Divila grew up within earshot of the Interlagos circuit in Sao Paulo, and his fascination with all things mechanical drew him to the track. By the age of 12 he was acting as a gofer on an ex-Jean Behra Maserati 250F sponsored by a friend of his father's in the South American Mecanica Continental series.

His other love was aircraft, and he was studying to become an aviation engineer, but his lust for racing proved too much. He neglected his studies in favour of designing a line of cars for Emerson Fittipaldi and his brother Wilson, a Formula Vee known as the Fitti-Vee and the Fitti-Porsche sportscar among them. They were followed by a twin-engined Volkswagen Beetle that was quick enough to run with an Alfa Romeo T33/2 and a Ford GT40 at the original Jacarepagua circuit in Rio.

Divila ran the 'Magic Merlyn' Mk11A in which Emerson swept all before him in British Formula Ford in 1969, and worked with Team Fittipaldi Bardahl that fielded both brothers in F2 in the early 1970s. That led to the formation of Fittipaldi Automotive with backing from Copersucar, a cooperative of sugar companies in Brazil. He designed the team's 1975-76 cars, which carried 'FD' nomenclature in deference to his work. The final car before the team folded at the end of 1982 was also a Divila creation. He always referred to it as the FD09 rather than the F9 name by which it is more commonly known.

Divila was a director of Fittipaldi throughout its time in F1 and was hit hard financially when it went out of business. He ended up working for the ADA Engineering team in London after it bought the remnants of the company because he was the only person who could identify the masses of parts. He helped out on its De Cadenet-Lola Le Mans racer, affectionately known as the 'Morris Minor'. An event that he had previously dismissed as a race for old men became a fixture in his diary over the remainder of his career. He was a regular at the 24 Hours with Courage Competition in the 1990s and again with Pescarolo Sport in the 2000s, engineering the car that finished second in 2005. More recently he was placed by Nissan with the Greaves Motorsport and Algarve Pro squads.

Listing all the teams for which he worked after Fittipaldi's demise isn't possible in the space available, so varied was Divila's career, so here are a few of the more offbeat ones. He was technical director of the short-lived PMC squad that fielded cars in Formula 3000 and Formula 3 in 1985. Its campaign in the higher category with a reworked Williams FW08 F1 car was unsuccessful, but the team dominated the early part of the British Formula 3 Championship with Russell Spence before folding.

Divila was involved sporadically in CART in the 1980s and 1990s, with teams such as Patrick Racing and Hemelgarn Racing, but he'd never engineered a car at the Indy 500. He set out to put that right and in 2009 he worked with Alex Tagliani and Conquest Racing. Together they won the rookie award with 11th place.

The early schematics for the unraced FIRST F1 car, which morphed into the W12-engined Life L190, were drawn by Divila. He was always perturbed that he was incorrectly credited with both designs.

Divila was also responsible for giving Adrian Newey his first job in the dying days of Fittipaldi: "He sent in his graduation thesis on a Group C car. I looked at it, and thought this guy knows what he's talking about."

Divila had no thoughts of retirement in his seventies. "I'm gonna keep on at it," he said a couple of years back. "So long as I'm working on interesting technical stuff and winning races, why give up?"

GARY WATKINS



With Wilson (right) and Emerson Fittipaldi in F1 pitlane in 1976

PHIPPS/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Chico Serra raced last Fittipaldi F1 car in 1982



Divila engineered Pescarolo to second at Le Mans in 2005…

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



…and had crack at Indy 500 with Tagliani

BOYD/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

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Threats and opportunities

While Formula 1 waits for a chance to start racing again, its future after the crisis may hang on how it deals with crucial cost-cap negotiations in the coming weeks

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Formula 1 is caught in a cliche — a major crisis, which at the same time is providing opportunity.

Make no mistake, the coronavirus pandemic is a very serious threat to the championship, although its tragic impact on so many people and our societies in general must not be downplayed when discussing the comparatively trivial topic of sport. The upending of normality has forced us to rethink how we operate — and F1 is no different.

The current negotiations between F1's stakeholders are critical. McLaren boss Zak Brown warned of "four teams" potentially going bust. FIA president Jean Todt told Autosport that F1 needs a "new deal". Thrown into stark relief by the threat to humanity, F1 is in the grips of an existential crisis. And so, these talks are the chance to change what was wrong before and build a new future that not only safeguards against threats such as the current pandemic, but also leaves the whole ecosystem healthier overall. There's even talk of the teams becoming profitable in their own right...

There was positive news last week when Liberty Media shuffled its deck and transferred $1.4billion cash — part of a wide-ranging transaction between the F1 Group to Liberty SiriusXM — that meant F1's owner could give advanced payments to those teams in desperate need. The plan to try to start the 2020 season with potentially two closed-door races in Austria, and then possibly two more at Silverstone, must also be welcomed — even if there are still major hurdles to overcome.

> **"F1 needs a 2020 season if it is to survive – TV-only races will help but mean reduced income"**

F1 needs a 2020 season if it is to survive. TV-only races will help but they will mean reduced income overall as race-promoter fees will have to be lowered — Silverstone surely couldn't even consider a spectator-less race without this — and some races won't take place at all given F1 is aiming for 15-18 and there were supposed to be 22. There is also the possibility of sponsors seeking refunds or reductions from their deals and the threat of manufacturer withdrawal. Audi's DTM exit could easily be a sign of things to come for other road-car companies with motorsport programmes.

Back to the opportunity. As many countries begin the arduous process of restarting their economies while minimising the risk of a second wave of coronavirus infections, businesses will be looking to the future with greater imperative than ever before. And F1 must look to capitalise on that through positive transformation.

"Change was required in any event," says Richard Cohen, global head of motorsports partnership development at marketing giant CSM, which has recently brought brands including DuPont and DP World to the Renault team. "Marketing has developed almost beyond recognition over the past 20 years. But motorsport sponsorship didn't necessarily keep pace — in that it was mainly still stickers on cars and hospitality. Now, clearly, it's gone beyond — there are additional assets. But if you look at what people were really selling, and what brands were paying for, it was still anchored in the old world."

When they get back to normality, F1 and the teams will have to change the way they do business. Whether that's by approaching different types of backers — some companies, such as those that facilitate homeworking (Zoom, BlueJeans etc), are doing well out of the lockdowns, which may even change the way we work forever — or reassessing what they offer in return for any sponsorship.

"Sport tends to bounce back more quickly than many other areas after an economic crisis — because it's such a strong passion point," says Cohen. "And if you want to engage with fans/consumers who are in a positive frame of mind, there's actually few if any better ways to do so than through sport. Ultimately, this is going to remain a priority and an imperative for the brands — they have to engage with their consumers."

Cohen reckons that first-party data "is going to be at the core of the revenue models to come". After all, even if F1 and the teams boast millions of followers on social media, it is still the tech giants that own the key data. But by operating slightly differently — offering fans exclusive offers, for example — teams can take this information to sponsors to create an improved return on investment.

But first, the cost-cap negotiations are critical. F1 simply must find a way to bring costs down and be more accessible to everyone: fans, through new broadcast-rights deals ("We now need for social platforms and broadcasters to co-exist," says Cohen) that don't lock the action away; and businesses looking to invest in a series that offers key performance-marketing opportunties and has a positive message to tell the world. Bernie Ecclestone's remarks about the hybrid engines — which are technological marvels — look worse by the day...

And, as Racing Point boss Otmar Szafnauer points out on page 25, the cost cap can level the competition imbalance that has hurt F1 for years. But to get there, all stakeholders must work together.

There are no guarantees, and the chance to improve F1 may even be unobtainable (quite how travel to any summer races will be possible remains unexplained). But there is a chance to make F1 fairer, healthier and better overall. If any good can come from the current nightmare, it simply must be seized.

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YOUR SAY

How the organisers managed to assemble pretty much the entire grand prix grid for a 40-lapper in mid-March is anyone's guess

CHRIS ELLARD

Non-championship races strike a chord

Congratulations on your excellent articles on the non-championship F1 races (23 April). Naturally any top 10 is highly subjective, but most folk probably wouldn't quibble with any in your ultimate pick. As far as the final order is concerned, personally, I would juxtapose first and second.

The quality of entry for that race in 1974 belied the fact that Britain was then suffering its own version of 'lockdown', with three-day weeks and power cuts. How the organisers managed to assemble pretty much the entire grand prix grid for a 40-lapper in mid-March is anyone's guess. True enough he was a wet weather maestro — even so, Jacky Ickx's drive that day on a soaking track was pure genius. And I was there!

Honourable mention though should also go to Jean Behra's heroic performance in the Gordini at Reims on a furnace like June day in 1952. Against the hitherto invincible Ferraris, the cash-strapped French marque was fully expected to struggle at the provincially named Marne GP. What emerged was a titanic battle between Behra and Alberto Ascari. At the end of three hours of racing Behra emerged unexpectedly triumphant. Little surprise, therefore, that the following day's papers carried the headline *'Le duel, Gordini-Ferrari. A la Victoire Française'*.

Just over a month later (as your article mentions) and in very different weather conditions, Mike Hawthorn almost duplicated Behra's feat with his drive in a Cooper-Bristol at the Boreham airfield circuit in Chelmsford — sorry, not Wiltshire! *[thanks, you're not alone in pointing that out — ed]*.

Nice tributes also to the great Sir Stirling Moss. He very kindly contributed the foreword to my book *Long Forgotten Races*. Shortly after I received an utterly charming letter from him which was then followed up by a phone call! Sheer class.

Chris Ellard
By email

Fantasy 2020 Formula 1 season

Although Liberty and F1 will not require external input, this is a game you've surely played in the Autosport office? Thinking of cost minimisation through logistical efficiencies, then revenue maximisation through hosting fees and key sponsors, while also considering a tight calendar with its potential for team fatigue, my fantasy 2020 calendar reads: 5/7 Austria; 19/7 Britain; 2/8 Hungary; 9/8 Netherlands; 23/8 Spain; 30/8 Belgium; 6/9 Italy; 20/9 Singapore; 27/9 Vietnam; 11/10 Azerbaijan; 25/10 USA; 1/11 Mexico; 15/11 Bahrain; 22/11 Abu Dhabi.

So 14 events, thus satisfying the eight races and three continents required and no overspill into 2021. The majority would be in their original dates and the Dutch and Vietnamese can earn some return on their many millions of investment.

Apologies to those events not already cancelled that I have 'eliminated', especially Japan and Brazil.

Graeme Innes-Johnstone
Elland, West Yorks



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WHERE CAN F1'S BEST 'POUND FOR POUND' TEAM GO NOW IT HAS MORE POUNDS?

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

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"It was evident from day one," recalls Sergio Perez. "I came from McLaren and I remember the first time visiting the factory at Force India. It was a shock straight away because I could see the deficit they had on money."

A transition from mighty McLaren at the end of 2013, when it was then only at the beginning of its slide from the front of the grid, to the squad then known as Force India is a dramatic lesson in the disparity of Formula 1 team budgets. But not so when it comes to results.

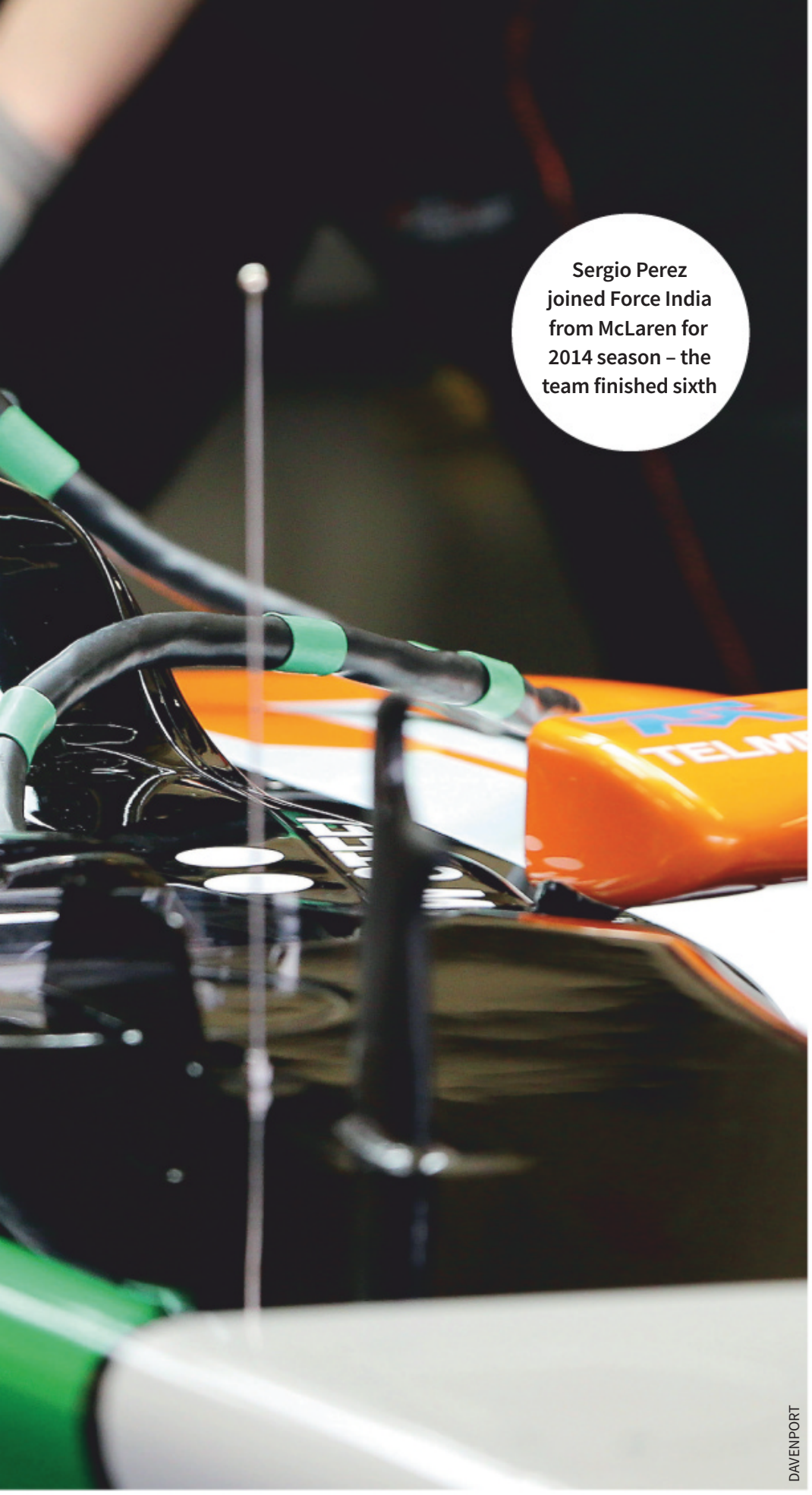
In Sergio Perez's first season at Force India, the team finished sixth – one place and 26 points behind McLaren. The following season it was fifth, with McLaren falling to ninth in the first of its disastrous years with Honda. Then came the golden years. In 2016, Force India usurped Williams as best of the rest behind F1's Mercedes/Ferrari/Red Bull 'Class A' (although Williams had impressively finished third in 2014 and 2015). And in 2017 it did so again, finishing fourth again despite the major regulations overhaul.

Then came the end of Force India. In 2018, the team's long-standing financial difficulties became too much. For so many years, Vijay Mallya's team had been operating on a cost cliff-edge, while team finances across the grid rose ever higher. Cashflow was the issue as, like many teams, Force India relied on money from F1's prize pot as well as sponsorship, but it did not enjoy the constructors' (CCB) and historical bonuses paid to some of its rivals. Bills had to be paid earlier than money arrived, which led to an increasing problem. This was reflected in the cars the team was producing – each season the carryover was considerable and in-season upgrades were few.

At the 2018 Hungarian Grand Prix, news broke that Perez had launched legal action, triggering a process that placed the team into administration. "At the time, I was really disappointed how it came out on the news," he says now. "They put it out that I was basically trying to get my salary. And at the time that was the least important thing."

But Perez's salary was actually a crucial part of saving the team. It made him a major creditor – as was engine supplier Mercedes – and the move placed Force India into administration. But this meant it could stay alive and see off a winding-up petition that had been launched by a technical supplier and would have likely killed the team.

From there, despite some initial resistance from other teams, not to mention rival bidder Dmitry Mazepin, a consortium led by Lawrence



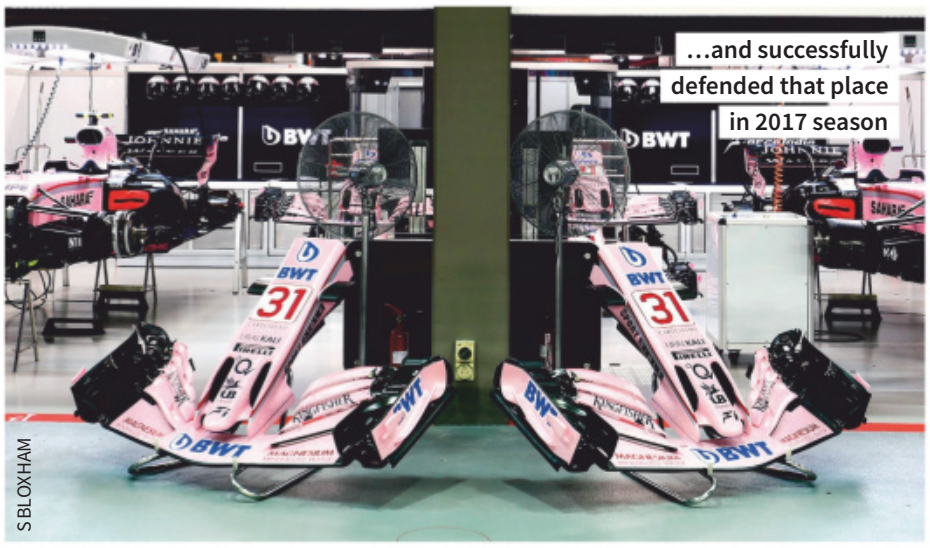
Sergio Perez joined Force India from McLaren for 2014 season – the team finished sixth

DAVENPORT



Force India beat Williams to fourth in championship in 2016…

DUNBAR



…and successfully defended that place in 2017 season

S BLOXHAM



Perez left Hungary in 2018 not knowing if team would race again

HONE

Stroll bought Force India's assets, and it reappeared at the Belgian GP after the 2018 summer break, essentially as a new entity. The 'new' Force India defaulted to zero points, but still ended the season on 52 in seventh place. Added to the 59 erased points scored by the 'old' squad, that 111 total would have put the team's combined two guises in fifth, just 11 points adrift of fourth-placed Renault.

In 2019 it was reborn as Racing Point, with Stroll's son Lance brought in to partner Perez. Its RP19 car started out essentially as the final machine of the Force India era, as the 2018 financial catastrophe greatly impinged on the design process for the following season. But bolting on several mid-season upgrade packages eventually turned its fortunes around. Perez scored 'Class B' wins in Belgium, Mexico and Abu Dhabi (to follow-up his early-season 'win' in Azerbaijan), with his home-race charge at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez a particular highlight. The team ended up seventh on 73 points, just 19 short of beating fifth-placed Renault's haul (with Perez's ex-employer McLaren finally back up the order in fourth). In 2021, the team will become known as 'Aston Martin F1 Team' after Stroll invested in the sportscar manufacturer at the beginning of 2020.

Despite all the turmoil, Force India/Racing Point's lowest constructors' championship position is the ninth place it took in 2009, the year after Mallya bought the ex-Jordan squad, which at the time was called Spyker. Even then it secured a podium with Giancarlo Fisichella's near-win at Spa, and the outfit added five more (all with Perez) in the 11 years to today. Since 2014, when F1's turbo-hybrid rules crystallised the championship's current 'class' imbalance, only Williams has scored more rostrum visits as a Class B squad.

Given that success and stability in terms of its constructors' finishing position (there has been no sudden decline *a la* McLaren and more recently Williams, and little Lotus/Renault-like fluctuation), it's little wonder that the team has developed a reputation as F1's best 'pound-for-pound' squad.

"If we look back at when I started at Force India [in 2009], we had 280 employees at the time, and at the time of administration we were up »



Szafnauer is determined to maintain team's efficiency now it has a bigger budget

to 405," says Racing Point team boss Otmar Szafnauer. "So we didn't grow very quickly, but our growth was planned and we grew in areas that were going to have the biggest impact on performance, because we always had a limited amount of budget. Every penny or every pound that we spent had to be considered.

"And then when Lawrence came in, he gave us a bigger budget — so significantly more money. Although we've got bigger resource now and we can do more, the one thing that we've got to make sure of — and so far so good — is that we don't lose that efficiency that we had in the past. So, we still scrutinise every pound spent — we're just spending more pounds."

HOW FINANCIAL SQUEEZE FORGED BONDS

Despite his initial deductions regarding the team's financial health, Perez realised that "as soon as we hit the track, I could see that there was a lot of potential in the team".

As is so often the case in motorsport, a well-run operation can overcome many challenges. Szafnauer heads a squad that has a motorsport history stretching back to the early 1980s, and includes familiar names such as long-time technical director Andrew Green (who joined in 2010 after leaving his previous post as Red Bull's head of R&D) and Andy Stevenson, the team's sporting director since 2005 and a stalwart since its Jordan days.

Szafnauer estimates that "even though we have a significantly bigger budget, say 30-40 per cent more than what we had" after Stroll's buyout (he puts the team's budget when it was securing its brace of fourth places at $110m), he still believes Racing Point has "got the lowest budget and the least amount of people in the pitlane".

"We're still the smallest Formula 1 team," he adds. "Maybe Haas has less people because a lot of their design and manufacturing work is done by Dallara. But if you added those equivalent heads in, I would suspect we're probably smaller than them as well."

Not all motorsport teams are comfortable with a plucky-underdog label, as it implies a level of negativity or superiority, depending on perspective. But given how bad things were getting during the final Force India years — which were further complicated by the legal wrangles facing Mallya (who earlier in April lost his appeal in a UK High Court ruling against his extradition to India) and his Sahara Group partner — it's a badge of honour for the squad. Even if it's not the precise term it uses.

"Maybe as an efficiently run team — that equates to underdog, if you know what I mean?," asks Szafnauer. "If you add more money than what we've had before, which is happening, and you keep the same efficiency, then the output is going to be greater. I have no issue with having a reputation of being an efficiently run team."

Although the end of the Mallya era led to stronger financial footing,



Ocon and Perez battle at front in Spa after team buyout in 2018

GORIA

it was a still a painful process for the team, with much uncertainty over the four weeks between that year's races in Hungary and Belgium. Perez felt the need to address his mechanics after the administration process had been set in place, stressing that he had been "looking at the big picture, knowing that the thing was very close to basically shutting down". He spoke to them just before qualifying at the Hungaroring, where he and then team-mate Esteban Ocon lined up 19th and 18th on the grid respectively, before rising to 13th (Ocon) and 14th (Perez) in the race. Then they headed into the summer break, not knowing if the team would return.

But with Stroll's consortium accepted by the administrators, the team was back at Spa — minus several sponsor logos and other branding relating to the previous Force India entity. There, Ocon and Perez qualified third and fourth — getting in among Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton's fight for the lead on the first lap — and finished fifth and sixth, with Perez ahead, in a resounding 'Class B' triumph.

"[The near-collapse] was something that really put us together as a team, as a family, because we went through the worst," says Perez. But it was so much uncertainty as well of what was going »



DUNBAR

PEREZ: I STILL WANT MORE

As he waits for his 10th Formula 1 season to start, Sergio Perez is boosted by a development from last summer: the refresh three-year deal that will keep him at Racing Point/Aston Martin until the end of 2022.

The new contract means he has stability – something that has inevitably been lacking at a team that has gone through such turbulent times.

"I would never have imagined to be that long with the team," he says. "Because pretty much, up to now, every year was a year renewal – year-by-year [contracts] – because every year I thought that was going to be my last, that I was going to change team."

The new deal means Perez will see the squad enjoy its greater resources as the Aston Martin project develops, which he calls "the big opportunity". The new era will be with a squad that Perez knows very well after seven consecutive campaigns (including the currently delayed season). He's brought home five podium trophies to a team that clearly appreciates him in return.

"On a Sunday, there aren't many other drivers that I'd like to have in our car than Sergio," says team boss Otmar Szafnauer. "He's excellent. He rarely makes mistakes, is very calculated, and just drives really well. And he's got this innate ability to look after the tyres."

"I GET ON REALLY WELL WITH LANCE, IT'S IMPORTANT WE RESPECT EACH OTHER"

Perez says working well with team-mate Lance Stroll – the owner's son – is key to getting the best results. "I get along really well with Lance, very much," he says. "I've got on well with all of my team-mates, in F1 or in the past – I probably had one exception of all [surely Esteban Ocon!]. But it's important we respect each other, share things, to try to push the team forwards. There are some places where he is quicker, where I'm quicker. But the most important [thing] is that we share our feedback – we talk a lot."

Perez's one-stopping, 'points-scoring' debut in Australia in 2011 – his Sauber team was disqualified for running a non-compliant rear wing – feels like a long time ago.

"It's crazy how quickly it's gone," says Perez. "I feel proud of what I have achieved with the machinery I've had in my career. I don't think it's close to being over. I'm still very young, only 30 years old. But now I have a long-term contract and I cannot really think much further than that. I made sure that contract is very successful – that I'm able to achieve great things with this team. Then, I will take it as it comes.

"Up to now I'm very pleased with what I have achieved, but I obviously want more."

to happen – if someone was going to buy it or not. And we just came out of it very strongly.

"I've never seen something like this in Formula 1, how everyone stuck together. Yeah, we probably lost some people. But I say the key people inside the team, everyone stuck together and I think that determination is the one that will make us very successful in the future."

THE 2019 HANGOVER

Although Stroll's investment meant the team could finally start making parts that had been designed earlier in 2018, the final financial squeeze of the Force India era had an impact on the new start as Racing Point the following year.

Green explains that the RP19 was "already well in progress" during the team's near-collapse as "we'd had to make quite significant decisions on it prior to the takeover, otherwise we wouldn't have had a car to run in 2019".

This meant that, although money was now available, the initial results of that investment would not be seen for some time – as ever in F1... There were also added challenges when it came to implementing the 2019 regulation changes, which were principally centred on new front and rear-wing designs, and which Green says "had a knock-on effect that we hadn't predicted, which took us a while to get out of".

But the team was finally able to make the big car upgrades the Force India budgets had generally precluded. This included updates to move the RP19 on from its interim testing specification into the new season, followed by further upgrades throughout the first half of 2019. In the second half of the campaign – particularly the major change to its nose design at the Belgian GP that abandoned the distinctive nostrils initially added to the B-spec version of the 2015 Force India, and a major aerodynamic upgrade introduced in Singapore – further developments boosted the team. The nose change was aimed at giving Perez and Stroll more front-end stability, and in the final 11 races of 2019 they took their respective points hauls from 13 and six at the British GP (round 10 of 21) to 52 and 21 after the Abu Dhabi finale.

"What [the investment] really did affect was how we could then go about developing the car that we had," says Green. "We had the opportunity to continually update the car in a manner that we'd never been able to do before to try and get the maximum out of it. By the end of the 2019 season, we'd developed quite heavily on the car and we were actually very close to where we targeted to be by the time we got to the end of the season."

But the biggest proof of the team's new financial health was set to come in 2020...



SUTTON

YEARS OF KNOWLEDGE SACRIFICED FOR RESULTS

At Racing Point's 2020 season launch in Mondsee in Austria – back in February, before the coronavirus pandemic swept world sport away for the foreseeable future – the RP19 was wheeled out in an updated, but still utterly pink, livery. This reflected the team's new title sponsorship deal with water-tech company BWT, and there was a palpable air of positivity around the squad. Just why the team was so excited became apparent at the first Barcelona pre-season test a few days later. The RP20 hit the track with little fanfare – there was no pitlane roll-out alongside Haas and Alfa Romeo – but its debut caused an uproar.

The car, as is well known by now, bares an unmistakable resemblance to the Mercedes W10 that took the German manufacturer to double title success in 2019, following in the footsteps of the five Silver Arrows machines that have done likewise since 2014. Perez, preparing to embark on his 10th F1 season (see page 21), had appeared relaxed and assured at the Mondsee event. Now it was clear why.

"I was confident because I knew what was going on behind [the scenes]," he says of the development of the RP20, which ended up as

5 FORCE INDIA/RACING POINT GOLDEN RESULTS

Racing Point has a grand prix-winning heritage from its Jordan days, but we've picked its best results since it became Force India from 2008 – when it was then Formula 1's perennial backmarker – to the present day.


HARTLEY



COATES

2009 BELGIAN GP

The closest Force India came to winning a race was, remarkably, the first time it scored points in that guise. Giancarlo Fisichella took the slippery VJM02 to pole at Spa and led away, only for a safety-car restart to give the KERS-armed Ferrari of Kimi Raikkonen a single chance, which he took to take the win, with soon-to-be-Ferrari driver Fisichella second.


HONE

2014 BAHRAIN GP

Practice suggested Force India was Mercedes' closest challenger in Bahrain, and Perez ended up third behind the duelling Silver Arrows to take his first podium with the team. But he had to get by Valtteri Bottas from fourth on the grid and then put a forceful mid-race pass on team-mate Nico Hulkenberg to end up on the rostrum, just ahead of the charging Daniel Ricciardo.



Barcelona testing times highlighted potential of Racing Point's new RP20



DUNBAR

Team owner Lawrence Stroll with his son Lance at Barcelona

the fifth fastest car overall across the two tests.

"I was [also] very pleased that all what we saw has worked well. I was optimistic because it's the first time that I could go back to the engineers and tell them, 'Focus on these things and make sure we improve them.' And straight away they were working on them. We have a good car and a good plan on how we want to do things.

"Everybody is holding back and trying different things [in testing]. So obviously we didn't see that full potential, the full picture of our car, because pretty much everyone hides a bit. But I can tell you Barcelona is not our strongest circuit either. So, for Melbourne we had big hopes, very big hopes — we were going to be extremely competitive there. But let's wait and see when we can race."

The RP20 is the first full demonstration of what the new investment has allowed the team to do in terms of car design. The 2020 machine is not a carryover from that of 2019, as was the case with so many of its predecessors. In addition to the similar front-wing and nose parts (as well as other aerodynamic parts further back) on the W10, the RP20 has shed the Red Bull-inspired high-rake concept that the team and many others had long used. That approach ended up frustrating the team, as it required a hefty compromise to align with the Mercedes gearbox, which was optimised for the low-rake approach favoured by the works squad.

"We were always compromised at the rear," says Szafnauer. "And we used to complain about that all the time, but we didn't have the resources to do anything about it, because we always had to carry over and do the best we could. Well, after the consortium, this is the first opportunity where we could say, 'You know what? We're buying that gearbox, let's have the aerodynamic concept around the rear work with the gearbox that we're getting.'"

So, with "no obligation to carry over a single thing in 2020", Green and his team simply shelved the years of experience they had gathered around the high-rake concept and got to work on the design that they had seen Mercedes ride to unprecedented F1 success.

"It seemed just so logical," explains Green. "Why fight against this [low-rake] concept that they've been running and the [high-rake] concept that we'd adopted. Why not just align the two and go from there?

"We had the opportunity to do it and we grabbed hold of it, and »



FERRARO

2016 MONACO GP

Perez stood alongside the delighted Lewis Hamilton and dejected Daniel Ricciardo after a dramatic rain-affected race. The key to what was a surprise result was a late stop for intermediates and misfortune for others, but once again Perez was the driver to profit – as he also did at the end of the 2015 Russian GP (Perez's other Force India podium, which didn't make this list).



HONE

2016 EUROPEAN GP

The history books show Perez started seventh, but he qualified second on a strong weekend for Force India (a final practice crash left him with a gearbox-replacement grid penalty). The 23 June 2016 edition of Autosport stated he "otherwise was faultless" as he recovered to third with his trademark tyre management and last-lap pass on Raikkonen to make up for team's Spa defeat.



ANDRE

2018 AZERBAIJAN GP

Perez survived being knocked into Kimi Raikkonen on what was a dramatic first lap, and enjoyed further fortune right at the end when Sebastian Vettel's wayward move for first left him vulnerable to a late pass, and leader Valtteri Bottas's tyre blew out. Nevertheless, Perez still had to make five overtakes to rise into the right position to bag another Baku podium.

everybody was up for it. It was a significant challenge — just psychologically — to talk to the team and say, 'Look, what you've done previously, you're going to have to shelve that for now, we're going to have to go down a different route.' It's a different type of learning and it's a concept that we had no real understanding of. It was going to be a significant challenge because it's not a case of just taking a concept, looking at pictures and running it — it's understanding the philosophy behind it and the concept behind it.

"Everybody just really wanted to do it and really wanted to show what they could do given a clean piece of paper."

But this approach brought extra attention from rival squads, and with that came a threat.

ANOTHER POLITICAL STORM BUILDS

Among the many fascinating strands of the 2018 Force India rescue was the reaction of rival teams. Under the terms of F1's Concorde Agreement, if a squad goes into administration and gets saved then all the other teams must agree to allow it continue to receive the payments provided by F1 to its previous regime. That didn't happen with the 'new' and 'old' Force India, as McLaren, Renault and Williams held out — concerned about the potential for a clear Mercedes B team to emerge.

What eventually happened, mainly because the sale couldn't go through in the two-week deadline set by the administrators because of the legal complexities surrounding Mallya and Sahara in India, was that Lawrence Stroll's consortium formed a new company — Racing Point. This bought Force India's assets and was allowed to enter the championship from Spa onwards, with no points and with a reduced prize-money allocation, via a little-known FIA 'late-entry' rule.

That political saga should be considered when assessing the context around the RP20's public debut. Before not very long at all, as Perez in particular was producing eyecatching lap times and long-run efforts, phrases such as 'Pink Mercedes' and 'Tracing Point' were being uttered by rival squads and internet snarks. In the Melbourne paddock there was talk of protests being prepared — before the event was aborted by the unfolding COVID-19 crisis — and Renault team



The similarities between 2019's Mercedes W10…

PORTLOCK

boss Cyril Abiteboul has since hinted that this possibility remains if/when the 2020 season gets going.

But Green is resolute that Racing Point has acted within the rules: "We don't really know what the grounds are that they are thinking of protesting about. When the car launched, we talked to the FIA about it. The FIA came round to the factory and looked at what we'd done and the designs of the car. They even took the design data from Mercedes for last year's car and checked it against ours. They did a thorough check. And they are completely happy that the car that we've got on track has been designed by us.

"It may have some similarities to the Mercedes, but it's just similar — it's not the same. And so there is no protest there. They can shout and scream as much as they want, but I think what they're actually shouting and screaming about is the fact that they've missed a trick. And that's what they're upset about."

Racing Point had initially decided that the W10-inspired approach was worth trying because even if it didn't work out, the 2021 rules reset meant only one year would be wasted. But the efforts to ease the economic impact of the pandemic on F1's teams mean the 2020 cars will be used next year — albeit with a few modifications allowed under an expected token development system.

So, if the RP20 is as good as it looked in testing — Autosport ranked it as the clear 'Class B' leader — and it matches Perez's Melbourne expectations at whichever venue is eventually the season opener, then questions about its legality are likely to continue. But the team is firm that it is operating within the rules.



Perez was confident about new car's potential in testing

DUNBAR

ASTON MARTIN ON THE HORIZON

At the end of January, it was announced that Lawrence Stroll had bought a 16.7% stake in the Aston Martin Lagonda road car company for £182million. His investment, and appointment as Aston executive chairman, was formally confirmed at the end of March, with his Yew Tree Consortium contributing £171m of £536m gathered in a fundraising round of investments and an equity raise.

The deal means Racing Point will be rebranded as the 'works' Aston Martin F1 Team, in a similar way that Red Bull (which will now have its Aston sponsorship deal cease at the end of 2020) can be considered a works operation with Honda — along the lines of the mid-1990s tie-ups between engine builders and existing squads, rather than the manufacturer team-purchasing splurge of the 2000s. But at the same time it is more than the branding exercise going on at the Sauber-operated Alfa Romeo squad.

"There'll be some technology transfer, mainly from the F1 team into their new road cars," says Szafnauer. "We've got a windtunnel at Brackley, for example, that they're going to be using, and we'll give them some expertise on how to do some aerodynamics for their road cars. And I'm sure there will be other technology transfer as well.

"Just like Ferrari goes racing and it helps their road cars, Aston Martin will go Formula 1 racing now and that'll help their road cars.


…and Racing Point's RP20 have been noticed by rival teams

DUNBAR

So it's a lot happening, but there will be some synergies that will be a win-win for both companies."

But against the backdrop of Stroll's investment, Aston's financial state looks perilous. The company share price has crashed from its stock market launch of £19 per share to recent lows of under £1.50, and it has been hit hard by the impact of the coronavirus shutdowns. One company statement said Aston did not have the cash to survive another 12 months, but it has taken steps — including the £536m cash injection — to improve its financial footing. Intriguingly, Stroll ally Toto Wolff has personally bought 0.95% of Aston, although he remains committed to his role as Mercedes team principal.

Despite all the uncertainty of the pandemic, the Racing Point rebrand is still on, and Stroll has reiterated his commitment to the project, saying in a recent statement that "I am committed to Formula 1 with a long-term vision and [the coronavirus shutdown] is just a temporary pause in the journey".

"It's all happening, it's still going ahead — we will be Aston Martin Formula 1 Team next year; we will still build the new factory [at Silverstone, which was approved last April]," insists Szafnauer, while Green says the RP20's moniker will change to include an "Aston Martin reference". But it's too early to tell if a pink Aston takes to the tracks in 2021 ("We haven't even raced one race this year with the livery that we introduced in Mondsee!" jokes Szafnauer).

"An iconic, worldwide brand being back in Formula 1 is definitely a huge boost for the team, puts a lot of pressure in the team," concludes Perez. "But I think this is what the team needed to go to the next step."

WHERE CAN SUCH A STORIED TEAM GO FROM HERE?

In Mondsee, Szafnauer stated that Racing Point's target for the season (whenever it starts!) is to retake fourth place, and pick up podiums. Based on the team's performance in testing that is a realistic aim, with Ferrari even suggesting that Racing Point could give it cause for concern, given the apparent struggles the team had with its SF1000.

But with the Aston rebrand firmly in mind, it's worth considering how far the former Jordan squad can reach — and if it could indeed pick up a first win since the 2003 Brazilian GP. Much will depend on the ongoing negotiations regarding F1's cost cap, and the push to bring it down further for 2021 in light of the pandemic squeeze (see panel, right). But that is the next aim.

"It's going to be our job [Szafnauer's and Green's] and the job of the 463 other people that work here to make sure that Aston Martin is as competitive as it needs to be to compete with the likes of Ferrari and Mercedes," says Szafnauer.

Racing Point has a long history of doing a lot with not many pounds. Now that it has more pounds to spend, and its rivals are seemingly set to spend fewer of their own, logic would suggest that a slick operation has what it takes to succeed. That is *if* F1's new financial rules can close up the field.


HONE

COST CAP NEGOTIATIONS KEY TO FORMULA 1'S FUTURE

Racing Point is currently playing its part in the intense negotiations over Formula 1's cost cap, which will come into force from 2021.

This had been intended to run alongside the new technical and sporting rules – now delayed to 2022 to ease the financial burden on the teams during the coronavirus crisis. But the financial changes will still come in next year, and will be lower than the $175millon announced last year.

A move to $150m has been agreed in principle, but at the time of writing no firm agreement had been reached as various teams argue for and against further lowering the cap. McLaren and its CEO, Zak Brown, have been vocal in advocating for the cap to be as low as $100m, while Ferrari is reluctant to move below $145m as it does not want to cut staff levels or redeploy personnel to other motorsport categories.

"I can see both sides of the argument," says Racing Point team principal Otmar Szafnauer (above, with F1's Chase Carey). "The right cost cap should be somewhere in between, and we're well on our way in everybody negotiating a cost cap that's either equally liked or disliked.

"If we get to, say, $140m/$135m, from a financial standpoint when the revenue gets back to normal, we'll be in a much stronger place as a series. Such that if anything like this happens, we don't look and say, 'Oh, four teams may not make it' [as Brown has warned]."

"THE COST CAP IS ALSO A LEVELLER – IT HELPS WITH CLOSING UP THE FIELD"

Szafnauer also feels that "with the cost cap you don't have to spend the money", and suggests the debate is also a chance for F1 to fix its current two- tiered competitive spread.

"The cost cap is also a leveller in competitiveness and the performance you can get out of it," he explains. "So we've got to be careful that we're not just saying 'cost cap for financial reasons'; the cost cap also helps with closing up the field."

Further suggestions regarding the cost cap include staggering a lowered level between 2021 and 2022, and possibly giving teams that supply parts a higher cap. The FIA has now altered its rules to accept a majority decision on issues such as the cost cap "in exceptional circumstances", as opposed to the unanimous support previously required for rule changes at this stage in advance of the next calendar year.

GOLDEN F1 DAYS IN THE DUTCH SAND

Formula 1's return to Zandvoort may have been delayed, but we take a look back at the circuit's greatest races in the meantime

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES





Lauda (l) leads field away in wet start in 1975, but Hunt won

The Dutch Grand Prix was *supposed* to return this weekend. The Formula 1 circus was going to visit Zandvoort for the first time since 1985, but the coronavirus pandemic has meant that Max Verstappen will have to wait a bit longer to perform for Red Bull in front of his home fans.

The seaside venue has a history stretching right back to the beginning of F1 and has hosted some great races, titanic struggles and fine moments. It has had its tragedies too, most notably the deaths of Piers Courage and Roger Williamson in the 1970 and 1973 Dutch GPs respectively. But with such a chequered past, Zandvoort and its greatest moments were well worth putting under the microscope, even if no one can be there this weekend.

EARLY STANDOUTS

Work on Zandvoort began during World War Two, and the British Racing Drivers' Club organised the first meeting on 7 August 1948. Prince Bira's Maserati won the Zandvoort GP by just 0.1 seconds from the Alfa Romeo of Tony Rolt, and the following year's event attracted a strong field that included factory Ferraris.

Perhaps the finest contest before Zandvoort joined the world championship calendar came in 1950, with the big race now named the Dutch GP. The pacesetting Alfa Romeos were not entered, but an Italian victory still looked likely, with Juan Manuel Fangio and Froilan Gonzalez both present in Maseratis.

French ace Raymond Sommer nevertheless took pole in his Talbot-Lago and repassed Fangio, who was struggling with suspension issues, in the early stages. Sommer's clutch eventually failed him, but still there was a surprise as Louis Rosier — victor of the Le Mans 24 Hours a month before — came through to win the 90-lap contest, beating the Ferraris of Luigi Villoresi and Alberto Ascari by over a minute in his Talbot-Lago.

BRM'S BREAKTHROUGH

The Dutch GP became part of the world championship in 1952, and for the next few years —aside from 1954, 1956 and 1957 when the race was not held — domination was the name of the game. Ascari led every lap in 1952 and 1953 for Ferrari; the Fangio-Stirling Moss Mercedes 'Train' left the rest behind in 1955; and Moss thrashed the opposition for Vanwall in 1958.

The 1959 Dutch GP, however, was different. For nearly a decade BRM had been something of a disaster. Initially all the hopes of the British (motorsport) industry had rested with British Racing Motors, but the failure of the overly complicated V16 and fragility of the promising P25 had long since resulted in the endeavour being labelled a shambles. The team persevered under Alfred Owen, and the Tony Rudd-designed car, which had first appeared in 1955, finally came good in 1959.

A great deal of testing preceded Jo Bonnier's Zandvoort pole position, and the Swede battled the Coopers of first Masten Gregory and then Jack Brabham, gaining the advantage when each developed gearbox issues. Bonnier's fine effort looked like it would go unrewarded when Moss took the lead on lap 60 of 75, but the Rob Walker-run Cooper then succumbed to gearbox failure, leaving Bonnier to take his only world championship F1 victory. It was also the first of BRM's 17 wins; three years later it would win the drivers' and constructors' titles.

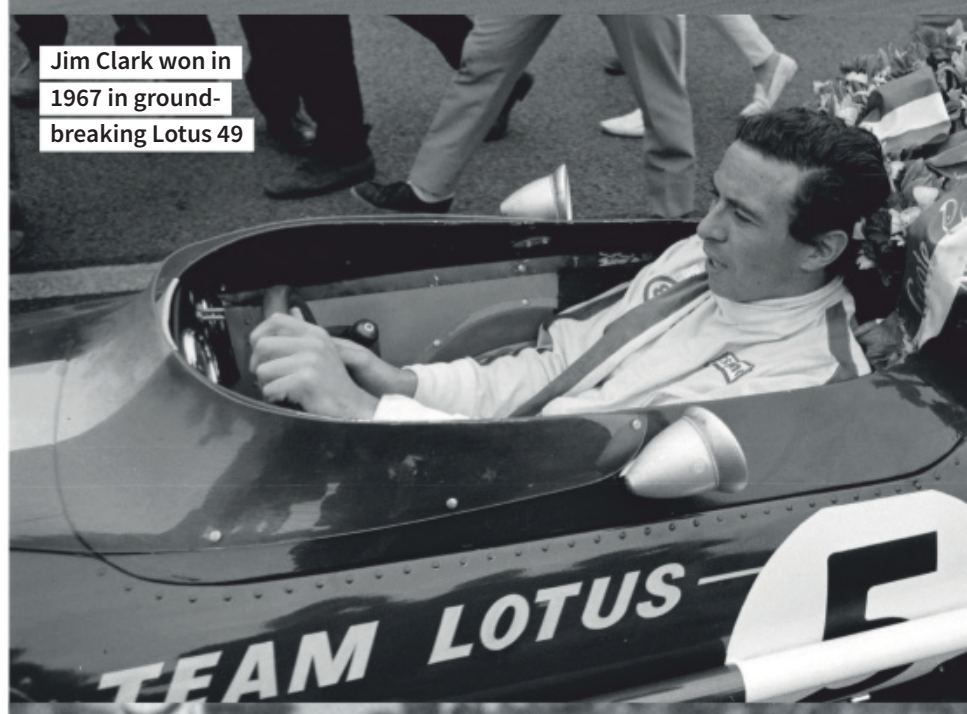
TWO NEW ERAS BEGIN

Jim Clark and Lotus had a certain affinity with Zandvoort. The revolutionary monocoque Lotus 25 had made its debut in the 1962 Dutch GP, and Clark scored a hat-trick from 1963 to 1965. He also put in one of his greatest drives, with two-litre Climax power against the three-litre Brabham Repcos, in 1966, but it's the following year's race that has the most significance. The debut of the Ford Cosworth DFV probably stands as Zandvoort's most important moment.

Colin Chapman's Lotus 49, designed to use the DFV as a stressed member, had exclusive use of the powerplant in 1967, and Graham Hill took pole by half a second on the car's debut. He led before retiring with a broken camshaft drive, but team-mate Clark — who had suffered a troubled practice and started eighth — had already climbed to fourth



Jo Bonnier gave BRM team its first win in 1959 Dutch GP



Jim Clark won in 1967 in ground-breaking Lotus 49

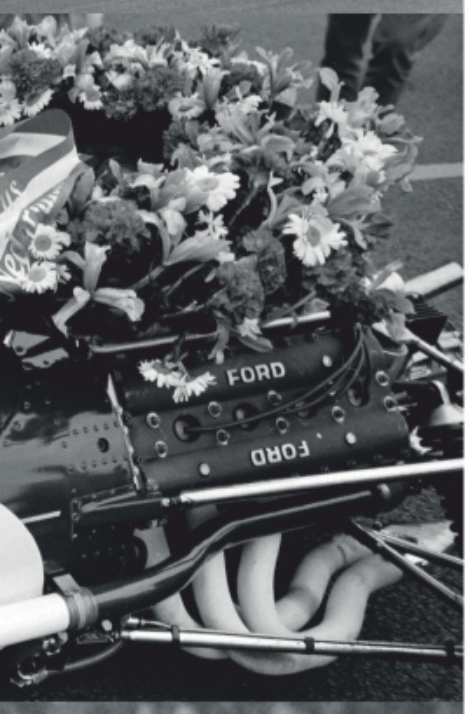


Jackie Stewart (8) won well ahead of rest of field in '68



Ickx in Ferrari and Rodriguez in BRM battled in 1971









Rosier was winner in 1950 and 1951

GP WINNERS AT ZANDVOORT

YEAR	DRIVER (CAR)
1948	**Prince Bira** (Maserati)
1949	**Luigi Villoresi** (Ferrari)
1950	**Louis Rosier** (Talbot-Lago)
1951	**Louis Rosier** (Talbot-Lago)
1952	**Alberto Ascari** (Ferrari)
1953	**Alberto Ascari** (Ferrari)
1955	**Juan Manuel Fangio** (Mercedes)
1958	**Stirling Moss** (Vanwall)
1959	**Jo Bonnier** (BRM)
1960	**Jack Brabham** (Cooper)
1961	**Wolfgang von Trips** (Ferrari)
1962	**Graham Hill** (BRM)
1963	**Jim Clark** (Lotus)
1964	**Jim Clark** (Lotus)
1965	**Jim Clark** (Lotus)
1966	**Jack Brabham** (Brabham)
1967	**Jim Clark** (Lotus)
1968	**Jackie Stewart** (Matra)
1969	**Jackie Stewart** (Matra)
1970	**Jochen Rindt** (Lotus)
1971	**Jacky Ickx** (Ferrari)
1973	**Jackie Stewart** (Tyrrell)
1974	**Niki Lauda** (Ferrari)
1975	**James Hunt** (Hesketh)
1976	**James Hunt** (McLaren)
1977	**Niki Lauda** (Ferrari)
1978	**Mario Andretti** (Lotus)
1979	**Alan Jones** (Williams)
1980	**Nelson Piquet** (Brabham)
1981	**Alain Prost** (Renault)
1982	**Didier Pironi** (Ferrari)
1983	**Rene Arnoux** (Renault)
1984	**Alain Prost** (McLaren)
1985	**Niki Lauda** (McLaren)



Hunt rated his 1975 win in Hesketh as the race of his life

and now inherited third place. He continued his charge and, on lap 16 of 90, overtook Brabham for the lead. Clark then nursed the new car to a 23.6s victory, the first of 155 world championship GP wins for the DFV and its derivatives.

The following year's Dutch GP could also be regarded as the start of a new era. Benchmark driver Clark had been killed in a Formula 2 race at Hockenheim less than three months before round five of the championship, leaving a vacuum at the top of the sport.

Jackie Stewart, who had missed two of the three intervening GPs due to injury, indicated that he would be the man to take over at the top with a superb victory at a wet Zandvoort. The Scot qualified down in fifth in his DFV-powered Matra, but took the lead on lap four. On a day when the Dunlop runners had an advantage, Stewart quickly pulled away. Only Jean-Pierre Beltoise (V12 Matra) could get anywhere near his times but, almost as soon as he got into second, he went off, pitted to have his throttle slides checked, and had to do it all again. He did, but still finished a minute and a half behind a cruising Stewart.

DUEL OF THE RAINMASTERS

Aside from Stewart, the other two rainmasters of the time were Jacky Ickx and Pedro Rodriguez. And they provided the rare sight of a race-long wet-weather battle in the 1971 GP.

Firestone-shod cars dominated this time, and Ickx's Ferrari and the BRM of Rodriguez proved to be the class of the field. The duo proved incredibly close in dry qualifying, Ickx taking pole by just 0.04 seconds, and the Ferrari maintained its lead at the start as they quickly pulled clear. After two laps, third man Stewart — struggling with inferior Goodyear rubber and braking issues on his Tyrrell — was nearly nine seconds behind Rodriguez.

On lap nine, the leaders came upon an incident involving Francois Cevert and Nanni Galli at Tarzan, and Rodriguez took the opportunity to snatch the lead. The BRM pulled away over the next few laps, at one stage building an advantage of over eight seconds, but then Ickx started to close the gap, the Ferrari pulling better out of the slower corners as the circuit dried.

Ickx grabbed the lead back on lap 30 of 70, Rodriguez retaliated in traffic the next time around, and then the Ferrari moved ahead once more on lap 32. "It was all real Formula 1 racing, and the damp crowd loved it," reported Autosport's Patrick McNally.

Ickx started to pull away, though he tended to be more cautious in traffic than his pursuer, Rodriguez keeping up the pressure. With 11 laps to go, Ickx was 15.6s ahead but — with oil down — the Ferrari driver was more cautious in the closing stages than Rodriguez, who was only eight seconds behind at the flag. Everyone else was lapped.

HUNT'S BREAKTHROUGH

Niki Lauda and Ferrari were on fine form when F1 arrived for the 1975 Dutch GP, having won the previous three rounds. That trend seemed set to continue when Lauda took pole, with team-mate Clay Regazzoni alongside, but more North Sea rain on race day provided an opportunity for others to shine.

James Hunt's Hesketh had managed to lead the incredibly tight DFV-powered brigade in practice, and he ran fourth in the early stages as Lauda led. Hunt had previously noticed that slick tyres worked better on a drying track than most thought, and he was one of the first to get rid of his grooved rubber.

"Lauda and most of the field stopped a good bit later than me," said Hunt years later, when selecting the drive as the race of his life. "Once ahead, I gave it everything. By the time Jean-Pierre Jarier and Lauda got their tyres hot and got used to the track conditions, I had a 10-second lead. From then on they were slowly catching me because the Hesketh was not a fully competitive car." Once Lauda had finally got clear of Jarier's Shadow he closed on Hunt and, for the final third of the race, applied pressure to the leader. But Hunt, on a dry set-up compared to Lauda's compromised 312T, held firm to win by a second.

Hunt felt it was a key drive that ended his weakness of making mistakes while leading: "That was the completion of my training as an F1 driver. It enabled me to win the 1976 championship, at my first and only chance in a competitive car, under *maximum* pressure." »

VILLENEUVE MISSES THE POINT

Gilles Villeneuve is regarded as one of the finest F1 drivers never to win the world title, and his 1979 Dutch GP drive perhaps showcased the best and worst traits of the Ferrari driver.

Villeneuve made a typically rapid getaway to jump from sixth to second, and chased the Williams of Alan Jones in the early laps. He then pulled off a superb pass at Tarzan, getting alongside under braking and then going all the way around the outside to complete the move.

He edged away, but then picked up a slow puncture and Jones closed back in. Villeneuve then spun at the new high-speed chicane, brilliantly keeping the car out of the barriers but losing the lead. If his slow puncture had not been apparent before, surely it would have been now, but he pressed on — and suffered a left-rear tyre failure a lap and a half later at Tarzan. The image of Villeneuve three-wheeling (or, at times, two-wheeling) became iconic, but the whole saga cost him any chance of a points finish. Had he pitted for fresh rubber he would have finished at least in third position, possibly second.

By contrast, Villeneuve's Ferrari team-mate and fellow title contender Jody Scheckter drove one of his great races after suffering an overheating clutch at the start. He moved aside to avoid getting hit, dropping to the back of the field. Scheckter then got the car going, nursed it by not using the clutch for the first couple of laps, and then began a charge. After 10 laps he was sixth, and he pulled a move on Didier Pironi's Tyrrell at Tarzan that was very similar to Villeneuve's pass on Jones. He then easily overcame Keke Rosberg's Wolf, and inherited third when Jean-Pierre Jabouille's Renault retired with clutch problems. "I was getting out of shape, doing some pretty ambitious outbraking moves in my determined efforts," said Scheckter.

Villeneuve's dramas allowed Scheckter to take second, putting him in a position that enabled him to clinch the title — with Villeneuve's help — next time out in the Italian GP at Monza.



Jones won in 1979; Scheckter (left) charged his Ferrari to second



Lauda won epic battle with Prost in track's last GP in '85

ZANDVOORT GP PREP

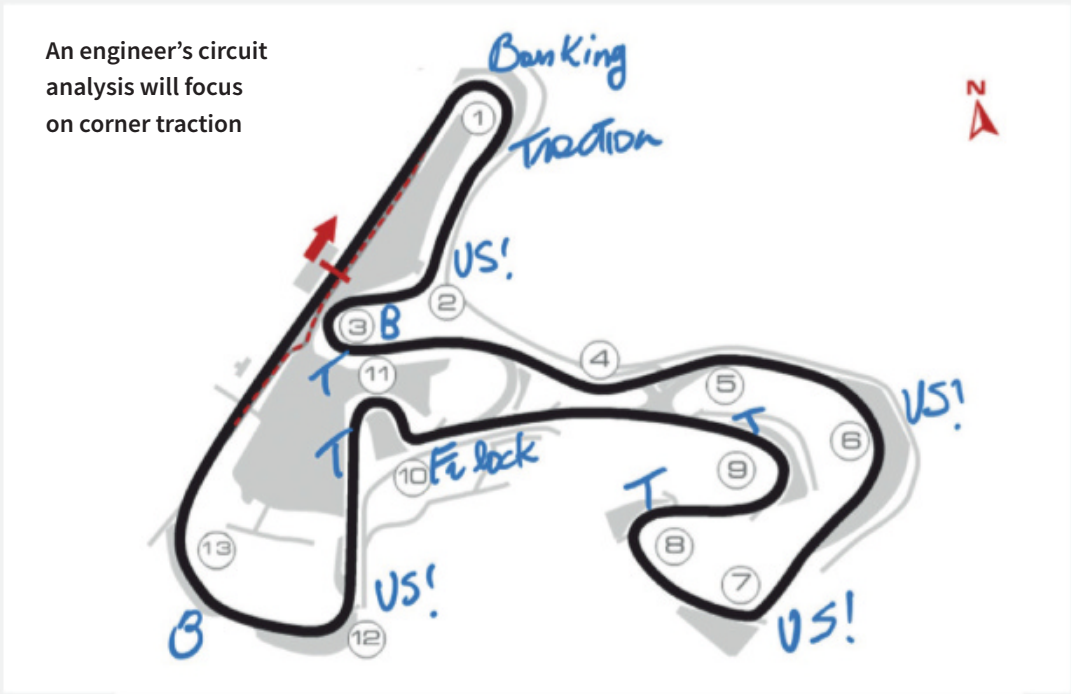
A LOOK AT THE CIRCUIT WITH AN IMAGINARY DRIVER

One of the things I miss the most from my past life as a race engineer is going through a circuit map analysis with my driver before the race event and after each session. Those are very precious moments for a race engineer as they provide the chance to "sit in the car" and immerse him/herself into the competition. The driver puts notes on the track layout highlighting the key points for the car performance (see right).

Although it is not easy to predict the behaviour of the Tarmac used to build this track, I tried to visualise what an F1 driver would recommend for this new, fascinating layout. With the available information, it looks like the main characteristic will be the traction (T) for the corners T1, T3, T8, T9 and T11. In particular, after T3, T9 and T11, the drivers won't attack the entry to be sure to have a more stable and clear acceleration on exit because of the straights that follow.

Traction means rear grip, which calls for high rear downforce and propulsion driveability. But this may induce also understeer (US) especially in mid to high-speed corners such as T2, T6, T7 and T12. You may be lucky and have an aero map providing enough front aero balance for the ride heights involved in those corners, and in this case the race engineers "only" need to set up the car to be in that magic zone. Otherwise, you will have to push the front flap or the car rake to the limit. The former is a drag-free solution, but the maximum angle may have the cost of a dirtier flow going to the rear of the car. The rake introduces some drag (you won't really care about this at Zandvoort) with the risk of getting the car in unstable regions of the aero map for higher rear ride height. Another option is to adopt a suspension geometry that introduces a progressive stiffness on the rear for speed greater than (say) 180 km/h.

A strong rear may affect



An engineer's circuit analysis will focus on corner traction

LAUDA'S LAST VICTORY

By 1985,'noise pollution'was becoming an issue and the circuit was looking a little the worse for wear, but still it provided some good racing. That was proved by the battle between McLaren team-mates Lauda and Alain Prost.

Tim Wright was Prost's engineer and he takes up the story:"This was the 11th race on the calendar and we came to the race fighting for both drivers'and constructors'championships. Prost had just won the previous race in Austria to put himself equal on points with Michele Alboreto in his Ferrari, so we were hoping the trend would continue. Lauda had not enjoyed much success up until this race, only scoring points in two races, although he had showed that he was still up for the fight in Austria, where he led Prost for 14 laps before again suffering an engine problem.

"As usual, Goodyear had brought the two compounds of tyre — the B and C — for the race and, although the track was notoriously abrasive, we were confident that, as the McLaren was kind on its tyres, we could get away with running the softer C compound.

"Both drivers suffered low power during qualifying, Prost having a malfunctioning pop-off valve to leave him third on the grid, with Lauda back in 10th as it transpired he only had five of the six Porsche/TAG cylinders working properly. During the year we had numerous problems with pop-off valves, as they were under the control of the FIA, but were totally inconsistent in their calibration and performance. It was a regular trip to their offices to have valves replaced.

"Pole position was taken by Nelson Piquet in his Brabham, with Keke Rosberg second in the Williams, but we were pleased to see the Ferraris struggling on the bumpy surface and had only managed 16th and 17th.

"The engine problems were sorted out for the warm-up on the Sunday morning and this was a pointer for what was to happen come the race, as Niki was quickest ahead of Prost. Piquet caused a bit of confusion at the start when he stalled the Brabham, with the result that Rosberg made a clean break, followed by Ayrton Senna in the Lotus, then Teo Fabi in the Toleman who had appeared from nowhere.

"Niki had made a great start and was right behind Prost in fifth place and had decided that he would push his tyres hard on full tanks and stop earlier. As always, Prost was able to look after his tyres better in a race situation and would go almost to half race distance.

"He disposed of Fabi and Senna after a few laps and, when Rosberg retired with an engine failure, he assumed the lead and things were looking good. Just before this, Niki had made his pitstop for fresh rubber, and he steadily made his way back through the pack as others fell by the wayside; he was soon up to second place behind Prost.

"Right on cue, Alain came in for his pitstop on lap 34 of 70, but things then went awry as he was stationary for 18s as a wheelnut refused to come off. By the time he was back on track he found himself behind both Senna and Niki.

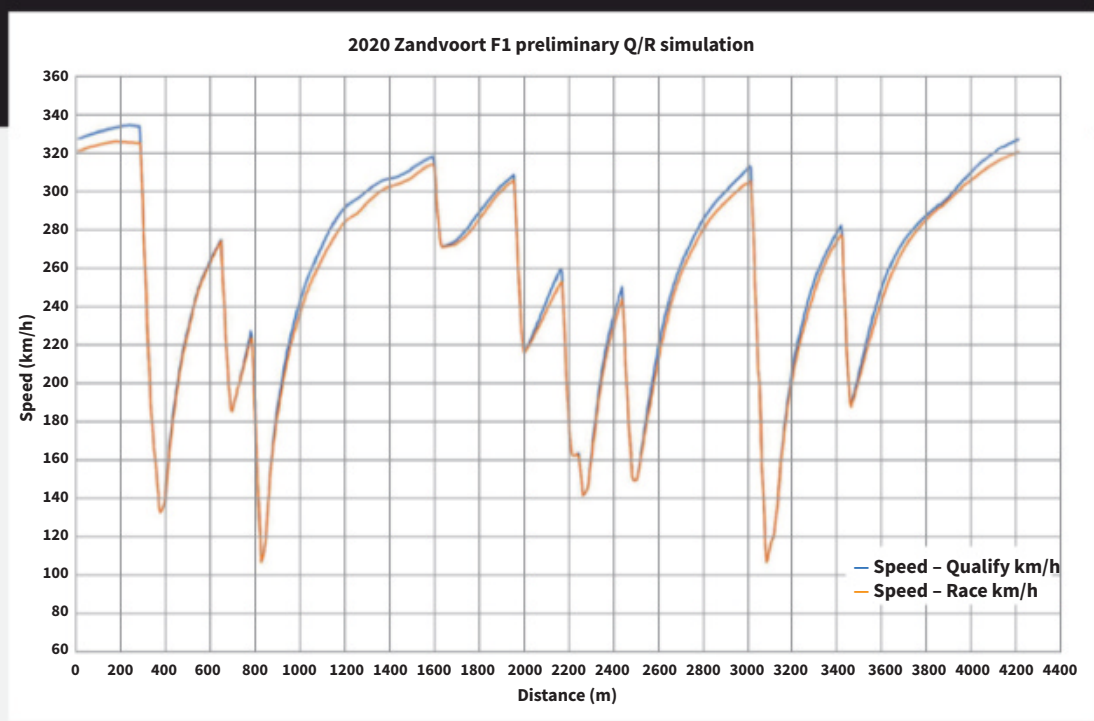
"There then followed an epic race between both our cars as Alain, once past Senna, set about catching Niki, setting fastest lap after fastest lap, reducing the gap between them, until they were nose to tail. We had never discussed team orders and so there were no radio conversations as we let them fight it out.

"The last 10 laps were nerve-racking for us on the pitwall, but the two drivers put on a magical show, with Niki resisting any move that Alain made, their mutual respect showing just why they were both world champions, although at this point Alain had still not realised his first one!

"Niki had made his point, and no one would begrudge him this win, but it also meant Alain had taken the lead in the championship, which he would not lose."

It was a fitting way for F1 to sign off from Zandvoort, but hopefully the Dutch fans can look forward to a new chapter of memorable moments when racing finally returns to normal.


TEE



the front locking in T1 and T10. To overcome that, drivers may have to shift the brake balance to the rear while approaching those corners. An exotic solution could be to run asymmetric camber angles (less camber on the right side) to have more tyre patch available in braking, but also in acceleration in at least three slow-speed corners.

Then the banking. This unique feature of this track calls for lower camber angles to reduce the responsiveness of the car and for the tyre wear. It will be fascinating to see the driving lines in T2 and T3. The former is a blind and uphill corner followed by a downhill and T3, which offers the highest banking level of the season. An amazing 3D forces input into the drivers' bodies, which will stress-test their consistency capabilities. The banking will also call for slightly higher cars overall. Furthermore, because of the bankings (especially the last corner), for a given construction, the tyre supplier may be worried about the structural reliability of the tyre. This would push Pirelli to suggest higher tyre pressures than usual with a consequent relative loss of longitudinal grip.

To add some more important details, we expect a qualifying lap around one minute and three seconds. The top speed in qualify will be around 334km/h, of which 23km/h is because of the hybrid system. This looks to be a low WOT (wide open throttle percentage) track, so should be gentle on the engines. The biggest braking areas are T1 and T10, meaning also the brakes will have an easier life but not the kinetic recovery of the hybrid system (estimated 710 kJ/lap). If gusty, T8 and T9 may present some annoying short-shifting for the drivers to manage. The lap simulation (left), which was possible thanks to the track data kindly provided by Dromo (Zandvoort track designer), suggests the speed profile (above).

Regrettably, we won't see much overtaking. The track is narrow and straights are not so long. The chance for overtaking will be there if the driver in front makes mistakes out of T3, T9 and T11. Nevertheless, the windy and sandy nature of the area, plus the uncertainties related to the Dutch weather, may naturally introduce the level of unpredictability that always helps provide the entertainment.

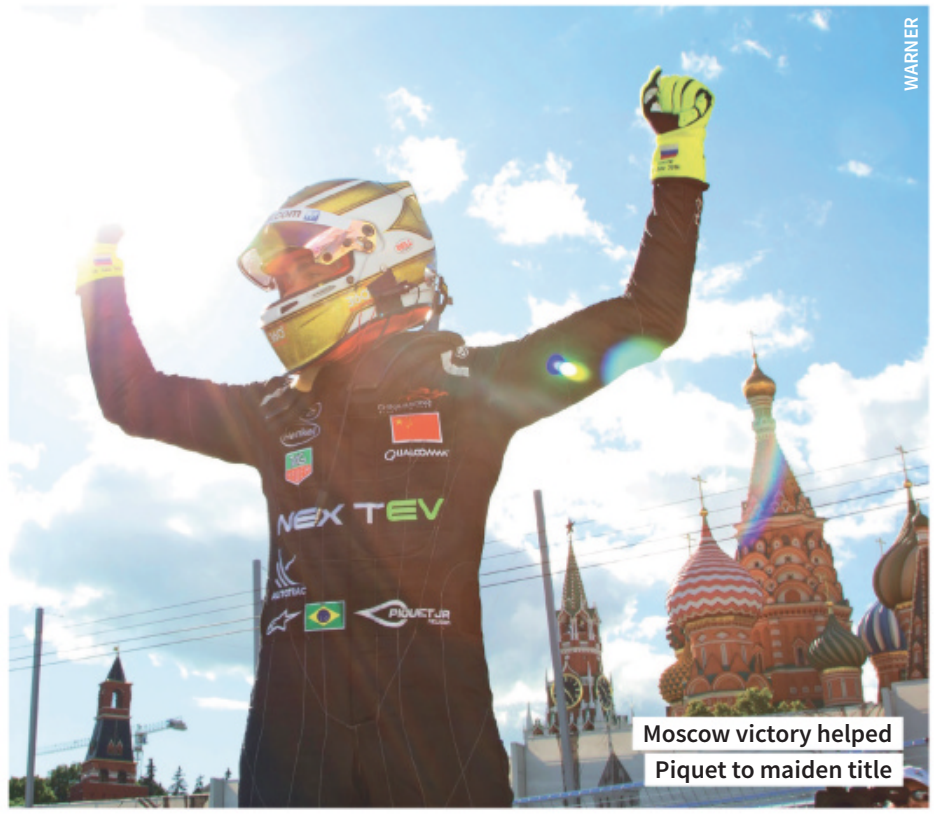
RODI BASSO

WHY NIO DECIDED TO TAKE THE RED PILL

An informal language barrier caused NIO 333 to drop to the foot of the Formula E standings. For the new owners, it's time to face reality

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES



Moscow victory helped Piquet to maiden title

The fall from Formula E grace for NIO 333 has been severe. Entered into the inaugural 2014-15 season as China Racing, its leading light Nelson Piquet Jr clinched the drivers' title, while the team – already rebranded as NEXTEV TCR – ended the campaign in fourth. Another three name changes later, and having finished bottom last season, NIO 333 again props up the table after five races of the interrupted 2019-20 campaign. Only it and Dragon Racing haven't scored a podium since the start of the 2018-19 contest.

The main cause of this decline was a language barrier. Not in the literal sense between the Chinese ownership and the Brilliance In Excellence (BIE) race team, which runs out of three Donington Park workshops and an R&D facility at Begbroke Science Park, near Oxford. Rather, there was a disconnect between the business interests and the engineers.

When car maker NIO listed itself on the New York Stock Exchange in 2018, it needed a halo product to help the share price. That was the EP9 – an all-electric 1340bhp supercar that blitzed the production car lap record at the Nurburgring Nordschleife. It's no doubt an impressive technical showcase, but the development was aided by the FE race team and so occupied some engineers.

"IT WAS PAINFUL, WE EXPECTED PROBLEMS. WE'RE TRYING TO TOTALLY REBUILD THE TEAM"

While the squad continues to run under the NIO banner this term owing to a title sponsorship deal, in stepped Lisheng Racing – circuit owner and promoter of the Chinese Touring Car Championship, and which bought the majority stake on the eve of the 2019-20 season.

In any sector, when a new owner comes in there are two routes. Employ new management who use terms like "blue sky thinking" and "synergies" and hope they offer some kind of magic bullet, or respect the talent they already have – the ones who have stuck by through thick and thin. You promote them internally, as they're already dialled in and can start picking at the "low hanging fruit". Lisheng Racing went for the latter.

Ex-Benetton, Renault, Marussia and Williams Formula 1 head Christian Silk was promoted to team principal. Mike Henderson »

BATHIE



GALLOWAY

moved from his role on Oliver Turvey's car to become chief race engineer, and Roberto Costa — who has run ex-F1 drivers Rubens Barrichello, Giorgio Pantano and Pastor Maldonado among others— was boosted to team manager.

As Costa says: "If you're working as a race engineer and you then start doing the team management, I think you have a much more cohesive view with the other colleagues. Between us all, we have a fairly good idea of what we need to do. We certainly work very harmoniously because we're all seeing it from the same page. We know all the programmes that we're doing, everything we were striving for. It's one direction."

NIO 333 took the red pill and decided to confront the reality of its ailing performance. Last summer, with just three months until the first pre-season test at Valencia, the bold call was made to switch suppliers to Integral Powertrain, which also provides much of the running gear for Dragon.

The knock-on effect was a need for all-new control systems; that meant a fresh data set to work from and, in turn, it rendered the team's simulator largely redundant as a reference point. In the first instance, it put NIO 333 massively on the back foot. But in the medium term, the belief is that it's one step backwards for two or more steps forwards.

The team's executive director Alex Hui recalls that it was "a critical decision to make with three months. It was painful, very challenging, and we expected problems. The plan we're trying to put together is to totally rebuild the team."

Even though the in-house powertrain for 2019-20 was already developed, Lisheng Racing wanted to address the lack of results and decided to change tack. While Dragon has by no means set the FE world alight, switching to components shared with their rival's outgoing machine was one of few options that NIO 333 could implement in such a tight timeframe. What's more, following homologation from the FIA, it retains manufacturer status.

"PEOPLE COULDN'T QUITE BELIEVE WE WERE GOING TO DO IT. THAT WAS A HUGE CHALLENGE"

"The Integral Powertrain option, which takes in various suppliers that we had worked with, was the one that fitted the bill in an immediacy point," says Costa. "We could get access to it and we needed to be able to adapt the carbon structure to fit the rear suspension and driveshaft. In a matter of a few weeks, we turned that around. People couldn't quite believe we were going to do it, but we presented ourselves for the test in Valencia with another powertrain option. That was a huge challenge."

The team did consider the "perfectly valid route" of using a customer powertrain but, in the same vein as the team's publicly stated ambition to always run a Chinese driver, it's proud of its nationality and wanted to remain a bona fide constructor.

Costa continues: "In the long term, we really want to continue as a manufacturer, and we want to make a statement as a Chinese team. I know there are other Chinese groups involved in Formula E [such as the Envision Group, which is the majority owner of Virgin Racing], but they are participants within a project rather than leading the project."

But before NIO 333 can go trophy hunting, the team has had to focus on the reliability of the car. Turvey's qualifying effort in Santiago, good enough to progress to the superpole shootout, is quite possibly the lap of the season so far. A points finish was squandered, however, by a technical problem that meant he slid in the race from fifth to 11th.

UNDERRATED AND UNDER PRESSURE

When Formula E drivers were asked to name their most underrated peer on the grid last season, Oliver Turvey won the poll with seven votes. Whether being widely acknowledged as the most underrated in fact makes that person simply 'rated' is a debate for a different day.

But what is clear is Turvey's popularity within NIO 333. Similarly, having remained with the squad ever since his FE debut in London in 2015, he must see the potential for the team to improve.

"Oliver has a lot of strength, a vast amount of experience, he's a naturally quick driver," says team principal Christian Silk. "I think his qualifying pace is quite legendary and he's a very strong and intelligent racer as well."

It's far less clear-cut on the other side of the garage. Albeit limited in pre-season testing mileage, at times this season Ma Qinghua has looked bereft of confidence. Most recently in Marrakech, a circuit where the ex-World Touring Car Championship driver has plenty of experience, his best effort was 2.7s shy of the fastest race lap and he wound up last of the finishers.

NIO 333 is adamant that it will retain one Chinese driver. Asian F3 racer Daniel Cao ran for the team in the Moroccan rookie FE test, but due to travel restrictions he was unable to run in the simulator to prepare. He went into the two sessions more or less blind and so was 0.4s shy of the benchmark time set by his temporary test team-mate Antonio Fuoco. For now, that may have saved Ma's seat.



Turvey is sticking by the team; Ma needs the team to stick by him

PORTLOCK

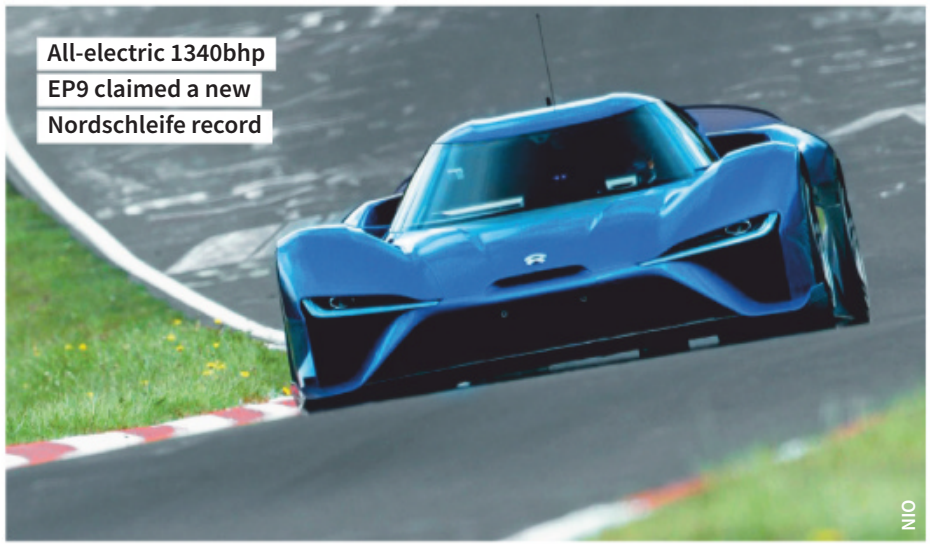
As NIO 333 executive director Alex Hui explains: "I think Ma is struggling quite a bit and I think it's a combination of factors. The car itself is not so easy to drive. I think Oliver is doing it based on his experience, he is much more capable in dealing with the problems. We are doing some changes for Ma, and we think we can help him to unlock his performance. I think the gap will be much smaller than what people have seen so far."

In that respect, the reset offered by the current FE season suspension may be the lifeline Ma needs.

Silk continues: "We are focusing now more on performance. The first thing is that the car's got to be reliable and legal. Our focus started off here. As far as performance on these cars is concerned, unlike Formula 1, which is totally dominated by aero, this formula is much more about efficiency. We're trying to maximise the electrical energy to make the car as fast as possible."

The current coronavirus-enforced pause on the motorsport season has enabled NIO 333 to perform a deep dive and sift through all of its data to identify where that performance can be found. "There's always plenty of areas where you can improve," Silk adds. "But you can't attack everything at the same time. We just worked through the job list as normal, we set our priorities, analysed the data, we see what areas of development we think will best advance the performance of the car, and we tick those off."

If that all comes to pass, NIO 333 can head into the 2020-21 campaign with more solid foundations. FE and the FIA have introduced new homologation regulations to cut costs while the season is on hold until the end of June. Teams can either continue with their current powertrain for another year, or they can introduce an all-new set-up for the 2020-21 term and retain it for two seasons. Now that NIO 333 has put in the legwork to understand the baseline of its new Integral Powertrain set-up, it's a safe bet that the squad will go for the second option and bring a heavily developed iteration to run for back-to-back campaigns.


All-electric 1340bhp EP9 claimed a new Nordschleife record

NIO

Hui adds: "I think we will have a very competitive powertrain in season seven [2020-21]. We will use season six for our development year for the control systems, we are adding resources in that area for the wisdom. We are a good race team so I think there's no reason why we can't be a regular finisher in the points — although finishing in the points is not an easy task when all 24 cars are very close."

Despite the importance of retaining manufacturer status, NIO is not a big OEM. Unlike Mercedes, it does not have the board of Daimler breathing down its neck, but that's no reason to question the team's motivation. "No one's in racing to come last," Silk says. "We want to move consistently forward up the grid. That's got to be our first target. [As team principal] I'm looking to build the team as best as possible over the next year or two. I've been really fortunate in my career to work for some of the great teams. I put NIO up there, and the engineers I'm working with are one of the great teams."

With the talent already in place and the roadmap now more clearly defined, NIO 333 can begin to push up. The team isn't setting unrealistic targets in a championship that doesn't normally permit one team to dominate. But the foundations to take that next step are now far more stable than they have been over recent times.

The more pragmatic Lisheng Racing owners identified that taking evolutionary steps with the powertrain was not going to yield substantial or fast enough progress. That's inspired the ground-up rethink. Now that the race team can get on solely with the business of being fast in FE, it means the engineers can begin to show their true talent and shake off the shackles of former management.

TAKE A BUTCHER'S AT THIS LITTLE BABY

Motorbase Performance has produced an all-new BTCC weapon based on the latest Ford Focus for 2020, and lead driver Rory Butcher is confident it will give him a title shot

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY **JEP** motorsport IMAGES

Age is just a number, so the saying goes. While it's often a throwaway comment muttered to play down the frequency with which birthdays come and go, it does ring somewhat true in the British Touring Car Championship.

Jason Plato extended his series record to a staggering 97 race wins with victory in the Brands Hatch finale last season. A day short of his 52nd birthday, he became the BTCC's oldest race winner. On the car front, the FK2 Honda Civic has been on the grid since 2012. As Rory Butcher and Sam Tordoff proved on four occasions last season, the machine is still eminently capable of winning, despite being long in the tooth. Up against the performance balancing measures of ever-changing turbo boost levels, success ballast and partially reversed grids, in its hatchback guise alone the car has amassed 53 race wins. There's a strong case for the FK2 Civic to be considered the best of the Next Generation Touring Car era.

Time has been far less kind to the Ford Focus, however. Motorbase introduced the Mk3 model in ST form through the 2012 campaign and then refreshed it with an RS variant in 2018,





Motorbase suffered a big drop in form last season…



…but Collins reckons the new Ford Focus will close the gap

which spurred Tom Chilton on to rank third in the drivers' standings. But last year he dropped to 10th with just the sole race win in what was a torrid campaign for the team. Chilton has since departed for BTC Racing, while Motorbase has set to work on a new Focus weapon to roll back the years.

Following the potency of the box-fresh BMW 330i M Sport last season, paddock rumour had it that Motorbase would follow West Surrey Racing's lead and turn to real-wheel drive. After all, that's the route Laser Tools Racing pursued by pulling the dust covers off the four-year-old Infiniti Q50 saloon to return it to the grid at Snetterton last August. For Motorbase, there was talk of a Jaguar XE, but its wide bodyshell, courtesy of an all-aluminium construction, wouldn't have comfortably accommodated a BTCC-spec rollcage. Combined with the squad's long-standing relationship with Ford engine tuner Mountune, the new front-wheel-drive Mk4 Focus entered the frame.

"We decided that if we were going to try and take on the likes of BMW, Toyota and Honda then we needed to do it with new machinery," says Motorbase team manager Oly Collins. "Ford have had their car out for a year or so now with the new Focus, but we had a look at a couple of different options. Obviously, we've got an engine programme with Mountune that we've invested quite heavily in over the years. The only way to carry that over was to use another Ford."

When you look at a new road-going Focus, it's easy to spot the lower roof line. That brings an improved centre of gravity and combines nicely with a stiffer chassis. In the industry's pursuit of ever better efficiency, it's more slippery too. Perversely, that's all good news when it comes to burning fuel on the race track.

"We decided Ford had done a lot of work in the last 10 years or so in between the two chassis," continues Collins. Fundamentally, the new car is 10 years younger. They've learned in the road car process as much as we've learned in the race team. The new car has a lower centre of gravity, it's got less frontal area, so in theory it's more aerodynamic.

"If you look at the modern fleet of cars on the grid — the BMW, the Toyota [Corolla] and the Honda [FK8 Civic Type R] in particular — you can see there's a new breed of car coming. We needed to keep up and Ford has kept up with a new car."

"IF WE WERE GOING TO TAKE ON THE LIKES OF BMW, TOYOTA AND HONDA THEN WE NEEDED NEW MACHINERY"

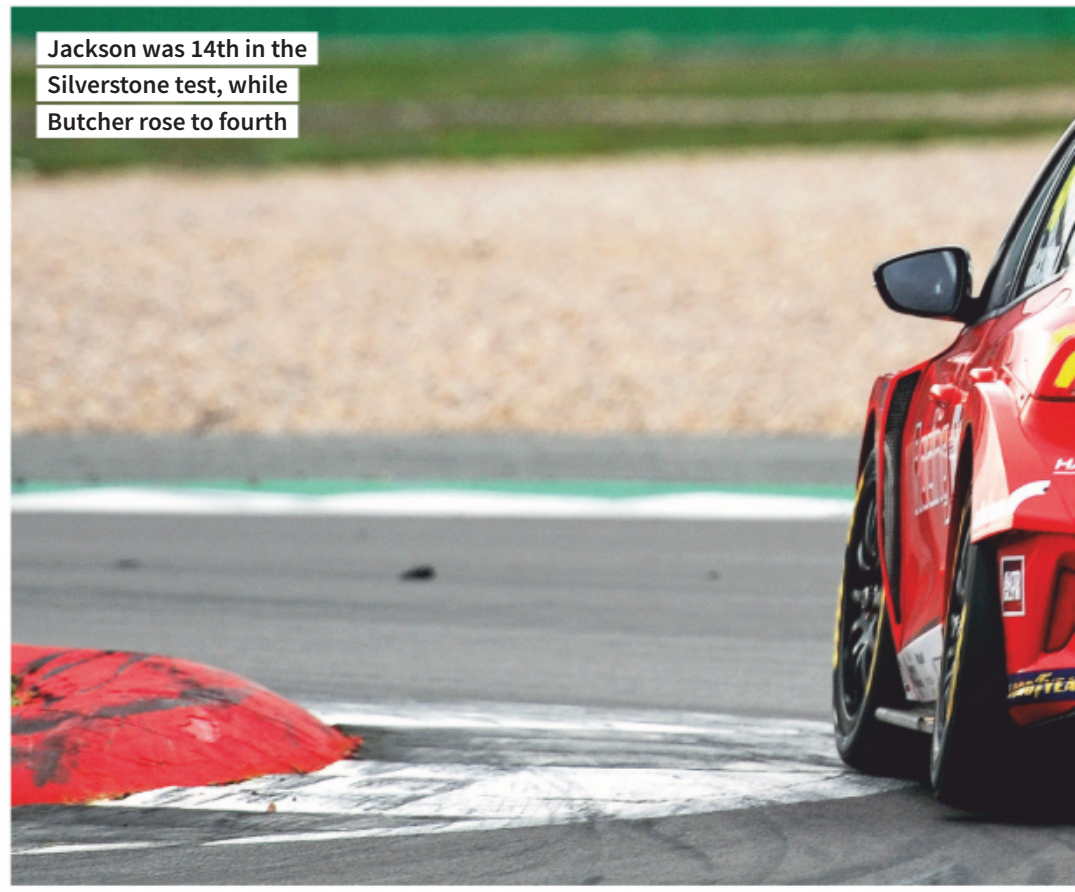
Motorbase greenlit the project at the end of last October, took delivery of the shells the following month, and the first car was rolling by the beginning of March. Although the returning Andy Neate was still using the old Mk3 RS for the official pre-season test at Silverstone earlier this year, by time the season eventually starts he and team-mates Ollie Jackson and marquee signing Butcher will all have the new machine at their disposal.

"That was another thing that was new to Motorbase," says Collins, "the amount of CAD work that we used to build the new car. The shell work was all done on CAD. We formed a technical partnership with Custom Cages. It was their first complete build of a touring car. They supply the [roll]cages for pretty much everyone that's on the grid, but they've never done a full shell before. »



Mk4 Focus has a lower centre of gravity, stiffer chassis and better aero





Jackson was 14th in the Silverstone test, while Butcher rose to fourth

We worked with them very closely, we had one person full-time involved in the build with Custom Cages fabricating, and our designers and engineers were with them as well. We both had equal input because they're rollcage and shell specialists, we're British Touring Car specialists. So we combined the two."

Under the NGTC regulations, there's little in the way of a blank sheet of paper. All cars run common RML-supplied subframes, and Motorbase will continue with its Mountune engines, so the team didn't go into testing totally blind.

In a time before coronavirus, earlier this year it seemed as though every other weekend Britain was hit by storms, and that meant a lot of wet-weather running. But in the dry, on the Silverstone International configuration during the media day test, Butcher — the breakout star of last season — was fourth fastest in the combined times despite never running the quicker soft tyres. Jackson was 14th, but Neate in the older RS was down in 29th.

"Oh, 100% there's still pace to unlock," says Butcher, who returns to Motorbase where he started his BTCC career during a part-time 2017 campaign. "But we've got a really good platform that we're working from. What I would say is that we haven't quite found the sweet spot in the centre just yet. As a car, it's one that you jump into and can be on the pace straight away. We just need to push the boundaries a little bit more with the set-up."

Fortunately, as a three-car attack, once testing resumes and the season gets under way, Motorbase can experiment with settings quickly. When single-entry concern Speedworks Motorsport introduced the new Toyota Corolla last season, the development



Three wins took Butcher to 2019 Independent drivers' title glory



"THE FIRST FEW TESTS HAVE GIVEN ME CONFIDENCE THAT I CAN SCORE BIG POINTS EARLY ON"

was limited by the mileage driver Tom Ingram could do on his own. Motorbase, by contrast, will have triple the data to work from.

Combined with the familiarity of the carried-over parts and the Mk4 Focus's developments, the team hasn't muted expectations. "Crikey, we definitely want to beat where we were last year because that was disappointing," says Collins. "We're not here to make the numbers up, we're here to try and win races and win championships. That's the beauty of the BTCC – it's possible.

"We're very aware that it's our first year with a new car, and we'll have a bit of a learning year and it's a case of how quickly we can get on top of it. West Surrey Racing had a brand new car last year and showed us all the way home. Toyota had a brand new car last year and won races and had a pretty good season. So yes, the hope is to be competitive from the start but up against some pretty fierce competition."

Butcher is also setting his sights high, having exited from AmD Tuning after being crowned the Independent drivers' champion last season. The 33-year-old Scot will work with race engineer Rich Benton, who Butcher snapped up on arrival having seen how efficiently he worked with former team-mate Tordoff during his turn at Motorbase in 2018.

"How well the car's gone in the first few tests, it's given me confidence that I can realistically score big points early on," Butcher predicts. "Don't count me out yet – we're definitely aiming to be challenging for the drivers' title!"

As a sign of that ambition, Butcher's car was laden with success ballast for much of testing in anticipation of carrying a weight penalty throughout the season. What's more, the team was pleased by how well the Focus took to set-up changes. That suggests a wide operating window, something that has held back the knife-edge FK8 Civic Type R – a machine that's unbeatable on its day but occasionally fades to the lower reaches of the top 10 with little warning.

Developing an all-new car is a task Motorbase has only done once before – with the outgoing Focus. It's also a challenge Butcher hasn't yet faced in his short BTCC career to date. But from where the team ended last season, it had little choice other than to reset the clock.



GINTHER'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP F1 CAREER

Starts: 52
Wins: 1
Podiums: 14
Best qualifying: 2nd
Fastest laps: 3
Points: 107



Celebrating victory with Honda in the 1965 Mexican GP

AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN F1 WINNER

Richie Ginther is one of only five US drivers to have won a world championship grand prix, but his impressive career is often overlooked

RICHARD JENKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

One of the five Americans to win a Formula 1 World Championship grand prix once finished runner-up in the standings, gave Honda and Goodyear their first victory, took 14 podiums, and was also very successful in US sportscar racing. He invented the rear spoiler, developed the iconic 'Sharknose' Ferrari 156, and is arguably F1's greatest test and development driver. Yet, despite all these achievements, Richie Ginther is somewhat forgotten.

Born almost 90 years ago, on 5 August 1930, Ginther evolved from a sickly, somewhat solitary childhood into a teenager with a fascination and appreciation for mechanical devices. His father worked in the tool-and-die industry (as did Richie briefly), but Ginther Jr's mechanical interest was focused on cars, about which he was fiercely passionate.

His father worked for Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, California, and this led to Ginther meeting a young man three years older than him who would change the course of his life. Living two and a half blocks away from Ginther was Jaguar XK120-owning Phil Hill. He knew Richie's father and brother, and became pretty much entwined in Richie's life until 1964. Ginther was Hill's mechanic and pitboard man, and also his workmate on long road trips across the US delivering cars for International Motors, a job that Hill helped Ginther secure.

The pair's success in the 1954 Carrera Panamericana, where they finished in second place, effectively set up Ginther with a proper racing career. And Hill, who encouraged and supported Ginther with so many opportunities, was also chiefly instrumental in getting him the Ferrari works drive in 1960 and the BRM seat in 1962.

Sadly, the greatest race of his life, the 1961 Monaco Grand Prix, also marked a seismic change in Ginther's relationship with Hill. Irked by what he considering an unnecessary and dangerous block by Hill before he allowed him to take second place and chase after Stirling Moss, Ginther's annoyance with what he perceived as a lack of credit for Hill's success and standing within the sport bubbled away under the surface until 1964, when it boiled over in an outburst by Ginther at a restaurant. They barely spoke again.

> **"HE REVELLED IN HIS TESTING ROLE AND HIS WORK WAS PIVOTAL IN FERRARI'S DOMINANCE IN 1961"**

From 1955 onwards, Ginther had established himself in Californian sportscar racing, rapidly becoming one of the top names in an iconic era for the sportscar scene. During this period he worked as a car salesman for friend John von Neumann's Ferrari dealership, and his racing successes helped with his standing at Maranello.

Ginther joined the Ferrari works team in 1960, ostensibly as test and development driver, but also to race in sportscars, and maybe a grand prix or two. Within only a few months he had made his world championship debut, finishing in sixth place in his first two races. He revelled in his testing role to develop cars and his »



Ginther (36) and Hill were very close, but the rot set in after Monaco '61



Ginther (leading) was joint title runner-up with Graham Hill in 1963

work was pivotal in Ferrari being the dominant team in 1961.

Ginther's stunning performance in the 1961 Monaco GP catapulted him into the front rank, raising his estimation of his own worth but also fazing Ferrari somewhat: the faithful, safe and 'anonymous' test driver they thought they had in place for years was now a genuine contender for race victories. He'd made himself very useful at Ferrari, using the experience gained at Douglas and on military service in Korea to come up with a rear spoiler similar to the trim tabs on the helicopters he had serviced, providing a big leap in aerodynamic stability for racing cars.

"HE CAME UP WITH A REAR SPOILER SIMILAR TO THE TRIM TABS ON THE HELICOPTERS HE SERVICED IN KOREA"

No agreement could be reached to continue with Ferrari, so in 1962 Ginther moved to BRM as its second driver to Graham Hill. Ferrari's loss was BRM's gain, as he became only the second man (Stirling Moss was the first, and only Emerson Fittipaldi since) to help two different constructors win constructors' championships in successive years.

The season had nevertheless been frustrating, littered with retirements and accidents (very few his fault), but was followed by an exemplary 1963 in which Ginther finished joint runner-up in the world championship with team-mate Hill, behind runaway champion Jim Clark. In fact Ginther would have been outright second had he not accepted team orders to finish a close second in the first race of the season in Monaco behind Hill.

The following year was a terrible one for Ginther. His wife of six years, Jackie, suffered a miscarriage as the marriage started to fall apart. Around the same time he suffered a huge crash at Aintree that he escaped relatively scot-free, but had to miss a couple of non-championship races. As a result of all the issues in his life, Ginther couldn't get motivated and lost confidence in the car.

But a move to the fledgling Honda team in 1965 revitalised him. Now Ginther was the number one driver, and he was still in a development role that he so loved. All involved with the project got the reward for all their hard work with a win at the Mexican GP, the last race of the season.

Had the 1.5-litre formula stayed for 1966, Ginther would have been a title contender, but as a result of the sweeping technical changes Honda not only struggled, but stopped racing altogether

GINTHER'S GREATEST DRIVES

1 1961 MONACO GP

Ginther's greatest drive, but unfortunately for him, one of Stirling Moss's too. Ginther matched one of the greatest drivers of all time, with an average lap time that was just shy of full qualifying pace. Moss had to drive flat-out for the entire race to win against a driver considered by Ferrari as only useful for testing. As Ginther said himself: "Jeez, what can you do about Moss?" And the answer, of course, was nothing.

2 1965 MEXICAN GP

A day when everything came together. A combination of a powerful engine, a well-worked fuel-mixture control and excellent tyre grip gave Ginther an advantage, but he made full use of it. He managed the Honda in car-punishing conditions as sympathetically as ever while having enough pace to consistently keep Dan Gurney at bay to take his first – and only – world championship grand prix victory.

3 1962 FRENCH GP

A starter motor failed at the beginning of the race and Ginther had to push the BRM unaided into the Rouen pits, where he lost 75 seconds. He roared back and was catching second-placed Tony Maggs at seven seconds per lap until a throttle linkage problem with five laps to go meant he had to control the throttle wire manually with his right hand – which is remarkable when you consider the gearbox was also on the right-hand side. Despite all this, he still finished third.

4 1959 KIWANIS GP, RIVERSIDE

In blistering heat, Ginther was victorious with multiple laps in his Ferrari at near-qualifying pace. He won by a clear two minutes and 25 seconds, and the result made even Stirling Moss sit up and identify Ginther as one of the key rivals for the forthcoming US Sportscar Grand Prix.

5 1954 CARRERA PANAMERICANA

How can a race that Ginther didn't actually drive in be considered one of his best? Well, the meticulously researched navigational support he gave Phil Hill was incalculable as this young duo beat far more established drivers to come a strong second. It was the launchpad for Ginther to establish himself as a racer.


Ginther's input helped make Honda a winner in 1965

so it could develop the car. A sign of what could have been came at the Italian GP — the new car was finally ready, and Ginther was battling with Ludovico Scarfiotti for the lead when a tyre burst when he was doing 185mph at Monza's Curva Grande.

In 1967 Ginther joined up with friend Dan Gurney to race for Gurney's Anglo American Racers. All started well, with a strong showing for the Eagles at the Race of Champions (won by Gurney) at Brands Hatch in March. But then Ginther failed to qualify for the Monaco GP — the first time he'd failed to start a race since driving a woefully slow Scarab in 1960. Ginther then went to the Indianapolis 500, but before he could do a serious practice lap he got out of the car and quit on the spot. The recent death of good friend Lorenzo Bandini would have preyed heavily on Ginther's mind, but there were a host of other factors that caused him to stop.

Ginther stayed involved in racing for some years, initially working as Eagle's team manager and test driver. Then he became a car tuner, preparer, builder and team manager of his own sportscar team, Richie Ginther Racing, which scored successes with Porsche. Eventually the racing game bored him and he began to look outside the sport. He was intrigued by the idea of travelling America in a motorhome, and a combination of an offer on his house and the sale of his business premises gave him the means to explore the country.

He now had the time to delve into his many interests. These included reading, photography, wildlife conservation and his great passion, Native American culture and history. Even as a team boss, Ginther had found time to visit local archaeological digs. He was also interested in art and enjoyed making jewellery, using precious stones he found during his travels.

Ginther could just go where he wanted to go and do what he wanted to do. He was at peace with himself and under no pressure. But he was no recluse, as some suggested. As much as he would take the motorhome to the deserts of Arizona, he would also drive it to historic race meetings or to meet up with friends.

Ginther's health began to wane in the 1980s, as a hereditary heart condition took its toll. His appearance at Donington Park in September 1989 for a BRM reunion shocked all who were there, and he died less than a week later of a heart attack while on holiday in France. He was 59.

To write Ginther off as a one-hit wonder is deeply unfair. He had enough talent, pace and racing nous to win multiple races. But he was a very different creature to almost all his rivals.

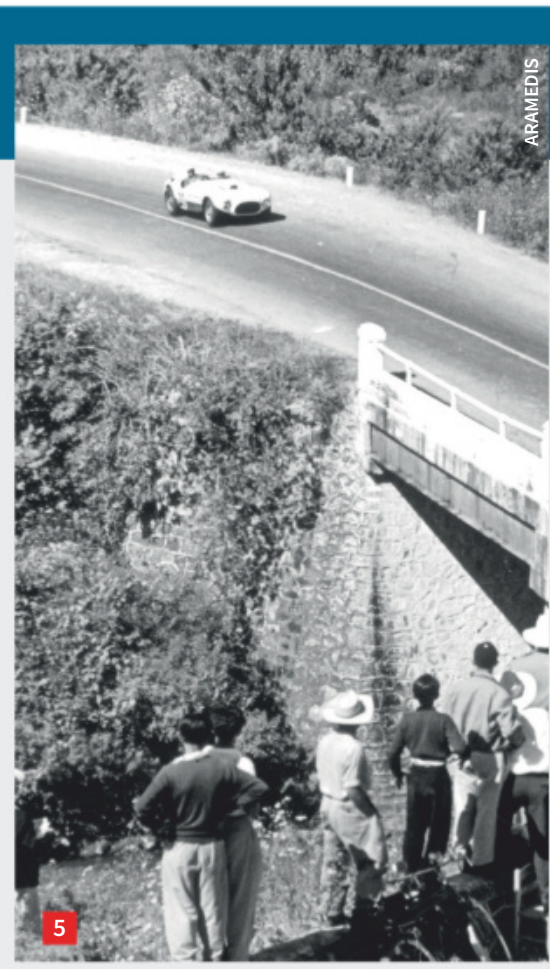
In an *Autocourse* interview he said: "I have a different view on driving to so many other drivers; many drive to lead the race, but for me, there's no question about it, I drive to finish. However, I always drive to win. That's the whole essence of racing. I know I've finished races many other drivers would not finish. But I was not one of these win or else guys. And I guess I outsmarted myself out of some wins. I know I lost races I could have won, races others might have won. I guess I wanted to finish more than I wanted to win. I always knew it's a dangerous sport and I knew I could get hurt, but I was not about to put myself in a position where the odds were against me."

Had Ginther been a true out-and-out no-compromise racer, would he have survived such a deadly era? Statistics don't always reflect careers accurately, but if you look at the high number of points finishes — 28 from his 52 starts — in an era of chronically poor reliability, that is a truly remarkable statistic for a truly remarkable man.

Richard Jenkins has written a new book on Richie Ginther's career, available from Performance Publishing. *Richie Ginther: Motor Racing's Free Thinker* is on offer at a special price of £25 during the COVID-19 crisis. Go to performancepublishing.co.uk/richie-ginther-motor-racings-free-thinker


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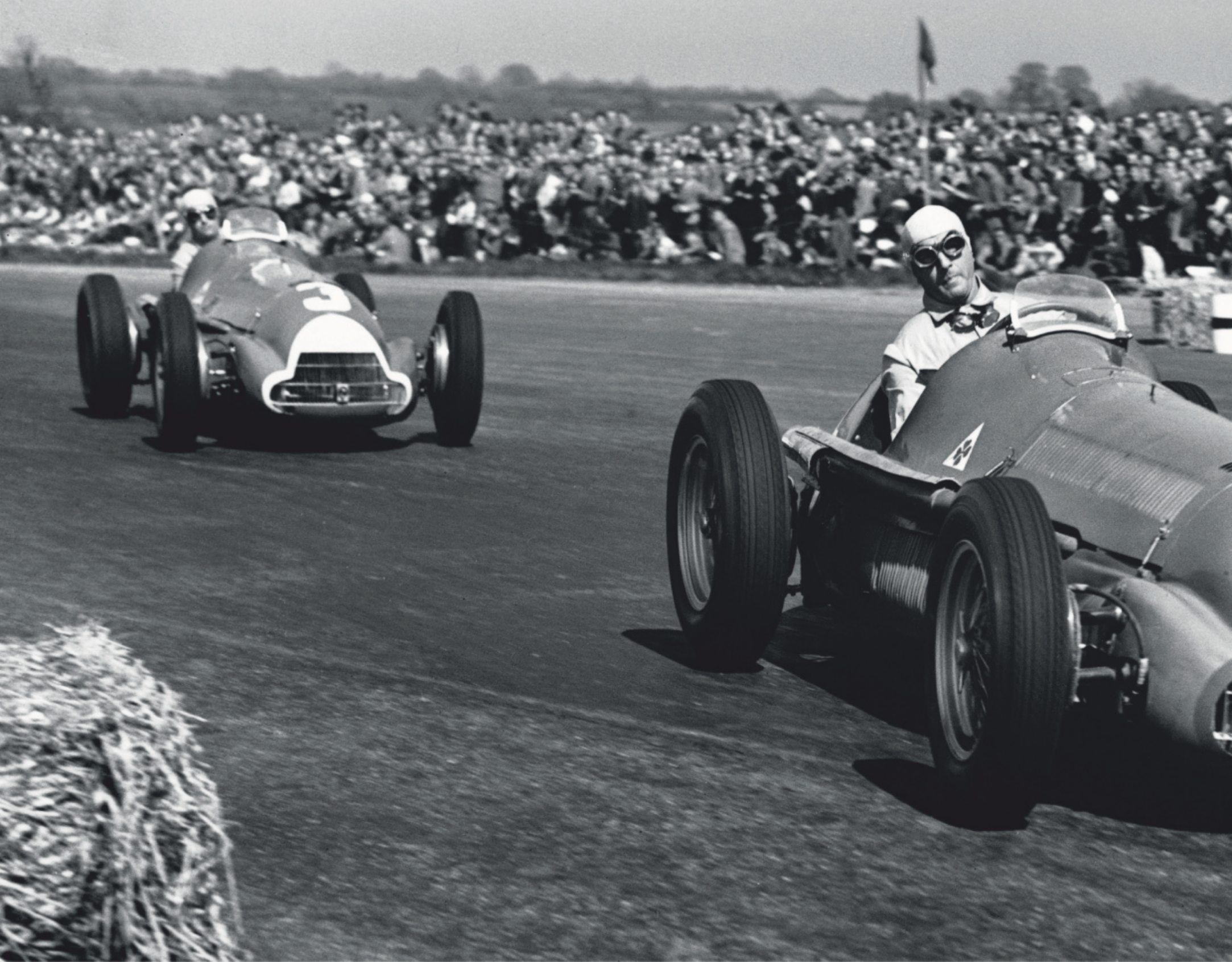

ALLEN R KUHN
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F1's first great racing machine

Autosport's third issue, published on 8 September 1950, focused on the dominant car in post-World War Two grand prix racing, the Alfa Romeo 158

NORMAN SMITH

Photography motorsport IMAGES





During the 1937 motor racing season when the Alfa Romeo cars raced by the Scuderia Ferrari were being trounced by Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union, rumour first announced that the famous Milanese factory intended to build a 1.5-litre machine, in a desperate effort to recapture some of their, and Italy's, vanishing prestige in the sphere of motor racing.

However, as month succeeded month no new 1500cc Alfa Romeo appeared on the scene. Despite this, odd snippets of news created the feeling that Alfas were 'up to something' for varying sources confirmed that new vehicles had any number of cylinders, from six to 16. This peculiar fog of uncertainty surrounding Alfa Romeo was not unusual, as only a mere five years earlier the birth and growth of Germany's new racers had been equally obscure.

The first real clue to anything definite came in June 1938, when the British motoring press revealed that Attilio Marinoni, head tester and mechanic of Scuderia Ferrari, had thoroughly tried out the new 1.5-litre Alfa Romeo and that it proved to be an eminently satisfactory motor car.

Barely had the news sunk in before three dull red 1.5-litre Alfa Romeos stood on the starting line in the annual curtain-raising voiturette [very roughly equivalent to today's F2] race at Leghorn on 31 July 1938, with drivers Emilio Villoresi (brother of the volatile Gigi), Francesco Severi and Clemente Biondetti. The field consisted of the inevitable swarms of miscellaneous privately owned Maseratis, plus a works Maserati team led by Luigi 'Gigi' Villoresi, who as always, set off as if all the fiends in Hades were chasing him, and with his brother just astern. The dice was a brief one: a mere 99 miles; by half distance Emilio had taken the lead, after which brother Gigi fell by the wayside, letting the new Alfa Romeo run on to an easy victory with Emilio first and Biondetti second, 2.8 seconds astern.

Such an initial victory was not exactly usual in the gruelling intensity of motor racing, and it aroused the greatest enthusiasm throughout Italy. But success is a heady tonic and thus it was a tremendous shock when a fortnight later at Pescara, in the Coppa Acerbo, the little *Alfettes*, as they were immediately dubbed by our press, failed dismally; only Severi getting through to the finish. Plugs were blamed for this debacle, although Severi's car, when going well, covered a timed kilometre at 141.48mph, a speed as good as any 1500cc road racing machine had ever achieved up to that time.

Their third appearance was at Monza on 11 September, when

"THIS PECULIAR FOG OF UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING ALFA ROMEO WAS NOT UNUSUAL"

a team of three cars raced in the 175km Prix de Milan held before the Italian Grand Prix. This time the drivers were E Villoresi, Severi and Raymond Sommer the French ace, and for the second time they defeated the Maserati opposition, victory going to E Villoresi, with Severi second. Sommer was in trouble, although he made the fastest lap at 96.16mph. Villoresi's winning speed was 91.71mph and once again Monza kept up its ill-fated reputation, Aldo Marazza (Maserati), a very promising young driver, crashed with fatal results.

Finally in 1938, the new small Alfa ran in a minor Italian street race when surprisingly all the team retired. Thus ended 1938's racing for the Alfettes and during the winter months, work proceeded on the machine to fit it for the major Italian races, which in view of Germany's GP supremacy had been converted to 1500cc battles, beginning with the Tripoli GP in North Africa.

High hopes were held that the 1938 cars would be sold to British »

drivers at one time, but it was not to be, and when at last the cars assembled at Tripoli the Alfetta was outwardly unchanged, though it now had an official designation, the Type 158. Thirty cars started, six Alfa Romeos, three works and 19 independent Maseratis, plus two sensational Mercedes, hot off the drawing board.

No one credited the Germans with much chance and an Alfa Romeo victory was supposed to be a foregone conclusion. Imagine the consternation then, when Hermann Lang and Rudolf Caracciola simply walked away with the race in a history-making drive that will forever remain an epic.

The 158 stayed well in the picture at first, Giuseppe Farina lying second, but by 10 laps (one-third distance), he was out and Alfa's bolt was shot. Eventually only E Villoresi finished, in third behind the two flying Mercedes. Before they raced again Alfa had a nasty setback when E Villoresi, seemingly a brainier driver than his brother, killed himself when engaged in testing at Monza.

Two big Italian races at Leghorn and Pescara, the Coppa Ciano and the Coppa Acerbo, both 1500cc events, were only briefly reported in England. However, the 158 ran in both of them, battling with the then new 16-valve, four-cylinder Type 4CL Maseratis. As usual the Coppa Ciano came first, victory going to Farina. He won by a lap from Franco Cortese (Maserati), with Biondetti/Carlo Maria Pintacuda third and Severi/Biondetti fifth. Fourteen days later, on the other side of Italy, they very convincingly finished 1-2-3 at Pescara, Biondetti, Pintacuda and Farina in that order, the leader averaging a record 80mph for the 1.5-litre class.

No photographs to my knowledge were ever published in this country of either of these two races, so what the 158 looked like is sheer guess work; for at Tripoli [in May] it ran in its 1938 outline, while at Berne in August, the car took on the form so well known today. The 1939 Swiss meeting included heats, with 1.5-litres in one and GP cars in the other, the whole lot being mixed together in the final. Heat one, for the Prix de Berne, became at once an Alfa walkover, Farina and Biondetti being entirely out on their own, crossing the line in that order, with Farina's average a healthy 96.9mph — a speed not surpassed by any 1.5-litre car until he himself beat it this year (1950). The second was naturally Germany's, as was the final GP, but Farina shook everybody by his terrific pace, second on the first lap, and which eventually obtained for him seventh place.

WARTIME RACING

War broke out on 3 September and we thought it was goodbye to motor racing for the duration. Not so the Italians for, being neutral, they planned to carry on with a full season's racing, and they commenced with a revived new version of the Mille Miglia at Brescia.

Scheduled for 12 May 1940 was the Tripoli GP, anticipated four-sided battle between Maserati, Auto Union, Mercedes and Alfa Romeo; the Alfa people were determined to wipe off the stigma of the 1939 defeat. Well in advance of the race a hack 158 was unmercifully thrashed round the circuit until the racing department was sure that it was really right, this practising suggesting record speeds when race day dawned.

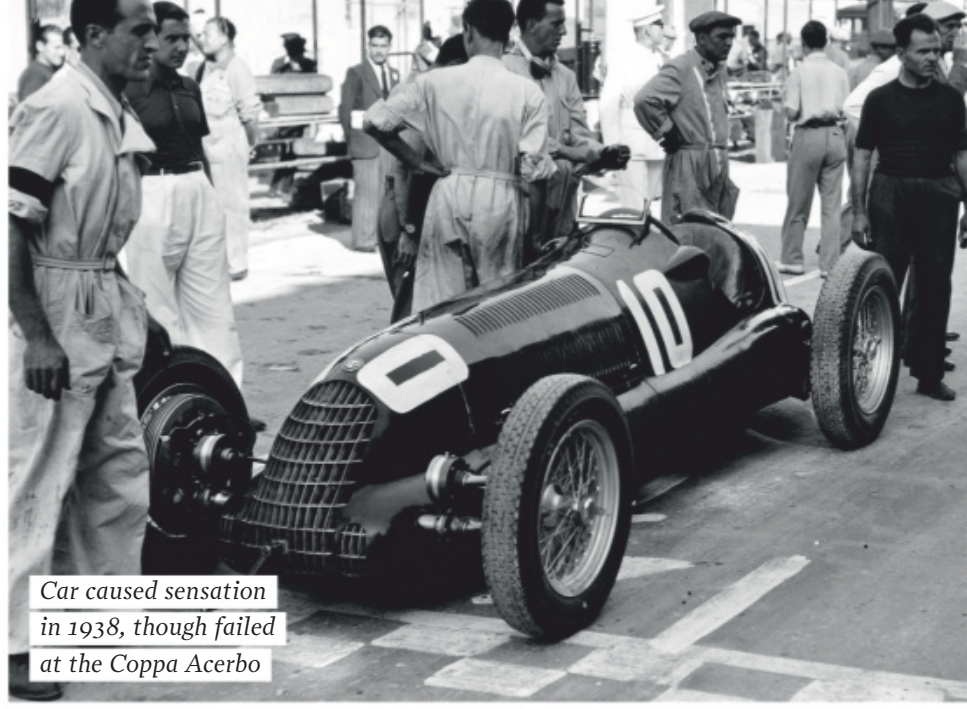
When it did the Germans were missing. For no 1.5-litre Auto Unions existed and Mercedes didn't risk the sea passage, leaving four Alfas to face a pack of Maseratis. Farina, Carlo Felice Trossi, Biondetti and Pintacuda represented the Milanese factory, L Villoresi carrying the standard for Maserati.

From flag fall Villoresi led, to yield to Farina on lap two. By lap seven Villoresi was again in front, a lap later it was Farina and from then on he stayed ahead to win at the incredible average of 128.2mph for 244 miles — over 5mph faster than Lang (with the Mercedes) a year previously.

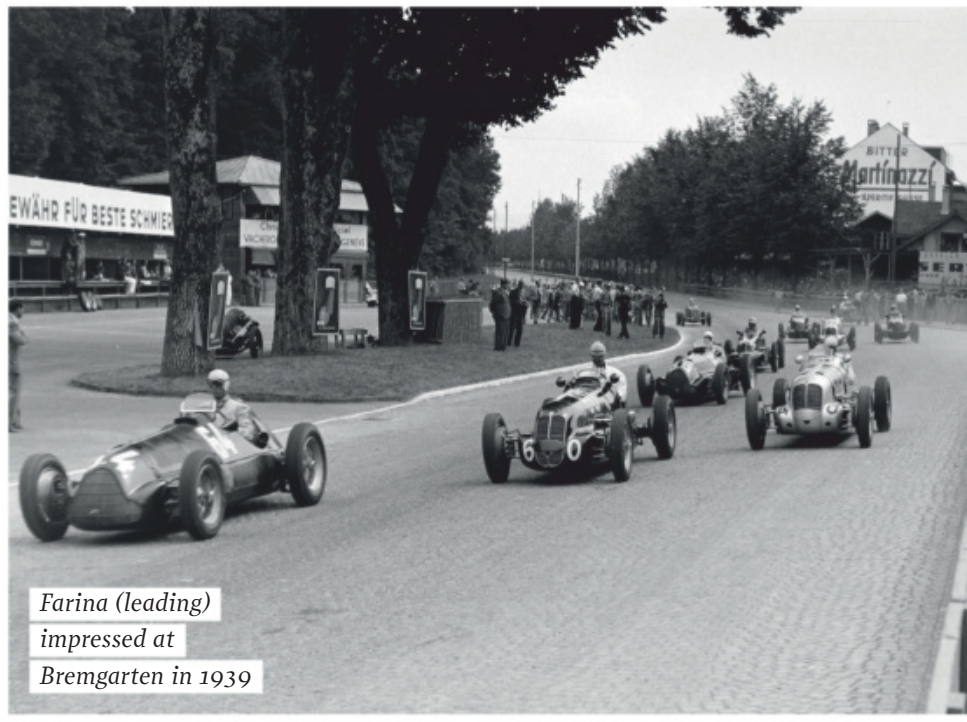
Villoresi slowly dropped back, and both Biondetti and Trossi passed him when the Maserati's refuelling stop took nearly one minute as against the Alfas' 30s. In the end, the 158s captured first (Farina), second (Biondetti), third (Trossi) and fifth (Pintacuda), plus the record lap.

THE 158 GOES INTO COLD STORAGE

Italian entry into the war in 1940 meant the cancellation of all their racing plans, and so the 158 went into cold storage till such time as »



Car caused sensation in 1938, though failed at the Coppa Acerbo



Farina (leading) impressed at Bremgarten in 1939



Trossi led an Alfa 1-2-4 in 1948 Swiss GP



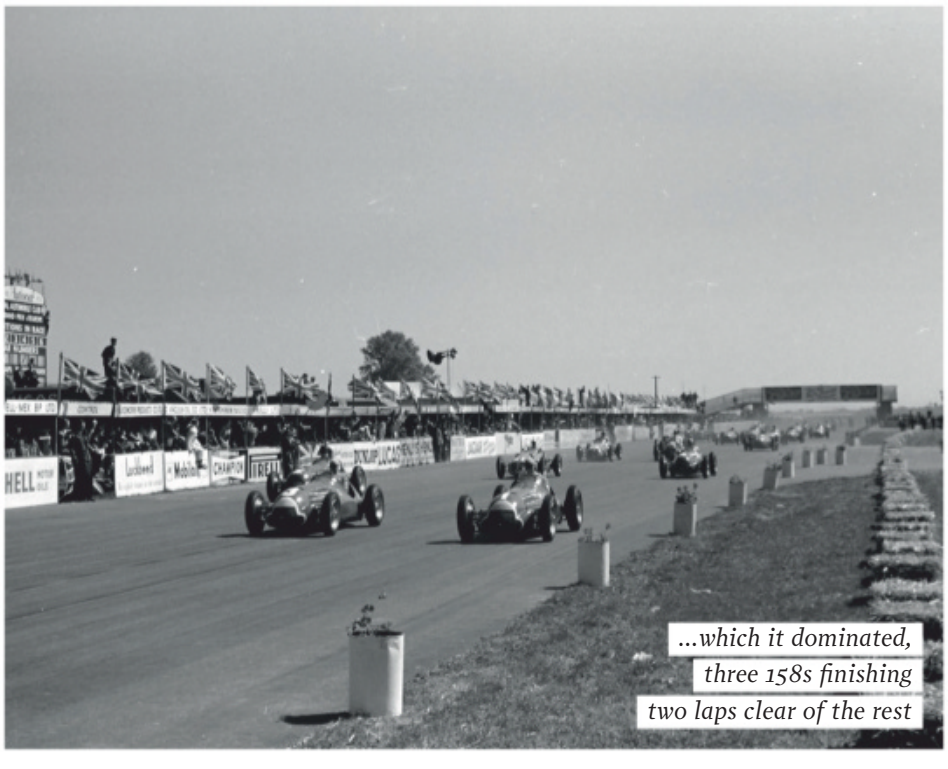
Fangio makes a stop. Fuel thirst ultimately led to the Alfa's downfall



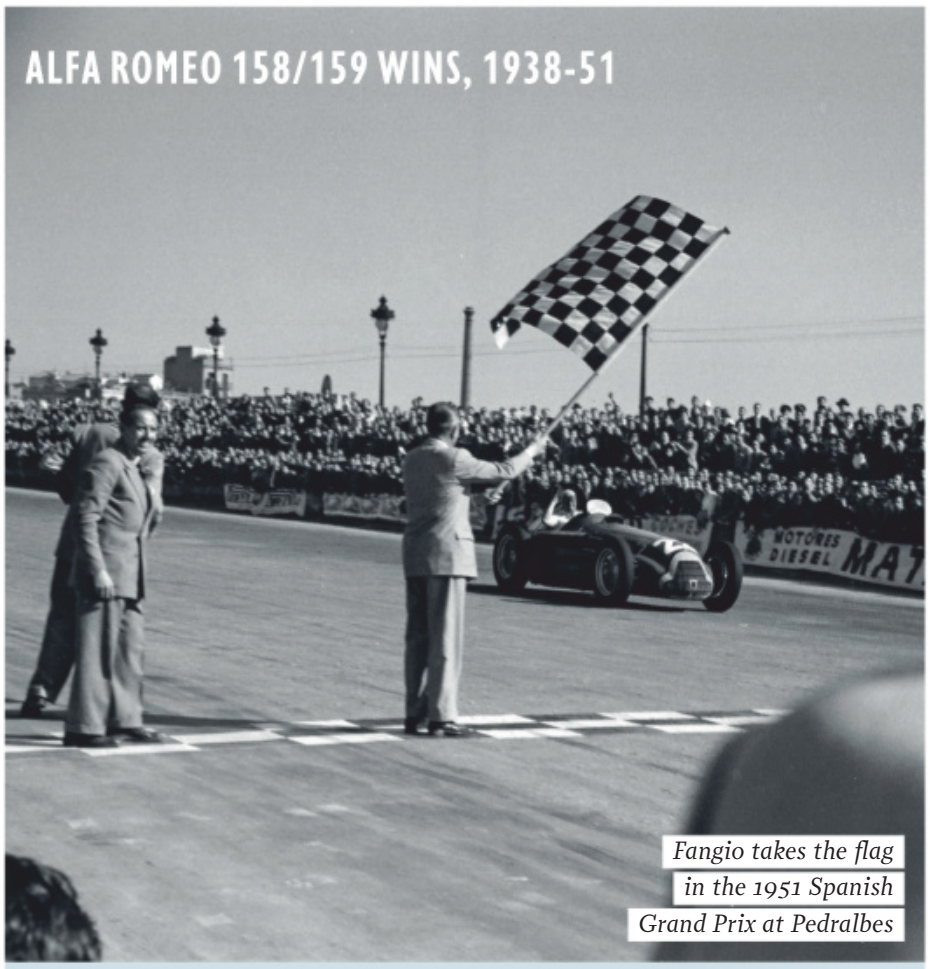
The two Villoresis – Emilio (left) and Luigi (centre) – and Severi were pre-war stars



The Alfa team prepares for the 1950 British GP...



...which it dominated, three 158s finishing two laps clear of the rest



Fangio takes the flag in the 1951 Spanish Grand Prix at Pedralbes

1938
Coppa Ciano
Leghorn (Emilio Villoresi)
Milan GP
Monza (Villoresi)

1939
Coppa Ciano
Leghorn (Giuseppe Farina)
Coppa Acerbo
Pescara (Clemente Biondetti)
Prix de Berne
Bremgarten (Farina)

1940
Tripoli GP
Mellaha (Farina)

1946
GP of Nations
Geneva (Farina)
Turin GP
Valentino Park (Achille Varzi)
Milan GP
Sempione Park (Carlo Felice Trossi)

1947
Swiss GP
Bremgarten (Jean-Pierre Wimille)
European GP
Spa (Wimille)
Bari GP
Bari (Varzi)
Italian GP
Milan, Sempione Park (Trossi)

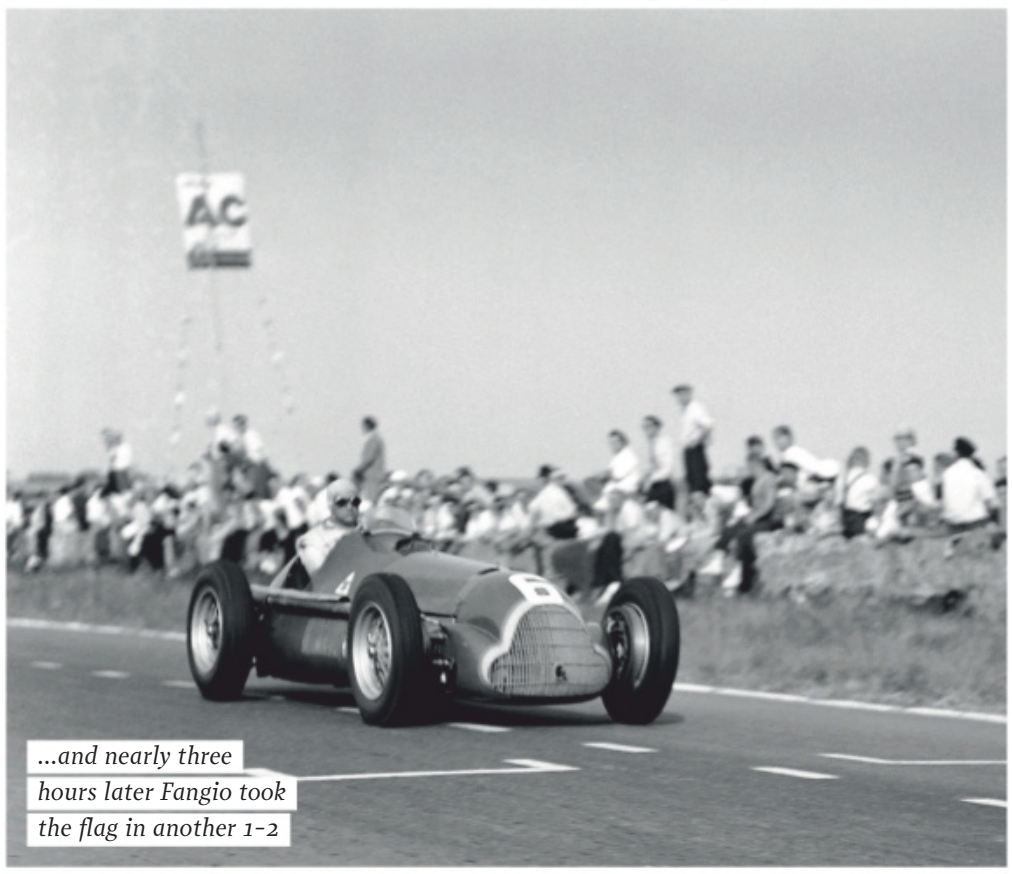
1948
Swiss GP
Bremgarten (Trossi)
French GP
Reims (Wimille)
Italian GP
Turin, Valentino Park (Wimille)
Autodrome GP
Monza (Wimille)

1950
San Remo GP
Ospedaletti (Juan Manuel Fangio)
European GP
Silverstone (Farina)
Monaco GP
Monte Carlo (Fangio)
Swiss GP
Bremgarten (Farina)
Belgian GP
Spa (Fangio)
French GP
Reims (Fangio)
Bari GP
Bari (Farina)
GP of Nations
Geneva (Fangio)
Coppa Acerbo
Pescara (Fangio)
International Trophy
Silverstone (Farina)
Italian GP
Monza (Farina)

1951
Swiss GP
Bremgarten (Fangio)
Ulster Trophy
Dundrod (Farina)
Belgian GP
Spa (Farina)
French GP
Reims (Luigi Fagioli/Fangio)
Spanish GP
Pedralbes (Fangio)
Bari GP
Bari (Fangio)



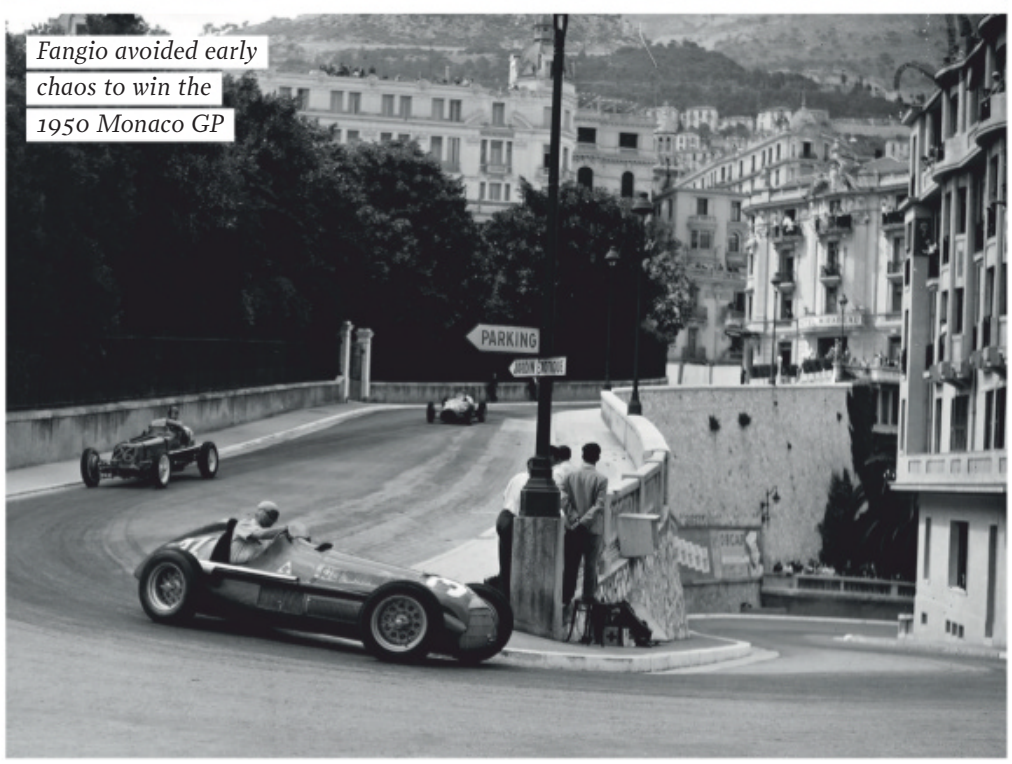
Maseratis and Talbot-Lagos are left trailing at the start of the 1950 French GP...



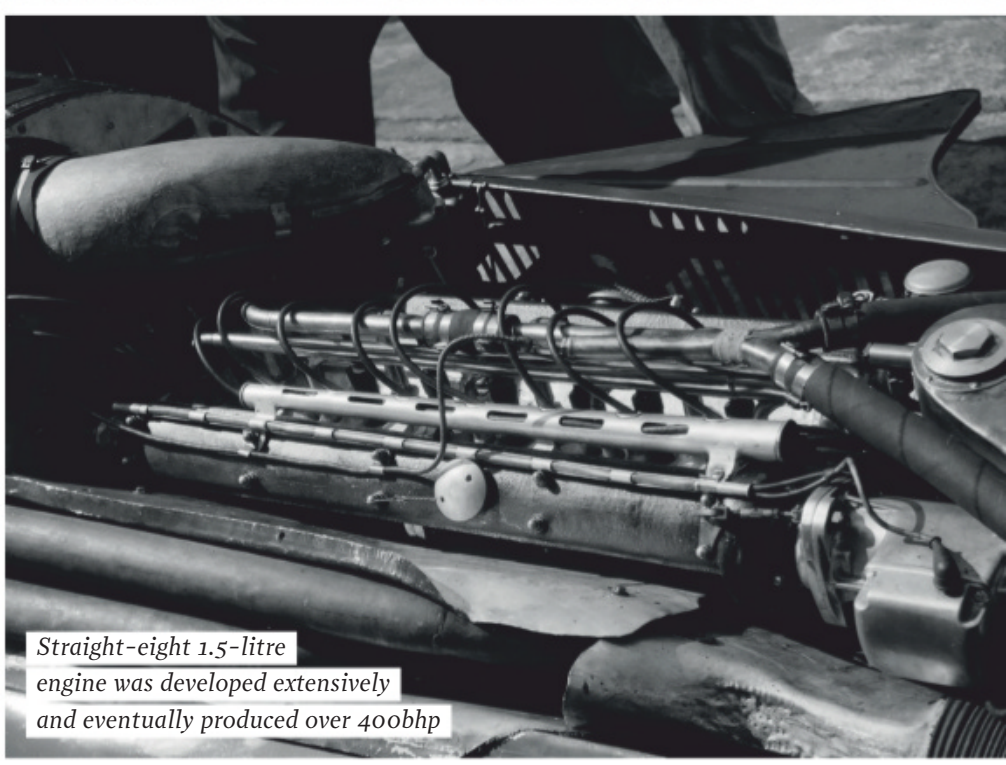
...and nearly three hours later Fangio took the flag in another 1-2



Fangio and Farina (both to the left) led the Alfa line-up in 1950-51



Fangio avoided early chaos to win the 1950 Monaco GP



Straight-eight 1.5-litre engine was developed extensively and eventually produced over 400bhp

peace returned and we could all go motor racing once again. This proved to be Easter 1946 at Nice, when the first post-war GP was held, without the Alfas. Shortly afterwards, with no fanfares, a couple of 158s were sent to St Cloud for a race there on 9 June, entrusted to pre-war stars Farina and Jean-Pierre Wimille.

Road conditions were none too good and early in the race Wimille and Farina (neither hurrying) lay first and third. As the race distance was only 112 miles it came as a surprise to find first Farina, then Wimille packing up, and with not even fastest lap to their credit. This St Cloud race was to be the last one in which Alfa Romeo 1.5-litre cars were to start and *not win*, right up to the point of writing.

Six weeks later, the little Alfas made their second post-war appearance in what was the real return of GP racing to Europe, the GP des Nations at Geneva on 21 July. Four cars were entered, with Farina, Wimille, Trossi and Achille Varzi as the drivers, and between them they collared first and second in each heat, and 1-2-3 in the final. Farina led Trossi home, with Wimille a lap in arrears due to the notorious mix-up with Tazio Nuvolari that caused quite a bit of bad feeling, and undoubtedly cost Wimille his first place.

QUARTETTE COINCIDENCE

In 1938 and 1939 the Alfa 158 raced four times, and 1946 was to be no exception, indeed save this year [1950] the Alfettes were in action four times only every season — a strange coincidence! The other two 1946 races were the GP of Turin and the GP of Milan. At Turin the Geneva quartette did duty, but at Milan Wimille was replaced by Consalvo Sanesi, a works tester.

Needless to say both GPs saw the expected Alfa Romeo wins, with Varzi beating Wimille by 4/5ths of a second over 174 miles at Turin, Trossi doing the needful at Milan backed up by Varzi, and Sanesi third; Farina (very angry), retiring in a huff. Much of his bad temper was caused his penalisation of one minute for twice jumping the start of heat two, thus making him third after he'd won it, and Sanesi, who was actually second, the winner.

POST-WAR RACING RESTARTS

Racing began the following year in early April at Pau, but not until the reinstituted Swiss GP on 8 June did the Alfa Romeo team appear on the starting grid. The four pilots were Varzi, Trossi, Sanesi and Wimille, the great Jean-Pierre rejoining vice Farina after the Milan squabbling.

The story of the Swiss GP is soon told, Alfas winning both heats and final exactly as at Geneva a year earlier. Heat one went to Varzi, heat two to Wimille, who also won the final at 95.42mph from Varzi and Trossi, Sanesi being fifth one lap behind. This was the race that was marred by the unruly spectators disregarding official and police instructions, several being killed as a result.

Having started 1947 in victorious mood, the 158s went to Belgium for the GP d'Europe at Spa, where morally they had a 100% success, with 1-2-3-4. Officially it was only 1-2-3, as Sanesi was stationary at his pit effecting repairs when the race ended, and so was a non-finisher although he was comfortably ahead of the Bob Gerard/Cuth Harrison ERA that was placed fourth. Wimille won, from Varzi and Trossi, and the French ace found team control irksome, for before Varzi had some light trouble Wimille had, unauthorised, usurped the lead.

At Bari, two cars only, Varzi and Sanesi up, had an easy 1-2 win from a poor field, leaving only the Italian GP to complete the four yearly races. Here on a tricky course in the Milan Fair Grounds, Wimille found himself excluded once again, his seat going to Alessandro Gaboardi. This time Count Trossi got the chequered flag ahead of Varzi, with Sanesi and Gaboardi trailing behind in third and fourth, somewhat outclassed in driving skill, but rescued by the Alfas' superiority over their Maserati rivals.

The works racing activities in 1948 began at Berne with the Swiss GP, and with tragedy, for Varzi was killed in practice, testing an experimental model with improved performance. Only three 158s therefore started, and as in 1947 an Alfa won, Trossi being a split second in front of Wimille.

Next came the French GP at Reims, and Trossi was absent, his place going to the young Alberto Ascari, promising son of a famous father, and right well he drove too. Highlight of Reims was Wimille's 112mph practice lap on the experimental model, the standard 158s eventually being used in the actual race, which was the usual Alfa parade, Wimille first, Sanesi second and Ascari third.

Surprisingly, in the Italian GP, this year at Turin, Wimille's car from Reims was the only Alfa to finish, the two normal cars blowing up. Wimille was uncatchable, ending his race sandwiched between Villoresi and Sommer in their hectic battle for second place.

Lastly at Monza, reopened on 17 October, with a 312-mile GP ending in an Alfa Romeo victory. Wimille won at 109.98mph, in front of Trossi, Sanesi and Piero Taruffi, Sanesi for a change doing fastest lap.

After Monza, Alfa Romeo abstained from racing until May 1950, due supposedly to financial and economic considerations, though the almost complete loss of their racing team, Varzi, Wimille (killed in South America in January 1949) and Count Trossi (died in May 1949) must have influenced their decision to rest on their laurels.

1950 SUCCESSES

This season's results are too recent to warrant detailed summary, but since returning to racing the 158 has won at San Remo (Juan Manuel Fangio), Silverstone (Farina), Monaco (Fangio), Berne (Farina), Spa (Fangio), Reims (Fangio), Bari (Farina), Geneva (Fangio) and Silverstone (Farina). The latest success was at Monza, where Farina won the Italian GP; he finished over a minute ahead of Ascari in the new, 4.5-litre, unsupercharged Ferrari, with Luigi Fagioli (Alfa Romeo) in third.

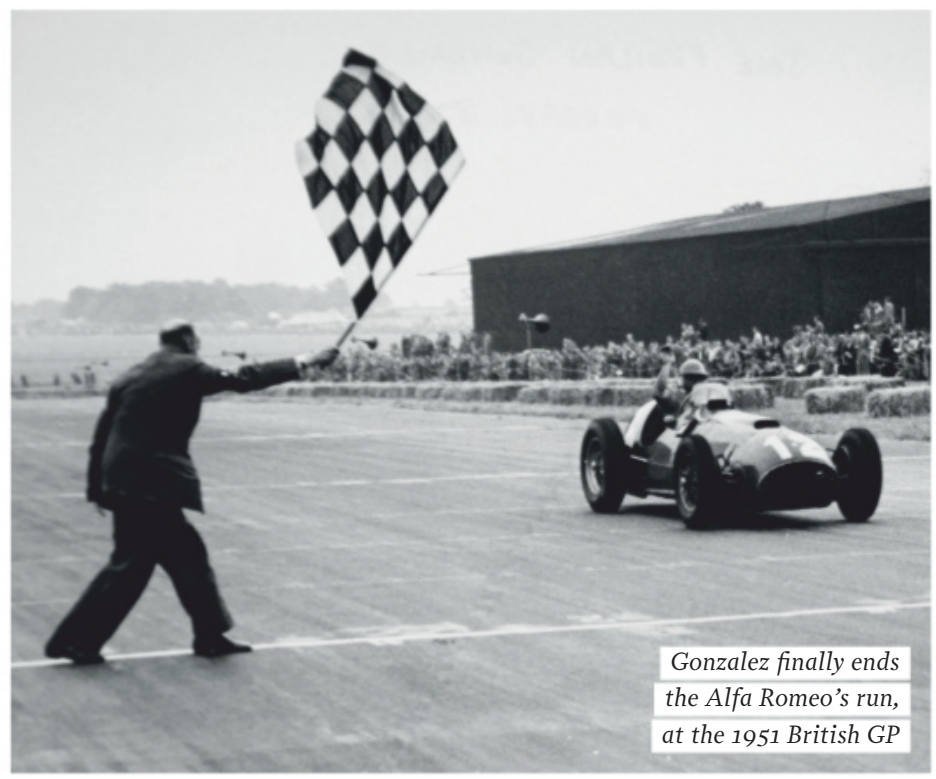
That then is the brief history of the car that our own much-awaited BRM will have to tackle in the not-so-distant future. Can it beat it? We all hope so, but it will be a formidable task as this article may have indicated.

2020 HINDSIGHT

Having won every round of the inaugural world championship — except the anomalous Indianapolis 500, which it didn't enter — Alfa Romeo started 1951 in the same fashion, with the upgraded 159. But its supremacy came increasingly under threat, not from the complex 1.5-litre supercharged BRM V16 championed by Autosport but from the unsupercharged 4.5-litre V12 Ferrari 375.

On 14 July 1951, in the British GP, Jose Froilan Gonzalez became the first person to defeat the works Alfa Romeo GP team in five years, scoring Ferrari's first F1 world championship race victory in impressive style.

The incredible fuel thirst of the highly developed supercharged 1.5-litre straight-eight Alfa engine — as low as 1.5-2mpg! — meant more fuel stops than the Ferraris, which could now match the 159's race pace. Ascari followed Gonzalez's Silverstone breakthrough by winning the German and Italian GPs. A Ferrari debacle thanks to a change of wheel specification at the title-deciding Spanish GP helped Fangio take victory and his first drivers' crown, but the writing was on the wall. Alfa Romeo did not have the funds to develop a new machine, so pulled out of F1, finally ending the frontline career of the incredible 158/159.



Gonzalez finally ends the Alfa Romeo's run, at the 1951 British GP

Guenther's fastest lap was just 0.0017s slower than the benchmark time of Nick Cassidy

Guenther on top after Vandoorne shunt

FORMULA E RACE AT HOME CHALLENGE
HONG KONG (CHN)
25 APRIL
ROUND 1

Maximilian Guenther's Esports stronghold over his Formula E rivals continued in the first points-paying round of the Race at Home Challenge — in partnership with Motorsport Games — thanks to a 2.2-second win around a virtual Hong Kong circuit.

Following the precedent set in the test race in Monaco, Stoffel Vandoorne was Guenther's closest challenger. But when it looked as though the Mercedes driver had found an edge and would dash off into the distance courtesy of an early race lead, Vandoorne stuffed his car into the barriers.

Vandoorne had snared pole by just 0.098s over sim racing debutant Pascal Wehrlein, while BMW man Guenther lined up third on the grid ahead of Nick Cassidy.

With reigning Super Formula champion Cassidy deputising for Sam Bird — who is expected to join the series this weekend when his internet issues are resolved — 23 of the 24 official drivers contested the race.

Vandoorne enjoyed a strong launch and built that early break into a 0.8s advantage come the end of the opening lap. He looked odds on to extend that margin, with Guenther hamstrung at the first corner, but instead Vandoorne nurfed the barriers halfway round the second tour.

With the damage level increased from 25% to 80% for the first championship race, Vandoorne was fortunate to continue but fell to sixth. The blunder allowed Guenther to inherit a lead he wouldn't relinquish.



Vandoorne led into T1 as Cassidy tagged the back of Wehrlein

FORMULA E

The BMW driver's only scare came at the opening hairpin. With Cassidy and Wehrlein starting well, the pair tagged at the apex of the right-hander. Guenther was forced to run wide and he momentarily lost out to both. But an initally compromised line allowed Guenther to then straighten his car early for the following long straight, and so he outdragged the pair to resume second, which would then become first.

Cassidy kept Guenther within his sights, as the gap balanced out at around 1s for much of the race, but he was never close enough to make an attempt for the lead before later dropping another 1.2s.

Wehrlein's impressive sim racing bow merited third ahead of Cassidy's Envision Virgin Racing team-mate Robin Frijns, who rose three spots from seventh in qualifying.

Vandoorne struggled to make progress after his crash, so he crossed the line in fifth ahead of Olivers Rowland and Turvey.

Felipe Massa celebrated his 38th birthday with eighth ahead of Jerome d'Ambrosio. Alexander Sims claimed 10th to give BMW a double points finish.

Andre Lotterer and James Calado both retired early after crashes. Meanwhile, reigning FE champion Jean-Eric Vergne had been in third during the early stages, but the DS Techeetah driver disconnected from the session. Lucas di Grassi failed to start owing to connection issues.

MATT KEW

Red Bull clinches LMES title

LE MANS ESPORTS
SPA (BEL)
25 APRIL
ROUND 5

Red Bull Esports clinched the Le Mans Esports Series Pro Team qualification series title after defeating Lazarus in a tense finale at Spa. Heading into the final event of the five-round season, just 10 points split the pair in Red Bull's favour.

Lazarus runner Daniel Nyman charged from fourth to win the sprint race with a bold penultimate-lap pass on Michael Thomas Coyne (Solar Vision Racing) around the outside of Les Combes. Red Bull's Aurelien Mallet spun down to 10th on lap one. He recovered brilliantly to finish in third behind Coyne. This left Red Bull and Lazarus tied heading into the decider.



Robin Betka took over the Red Bull for the reverse-championship-order 25-lap endurance race. Nyman made a critical error when he earned a five-second penalty after causing a collision with Miguel Molina.

Betka was also able to pass Nyman and undercut the leaders in mixed conditions to emerge with the lead, and ensured Red Bull won five of the 10 races in the qualifying series. This secured the team $10,000, with Lazarus second in the standings ahead of Total Performance Racing, Fast Racers Forza, Solar Vision and Ryze Motorsport.

Those six teams will compete for their share of $100,000 at the LMES Super Final. They will be joined by wildcards and Autosport International qualifier winner Williams Esports.

JOSH SUTTILL

Pepper pips it for Bentley

SRO GT SERIES ESPORTS
SILVERSTONE (GBR)
26 APRIL
ROUND 1

Bentley driver Jordan Pepper won the opening SRO GT Series Esports event at Silverstone, while 2009 Formula 1 champion Jenson Button and Ferrari F1 star Charles Leclerc hit trouble.

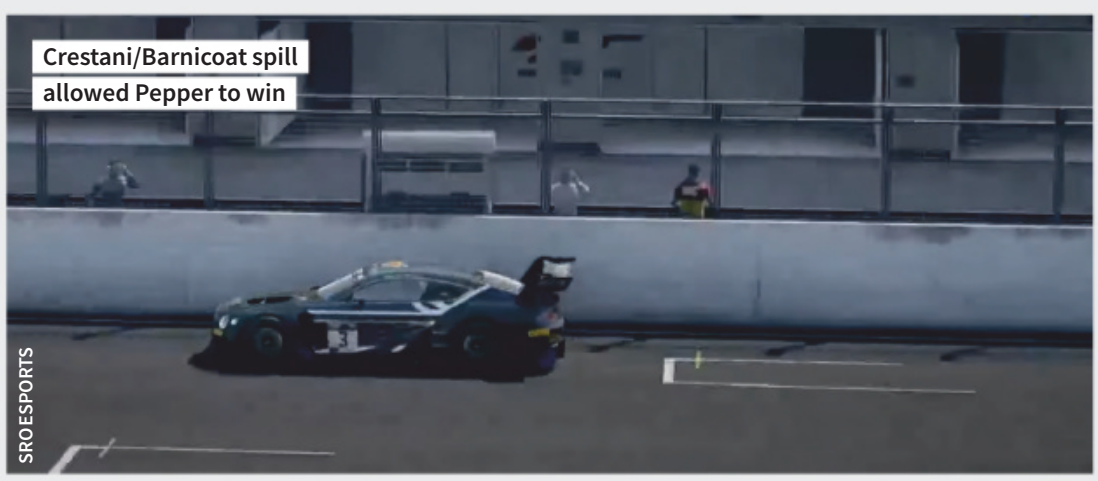
Pepper claimed the lead when polesitter Fabrizio Crestani collided with fellow McLaren driver Ben Barnicoat as they diced for first place among an impressive 49-strong field. Crestani was handed a drivethrough penalty as Barnicoat fell to eighth.

Thereafter, Pepper was dominant and bagged the glory in the one-hour enduro ahead of Barnicoat, who recovered to second ahead of karting graduate Luigi di Lorenzo.

Mercedes' Raffaele Marciello initially took third, but the 2018 Blancpain Sprint Cup champion was handed a two-second penalty for his move on di Lorenzo's Aston Martin.

Leclerc finished 21st after serving a drivethrough for twice colliding with Aston Martin driver Luca Ghiotto, his ex-real-life Formula 2 rival. Meanwhile, Button was denied a top-10 finish following a collision at Abbey as he battled ex-Renault junior Arthur Rougier and David Perel.

JOSH SUTTILL





Norris spins then wins on IndyCar debut

INDYCAR iRACING CHALLENGE
AUSTIN (USA)
25 APRIL
ROUND 5

McLaren Formula 1 star Lando Norris recovered from a mid-race spin to take victory on his IndyCar iRacing Challenge debut in a wildcard appearance at the Circuit of The Americas.

Experienced iRacing racer Norris beat 2014 IndyCar champion Will Power to pole and led comfortably at the start.

A crash between Norris's McLaren Arrow SP team-mate Oliver Askew and Robert Wickens prompted an early cautionary pitstop, which handed Power the race lead as Norris resumed from his stop in sixth. He made quick progress at the restart, but lost traction through the final corner and spun. He had to work his way back up to the front, which he did successfully, as Power blew a likely win when he also lost control in the first sector on his out-lap.

Chip Ganassi Racing's Felix Rosenqvist was the next to hit trouble at the front. He was attempting to make an alternative one-stop strategy work, but he spun out of first place. Norris narrowly avoided the Swedish ace, retook the lead and went on to secure victory on his debut.

Patricio O'Ward made it a McLaren 1-2, while Rosenqvist recovered to finish in third ahead of the leading Penske driver, Scott McLaughlin.

Dale Coyne Racing's Santino Ferrucci took fifth ahead of Power, Rinus van Kalmthout, Marcus Ericsson, Alex Palou and Josef Newgarden.

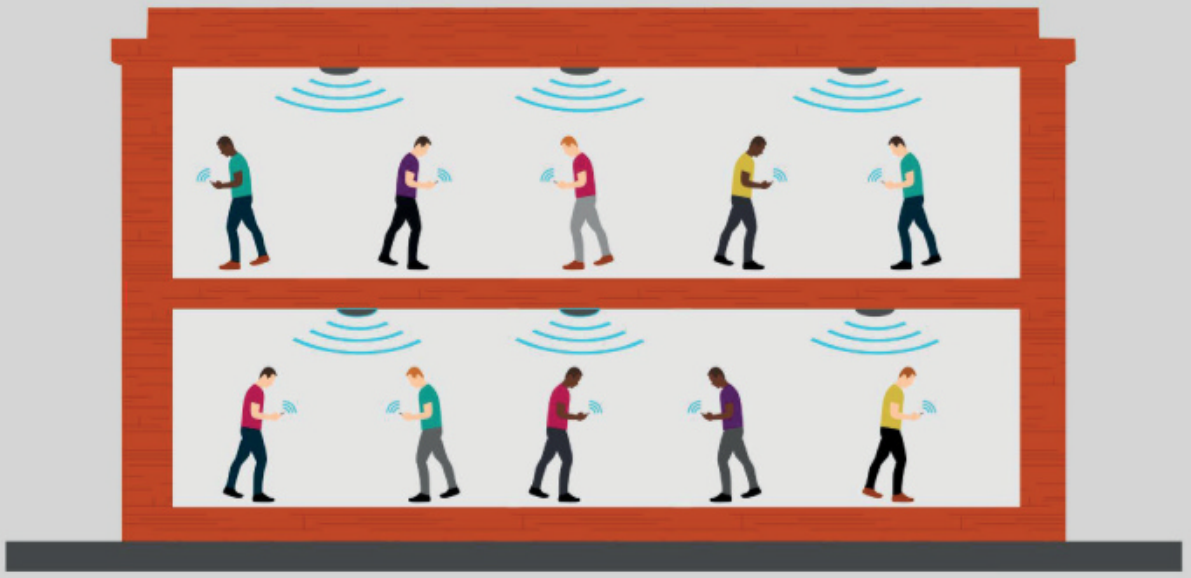
The final round of the virtual IndyCar season will take place this weekend around the Indianapolis oval. Norris's win earns him an automatic entry.

JOSH SUTTILL

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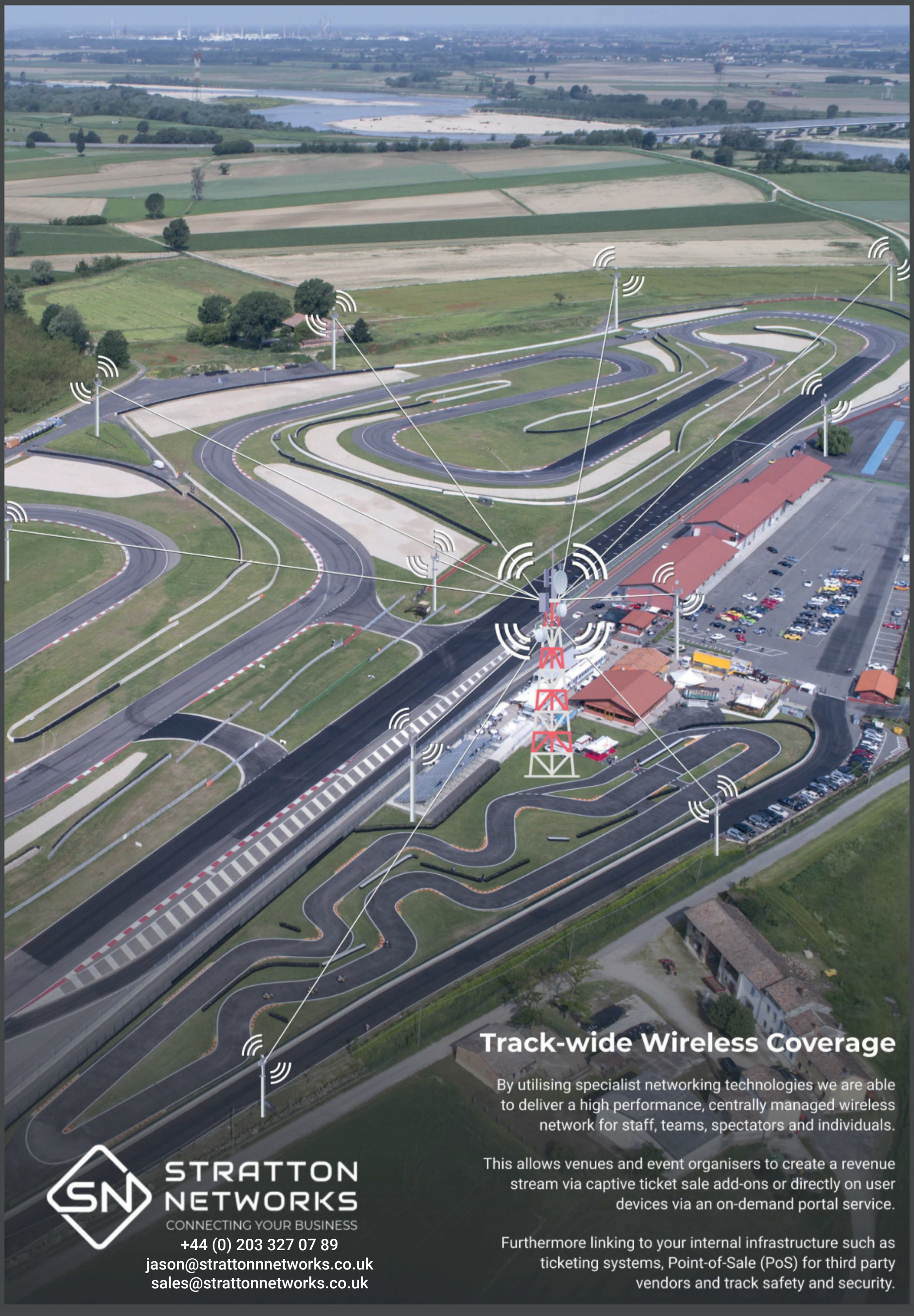


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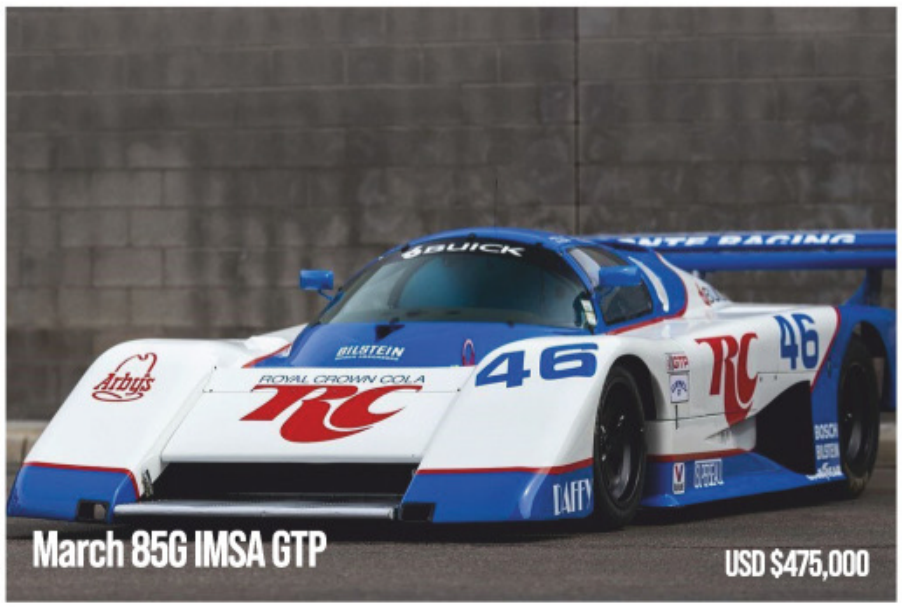
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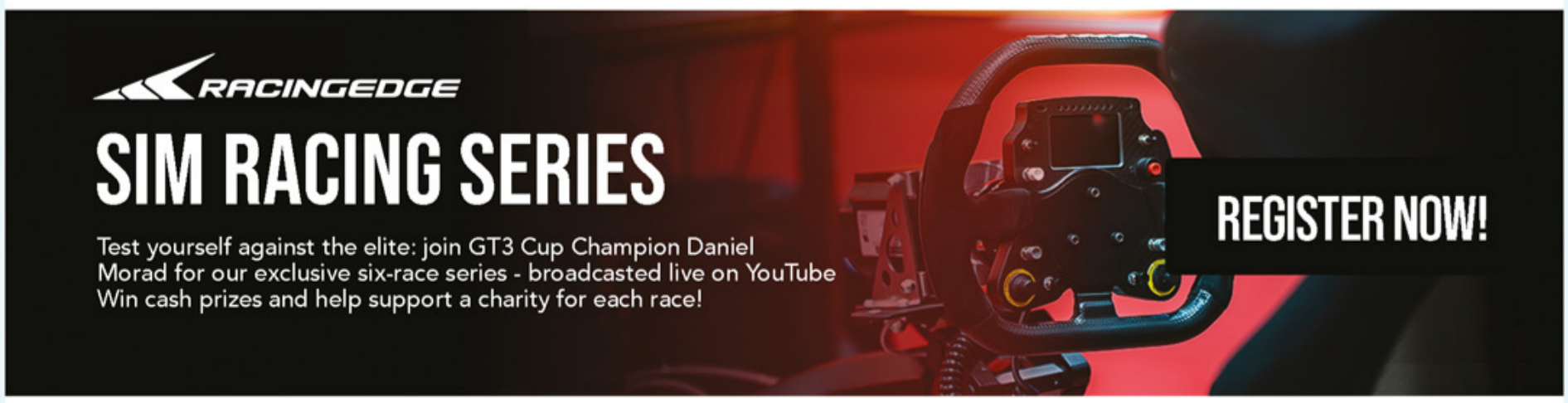
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BTCC SUPPORTS WELCOME REVISED 2020 CALENDAR

CORONAVIRUS

Bosses of the British Touring Car Championship's support categories have welcomed TOCA's unveiling of a revised calendar, describing it as "very positive".

The revamped schedule features nine events in the space of three and a half months between August and mid-November, and includes all nine venues that originally appeared on the calendar. The second Silverstone event, featuring the International layout, is the only one not on the new timetable.

Porsche GB motorsport manager James MacNaughton is happy that he has now got a schedule to "plan for and work towards".

"I've been in reasonably regular contact with Alan [Gow, BTCC chief executive] and know he's worked very hard to create a provisional calendar, so we're very appreciative of everything he's done," said MacNaughton.

One of the main features of the new calendar is three back-to-back events, and MacNaughton acknowledges that this will pose some challenges, such as making sure there are enough spare parts available for the Oulton Park and Knockhill events on consecutive weekends.

"Going from Oulton Park straight to Knockhill means the teams aren't going to be able to go back to base, so everyone will have to bear that in mind," he said. "Unfortunately, it's going to be a lot harder for people but, from the conversations I've been having with our teams and drivers, I know how keen they are to go racing for lots of reasons – business reasons and because we all love racing."

The situation is complicated for MacNaughton because, as well as running the Porsche Carrera Cup GB at eight events, the new-for-2020 Sprint Challenge GB series – featuring the Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport – was also due to appear at two BTCC rounds. While he has confirmed that Porsche will have a presence at all nine events, the exact calendars of the two series have yet to be finalised.

Also appearing at all nine TOCA fixtures will be British Formula 4. The single-seater category has, since its inception, appeared at all BTCC events and promoter Sam Roach is pleased with the new calendar.

"It's an intensive schedule, not least four events in the opening five weeks and three back-to-back events, but I'm sure our drivers and teams are very enthusiastic to resume racing as soon as it is safe to do so, and I'm sure they'll all rise to the challenge," said Roach.

"I'd like to put on record my thanks to TOCA, and Alan Gow in particular, along with ITV for the exceptionally hard work they've put in to bring this revised calendar together."

Another challenge will be the decreasing daylight for the late-October and November meetings. Gow has already said that bespoke BTCC night races will not be run, but MacNaughton says Porsche is preparing for the possibility of racing in darker late-afternoon conditions.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Alfa champ Hill to step up a class in new GT

ALFA ROMEOS

Triple Alfa Romeo champion Tom Hill is set to step up to the series' Power Trophy class, driving a newly-built Alfa Romeo GT.

Hill became the first driver to win the long-running Alfa championship three times when he added last year's title to his 2016 and 2018 crowns, each coming aboard Twin Spark Cup-class 156 models. Now he will graduate to more powerful machinery with a new 3.2-litre V6-powered GT built by Roger Evans's Revs Italia concern.

"It was something we thought quite a lot about — do we stick with Twin Sparks or do we venture out into other things?" said Hill. "And we'd asked ourselves that for at least the last three or four seasons!

"I wanted to develop as a driver and get to grips with a little bit more power, slick tyres — just going that little bit faster."



Hill will swap his 156 for Power Trophy-class GT

Hill tested a Power Trophy-spec 156 at Donington Park before Christmas, but a planned first runout in the new GT was thwarted by the UK's lockdown measures. Now he plans to treat this season's shortened schedule as a chance to learn the car ahead of a full campaign next year.

"I'm under no illusion that I'm immediately going to be competitive in a new car," he added. "This year was always going to be a bit of a testing year for us anyway. I've got no doubts in the reliability of the car — it's more learning for me."

MARK PAULSON


FIA's Formula Junior series was due to visit Brands Hatch in May

HAWKINS

Lurani Trophy called off for 2020

FORMULA JUNIOR

The Formula Junior Historic Racing Association has taken the unprecedented step of cancelling its flagship FIA Lurani Trophy championship for 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The longest-established historic racing competition run under the world governing body's flag, the Lurani Trophy celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.

The 2020 championship was due to have opened last weekend at Hockenheim's Jim Clark Revival meeting, long postponed. Only rounds at Misano (19-21 June), Imola (10-12 July), Nurburgring (7-9 August) and Dijon (2-4 October) remain on the current schedule.

A statement issued by FJHRA organisers Duncan Rabagliati and his daughter Sarah Mitricke read: "The spirit of the Lurani Trophy has always been that it is an international competition. Even if pockets of Europe are able to open and try to find their feet again in public events and business, it is unlikely that competitors from all sides of Europe, let alone the globe, would be able to freely attend what races may find viability and a rescheduled date."

They added that, if any of the late-season events can take place, they will run as standalone non-championship rounds.

MARCUS PYE

ULSTER RALLY IS THE LATEST BRC CANCELLATION

BRC

British Rally Championship boss Iain Campbell is optimistic of still running a number of events this year, despite the penultimate round in Northern Ireland being called off.

August's Ulster International Rally now joins West Cork and Rally Tendring & Clacton on the sidelines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But, with the season-opening Cambrian Rally having already run, and hopes remaining that June's Ypres Rally, September's Galloway Hills and October's Rally GB will go ahead, Campbell said: "There is no announcement from Ypres at the moment — currently we have five scoring rounds for 2020."

Initially a reserve counter for this season's competition, Rally GB is important as it now serves as two points-scoring rounds for BRC-registered crews.

"Originally, it was going to be six scoring rounds, so we still very much have a championship at this point," added Campbell. "I knew what was being discussed by [Northern Ireland Motor Club] but of course I am disappointed the Ulster will not run but completely understand, and support, the reasoning."

Ulster Rally event director Richard Swanston said the decision to call off the fixture, which was due to take place on 22 August, was a simple one.

"People are our priority and, given the support we get from the 800 volunteers it takes to make the event happen, as well as the number of people in the community the event impacts, the committee felt it was the only option available," he said.

JASON CRAIG


Craig Breen won last year's Ulster Rally

McCULLAGH



HAWKINS

Brabham BT62 takes a double victory on virtual debut



BRITCAR E-SERIES

David Brabham guided the Brabham BT62 to its first ever virtual victory during the Britcar Endurance E-Series at Spa last week.

With the real-life Britcar championship on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, organisers held the series' first Esports event with 2009 Le Mans 24 Hour winner Brabham, 2019 Renault Clio Cup UK runner-up Max Coates and W Series driver — and 2018 Britcar champion — Sarah Moore among the drivers taking part.

Using Assetto Corsa software, the Brabham BT62 appeared for the first time in the virtual world, having made its real-life racing debut last November at the Into the Night race at Brands Hatch in the hands of Brabham and Will Powell.

And just like five months ago, when it took the top spot, it was the case again in the E-Series event as Brabham finished ahead of Powell to make it a Brabham 1-2.

A repeat result appeared likely for the second race, but poleman Brabham disconnected prior to the start and was out of contention. There was further drama heading into Les Combes on the opening lap, as Powell dropped from first to third behind the BMW Z4 GT3s of Morgan Short and Steve Burke.

Short, son of British GT stalwart Martin, continued to extend his lead to four seconds approaching the halfway point of the 30-minute race, but he too had connection problems, which promoted Powell into a lead he was not to lose.

Behind Powell, Britcar race winner Sam Neary finished second aboard a Mercedes-AMG GT3 to add to his third place in the opening race, while Team BRIT driver Bobby Trundley finished sixth overall and took the Class 3 spoils aboard a Cupra TCR.

Arguably the most thrilling battle from the event took place between Dave Farrow (Ginetta G55 GT4) and James Rainford (Cupra TCR) for Class 3 honours in the opening contest, with the duo trading places a number of times. Their battle came to an end when Farrow pitted at the midway point and Rainford came home a comfortable Class 3 winner.

STEFAN MACKLEY

British F4 and Mini Challenge enter Esports world

ESPORTS

Another raft of UK national categories has announced virtual series to run during the coronavirus-induced break, including British Formula 4, the Mini Challenge and British Rally Championship.

British F4 will run a seven-event season, which began with two races at Donington Park on Monday. These were won by one-time F4 racer Christopher Lulham and frontrunner Luke Browning, and also featured 2018 title winner Kiern Jewiss and reigning champion Zane Maloney. The virtual champion will receive free entry to a real-life F4 event this year.

The Mini Challenge JCW series, which is joining F4 at British Touring Car Championship meetings this year, has also revealed it is branching into the world of Esports and will organise a competition in partnership with the Virtual Reality Racing Club. Entries are open to real-life and sim racers ahead of mid-May qualifying heats.

The BRC is another series joining the Esports craze and will run a four-round contest using the *DiRT Rally 2.0* game. The overall champion, providing they have a full driving licence, will receive a test with BRC team EDSL Sport.

From club racing, the Alfa Romeo Championship has also moved into the virtual scene with a competition for past and present drivers.



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Wilson won Xbox crown despite missing final races

SMRC Esports titles decided in dramatic Silverstone finale

ESPORTS

The inaugural Scottish Motor Racing Club Esports championship came to a close at a virtual Silverstone last weekend, with all three class titles being decided in dramatic fashion in Porsche 911 GT3-R machinery.

In the Xbox One class, Tam Hamill agonisingly missed out on a chance to snatch the title away from Ayden Wilson, who failed to qualify for the finals.

Wilson suffered a disconnect in the qualifying heats and was forced to watch nervously as Hamill kept alive his hopes by taking third in the opening race. But it wasn't to be for Hamill, who was spun out of the lead at Village by Andrew McKinlay. Hamill was involved in two more incidents on the opening lap and eventually called it a day. The wins were shared by Josh McNab and Cameron Evans.

The PlayStation 4 title race also went down to the wire, with real-life SMRC racer Michael Weddell needing only to beat the in-form Martin Buchan in the first encounter to be crowned. But Buchan had other ideas and brilliantly grabbed both race wins; the first of which he snatched from Weddell's grasp as the pair went side-by-side at Maggotts and Becketts on the penultimate lap. Weddell, however, made sure of the title with another second-place finish in race two.

John Munro came out on top in the PC title battle, his two wins taking his season total to five as chief rival Craig Lax could only manage a second and third place.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

Wilson feared title hopes were over

ESPORTS

Newly crowned Scottish Motor Racing Club Esports Xbox One champion Ayden Wilson admitted he thought his title chances had disappeared after failing to make it through the pre-qualifying heats before last Sunday's final.

The 15-year-old from Stirling went into the weekend with a comfortable 37-point advantage over nearest rival Tam Hamill but disconnected in mid-week qualifying, which prevented him from reaching the final.

"I qualified second for the heat and just before the race started, my screen completely froze and disconnected from the server," Wilson said. "I wasn't angry, I was just shocked and thought that it was all over."

SMRC Esports regulations state that if a competitor 'disconnects' from a heat, they are placed in another heat where possible. However, Wilson was already in the final heat of the evening, therefore ruling him out.

Hamill took the title fight to the last race of the season with third in race one but had a disastrous first lap of the final encounter which resulted in his retirement, handing Wilson the title.

"I sort of watched the races with one eye open but knew Tam had it all to do in the second race," Wilson added. "I think maybe the pressure got to him in the end."

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

IN THE HEADLINES

CCRC EXTENDS MEMBERSHIPS

The Castle Combe Racing Club has decided to extend all of its club memberships by a complimentary three months in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. The club says it recognises the difficulties members are facing financially and wanted to help compensate competitors for the lack of racing in what should have been the first three months of the season. The CCRC's categories are due to get under way on 4 July.

BRSCC DOESN'T GO DUTCH

Another meeting that has fallen victim to the COVID-19 pandemic is the British Racing and Sports Car Club's planned visit to Zandvoort. The club's Caterham categories and Production GTI championship were due to visit the Dutch circuit over 11-12 July. The BRSCC is in talks with circuit bosses about a possible alternative date.

DAVE GRIFFIN 1950-2020

We regret to record the death, last Sunday, of Irish racer Dave Griffin. Son of Dave Sr, who worked for racers Bobby Baird and Joe Kelly in the 1950s, Griffin never regained consciousness after a fall last October. A successful Formula Ford racer, Dave started in a Lotus 69F at home, then switched to a PRS 78F. He is best remembered in the UK for winning the 1979 Champion of Brands title at Boxing Day's final hurdle in one of Jerry Furner's Harlequin Racing Van Diemen RF79s.

REVOLUTIONARY LIVERIES

Revolution is offering the chance for a fan to design the livery of one of its 12 A-One prototypes that are due to feature at the Spa World Endurance Championship round. Scheduled for 15 August, the Revolution Trophy will run as a class within the non-championship Britcar races. Designs can be submitted to the Revolution Facebook page or emailed to roger@revolutionracecars.com by 30 May.





TWO MORE MONTHS OF TWO-WHEEL



VIDEO GAME REVIEW
MOTOGP 20
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Choosing to bring forward the release date of a video game by almost two months is either indicative of a developer's confidence, or it's a risky move that ends up with a half-baked product. Fortunately for motorcycle fans restless since the postponement of the real-life season, Milestone's release of *MotoGP 20* is an example of the former.

A redesigned handling model, revamped career mode and the reintroduction of historic content are just some of the successful elements of Milestone's eighth instalment in its MotoGP gaming franchise.

Career mode now features a personal manager who will negotiate your rise through the ranks. Gamers can start from Moto3 and work their way to the top class, or elect to jump straight into MotoGP from the start. Unfortunately, there is no MotoE or Red Bull Rookies Cup included, but that void is somewhat filled by the returning historic mode.

In career mode, you also hire and delegate personnel to work in your R&D department, where the engine, frame, aerodynamics and electronics can be enhanced. You earn points by achieving objectives set by your team as well as completing development tasks in practice, giving the sessions more emphasis.

The R&D factor also creates interesting dilemmas. Should you stick with a KTM for a couple of seasons and develop it to the front of the MotoGP pack, or simply use your manager to negotiate you a ride on a factory Honda or Ducati?

It's a shame all riders stay with their respective teams for the entirety of their careers. There isn't the transfer market that we see in Codemasters' *Formula 1* franchise.

Customisation in the MotoGP game is better than ever — you can edit your livery, helmet and riding gear. User-created content from other gamers can also be applied to your in-game rider, giving you plenty of options and inspiration.

The historic mode features plenty of bikes and riders from the two and four-stroke eras. These are not just simply tacked onto the game. Instead they feature in a dedicated mode, where gamers can complete challenges of varying difficulty to unlock more nostalgia. There are also two old-timer tracks in Donington Park and Laguna Seca alongside the 20 official MotoGP circuits.

The handling model has been revamped for this year, with the benefits felt particularly through the slow-speed corners. As with any racing game, it will not be to everyone's liking, but it strikes a sturdy balance between simulation and accessibility.

With the addition of fuel, traction control and brake management while riding, newcomers or casual fans may find the experience overwhelming at first. The game does little to ease you into what can be a tough challenge — even with several riding aids turned on.

This can result in a steep learning curve for some, and they may be put off just moments into the game. The AI difficulty slider does do something to compensate for this, but it's quite inconsistent from track to track. This may well be smoothed out in an upcoming patch, but it's one typical downside of an early release.

Online multiplayer has proved solid in release week, particularly important given MotoGP's own Esports ambitions. Its real-life riders will take part in the first Virtual GP in May, and the fourth Esports season for



CHALLENGES



the top virtual riders will begin shortly.

The quality of this game will be particularly important to motorcycle fans devastated that half of the real-life season has already been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Milestone has delivered another solid entry into the series, which will provide fans with plenty to do until the racing action gets underway again. *MotoGP 20 is available now on Xbox One, PlayStation 4, Steam, Google Stadia and Nintendo Switch.*

JOSH SUTTILL



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JEAN-ERIC VERGNE AND ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA

The in-form DS Techeetah Formula E team-mates discuss the strain of fighting for a Formula 1 seat, why as many races as possible should return this season and how they might treat one another in a title showdown.

YouTube youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



Throughout Formula 1's history, circuits have come and gone. Naturally, there are some we dearly miss. Here's Autosport's pick of 10 venues we'd like to see back on the grand prix calendar. **Go to bit.ly/10F1tracks**

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How the DTM landed itself in crisis

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Ocon's best result from the three FR3.5 races he started in 2014

ESTEBAN OCON

A rising star's mixed Formula Renault 3.5 cameo

JAMES NEWBOLD

When future Formula 1 racer Esteban Ocon landed at Comtec Racing for a two-round cameo in the 2014 Formula Renault 3.5 championship, he was riding the crest of a wave. With a commanding 77-point buffer over Max Verstappen in the FIA European F3 championship and only two rounds remaining, the opportunity to sample more powerful and complicated machinery couldn't have come at a better time.

His appearances at the Hungaroring and Paul Ricard showed all the hallmarks of the devastating speed and technical sensitivity he would go on to display in F1 but, as his race engineer Danny King recalls, Ocon was preoccupied with showing more experienced contemporaries including Carlos Sainz Jr and Pierre Gasly the way.

"It was a frustrating event," reflects King. "I felt that he wanted to be the fastest in every session, which you can understand coming from F3, having pretty much won the championship already."

Hampered by red flags in qualifying for race one, Ocon lined up sixth — King reckoned fourth was achievable if he'd completed his final flier — but fluffed his start and could only recover to ninth.

"To get the thing off the line with anti-stall and a launch control system that was a bit unreliable was difficult," says King. "Ninth was OK, but there was more potential there."

Qualifying for race two took place on a damp but drying track, which caught Ocon out at the Turn 11 right-hander. The damage was significant, and Comtec ran out of time before the race to make repairs.

"A missed opportunity," King adds. "He was super good at working out where the grip was, he could have been in the top three."

As Ocon had not tested before his debut, King was optimistic that his charge would take a step forward at Paul Ricard, but Ocon did not figure near the front at all. He finished outside the top 10 on both occasions, forgetting to keep the DRS system open through Signes and frequently using the wrong gear exiting the chicane.

Nonetheless, King reckons the experience was useful for Ocon and helped him realise areas he needed to work on before making an F1 race debut with Manor two years later.

"Upping the level of the complexity of the car was a good thing for him and would have given him more tools in his toolkit," King says. "Le Castellet [Paul Ricard] wasn't our finest hour, but I think he learned a lot."



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"IT WAS A FRUSTRATING EVENT, I FELT OCON WANTED TO BE FASTEST IN EVERY SESSION"



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Michael Schumacher (Ferrari F300) exits his pitbox during the 1998 German Grand Prix at Hockenheim. It wasn't a happy home event: his track time was curtailed by an abortive early practice run in a long-wheelbase car, then a spin, followed by an engine failure. Come qualifying he could only record the ninth-fastest time. He managed to finish fifth in the race, behind Damon Hill's Jordan-Mugen 198, Jacques Villeneuve's Williams-Mecachrome FW20 and the dominant McLaren-Mercedes MP4/13s of David Coulthard and winner Mika Hakkinen.

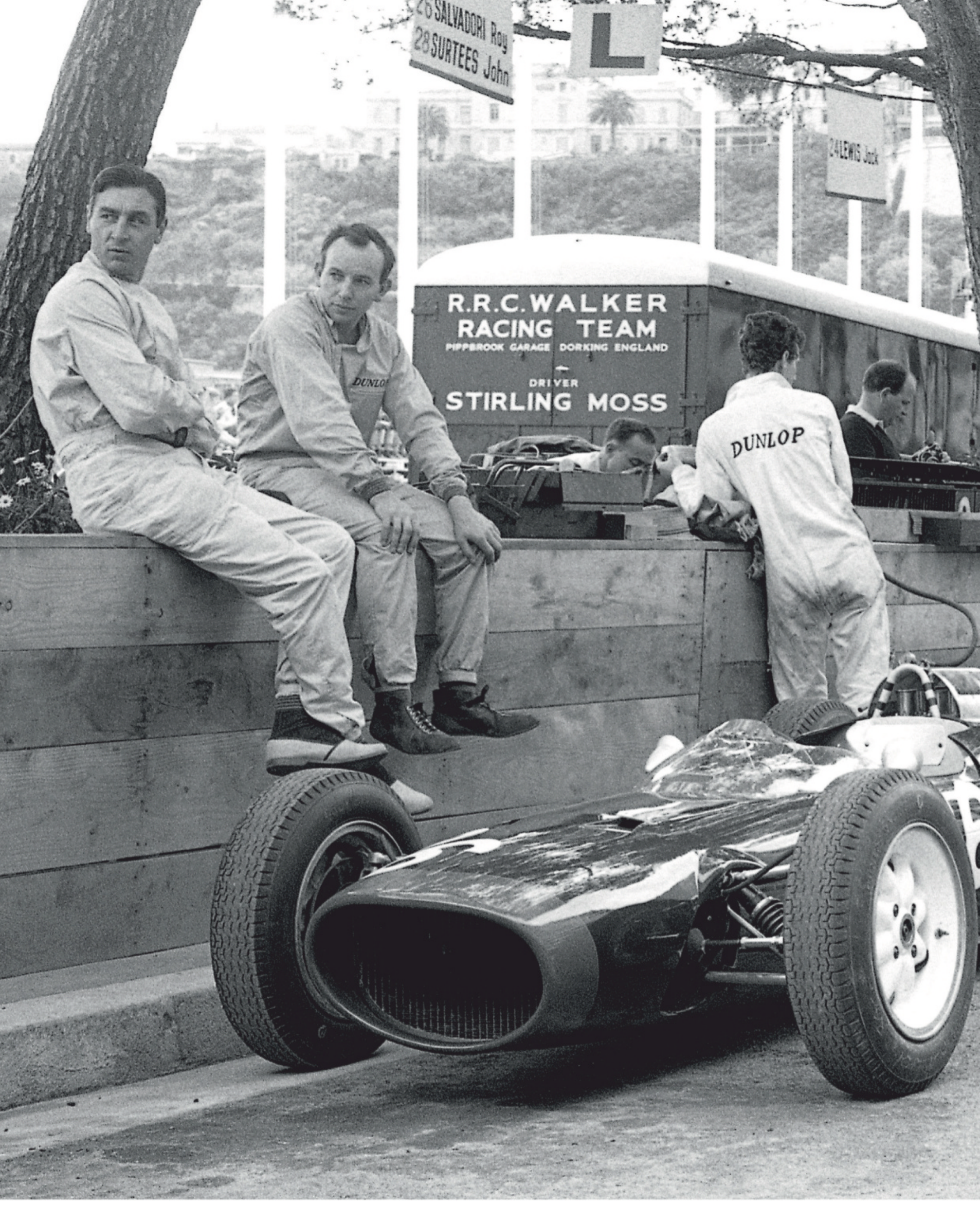
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FROM THE ARCHIVE

Reg Parnell Racing drivers Roy Salvadori (left) and John Surtees wait by their Lola-Climax Mk4s for the start of practice for the 1962 Monaco Grand Prix. In the background is the Rob Walker Racing Team transporter still bearing the name of Stirling Moss, who had suffered his career-ending crash at Goodwood several weeks earlier, a detail that seems even more poignant in light of his recent death. Surtees and Salvadori qualified 11th and 12th respectively; the former finished fourth, while his team-mate retired with broken suspension.

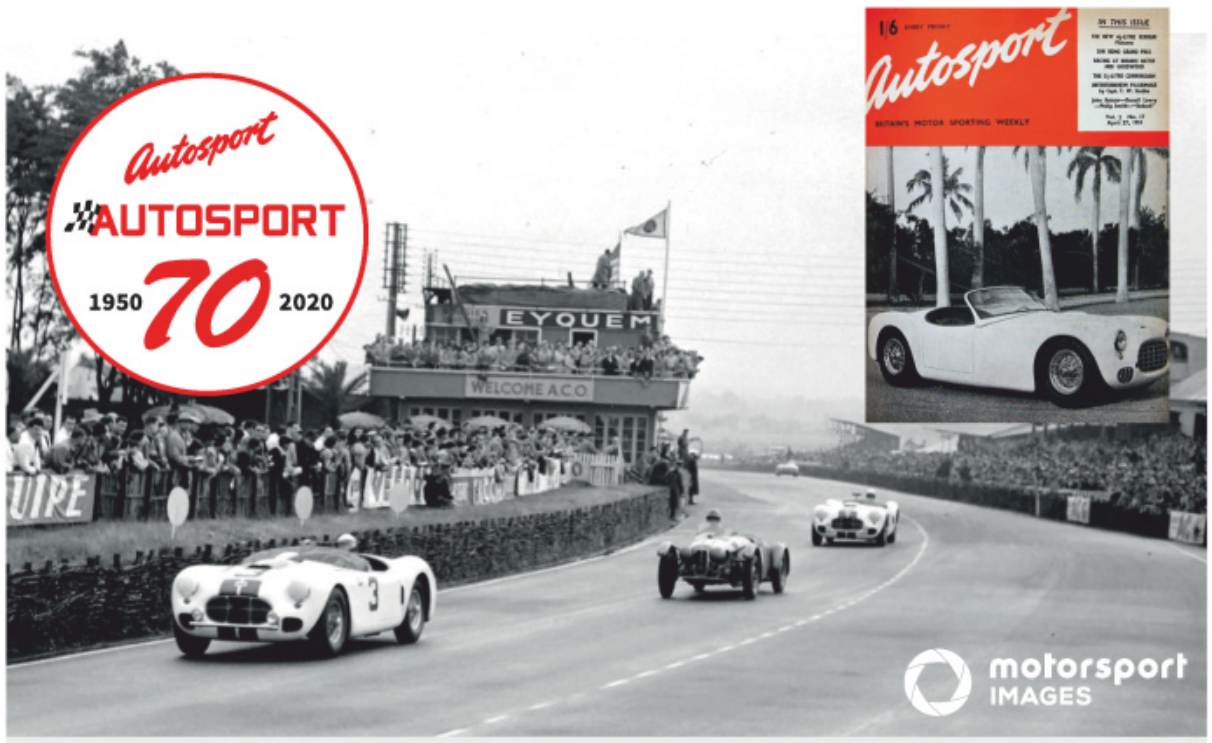
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A new American contender enters the fray

27 April 1951

Autosport heralded the arrival of the new Cunningham sportscar this week in 1951. The 5.4-litre V8 machine, to be known as the C2-R, marked an American return to Le Mans.

"Twenty years have passed since an American sportscar, the Stutz Bearcat, competed in the great 24-hour race," said Autosport. "It is with great interest that details have been awaited of the new cars which that great enthusiast Briggs S Cunningham announced that he would be producing to race at Le Mans."

We were impressed with the overall modernity of the design and estimated that the race versions would produce "at least" 220bhp: "There is nothing of the hot-rod about the Cunningham. Its conception owes a great deal to European influence, and its V8 Chrysler engine is recognised as being a superb piece of engineering.

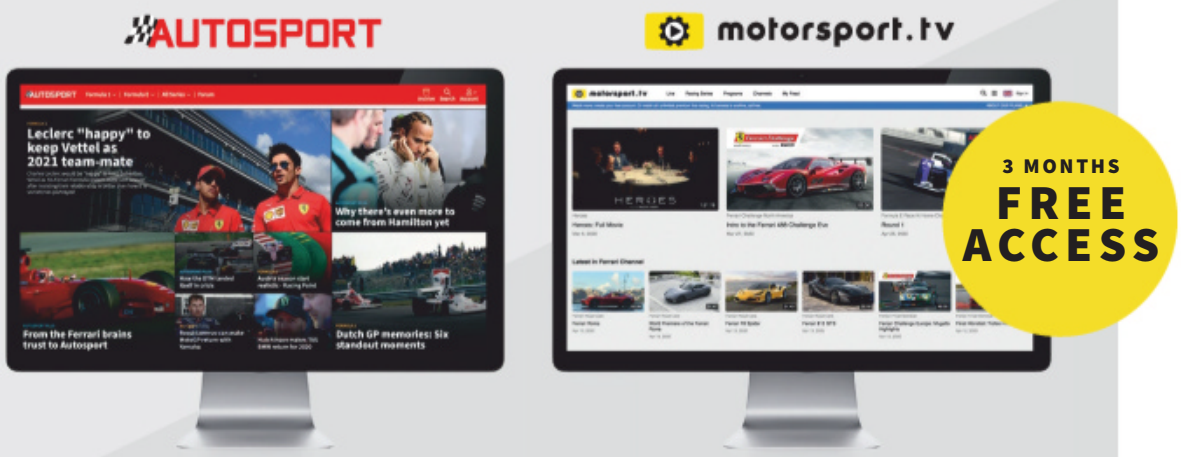
"Knowledgeable people have always maintained that American engineers could design and construct very fast cars that would be a match for anything built on this side of the Atlantic."

The three-car entry failed at Le Mans that year (pictured), won by Jaguar's new C-type, but subsequent Cunninghams would be increasingly competitive. The C4-R won the 1953 Sebring 12 Hours and took third place at Le Mans, preventing a Jaguar 1-2-3.

Autosport was clearly in a complimentary mood, for the Ferrari 375 was also praised, less than three months before it finally broke Alfa Romeo's stranglehold on Formula 1 (see page 44): "Few racing cars have achieved such immediate success as the unsupercharged 4.5-litre Ferrari. The original [1950] cars have proved to be extremely fast and reliable, but Ferrari does not believe in standing still and has produced an even faster car for 1951."

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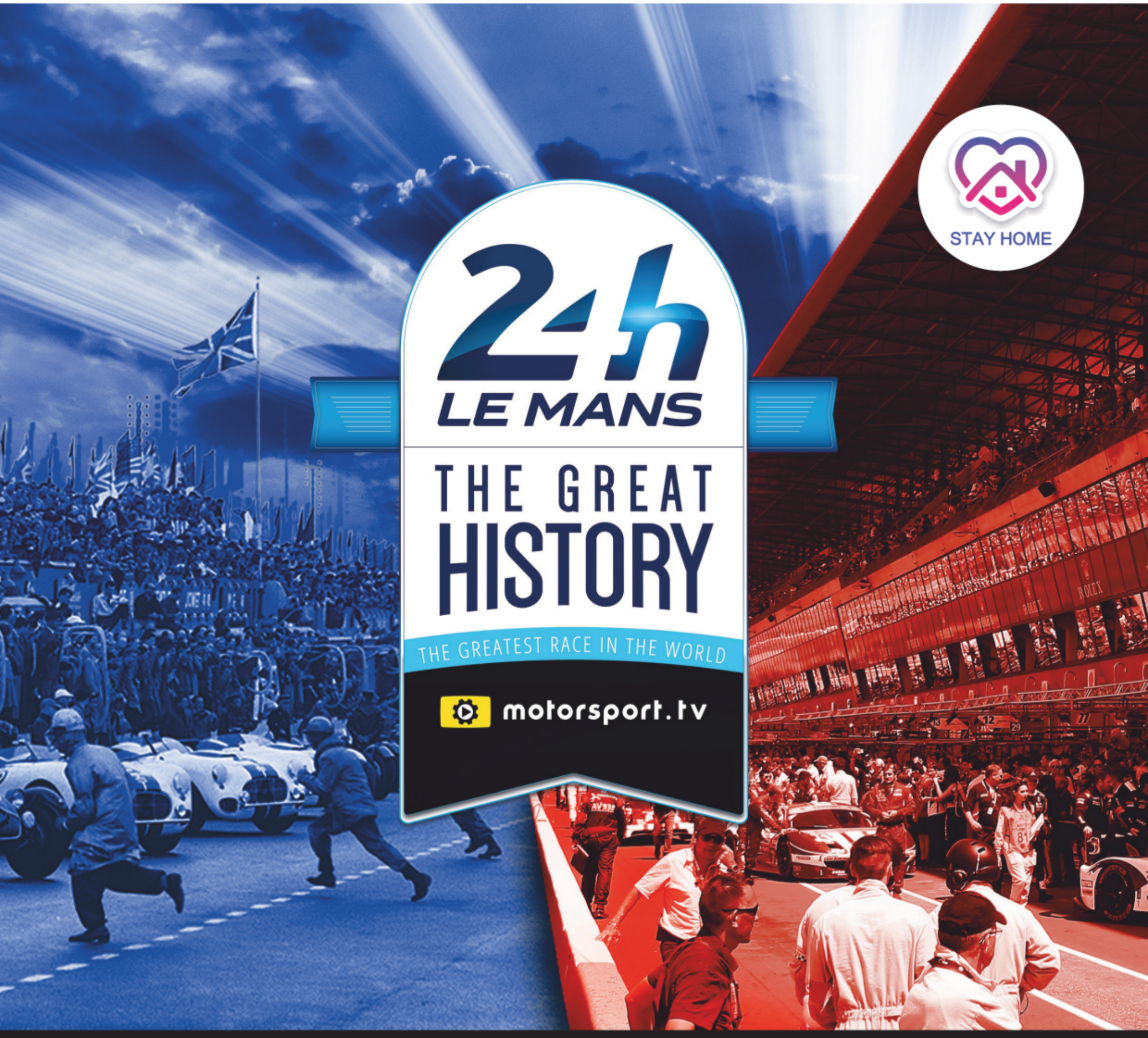
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