

# CUPRA ATECA



## PLAY BY YOUR OWN RULES. WHAT CAR? SPORTS SUV WINNER 2019.

### CUPRA ATECA. CREATE YOUR OWN PATH.

When we created a sport SUV with 300HP, DSG Automatic Gearbox and 4Drive, we were not following the crowd. When we crafted each detail, inside and out, we were not taking an easy road. When we chose to have 19-inch alloy wheels in aluminium and carbon fibre details, we didn't settle for the standards. We only knew. Not what we would find along the way, but exactly where we wanted to go. And here we are.

The What Car? Car of the Year 2019 Sports SUV winner.

Made for those who create their own path.

Official fuel consumption for the CUPRA Ateca mpg (litres/100km):  
33.6 (8.3) – 34.0 (8.4). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 168 (g/km).

[CUPRAOFFICIAL.CO.UK](http://CUPRAOFFICIAL.CO.UK)



Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures (known as WLTP). The CO<sub>2</sub> figures shown, however, are based on a calculation designed to be equivalent to the outgoing (NEDC) test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration. For more information see [cupraofficial.co.uk/wltp-ateca](http://cupraofficial.co.uk/wltp-ateca).

# AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

18 APRIL 2019

## How Lewis won the 1000th race

### Hamilton beats Bottas as Ferrari flounders



 AUTOSPORT

# 1000

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACES



PLUS

### FORMULA E

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# Advantage Hamilton as Ferrari discovers its own diva?

The 1000th world championship race wasn't the best event, but the Chinese Grand Prix last weekend did at least tell us a few things about how the 2019 season is likely to develop.

First, and most importantly, Ferrari is still struggling to get the best out of its SF90. Events at Shanghai suggest that Ferrari's underwhelming performance in the Australian GP season opener wasn't just an anomaly. It would seem that it is now Ferrari that has a 'diva' on its hands, so it will need to work out its idiosyncrasies quickly, just as Mercedes did with its difficult Wo8 in 2017.

It also looks as though Valtteri Bottas will be a factor in the championship battle, but Lewis Hamilton once again underlined that he is favourite. On a weekend when he struggled to find a balance with the Mercedes and was beaten to pole by Bottas, he grabbed the lead at the start and never looked like losing. And remember, Bottas started 2017 and 2018 in good form, only to fall away in the later stages of the season as Hamilton stepped up a gear.

Red Bull-Honda demonstrated its strategic savvy and Max Verstappen was again impressive on his way to fourth. He will surely be waiting for Monaco to see if he can do what Daniel Ricciardo managed last year and win around the streets despite a power disadvantage.

Before that, though, are the Azerbaijan and Spanish GPs. Ferrari appears to have a power advantage, which should put it in the mix in Baku, and Barcelona is the venue at which it impressed in pre-season testing. If it doesn't win one of those races, then Hamilton's sixth world title will start edging closer.



**Kevin Turner**  
Editor

kevin.turner@autosport.com

**NEXT WEEK**  
**25 APRIL**

**AYRTON SENNA SPECIAL**  
We look at the Brazilian's  
legacy and best races,  
25 years on



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Motorsport Images/Sutton

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## VETTEL SLATES MEDIA FOR TEAM-

### FORMULA 1

Sebastian Vettel believes that Ferrari has been a victim of “poor journalism” amid ongoing scrutiny of the team’s use of team orders in Formula 1, which Mercedes boss Toto Wolff has warned could “open a can of worms”.

Under new team principal Mattia Binotto, Ferrari has attempted to set a clear policy on team orders after suffering from indecision in recent seasons. Binotto has identified Vettel as the priority in “fifty-fifty” situations because the four-time world champion is considered a better title bet compared to his young, new team-mate Charles Leclerc.

Early in the Chinese Grand Prix, Ferrari told Leclerc he would be asked to move aside for Vettel if he could not pick up his pace. He was then asked to let Vettel past, because Leclerc seemed to be struggling more with his tyres and the team wanted to release Vettel to try to keep pace with the dominant Mercedes duo out front – only for Vettel to go slower, but maintain third place as Leclerc fell to fifth behind Red Bull’s Max Verstappen.

Vettel played down the role of team orders in the title battle and said he was “keen to expand much further because it’s always a bit difficult, especially what you make out of the answer”. Asked if there was a specific story in mind, Vettel said: “Not really, it’s just poor journalism from my point of view. But I’m not a journalist to judge. So you shouldn’t take my judgement personally.”

When asked if he had requested the order, or if it was fair, Vettel said: “I knew the moment it

was happening that I would have to face these questions. Not sure I want to answer because I’m a little bit against the way you – all of you – work, because you take bits out of answers here and there and put it into the wrong light. So, if you ask me again in half an hour down in the paddock, maybe I give you a straightforward answer and you don’t write it down or record. Seems the way that, not maybe all of you, but some of you are working.”

Vettel said the conversation about a number one or number two driver was not “frustrating – it’s just a pain to answer the same questions over and over”. The repeated questioning has come despite Ferrari’s position remaining largely consistent: a desire to let its drivers race but putting Vettel first in so-called “fifty-fifty” scenarios.

Binotto first raised the prospect of Vettel receiving preferential treatment, should Ferrari deem it necessary, at the team’s launch of its 2019 car. He has faced further questioning at every turn since, although this has not been helped by team orders being applied in all three races so far.

In Australia, Binotto said the drivers could race one another, but Ferrari told Leclerc to hold position when he asked if he could attack Vettel late on. Binotto explained that it was not worth risking anything over fourth and fifth places. In Bahrain Leclerc ignored a command to stay behind Vettel and passed him for the lead. Both drivers downplayed the incident because Leclerc was so much faster and the pass was easy to make. But it meant that Ferrari faced questions over team orders in the build-up to China and after the race thanks

STAT

31

points Vettel is behind  
Hamilton after  
three races



## Monza in government plea for €60m to save Italian GP

### FORMULA 1

Monza “urgently” needs €60million for the renovation work it wants completed for its 100th anniversary and to secure its Formula 1 future.

At the end of last year it emerged that Monza bosses were planning major changes to the famous Italian circuit for its centenary in 2022, including removing one of its chicanes. But the Italian Grand Prix does not have an F1 deal beyond the current season. Angelo Sticchi Damiani, president of Italian federation the ACI, has now said it is “urgent” that it gets €60m of the estimated €100m renovation budget.

“The ACI is involved in the payment of the hosting fee to Liberty Media and cannot spend

money on the very urgent renewal of the circuit,” he said. “The right way to arrive at this date is to have the circuit up to [the standard of] its history. If some help could arrive from the Italian government for the circuit, it would be decisive in order to do everything we want to do. We were able to find a balance with the help from the Lombardy region, which expires this year and we have to renew for the next few years.”

Monza is currently on a short-term F1 deal that was struck following fraught negotiations back in 2016. It is in discussions with F1 owner Liberty Media, but Damiani said one problem was the legacy left by previous contracts negotiated with Liberty’s predecessor.

**GIACOMO RAULI & SCOTT MITCHELL**

## ORDER FOCUS

to the call to swap positions.

Wolff said: “I can understand that. Nevertheless, when you start doing these things it becomes very complicated and you start a precedent and open a can of worms. Then you might have to call at every race that the car behind can go quicker.”

Mercedes is well-placed to comment on Ferrari’s situation. It has grown to act decisively when implementing team orders, most notably at last year’s Russian Grand Prix. Then, race leader Valtteri Bottas was told to move aside for championship contender Lewis Hamilton, who was being caught by Vettel’s Ferrari. Last weekend in China, while Ferrari struggled, Mercedes protected its result by pitting Hamilton and Bottas on the same lap. Bottas said it ended any chance he had of fighting his team-mate for the win, but Mercedes was playing it smart.

“We had a situation today where they were pushing each other very hard and taking a risk to potentially not finish the race,” said Wolff. “It’s not a Ferrari problem alone – every team has that issue if you have two alpha drivers.”

That is the problem facing Ferrari. Leclerc is challenging the nominal alpha driver and proving more than a “little bit of a number two”, which is how Mercedes’ 2016 world champion Nico Rosberg believes he is being treated.

Ferrari does not have to adjust its position if it feels justified continuing to back Vettel. Should that be the case, though, it must be prepared to continue to field uncomfortable questions.

**SCOTT MITCHELL**

## F1 ‘Q4’ revamp in limbo after system flaws raised

### FORMULA 1

Plans to introduce a four-part Formula 1 qualifying system for 2020 remain in limbo, after further discussions at the Chinese Grand Prix.

Team managers met FIA technical chief Nikolas Tombazis and F1 sporting director Steve Nielsen to dig deeper into the system, which would see four cars eliminated after Q1, Q2 and Q3, leaving eight to contest Q4. The top eight would then start

the race on the same spec of tyre used to set their best Q4 times.

The consensus was that Q4 would be an anti-climax, with the six cars from the ‘big three’ teams drifting towards using the hard tyre in qualifying, thereby reducing strategic variations, and the other two in Q4 either not running or making a token effort.

F1 owner Liberty felt the plan would hold viewers’ attention.

**ADAM COOPER**

**P11 OPINION**



## Ford evaluates hypercar future after GT pullout

### WORLD ENDURANCE

Ford won't be on the World Endurance Championship grid with a full-factory team in GTE Pro beyond the end of this season. But an evolution of the Ford GT could be racing at the front of the field in the hypercar concept ranks come 2020-21.

The US manufacturer has admitted that it is evaluating how its carbon-chassis GTE car could become a hypercar WEC contender after the rules were opened up last month to incorporate road-going supercars to race alongside the lookalike prototypes for which the class was conceived. The admission came at the same time as Ford finally confirmed that there would be no overt factory programme with the GTE car beyond the end of the 2018-19 WEC and the 2019 IMSA SportsCar Championship.

"It was a very interesting development last month when we learned what was happening with the hypercar rules," said Ford Performance Motorsports boss Mark Rushbrook. "It would give us the opportunity to race our GT as a road-based car in that class. It is something we are looking at and asking what it would take to compete with our car in that class and whether it makes sense."

But Rushbrook stressed that

"no decisions had been made" at a time when Ford is formulating its motorsport future.

Ford was a player in the process that led to the hypercar concept prototype rules published last December. But it stressed on multiple occasions that it was only interested in the category if it could build a car that could be raced in both the WEC and IMSA in the same way as it does with its GTE contender.

Rushbrook has previously insisted that there was no decision about whether to continue the Ford GT racing programme under the Chip Ganassi Racing banner beyond its current commitments. But now he has stated that there will be no full-factory involvement beyond those campaigns, without ruling out some kind of continuing works assistance for the cars. "In these coming months we will be making decisions about what we do with our GT race cars," he explained. "Do we continue to support them racing in some way or do we sell them to private individuals to go racing?"

Ford has been undertaking a wide-ranging review of its motorsport activities. It has stressed the importance of what Rushbrook calls "electrification" in its future.

**GARY WATKINS**

## New era dawns in Japanese racing

### SUPER FORMULA

A new era in Japan's Super Formula series kicks off this weekend at Suzuka. The new Dallara SF19 – halo included – makes its competition debut in place of the much-loved SF14, while the series' silly season has been more volatile than ever.

Honda's reigning champion Naoki Yamamoto switches teams from Team Mugen to Dandelion Racing, while his close runner-up Nick Cassidy has secured what is ostensibly a promotion from Kondo Racing to flagship Toyota squad TOM'S – but actually steps into a team with a lot of work to do following its dreadful season in 2018.

Following a pair of two-day pre-season tests at Suzuka and then Fuji, Yamamoto (below) is looking good for another title attack as he bids for his third crown. "I think he's quite clearly the favourite," Cassidy told Autosport. "At the Suzuka test he was quickest by seven tenths, and at Fuji he was quick out of the box straight away." Although Kondo's Kenta Yamashita – Cassidy's mate who he leaves behind on his switch to TOM'S – narrowed the gap to 0.056s by the end of the Fuji test, there have been whispers that Honda's engines were turned down for the remaining sessions.

Cassidy, who replaces James Rossier alongside Kazuki Nakajima at TOM'S, rates Yamashita as "probably the strongest guy at Toyota at the moment. I'm sure he'll be up there challenging and we'll have to be at our absolute best to beat him. Obviously it was a disastrous year for TOM'S last year by their own standards. Performance-wise, when I joined for the [December] test it was noticeable that it wasn't where it needed to be. But I've been fortunate that the direction I went in last year [at Kondo] was strong and we've made some good improvements."

Of the rookies, it's been the low-profile Alex Palou at Nakajima Racing who's looked best in testing. Other European newcomers are Red Bull Junior Dan Ticktum (Team Mugen), whose form has been middling, and F2 star Artem Markelov (Team Le Mans), who has been off the pace. B-Max with Motopark pair Lucas Auer and Harrison Newey have flown below the radar, but have not gone for glory runs in testing.

**MARCUS SIMMONS**





**FORMULA 1** Damon Hill drove the Lotus 49B in which his father Graham won the 1969 Monaco Grand Prix at Shanghai last weekend as part of F1's celebration of 1000 world championship races. "It was great fun," said Hill. "I've driven 49s before, but I've never pushed them, although you've got a bit of space here." The car, chassis R10, is also ex-Jochen Rindt/Emerson Fittipaldi/Ben Anderson (see last week's Autosport track test!). **Photograph by Motorsport Images/Hone**

## Pulcini steals the thunder of the F1 juniors

### FORMULA 3

When you've got Ferrari Driver Academy prospects at Prema Racing, Renault F1 juniors at ART Grand Prix, and a smattering of Red Bull Juniors dotted around the field, it's logical to look no further for the likely pacesetters in the new-for-2019 FIA Formula 3 Championship.

But the unaffiliated 20-year-old Roman Leonardo Pulcini has other ideas. His career to date hasn't been meteoric, although he was a rival of Lance Stroll's in the 2014 Italian F4 campaign, and crushed Ferdinand Habsburg and new IndyCar star Colton Herta as he romped to the 2016 Euroformula Open crown. After a strong 2018 in GP3 – fourth in the points – he has been quick in F3 testing and topped both days of last week's pre-season running at Barcelona.

Pulcini (right, top) is lining up with Silverstone-based Hitech GP. His fastest time on Tuesday was inconclusive – that day was rain-affected – but he led the way on Wednesday morning as the field went on qualifying-style performance runs.

ART's Renault pair Christian Lundgaard

and Max Fewtrell – fresh from battling for the 2018 Formula Renault Eurocup – were next, with Lundgaard (right, bottom) trailing Pulcini by 0.147 seconds. Campos Racing's Alex Peroni was fourth, but did trigger a red flag, while Jehan Daruvala led Prema's trio.

The field is now complete, with German F4 graduate Andreas Estner at Jenzer Motorsport taking the 30th and final seat.

### MARCUS SIMMONS

#### TOP 10 TIMES, BARCELONA, 9-10 APRIL

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Leonardo Pulcini (Hitech)	1m32.222s
2	Christian Lundgaard (ART)	1m32.369s
3	Max Fewtrell (ART)	1m32.429s
4	Alex Peroni (Campos)	1m32.460s
5	Jehan Daruvala (Prema)	1m32.507s
6	Liam Lawson (MP)	1m32.621s
7	Sebastian Fernandez (Campos)	1m32.627s
8	David Beckmann (ART)	1m32.642s
9	Robert Shwartzman (Prema)	1m32.712s
10	Richard Verschoor (MP)	1m32.722s



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/GRIFFITHS



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/GRIFFITHS

## Tanak becomes co-team principal at Estonian squad

### WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

World Rally Championship contender Ott Tanak has lined up his post-driving future by taking a stake in MM Motorsport, the team set up by fellow Estonian rallying hero Markko Martin.

While Tanak's star remains very much in the ascendancy, he is laying the foundations for life beyond the WRC in joining Martin on board at the Tallinn squad.

"This sport comes from the inside –

I have known it all of my life and I don't want to work outside of it," Toyota star Tanak told Autosport. "When I lost the drive with M-Sport in 2012, I told myself it was all over and I would go and set up my own team to run other cars. I did that and I will do it again.

"We have been working together since I have known him [Martin]," added Tanak, who drove for MM Motorsport between 2009-11, making his first appearances in the WRC. "And working together is a fair thing

to do. Estonia's quite small, so it's more efficient to be working together than apart. When I stop, this is the next step."

"You have that saying in English," said Martin, who peaked with third in the WRC with Ford in 2004. "It's something about ducks, or birds going away and then coming home – home to roost! Roughly speaking, that's what Ott is doing here. He started his serious rally career here with these people and it's nice to see him coming back."

DAVID EVANS

## Fittipaldi closes on DTM with Audi test

MOTORSPORT IMAGES/SUTTON



### DTM

Pietro Fittipaldi, grandson of two-time Formula 1 world champion Emerson, is edging towards a season in the DTM. The Haas F1 tester and sometime IndyCar driver is being given a tryout in the WRT Audi squad this week in what is likely to be a precursor to a full-time drive in one of its customer RS5s.

Fittipaldi was due to drive the solo car WRT is allowed

to enter in the pre-season test at the Lausitzring on Wednesday and Thursday this week. Team boss Vincent Vosse explained that the reason he was driving the car was because a deal was in the offing.

"Pietro will be in the car for the test and we are working as though he will be in the car for the full season, but we can't say that it is confirmed yet," said Vosse ahead of the test. "He's a

very good kid and I'm excited about having him in one of our cars."

Should the deal fail to come off, the likelihood is that WRT will run only a single car in its maiden season in the DTM. Vosse has stressed the importance of running a potential candidate for the seat alongside South African Jonathan Aberdein in the only official pre-season test.

GARY WATKINS



**INDYCAR** Fernando Alonso hit the track at Texas Motor Speedway last week with the Carlin-supported McLaren IndyCar team as he gears up for his second Indianapolis 500 assault. He drove one of McLaren's two Dallara-Chevys on the 1.5-mile oval. **Photograph by Owens/IMS**

## Women rack up mileage

### W SERIES

A final pre-season three-day test for the new all-female W Series has taken place this week at the Lausitzring, with two weeks to go before the series gets under way at Hockenheim.

The final grid of 18 drivers – who were picked from an intensive selection process – had the opportunity to further familiarise themselves with the Alfa Romeo-powered Tatuus F-318 Formula 3 car they will race in the inaugural season.

The drivers, who include recently crowned MRF Challenge champion

Jamie Chadwick and ex-GP3 points scorer Alice Powell, had previously driven the car as part of the final selection test at Almeria last month. Each car is operated by Hitech GP, with the Lausitzring test giving each driver the opportunity to work closely with her allocated engineer.

Series director Dave Ryan said: “We have a lot of work to do not just on car performance, but also just as importantly on working with the drivers on start procedures, race starts and operating out of a remote paddock and keeping to a fixed, very tight schedule.”

**LUCY MORSON**



Beitske Visser leads  
Megan Gilkes at  
the Lausitzring

W SERIES

### IN THE HEADLINES

#### LE MANS FIELD UP TO 62 CARS

The Le Mans 24 Hours grid will be increased to a record 62 cars for his year's race with the addition of two temporary garages at the start of the pitlane. The move means the High Class Racing and United Autosports LMP2 entries move up from the reserve list.

#### EKSTROM BACK IN RALLYCROSS

Two-time DTM champion and 2016 World Rallycross title winner Mattias Ekstrom will return to the WRX fray for next month's round at Spa, on 11 May. Ekstrom stood down from full-time competition at the end of last season, but his EKS team is continuing to run Audi S1s this season. While he'll be racing an Audi in Belgium, it won't be one of his own – instead it's with fellow Swedish squad JC Raceteknik. He'll be joined by former Blancpain GT Audi ace Enzo Ide, who is making his rallycross debut after buying an S1 from EKS at the end of last season.

#### HOY TO MAKE WRX DEBUT

Cycling superstar-turned-sportscar racer Chris Hoy is to make his WRX debut in next week's Barcelona round. The 43-year-old will drive an Olsbergs MSE-built Ford Fiesta run by Xite Racing, and was due to get his first taste of the machine at Pembrey this week.

#### LECLERC AND YE ARE F1 JUNIORS

Two more leading talents have been vacuumed up by F1 junior programmes in recent days. Arthur Leclerc, brother of Ferrari F1 newboy Charles, has become a Sauber Junior for his switch from French F4 to its German equivalent. Leclerc Jr will race for the US Racing team of Gerhard Ungar and Ralf Schumacher, which ran Lirim Zendeli to the 2018 title. Meanwhile, Chinese talent Yifei Ye joins compatriot Guan Yu Zhou in the Renault ranks. Ye, a title contender in the Formula Renault Eurocup last season, is racing in FIA F3 this year with Hitech GP.

#### BTCC ISSUES HYBRID INVITATION

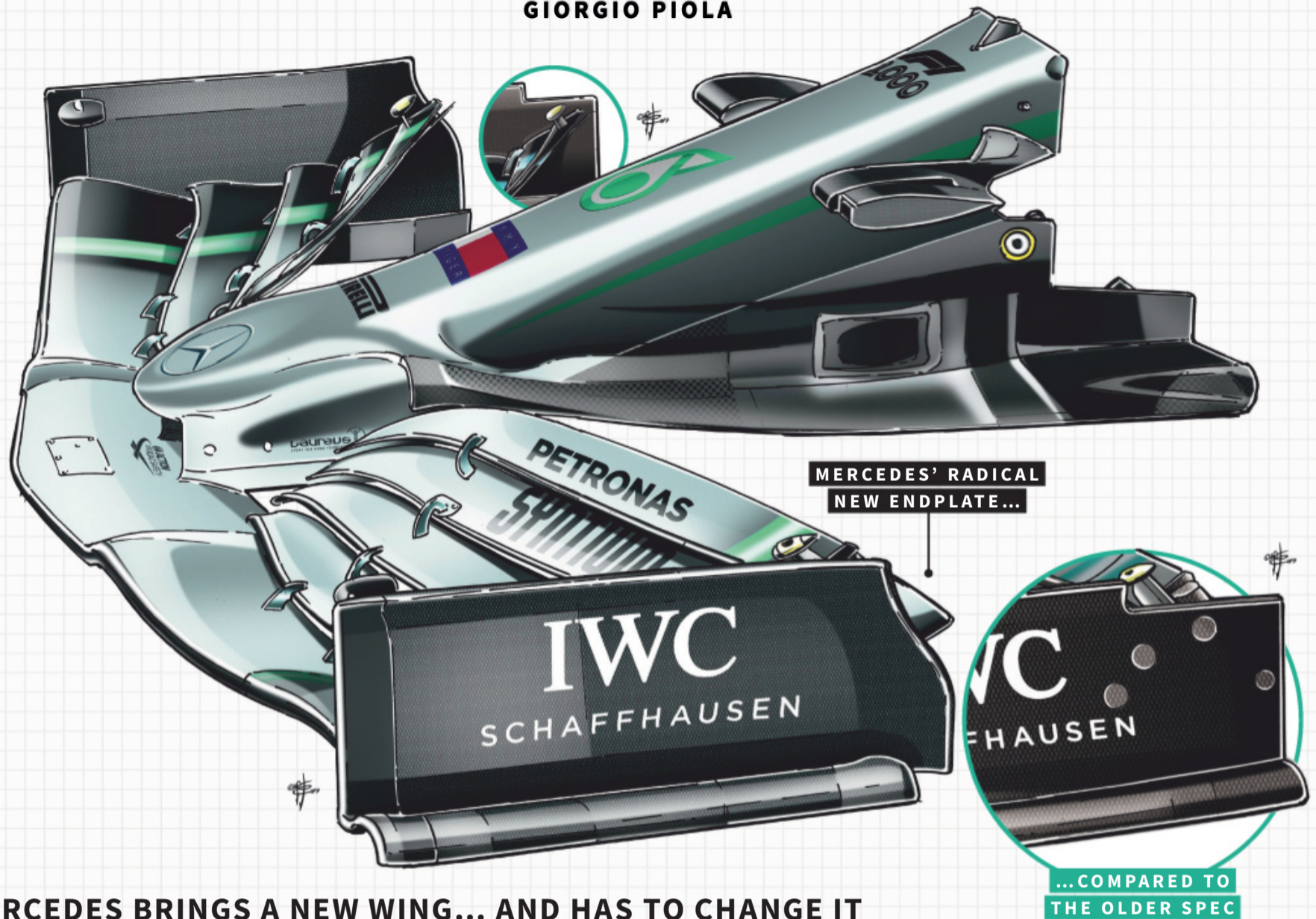
British Touring Car Championship organiser TOCA has issued an invitation to tender for the supply of a hybrid system planned for a 2022 introduction. Last year the BTCC began an investigation into hybrid push-to-pass technology. The plan is for a specified hybrid unit to be fitted to all cars as an addition to their current two-litre turbo powerplant.

#### AUSTIN BACK ON TRACK IN ALFA

BTCC race winner Rob Austin will return to the wheel of the HMS Racing Alfa Romeo Giulietta during the annual mid-season tyre test at Snetterton in July. HMS decided to take a sabbatical from the category in 2019 to allow it to regroup and focus on returning the following year.

# DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



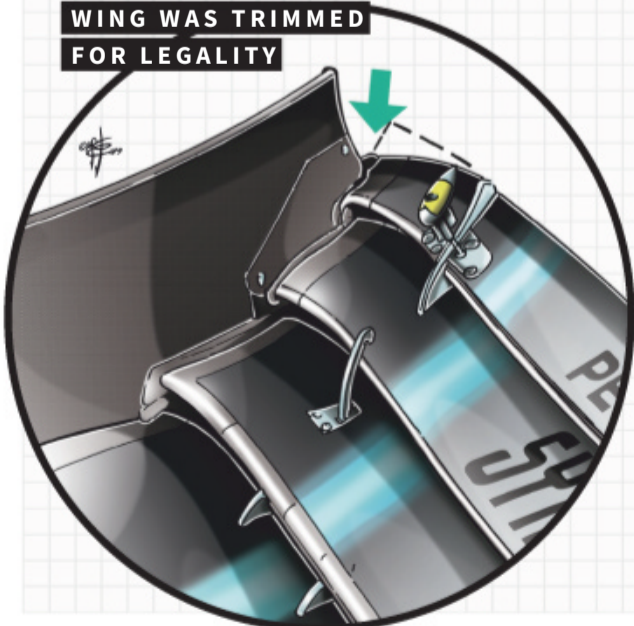
## MERCEDES BRINGS A NEW WING... AND HAS TO CHANGE IT

We're now three races into the 2019 Formula 1 season and each team is beginning to work out what makes its car tick. That said, we're still a couple of rounds away from the usual Spanish Grand Prix flurry of large upgrade packages – everyone is keeping their powder dry for the early flyaway events.

But there's still plenty to do in these early stages. In China, the biggest technical talking point was Mercedes' new front wing, its legality immediately coming into question. The new concept was scooped up straight away by the FIA, which alerted the team to changes it needed to make before it could be run.

On Mercedes' reprofiled endplate,

**WING WAS TRIMMED FOR LEGALITY**



the rectangular cutout in the top trailing-edge corner had been binned for a curved rear section. This pairs up with an exposed section of wing, which is able to energise the flow coming off the front end of the car.

The footplate had been shortened, opening out earlier to allow the rotational flow underneath to be carried out around the tyre by the endplate.

The main sticking point with Mercedes' new wing was that exposed section, readily visible from a side-on view, and the FIA's concern was that the sharp corner could result in punctures. But by the letter of the law, Mercedes had a case for the wing being completely legal.

When the new aerodynamic formula came into play for 2019, the front-wing endplates became more heavily policed by the FIA as a result of the studies developed into generating closer racing produced by FOM's in-house technical research team. It dictates that all endplates must fall into a bounding box, defining it as the "virtual endplate surface".

Each wing element has to be intersected by the virtual endplate surface, stopping teams from carrying any furniture to the outside of the endplate. But there's also a regulation that states that the physical endplate must include at least 95% of that virtual endplate surface, meaning there's

room available for small cutouts.

What that doesn't cover is exposed wing sections. As long as the exposed wing is bound by the virtual surface, it doesn't necessarily force it to be bound by the physical surface, especially if the cutout lays in the top corner where the wing meets the endplate. That's something that Red Bull and Williams have already taken advantage of, featuring small square cutouts on the top trailing-edge corner to expose those wing flaps.

This promotes a greater focus on shuttling airflow around the front wheel, recouping some of the effect lost to the new regulations.

Red Bull and Williams were both forced to make changes, having to remove those cutout sections for Shanghai after concerns outlined by an FIA technical directive. Mercedes, which had turned up with its own interpretation, had to make changes too.

Ahead of last Friday's practice, the corner of the uppermost flap was trimmed back slightly, and the remaining overhang was covered up with a small triangular piece to placate the FIA. Although a small change, it was still going to provide a knock-on effect to the aerodynamics of the Mercedes; front-end downforce is a little compromised as the top flap can't generate as much pressure on top of the surface, while that desired outwash effect is less pronounced.

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**



# Qualified approval

*Formula 1's desire to improve the spectacle of how grid order is decided is perfectly laudable, but tinkering with the format won't suddenly crank up the drama*

EDD STRAW

**Q**ualifying is rarely cited by fans as an aspect of modern Formula 1 that needs fixing, yet for the second time in recent years a major revision is being mooted, the plan being to increase the session from three to four segments.

Given what happened in 2016, when the disastrous and ill-thought-through elimination qualifying format was hastily introduced, met with derision and then axed after two races, the phrase 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' springs to mind. But there's nothing fundamentally wrong with F1 trying to tackle what it understands to be weaknesses.

The main criticism of the current qualifying format is actually one of its strengths. During Q1 and Q2, the real action surrounds those competing to avoid elimination rather than the top teams' battle. This is what makes the hour of qualifying so compelling for those willing to watch some of the lesser names more closely.

But much of the audience primarily has eyes for the top drivers and teams, hence complaints from broadcasters that many only tune in for what they see as the business end of qualifying. So while the current format works well, and makes the qualifying hour more gripping than the old slow-burn approach, there's no reason to be complacent. The proposal to bring in Q4 will intensify what is already a good format, but the desire to create more jeopardy for the top teams seems misplaced.

---

**“If there is a genuine desire to mix things up more, perhaps more extreme solutions are needed”**

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It's true that, with three rather than two sessions to avoid the dropzone, there is increased opportunity for things to go wrong, but currently it's not exactly difficult for those at the front to advance to the final top-10 shootout.

Since three-stage qualifying was adopted in 2006, the top three teams in the constructors' championship have a 96.7% strike rate of advancing to Q2 and 88.8% of making Q3 – and that's counting both cars rather than their stats on getting one car through.

In many cases, the failures to advance were down to mechanical problems and incidents, meaning that the hope of a fast car being eliminated in an earlier qualifying stage on merit is small. Adding a fourth segment of qualifying would create greater opportunity for this to happen, but won't make a huge difference.

Qualifying can be difficult to get right. Before three-segment

qualifying came in, there were various experiments with different formats. One-lap qualifying was conceived to allow fans to see every driver's lap in full, but actually gave them even less of their favourite drivers and lots of time watching those they were less interested in.

It's tempting to suggest some kind of aggregate system would work well. Make drivers carry their fastest laps from each segment through so that the final order is decided by three laps being added together, culminating in Q3. But F1 tried an aggregate system before, in 2005, and it was ditched after six races because, understandably, it was not popular.

So the segments-based qualifying approach seems the best one, although it would be foolish to think having four of them would be anything other than an incremental gain. But there is one other question that arises from this desire for change – namely the clash inherent in the fundamental basis of qualifying and the apparent need to increase jeopardy for the big teams.

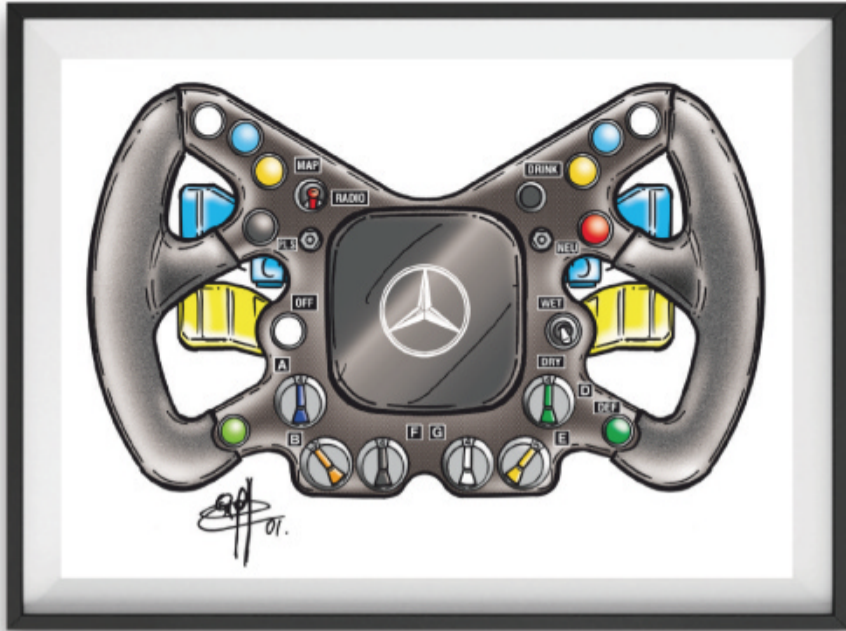
Qualifying exists with one specific objective – to arrange the cars on the grid in pace order. This was pioneered in grand prix racing in Monaco in 1933, yet in recent times there has been a desperation to mix this up. It stands to reason that if you line cars up in pace order, it increases the chances that they will all circulate predictably in pace order. Achille Varzi took that first pole position, and went on to win the Monaco Grand Prix.

What is puzzling is that there's a desire for qualifying to be based on rewarding the cars and drivers in order of pace, yet at the same time to somehow mix this up. Suggestions of extreme solutions such as reversed grids tend to be derided at the same time as people call for scrambled grids for what are termed 'natural' causes.

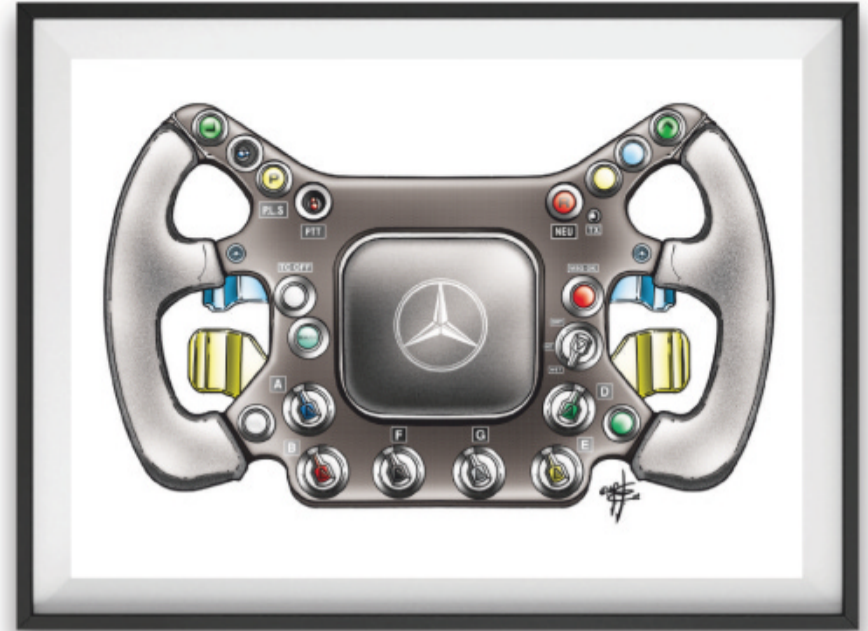
It's certainly true that mixing things up makes for great racing. The 2005 Japanese GP is a famous example, when weather scrambled the grid and Kimi Raikkonen surged through to win on the last lap from 17th on the grid. There's also an interesting case study in Formula E, whereby the four qualifying groups are set in championship order and the leaders go out first to run on the track when it's at its slowest. This has played a part in what's been a dramatic season to date, despite criticism in some quarters.

So the Q4 idea is not a bad one as such. It will likely make a tiny dent in the problems F1 has detected with qualifying, even if it won't come close to solving them, meaning that it's entirely understandable that the plan has been questioned. But there are wider questions surrounding qualifying that F1 needs to consider. If there is a genuine desire to mix things up more, perhaps more extreme solutions need to be conceived...

Either that, or stick with the conventional approach of qualifying in pace order. Both approaches are valid, but what is frustrating is the halfway-house approach. ❄



McLAREN MP4/16 - 2001



McLAREN MP4/17 - 2002



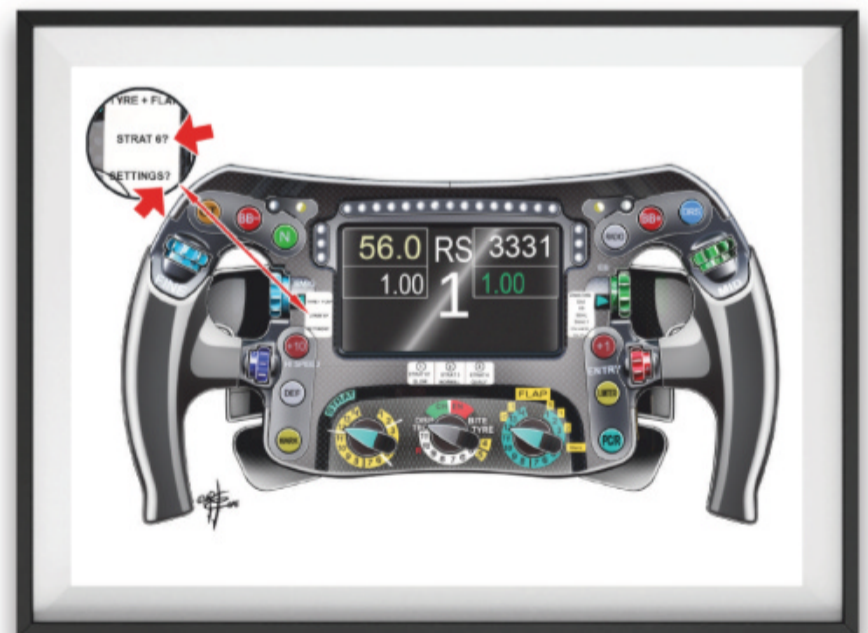
FERRARI F2002 - 2002



WILLIAMS FW26 - 2004



MERCEDES F1W04 - 2013



MERCEDES F1W07 - 2016



FERRARI SF70H

THE ART OF



RACING



# Conquering the Chinese way

*Renault development driver Guan Yu Zhou not only has his eyes on Formula 1 – he also hopes to do for motorsport in China what Fernando Alonso achieved in Spain*

JACK BENYON

**I**n 2005, Fernando Alonso won the Formula 1 World Championship and inspired a Spanish nation that had previously seen little beyond MotoGP with a new passion for four-wheeled motorsport. Interest reached such levels that Spain even briefly had two grands prix as Valencia joined Barcelona on the calendar, and ticket sales for events on the Iberian peninsula rocketed, as did grassroots participation.

In 2004 Alonso came fourth in the first-ever Chinese Grand Prix for Renault, and a five-year-old native was also inspired. Now driving for Renault and a member of its Formula 1 junior programme, Guan Yu Zhou could just do for Chinese motorsport what Alonso did in Spain a decade and a half ago.

Born in Shanghai, Zhou – known as Joe or Joey by most – lived in China until 2012, when he moved to the UK to compete in karts “against the best”, something he has never been scared of.

He was immediately successful when he moved to cars, finishing second in Italian F4 to Ralf Aron. Then came three years in F3, the first probably a bit too soon as he effectively became a victim of his F4 form causing a quick move up the ladder. In 2017 a switch from Motopark back to Prema, with which he had competed in F4, yielded better results. A tough 2018 season didn’t deliver what was promised after he won the first race of the year, which had looked like a breakthrough at the infamous and tricky Pau circuit.

**“Reaching F1 on merit and becoming a fully fledged driver is the priority, not the ‘brand’”**

Now he has taken the step up to Formula 2 and a seat with Virtuosi Racing, which ran in recent years under the Russian Time banner. That graduation means Zhou is on the Formula 1 support package. With it comes a switch from being a Ferrari junior to a Renault one, and last weekend in Shanghai he drove an F1 car – even if it was an older version – on the streets in front of a bumper crowd.

In an era where having the right backing is often as important as having a sufficiently starry track record, Zhou has all the necessary support to reach F1. But he is eager to complete his apprenticeship before making what will be the biggest step of his career.

“It feels good to be labelled the best in your country – it’s not easy to get to where I am now,” says Zhou. “But obviously I am working as hard as I can to achieve my ultimate goal to become

the first Chinese Formula 1 racing driver. There’s not that much pressure – you have to turn it into motivation.

“I’m doing simulator work for F1 [with Renault] and on F2 weekends I can join the F1 debriefs, to analyse stuff with the F1 drivers. Anything I need to help me, the Renault F1 team is more than happy to help. That’s definitely something really good.

“There’s not exactly a number of years [in terms of timeframe] for when I want to get to F1, but I try to think in two years’ time if that’s possible. Firstly I have to do well in F2, and try to get good superlicence points as they open a lot of opportunities. Also you need the chance to have an open seat to race in F1.”

Virtuosi is the perfect place for Zhou to be. It is known for helping drivers entering the series for the first time, and won the teams’ championship in 2017 as Russian Time. Two years there will serve Zhou well and, if his F2 debut in Bahrain last month was anything to go by, there’s plenty of potential this season for the 19-year-old. A brake issue in qualifying meant starting near the back of the grid for the first race in Bahrain, but he fought back to 10th and then turned that into fourth in the sprint race, passing polesitter Mick Schumacher (who took sixth) and fellow Renault junior Jack Aitken, who started second and finished 11th.

Zhou is well aware of his role as a figurehead for motorsport in China, but he’s turned that pressure into a positive.

“The first thing is to be an F1 driver – as soon as I get there I think motorsport in China will go up, like the other sports in the past,” he says. Zhou is a basketball fan and a similar phenomenon happened when Yao Ming was the first Chinese basketball player to be chosen first overall in the NBA draft.

“You need to have somebody who will be an ambassador for the sport in your country. Then you will have much more people following it and looking into it, and you start to get young drivers doing the same. But you need to reach that goal first.”

The link with Renault is perfect, since it is pushing hard to penetrate the Chinese market. That may explain his switch from the currently more competitive Ferrari team, but Zhou is adamant there’s more to it than the Chinese link. Reaching F1 on merit and becoming a fully fledged driver is the priority, not the ‘brand’.

“It’s a good call that I made [to join Renault],” he adds. “Renault care a lot about the Chinese market but at the same time there’s so much more opportunity with F1 stuff, like doing the demo before the Chinese GP. I’m really pleased the decision has been made and they’ve given me lots of opportunities already.”

His prospects of reaching that goal are strong. Zhou has two years of learning to complete in F2 and, as with Mick Schumacher, he is somebody F1 is keen to welcome. With a population of 1.4 billion, China is an untapped market in F1 terms – and Guan Yu Zhou mania is just the kind of thing the championship is looking for. ✨

# YOUR SAY

*If I have one birthday wish it's that the sport learns the lessons from its glorious past and its troubled present and uses them to create a prosperous and exciting future*

TOM MARTIN

### A milestone to be celebrated

Congratulations to Formula 1 on the 1000th race, world championship event or whatever it actually is. If last weekend's rather forced celebrations have done one thing, they have reminded me just how wonderful this amazing sport can be.

Sadly, the Chinese Grand Prix was a huge statement about everything currently wrong with the sport. A race dominated by teams controlling their drivers' pace and strategy, with so little action that one of the 'highlights' was a double pitstop. A race played out on a sterile Tilke-drome, a place we only visit for commercial reasons, a track built for the corporate empires of the car manufacturers who wield too much power in our sport.

Still, 1000 races is a milestone to be celebrated. If I have one birthday wish it's that the sport takes a long, hard look at itself, learns the lessons from its glorious past and its troubled present and uses them to create a prosperous and exciting future.

On another note, Formula E, the sport that so many are worried F1 will turn into, delivered another epic race in a fantastic season with an open and unpredictable title fight – but then electric racing is boring, isn't it!

**Tom Martin**  
Cardiff

### Let's recapture lost beauty and elegance

I've enjoyed reading your F1 1000 races celebration issue (11 April) and I'd agree that the four Lotus cars that Ben Anderson tested are indeed some of F1's greatest game changers. Moreover, I'd also suggest that the Lotus 49 (especially in its 1967 pre-wings configuration), 72 and 79 are – to my mind at least – the three best-looking F1 cars of all time, too.

Such things are of course in the eye of the beholder, all very subjective, etc, etc; but alongside his undoubted technical brilliance, Colin Chapman somehow seemed to have an uncanny knack of creating very aesthetically



pleasing designs over the years, too. Can we not recapture at least some of this lost beauty and elegance from the past in respect of today's cars?

What price aesthetics in F1 2019?

**James Rollin**  
Belper, Derbyshire

### Spot the ex-F1 mechanic...

What a great picture 'From the archive' of the ATS Formula 1 team in your 11 April edition. Lots of technical detail, and lots of action.

And isn't that a very youthful Simon Hadfield, historic race car preparation and driving legend, second ATS shirt from left?

**Adam Going**  
Somerset

*Yes it is; and yes it is. He was very pleased to be able to point out the latter to us as soon as he saw the magazine – ed*

## HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH


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# RACE CENTRE

CHINESE GRAND PRIX • FORMULA E ROME • INDYCAR LONG BEACH • WORLD OF SPORT





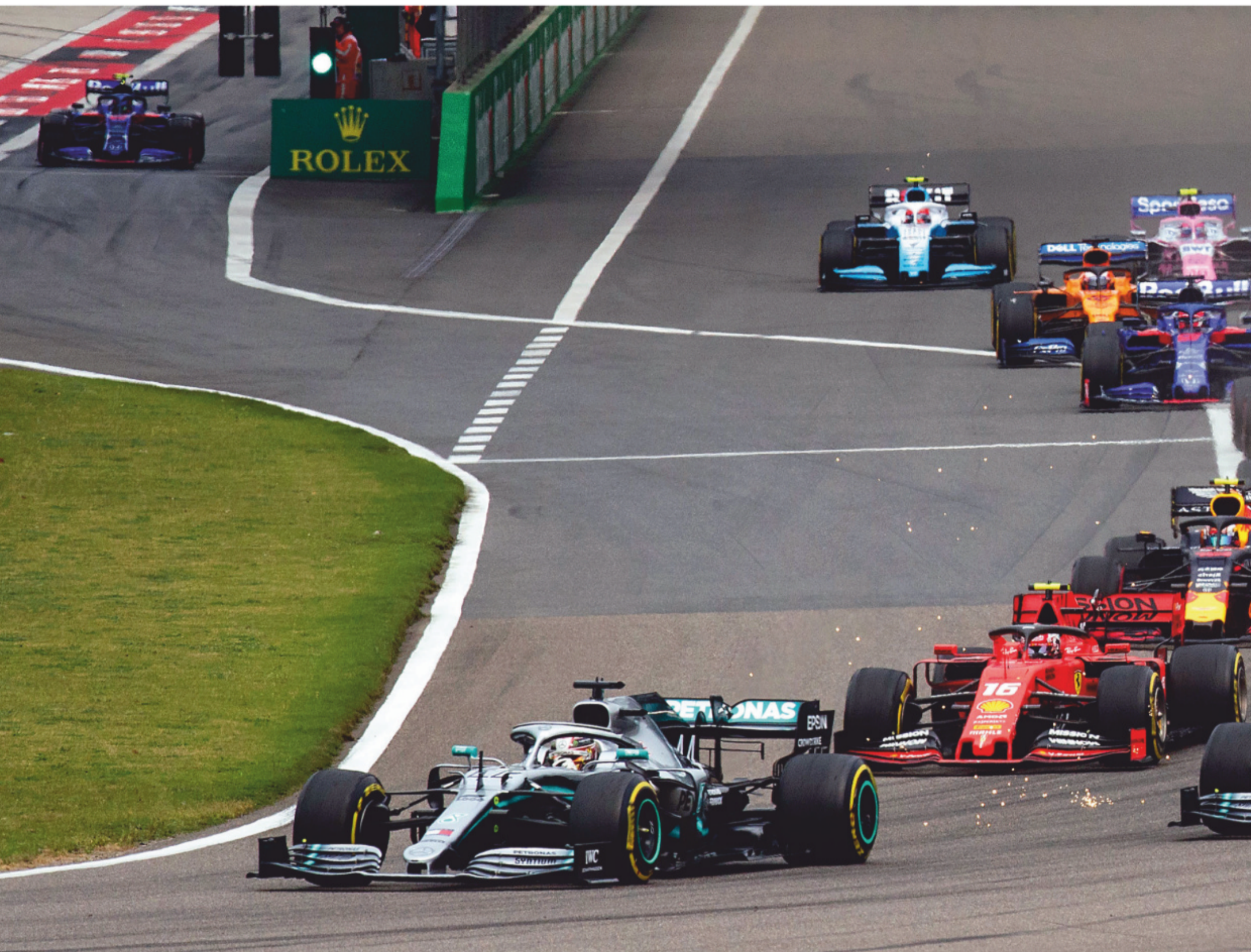
# HAMILTON TAKES THE LEAD

*Lewis Hamilton won the Chinese GP after taking the lead at the start from Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas, as Ferrari's challenge faded*

EDD STRAW

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**  
IMAGES





Lewis Hamilton's victory ahead of Valtteri Bottas in the Chinese Grand Prix means Mercedes has started what should be its most challenging season in years with a hat-trick of 1-2s. But the 1000th world championship race wasn't just about the Silver Arrows dominating – it also cruelly exposed three key weaknesses for a chastened Ferrari team.

Firstly, Ferrari was not fast enough in China, even with its straightline-speed advantage carrying over from Bahrain. Secondly, Ferrari was indecisive in how it managed its drivers and should have either ordered Sebastian Vettel past Charles Leclerc earlier or let the battle between the pair play out rather than doing a bit of both. Thirdly, its strategy with Leclerc was questionable, ultimately costing him any chance of beating Max Verstappen's Red Bull to fourth place.

Ferrari's pace in Bahrain had raised hopes for the team but, with Mercedes convinced it had run a little too much wing and therefore drag there, things were back to what we now must consider normal in China. The best of the Ferraris was 0.3 seconds down in qualifying as Bottas and Hamilton locked out the front row.

Just as in Australia, the start was decisive in the intra-Mercedes battle and went in favour of the driver in second place. Bottas's launch was reasonable enough, but he picked up wheelspin as he crossed the white line at the front of the grid. That was enough to cause a slight hesitation in the build-up of speed and allowed Hamilton, who had laid down plenty of rubber at the start of the formation lap, to take the lead well before they got to Turn 1.

"Lewis had a better start and, for me, the problem was already on the formation-lap start," said Bottas. "There was a thick white line just in front of my grid box so, when you're still accelerating, and when I went over the white line I got some wheelspin on the formation-lap start. For the race start, I thought maybe it's going to be better with warmer tyres but it wasn't, so once I hit the white line, got the wheelspin, took too long to recover it, lost a few metres of distance, so Lewis got me."

Hamilton was two seconds ahead by the end of the first lap. With both drivers on the medium Pirellis, having used them to set their times in Q2 – like all of the top five – Bottas halved the gap on the second lap to 1.047s.

From lap three to lap 20, Hamilton eked out an average of 0.248s over Bottas to build a lead of 5.516s. But the real story during this phase of the race was behind them. Vettel had the edge over Leclerc throughout the weekend, even though the pair were only separated by 0.017s in qualifying. And, given Leclerc's lengthy self-beration over the radio after completing his lap, it was clear he believed he had it in him to be ahead.

Bottas's start gave him that opportunity, as it led to Vettel placing his Ferrari on the outside line into Turn 1 in the hope of attacking Bottas. He couldn't, and Leclerc on the inside was able to get ahead, comfortably securing third place by the time they entered Turn 2.

Vettel was adamant he was quicker than Leclerc, and after 10 laps the gap to Bottas had grown to 3.715s – with Hamilton nearly seven seconds up the road. Vettel couldn't launch an attack but, with both drivers being urged to push over the radio, it was clear that a swap was on the cards, as



Hamilton took the lead at the start after Bottas experienced wheelspin on a white line

MAUGER

## “LECLERC, AS YOU’D EXPECT, WASN’T DELIGHTED WITH THIS AND STARTED TO TAKE ISSUE BEFORE REINING HIMSELF IN. IN THE END, HE DID AS HE WAS TOLD AND LET VETTEL PAST”

Leclerc was told “you need to go faster otherwise we’ll let Sebastian past”.

Leclerc, as you’d expect, wasn’t delighted with this and started to take issue before reining himself in. In the end, having been given the instruction to cede position, he did as he was told and let Vettel past into Turn 1 on lap 11.

The Ferrari switch allowed fifth-placed Verstappen to close a little. Verstappen could have started ahead of the two Ferraris on the grid had he, along with team-mate Pierre Gasly and both Haas drivers, not failed to start the final Q3 lap before the chequered flag thanks to getting stuck in the preparation-lap traffic. He was 2.7s behind the pair before the changeover, but the gap immediately closed to two seconds when the Ferraris swapped.

Once ahead, Vettel did not initially pull away from Leclerc. In fact, he struggled a little and lost half a second to Leclerc when he locked up and ran wide at the hairpin. “We are losing quite a lot of time,” said Leclerc over the radio. “I don’t know if you want to know or not, but I’m letting you know.”

With the stint well advanced by the time he was ahead, Vettel dived into the pits at the end of lap 18 when only 2.070s clear of Leclerc. This was in response to Verstappen stopping for hard Pirellis a lap earlier. Verstappen had closed to 1.266s behind Leclerc – and 2.827s behind Vettel – when he pitted at the end of lap 17, so both Ferraris were vulnerable to the undercut.

Vettel was called in first and emerged with Verstappen bearing down on him after a good out-lap, on which he efficiently dispatched both Sergio Perez’s Racing Point and Daniel Ricciardo’s Renault. Verstappen attacked on the entry to the hairpin, braking ultra-late and diving up the inside. Vettel left him space, cutting back to the inside and repassing the Red Bull – hanging him out to dry and forcing Verstappen to take a bite of the grass on the run out of the corner. Verstappen considered attacking into the final corner, but thought better, eased off and peeled back in behind Vettel.

Threat averted, hard-shod Vettel was able to consolidate his advantage over Verstappen and inch away again. Mercedes, meanwhile, was able to pick its moment and extended its first stint slightly. Bottas was called in first, at the end of lap 21, with Hamilton a lap later. The reversal of the usual leader-first order was to ensure Bottas didn’t lose too much time to Vettel’s undercut, but he emerged with nearly five seconds in hand.

Conventional wisdom has it that Leclerc should have pitted by this time. Had he stopped a lap after Vettel, he would have lost fourth place to Verstappen but would at least have been close. Instead, he was told >>



SEQUENCE: PORTLOCK

**“VERSTAPPEN ATTACKED ON THE ENTRY TO THE HAIRPIN, BRAKING ULTRA-LATE AND DIVING UP THE INSIDE. VETTEL LEFT HIM SPACE, CUTTING BACK TO THE INSIDE AND REPASSING”**



to extend his stint, which he did, to the end of lap 22.

That means his stint was four laps longer than Vettel’s, and at least three laps longer than it needed to be. From laps 19-21, Leclerc lost 2.5s per lap to Verstappen. On his in-lap, he shed almost three seconds. So when he emerged from the pits, Leclerc was just over 11 seconds behind, and with only the advantage of hard tyres that were five laps younger.

With Verstappen now three seconds behind Vettel, the real battle was the one for fourth and fifth. Leclerc was told to push. Over the next 10 laps, Leclerc was 0.743s per lap faster than Verstappen and started the 34th lap 3.4s behind. But, thanks to an inspired Red Bull strategy call that had a big impact on the race by ensuring the other leaders also had to commit to a two-stopper when a one-stopper was still possible, what followed was Verstappen’s in-lap.

“We triggered the two stops for everybody else,” said Red Bull team principal Christian Horner. “Our rationale was that, pretty early on, we decided that the most upside we might have was in the event of a two-stop race, particularly if there had been a safety car around and others elected to stay on one. This then sparked some discussion between Sebastian and his pitwall as to whether or not they were going to stop at all, but in the end they covered us, and Mercedes had to cover him. And Leclerc got hung out to dry.”

Verstappen stopped at the end of lap 34, followed by Vettel a lap later.

As the lead Ferrari had been within 14 seconds of Hamilton, the risk of getting caught by a car on fresher rubber by the end of the 56-lapper was too great. To avoid losing any unnecessary time to the undercut with either car, Mercedes decided to double-stack its cars. While there was 5.5s between the two, it was still a pressure point.

“We wanted to make sure that Valtteri and Lewis didn’t lose out in pitting,” said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. “It’s an extremely tricky manoeuvre – you don’t get to train that a lot. The first line of attack needs to be out of the way for the second group to put the tyres on. How it functioned today, I can only take my hat off to the mechanics and everyone involved.”

When it all shook out, the spread of the leading cars had narrowed. The Mercedes were still safe, but Vettel had closed to within 10s of the lead. He wasn’t close enough to threaten Bottas, but it showed that Mercedes was justified in pitting its two cars simultaneously.

But there was one odd man out among the leaders – Leclerc. He found himself a strategic outlier and running second on the road, only a few seconds behind Hamilton. With a tyre and car pace disadvantage, he was inevitably going to fall away from the leader and he was soon passed by Bottas after a spirited defence. For the second time in the race, he was told to let Vettel past just before making his second stop on lap 42. This time, Ferrari was justified in leaving him to run long, either in the hope of making a one-stopper work or to build a significant tyre offset that



## “AN INSPIRED RED BULL STRATEGY CALL HAD A BIG IMPACT ON THE RACE BY ENSURING THE OTHER LEADERS ALSO HAD TO COMMIT TO A TWO-STOPPER WHEN A ONE-STOPPER WAS STILL POSSIBLE”

might give him the chance to catch and pass Verstappen. On top of that, there was forlorn hope that he might hold up Bottas and allow Vettel to get into the fight for second.

“We stayed out because we tried to understand the tyre wear and if he could have concluded the race on one stop,” said Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto. “One stop could have been his better chance to recover some positions. We recognised it was safer to come in.”

Like the rest of the frontrunners, Leclerc had mediums fitted for the final stint. He emerged, with 14 laps remaining, 15 seconds behind Verstappen as he navigated the first corner. That gap only came down to 14.695s by the end of the lap and Leclerc faced an almost impossible task. Over the final 13 laps, Leclerc was the fastest man on circuit, but only 0.850s on average faster than Verstappen, and fell 3.7s short in fifth place.

Behind them, Pierre Gasly’s difficult weekend offered one consolation in the form of an opportunity to attack Vettel’s fastest lap. He’s still trying to get on top of how to get the best out of the Red Bull, citing in particular the corner-exit phase — although he also appears to be struggling to get the car turned in as he would like.

The result was a lonely run to sixth place but, with a big gap back to the Renault of Ricciardo, he could comfortably make a pitstop for a set of softs previously used in qualifying. With three laps remaining, he dived into the pits and attacked on his first flier. He successfully took fastest lap by 0.094s, although it was a little more calculated a >>

## QUALIFYING



In the build-up to the final stage of qualifying, Valtteri Bottas seemed to have the edge on Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton. Faster on Friday by 0.707 seconds, in Saturday practice by 0.859s and in Q1 by 0.457s – even Hamilton’s advantage in Q2 was the result of having a second crack on mediums as he tried to get on top of the car. It was a sign that Hamilton was making progress, but Bottas responded to the pressure brilliantly, putting in two laps good enough for pole position in Q3 – just.

On his first lap, a mighty first sector gave him 0.131s over Hamilton straight away. He eked out a few more hundredths in the middle sector, but Hamilton’s rapid run through the final sector meant he closed to within 0.007s by the line. In fact, he was up on Bottas before a more conservative approach into the last corner cost him. Talk about pressure...

Bottas didn’t improve by much on his final lap, finding just 0.016s in trickier conditions, but it was enough to give him pole position by 0.023s from Hamilton, who failed to improve. And this was despite Bottas admitting he couldn’t get a perfect lap.

A glance at the theoretical fastest lap, based on putting together the three fastest sectors by each driver in qualifying, suggests Hamilton did have it in him to be ahead. While nobody managed to put their perfect lap together in Q3, that Hamilton lost 0.318s in the final sector on his final lap potentially cost him pole.

**“THAT HAMILTON LOST 0.318s IN THE FINAL SECTOR ON HIS FINAL LAP POTENTIALLY COST HIM POLE”**

Ferrari lacked the pace to challenge the Mercedes, with Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc fortunate to beat Max Verstappen’s Red Bull. Verstappen was just ahead of both based on his first-run time, but a mix-up in the traffic jam to start the lap as close as possible to the chequered flag, during which Vettel overtook him at the hairpin, meant he didn’t get a second attempt. A similar fate befell sixth-placed Pierre Gasly and the two Haas drivers.

Vettel beat Leclerc by just 0.017s. Despite closing the gap to his team-mate, who he had trailed throughout Friday and Saturday, Leclerc castigated himself over the radio for mistakes on his lap.

For the first time this season, Renault reached Q3, with Daniel Ricciardo beating Nico Hulkenberg to seventh place.

**EDD STRAW**



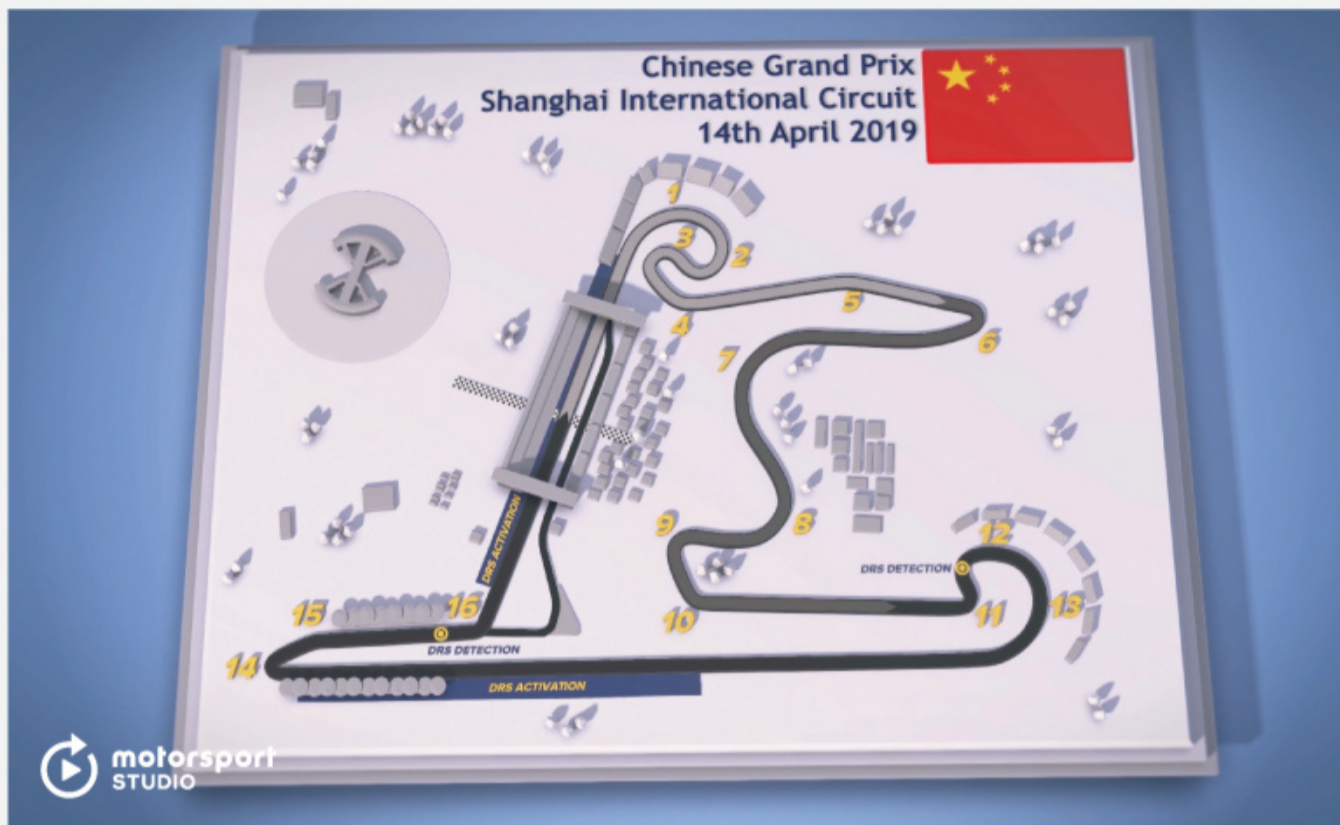
TRACKSIDE VIEW

When watching trackside, it's always fascinating to pick out differences in the styles of the drivers. Standing on the outside of the long Turn 3 left-hander – which also offers a good view of the second turn and, if you turn around, the fast entry to the first corner – one pair of drivers stand out for their differences: Robert Kubica and George Russell.

With the Williams duo on slightly offset runplans compared to the rest of the field, heading out earlier for their runs and completing their qualifying simulations on soft Pirellis before the rest, it's easy to catch their quickest laps. The contrast is stark. Kubica is all steering inputs, throttle stabs and the odd snatch of the brake, while Russell is significantly smoother.

On their qualifying simulation laps, Kubica has several jabs of the throttle out of Turn 2. Into Turn 3, he brakes late, locking up and producing a tiny puff of smoke (you can just see the end of the lock-up in the photograph) as he hustles the car through the left-hander.

Russell's approach is altogether more controlled. He rolls the car into the corner, the lack of a lock-up ensuring he gets the nose in more tightly. While this means the rotation phase of the car is longer, it also keeps a tricky



car under better control.

“All the drivers have slightly different approaches to this circuit,” says Russell. “It's clear on the data we're doing different things in the first two corners but we always come out almost equal. It's not like there's necessarily a right or wrong way of approaching it.”

Russell, who describes himself as “a smooth and in-control driver”, is right. A glance at the first sector

times on their fast laps, running a few seconds apart, shows they are almost identical in pace.

“Every driver is trying to react to the car and what it's doing – it depends on many factors,” says Kubica of his driving style. “On the car, on the set-up, on engine mappings, so it depends. You follow what the car does and you try to obtain maximum grip in that moment and what you must do to get a better feeling

or a better lap time.”

This suggests the difference is not in the way the driver is attempting to achieve the results, but in the car itself. Kubica has talked in the past about his car being different to that of his team-mate's, something Russell has backed up, and it seems he's battling a car that's more on the nose. It's what makes comparisons between the pair difficult.

**EDD STRAW**



Kubica (l) locks up, flat-spotting front-left tyre, Russell more controlled



Mercedes has completed the first three races with a hat-trick of 1-2s

**“HAMILTON’S REWARD FOR CROSSING THE LINE 6.6s AHEAD OF BOTTAS WAS, FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS SEASON, THE CHAMPIONSHIP LEAD”**

ETHERINGTON

mission than the narrow margin might suggest.

“Not so much,” he said when asked if it felt like a qualifying lap. “I had the delta time, I knew the target to do and it was a decent lap.”

Losing that bonus point for fastest lap at the death was the final nail in the coffin for Ferrari on a difficult weekend. After the promise of pre-season testing, we’ve now seen enough even with the Bahrain anomaly to say that Mercedes, which was effectively four days behind in testing having introduced its ‘real’ 2019 car aero-wise at the second test, is definitively stronger – for now.

And for Hamilton personally, the weekend was something of a struggle even though he came out on top. But he worked sensibly and methodically and could have beaten Bottas to pole but for a poor final sector on his second, and slower, Q3 lap. His reward for crossing the line 6.6s clear of Bottas was, for the first time this season, the championship lead.

“We definitely didn’t expect to have three 1-2s, but now I’m proud to have been part of the work that everyone has done and to be a part of these results,” said Hamilton. “[It has been] a little bit of a struggle this weekend for me, but once I got into qualifying, a little bit of a shift in driving style enabled me to unlock a bit more potential with the car. And then the start was obviously great, which was really the decisive moment I’d say for the race.

“After that it was fairly straightforward. I managed to have quite good pace today compared to practice two, long-run pace, so I’m really, really happy with it. You can see it’s still quite close with us all and I think it’s

just down to little small details of overall performance that’s enabling us to come out with the results we’re pulling.”

Vettel, meanwhile, railed against some reports in the media when he was asked repeatedly after the race about team orders. He’s right in that some of the reaction to Ferrari’s willingness to use team orders – quite justified if the circumstances arise – has been misinterpreted in some quarters. But much more concerning to him will be that, on top of the slightly flat-footed approach to the early stages of the race, the car simply does not have the pace.

“As Mattia said, we tried to do everything as a team,” said Vettel. “Two weeks ago, Charles was faster. And it was quite straightforward and maybe a bit easier to pass in Bahrain.

The upsetting thing after this race is we didn’t manage to finish third and fourth. I want to be ahead of Charles, he wants to be ahead of me.”

Meanwhile, built on the confidence of the previous five seasons – and as the world championship enters its second 1000 races – Mercedes has emphatically restaked its claim as the era’s pre-eminent team. Can Ferrari hit back? ❄

#### NEXT F1 REPORT

### AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX 2 MAY ISSUE

Will Valtteri Bottas have an answer to Lewis Hamilton at the next race, and will Ferrari sort out its pace problems and come back to challenge Mercedes?



## Kvyat penalised for McLaren wipeout

Toro Rosso's Daniil Kvyat was hit with a drivethrough penalty for a first-lap incident that ruined the races of McLaren drivers Carlos Sainz Jr and Lando Norris.

Kvyat was battling for 14th with Sainz into the Turn 6 hairpin on the inside line. Shortly after the apex, he had to correct when the rear end stepped out, which pushed him wider towards Sainz. He clipped the right-front of the McLaren with his left-rear and was pitched briefly off the ground. On landing, he slid into the other McLaren of Norris, who had run wide at the corner and had been almost off the track, and hit his sidepod with his front-left. Norris then rode up over the Toro Rosso's tyre and was flicked into the air.

Both McLarens had to head to the pits for new front wings, with Norris carrying other damage into the rest of the race and retiring after 50 laps. Sainz finished 14th.

Kvyat served his drivethrough while running 14th and was never able to get back into points contention, before retiring late on to save mileage.

"This was, I think, a normal lap—one incident — one car coming from off the track, and one car being sandwiched, and me leaving space enough for one car certainly," said Kvyat. "I don't see how that incident deserved a drivethrough penalty."



RUBIO

### BIG NUMBER

# 52

Kimi Raikkonen's elimination in Q2 in China ended a run of 52 consecutive Q3 appearances, which started at the 2016 German GP. From 13th on the grid, he finished ninth behind Sergio Perez.

## Albon scores points after shunt causes pitlane start



ETHERINGTON

Toro Rosso driver Alex Albon scored a point for the second consecutive race after starting from the pitlane following a big accident in Saturday practice.

Albon ran wide exiting the final corner on his qualifying simulation lap, dropping the right side of his car onto the artificial grass at the exit. He attempted to hang onto the tankslapper without losing momentum, but was flicked right into the barrier separating the track from the pit entry. The damage meant Albon missed qualifying, and the Toro Rosso team had to build up a new car around a spare monocoque.

"There is lap time there, you can run a bit wider and it helps to bring that entry speed into the corner," said Albon, who was uninjured. "It's something I've been

doing before. You always get one snap, it's quite normal, but it snapped and then it snapped the other way. Once you get the tankslapper, you're a passenger and I was hoping it would snap left to spin me onto the circuit, but it went right into the wall."

Having shown strong long-run pace on Friday, Albon ran 18th at the end of the first lap thanks to both McLarens sustaining damage (see left). He then passed Williams drivers Robert Kubica and George Russell, then the Alfa Romeo of Antonio Giovinazzi, to run 15th.

After climbing to 11th as others pitted before him, he finally stopped at the end of lap 19 to switch from hard to soft Pirellis. This dropped him to 16th before he promptly dispatched Russell again. Lance Stroll, directly



TEE



ahead of Albon before the stops, stopped a lap after and was jumped as a result, moving Albon up another spot.

Team-mate Daniil Kvyat lost time earlier to a drivethrough penalty and also made his stop later than Albon, which dropped him behind. Albon overtook Giovinazzi again and then took 11th from Kevin Magnussen's Haas. Albon moved into the final points place when Romain Grosjean's Haas made its second stop.

Despite running to the end, Albon held off Grosjean – who lost time late on to a blue flag for Charles Leclerc – to take his second points finish in three starts and earn the fan accolade of 'driver of the day'.

"Saturday I was maybe worst driver of the day," said Albon, "so it was nice to come back strong."

## Q &amp; A

**DANIEL RICCIARDO  
RENAULT DRIVER**

After a difficult start to his Renault career, Daniel Ricciardo picked up his first points of 2019 with seventh place, having qualified at the front of the midfield. He ran seventh from the start and kept Racing Point driver Sergio Perez behind him throughout.



**After difficulties in Australia and Bahrain, is it positive that you've proved Renault is at the front of the midfield?**

That's certainly positive for us. I was a bit surprised by Perez's race pace. Ideally we want to stretch the gap to the others,

but he had a strong one. So I think there are areas we can still improve. But, generally speaking, if we put the weekend together we should be at the front of that group.

**A good result, but you didn't have perfect tyres at the end...**

We were the only car to do it soft-hard, and considering in Bahrain we tried it and it didn't work, I'm happy we made it work today. It wasn't easy – Perez was actually really quick and pushed me the whole race. I was trying to manage the game, then he was coming, so I just had to go. Towards the end it was starting to get a bit tricky, but I think he was also suffering.

**How was the stint on the last tyre?**

I definitely think we managed it well. Part of me was wanting the tyres to drop off quickly, so I could say, 'Guys, let's do a two-stop.' But they were not dropping off, so I was like, 'OK, let's just try to push this.' So I knew we had to go a long way with the hard. I was a little bit nervous, but I'm happy we made it work.

**How big a boost is it for you personally to finally get a result for Renault?**

It feels good, probably just for my guys in the garage as on my side we hadn't seen a chequered flag yet. It's good they can fly home with a little smile on their face.

**You talked about a different approach in practice after what you learned in the Bahrain test, so did that pay off?**

I think so. It always helps when P1 goes smoothly, and I don't know if that's luck or good preparation pre-race, but the set-up was there. We didn't have to change too much over the weekend, and I felt like I could build on myself as opposed to learn the car by changing this and that. I think some of those things we learned from the test in Bahrain. So hanging back for that was positive.



## Another MGU-K failure for Hulkenberg

Nico Hulkenberg suffered his second successive MGU-K-related failure when he retired after 16 laps with a software problem.

Renault was forced to produce a new-specification MGU-K after McLaren's Carlos Sainz Jr suffered a failure in the

Australian Grand Prix, with the works team running it for the first time in Spain after a double retirement in Bahrain.

"We had to push massively on production, which meant we had to fast-track some of the process and sign-off that we do," said Renault F1

boss Cyril Abiteboul. "Something was triggered that we had not had the time to properly sign off."

Hulkenberg started eighth and ran ninth in the early stages after slipping behind the fast-starting Sergio Perez. He was 15th after an early first pitstop when he retired.

<b>20 Albon #23</b> no time		<b>18 Kubica #88</b> 1m35.281s		<b>16 Stroll #18</b> 1m34.292s		<b>14 Sainz #55</b> 1m33.523s		<b>12 Perez #11</b> 1m33.299s	
	<b>19 Giovinazzi #99</b> no time		<b>17 Russell #63</b> 1m35.253s		<b>15 Norris #4</b> 1m33.967s		<b>13 Raikkonen #7</b> 1m33.419s		<b>11 Kvyat #26</b> 1m33.236s

**FREE PRACTICE 1**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m33.911s
2	Hamilton	1m34.118s
3	Leclerc	1m34.167s
4	Verstappen	1m34.334s
5	Bottas	1m34.653s
6	Ricciardo	1m35.239s
7	Gasly	1m35.428s
8	Kvyat	1m35.447s
9	Stroll	1m35.466s
10	Grosjean	1m35.507s
11	Magnussen	1m35.517s
12	Hulkenberg	1m35.591s
13	Norris	1m35.631s
14	Albon	1m35.695s
15	Raikkonen	1m35.729s
16	Sainz	1m35.756s
17	Perez	1m35.820s
18	Kubica	1m36.847s
19	Russell	1m37.619s
20	Giovinazzi	no time

WEATHER 18C, overcast

**FREE PRACTICE 2**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m33.330s
2	Vettel	1m33.357s
3	Verstappen	1m33.551s
4	Hamilton	1m34.037s
5	Hulkenberg	1m34.096s
6	Sainz	1m34.141s
7	Leclerc	1m34.158s
8	Norris	1m34.296s
9	Ricciardo	1m34.336s
10	Gasly	1m34.455s
11	Raikkonen	1m34.551s
12	Albon	1m34.634s
13	Kvyat	1m34.694s
14	Stroll	1m34.779s
15	Perez	1m34.784s
16	Magnussen	1m34.788s
17	Grosjean	1m35.704s
18	Giovinazzi	1m35.914s
19	Kubica	1m36.121s
20	Russell	1m36.229s

WEATHER 20C, overcast

**FREE PRACTICE 3**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m32.830s
2	Vettel	1m33.222s
3	Leclerc	1m33.248s
4	Hamilton	1m33.689s
5	Hulkenberg	1m33.974s
6	Raikkonen	1m34.246s
7	Verstappen	1m34.447s
8	Sainz	1m34.510s
9	Albon	1m34.600s
10	Kvyat	1m34.783s
11	Norris	1m34.938s
12	Perez	1m35.078s
13	Ricciardo	1m35.142s
14	Stroll	1m35.223s
15	Gasly	1m35.326s
16	Giovinazzi	1m35.726s
17	Grosjean	1m35.771s
18	Magnussen	1m35.998s
19	Russell	1m36.124s
20	Kubica	1m36.176s

WEATHER 20C, sunny

**SEASON STATS**

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Hamilton	68	1	1
2 Bottas	62	1	1
3 Verstappen	39	3	4
4 Vettel	37	3	2
5 Leclerc	36	3	1
6 Gasly	13	6	6
7 Raikkonen	12	7	9
8 Norris	8	6	8
9 Magnussen	8	6	6
10 Hulkenberg	6	7	8
11 Ricciardo	6	7	7
12 Perez	5	8	10
13 Albon	3	9	12
14 Stroll	2	9	16
15 Kvyat	1	10	11
16 Giovinazzi	0	11	14
17 Grosjean	0	11	6
18 Sainz	0	14	7
19 Russell	0	15	17
20 Kubica	0	16	18

**CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

1 Mercedes	130
2 Ferrari	73
3 Red Bull	52
4 Renault	12
5 Alfa Romeo	12
6 Haas	8
7 McLaren	8
8 Racing Point	7
9 Toro Rosso	4
10 Williams	0

**QUALIFYING BATTLE**

Hamilton	2	1	Bottas
Vettel	2	1	Leclerc
Gasly	0	3	Verstappen
Ricciardo	1	1	Hulkenberg
Grosjean	1	2	Magnussen
Norris	1	2	Sainz
Perez	3	0	Stroll
Raikkonen	2	0	Giovinazzi
Albon	1	0	Kvyat
Russell	3	0	Kubica

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

**WINS**

Hamilton	2
Bottas	1

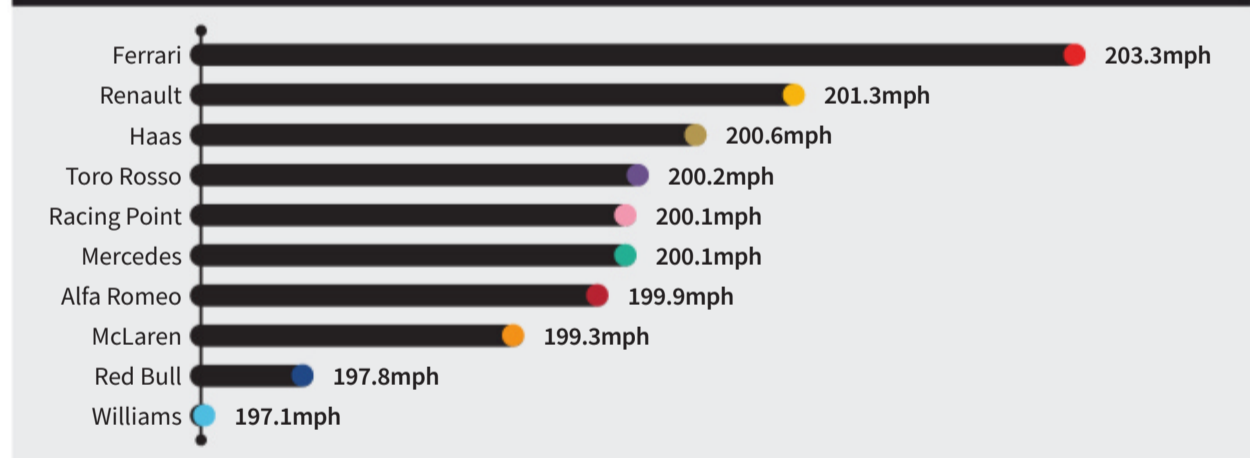
**POLE POSITIONS**

Bottas	1
Hamilton	1
Leclerc	1

**FASTEST LAPS**

Bottas	1
Gasly	1
Leclerc	1

**SPEED TRAP**



**QUALIFYING 1**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m32.658s
2	Leclerc	1m32.712s
3	Hamilton	1m33.115s
4	Verstappen	1m33.274s
5	Vettel	1m33.557s
6	Hulkenberg	1m33.644s
7	Sainz	1m33.686s
8	Ricciardo	1m33.709s
9	Grosjean	1m33.752s
10	Kvyat	1m33.783s
11	Gasly	1m33.863s
12	Perez	1m34.026s
13	Magnussen	1m34.036s
14	Raikkonen	1m34.125s
15	Norris	1m34.148s
16	Stroll	1m34.292s
17	Russell	1m35.253s
18	Kubica	1m35.281s
-	Giovinazzi	no time
-	Albon	no time

**QUALIFYING 2**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m31.637s
2	Bottas	1m31.728s
3	Vettel	1m32.232s
4	Leclerc	1m32.324s
5	Verstappen	1m32.369s
6	Gasly	1m32.948s
7	Hulkenberg	1m32.968s
8	Magnussen	1m33.150s
9	Grosjean	1m33.156s
10	Ricciardo	1m33.214s
11	Kvyat	1m33.236s
12	Perez	1m33.299s
13	Raikkonen	1m33.419s
14	Sainz	1m33.523s
15	Norris	1m33.967s

**QUALIFYING 3**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m31.547s
2	Hamilton	1m31.570s
3	Vettel	1m31.848s
4	Leclerc	1m31.865s
5	Verstappen	1m32.089s
6	Gasly	1m32.930s
7	Ricciardo	1m32.958s
8	Hulkenberg	1m32.962s
9	Magnussen	no time
10	Grosjean	no time

WEATHER 21C, sunny





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## STARTING GRID

10 Grosjean #8 no Q3 time	8 Hulkenberg #27 1m32.962s	6 Gasly #10 1m32.930s	4 Leclerc #16 1m31.865s	2 Hamilton #44 1m31.570s
9 Magnussen #20 no Q3 time	7 Ricciardo #3 1m32.958s	5 Verstappen #33 1m32.089s	3 Vettel #5 1m31.848s	1 Bottas #77 1m31.547s

## RACE RESULTS ROUND 3/21, 56 LAPS - 189.57 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	1h32m06.350s	56	Mu, Hn, Mu
2	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	+6.552s		Mu, Hn, Mn
3	Sebastian Vettel (DEU)	Ferrari	+13.744s		Mu, Hn, Mn
4	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	+27.627s		Mu, Hn, Mn
5	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+31.276s		Mu, Hn, Mn
6	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Red Bull-Honda	+1m29.307s		Su, Hn, Mn, Su
7	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	Renault	-1 lap		Su, Hn
8	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Racing Point-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
9	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
10	Alexander Albon (THA)	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap		Su, Hn
11	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap		Su, Hn, Mn
12	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Racing Point-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn, Sn
13	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap		Su, Hn, Mn
14	Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap		Mn, Hn, Sn
15	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Su, Mn, Mn
16	George Russell (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps		Mn, Hn, Sn
17	Robert Kubica (POL)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps		Mn, Hn
18	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Renault	50laps-acc damage		Mn, Hn, Mu, Sn
R	Daniil Kvyat (RUS)	Toro Rosso-Honda	41laps-save mileage		Mn, Hn, Sn
R	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Renault	16laps-MGU-K		Su, Hn

## FASTEST LAPS

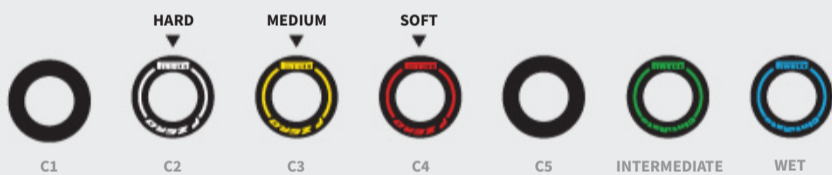
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Gasly	1m34.742s	-	55
2	Vettel	1m34.836s	+0.094s	37
3	Leclerc	1m34.860s	+0.118s	45
4	Bottas	1m34.872s	+0.130s	38
5	Hamilton	1m35.892s	+1.150s	47
6	Verstappen	1m36.143s	+1.401s	45
7	Stroll	1m36.678s	+1.936s	46
8	Grosjean	1m36.873s	+2.131s	37
9	Russell	1m37.283s	+2.541s	51
10	Magnussen	1m37.471s	+2.729s	35
11	Sainz	1m37.502s	+2.760s	44
12	Raikkonen	1m37.812s	+3.070s	27
13	Kvyat	1m37.975s	+3.233s	27
14	Giovinazzi	1m38.048s	+3.306s	32
15	Norris	1m38.346s	+3.604s	37
16	Ricciardo	1m38.632s	+3.890s	38
17	Perez	1m38.702s	+3.960s	37
18	Albon	1m38.901s	+4.159s	22
19	Hulkenberg	1m39.677s	+4.935s	14
20	Kubica	1m39.772s	+5.030s	28

WEATHER 19C, overcast

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 123.49mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 128.71mph

## TYRES

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



## RACE BRIEFING



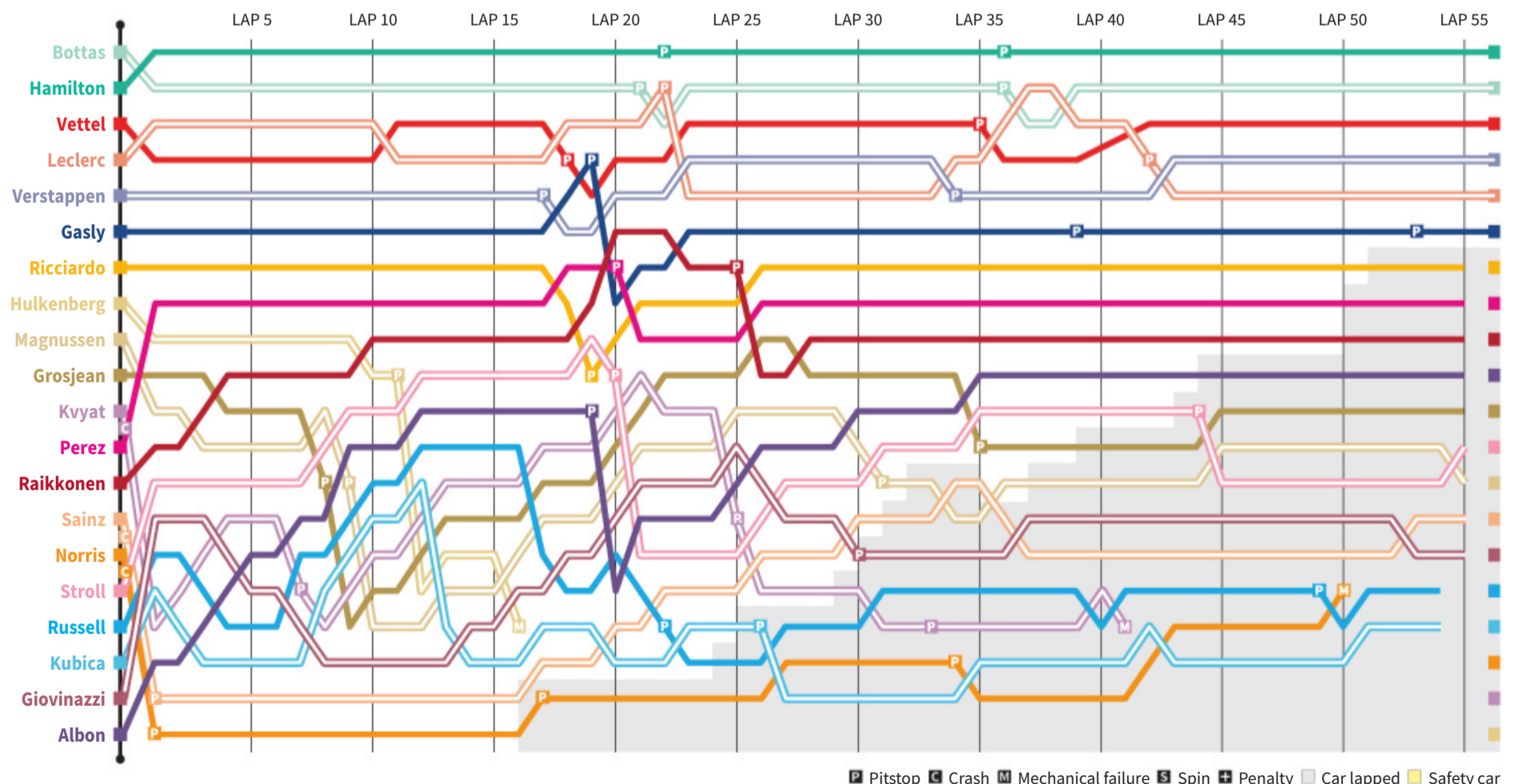
## GRID PENALTIES

**ALBON** Required to start from pitlane after re-scrutineering. Nominal five-place penalty then applied for replacement gearbox

## RACE PENALTIES

**KVYAT** Drivethrough penalty and two licence points for causing a collision

## LAP CHART What happened, when



P Pitstop C Crash M Mechanical failure S Spin H Penalty L Car lapped Y Safety car

# ONE DRIVER GETS A PERFECT SCORE, BUT IT'S NOT LEWIS

*Many drivers starred across the weekend, but only one put together a performance worthy of a 10/10 in our traditional driver ratings*

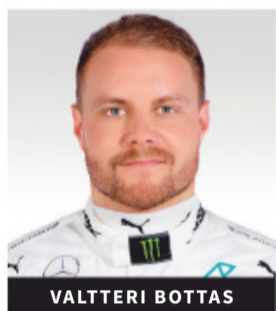
EDD STRAW

## MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

**9** This weekend wasn't easy for Hamilton, who struggled to match Bottas on Friday and was all at sea with the car on Saturday morning. He improved in qualifying, but Bottas's last-corner speed prevented him nicking pole. Took the lead at the start and used first-stint pace to build a decisive lead.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

**8** From Friday practice, Bottas looked the better of the Mercedes drivers, was more at home with the characteristics of the car, and he set two laps good enough for pole. But wheelspin as he crossed the painted startline cost him the lead and thereafter he didn't quite have the pace Hamilton did.

## FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

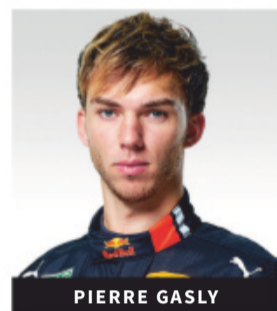
**8** Vettel was the quicker of Ferrari's drivers through much of practice, only to come close to falling behind Leclerc in qualifying. He dropped to fourth after having to take the outside line into Turn 1. Once ordered past Leclerc, he initially didn't pull away but went on to make sure of third place.



CHARLES LECLERC

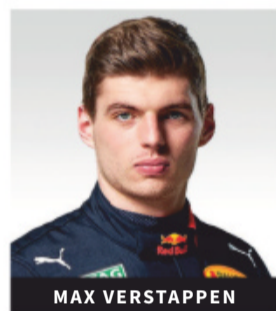
**7** A tricky weekend for Leclerc, who was on the back foot after Friday practice problems. He was kicking himself for not beating Vettel in qualifying after making mistakes. He jumped Vettel at Turn 1, but team orders and poor strategy set him back and meant he was never close enough to attack Verstappen.

## RED BULL



PIERRE GASLY

**6** The 0.841s gap to Verstappen in qualifying perhaps made things look worse than they were, but he wasn't at the same level as his team-mate in China. Even so, he did make sure of sixth in qualifying and the race, and the bonus point for fastest lap late on, even if he's still not on top of the car.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

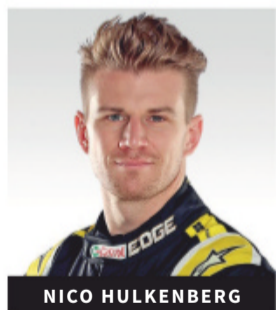
**9** Verstappen might have beaten the Ferraris in qualifying but for missing his second Q3 run thanks to traffic, which he could have avoided had the team been more insistent. Formation-lap spin aside, his race was exemplary and he had the speed to force the issue at both pitstops.

## RENAULT



DANIEL RICCIARDO

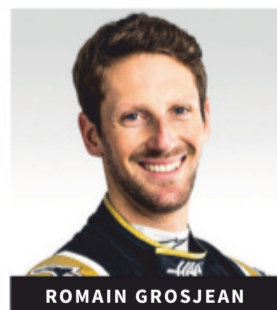
**8** Ricciardo knew he still had work to do at the Bahrain test, even after working on getting on top of the car, specifically to avoid overdriving on corner entry. The progress was clear as he managed to shade Hulkenberg in qualifying, then control the 'Class B' race from start to finish.



NICO HULKENBERG

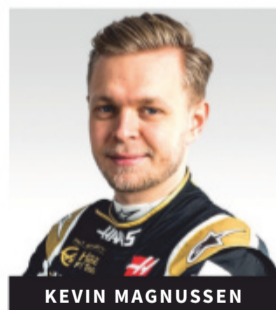
**7** Hulkenberg was pipped by Ricciardo in qualifying, although he would have been ahead by a couple of tenths had he nailed it in Q3. He lost a place at the start, and his two-stop strategy couldn't play out as he retired after 16 laps with a software problem related to the upgraded MGU-K.

## HAAS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

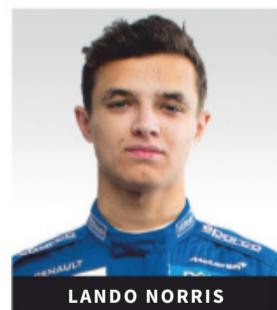
**7** Ended up behind Magnussen on the grid thanks to being very slightly slower in Q2, although he seemed to have a slight edge on underlying pace. In the race, made a go of scoring a point and was the best of the midfield two-stoppers, but ran out of time to get past Albon in the closing stages.



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

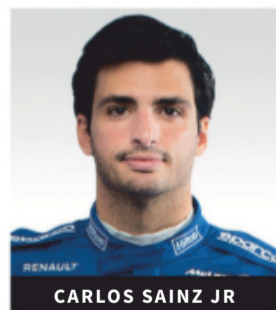
**7** Magnussen won the Haas qualifying battle thanks to being 0.006 seconds faster in Q2, with neither driver posting a time in the final part of qualifying. He was again baffled by the lack of pace in the race as both drivers struggled to keep the tyres alive and slipped out of points contention.

## MCLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

**6** Norris couldn't match Sainz, losing time in the second and third sectors. Qualifying was difficult for McLaren, but it would have been interesting to see what might have happened in a clean race. In the event, Kvyat's mistake led to Norris sustaining damage, but he continued almost to the end of the race.



CARLOS SAINZ JR

**8** Had a 0.444s advantage over Norris in qualifying, and certainly used his knowledge of the circuit to good effect. His race was ruined by being hit by Kvyat at Turn 6, but his pace thereafter suggested that a run at the points would have been on the cards had that not happened.



RACING POINT



**10** Perez thought coping with difficult wind conditions helped him grab 12th on the grid. A superb run early on got him up to eighth, which he held after a well-executed one-stop strategy. Resisted pressure from Raikkonen, and probably couldn't have beaten Ricciardo.

**6** Stroll fell in Q1 for the third consecutive race after a scrappy lap, with the 0.266s gap to Perez putting him into the dropzone. His race was good, but getting undercut by Albon at the first stops cost him a shot at a potential point, although he also finished behind the Haas of Grosjean.

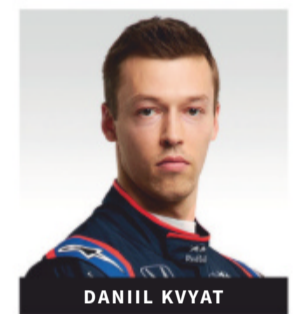
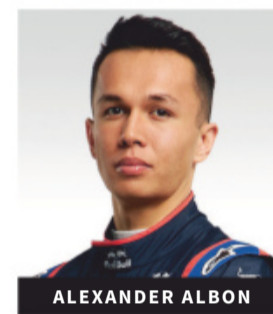
ALFA ROMEO



**8** Raikkonen failed to reach Q3, although the power loss he reported over the radio in Q2 proved to be a strong headwind. But he made good progress in the race, making key passes to climb to ninth. Losing tyre temperature late on meant he couldn't attack Perez to the end.

**7** Giovinazzi is an early contender for 'unluckiest driver of the season'. He lost FP1 to an engine installation problem and then qualifying to a control electronics failure, and started from 19th. He ended up on a curious strategy with an ultra-early first stop that didn't allow him to match Albon.

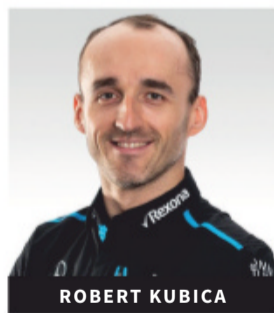
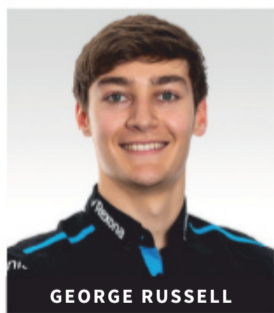
TORO ROSSO



**7** Albon caught the eye with a superfast long run on Friday, but his weekend seemed ruined when he shunted heavily at the final corner in FP3. That forced him to start from the pitlane, but he executed a one-stop strategy well, made some key passes and held off Grosjean for the final point.

**5** Kvyat showed serious pace but didn't make Q3 after a mistake on his second Q2 lap. That put him in harm's way at the start, and his race was ruined when he hit Sainz, then Norris, after a rear-end wobble in Turn 6 and earned a drivethrough. He was 16th when he retired to save mileage.

WILLIAMS

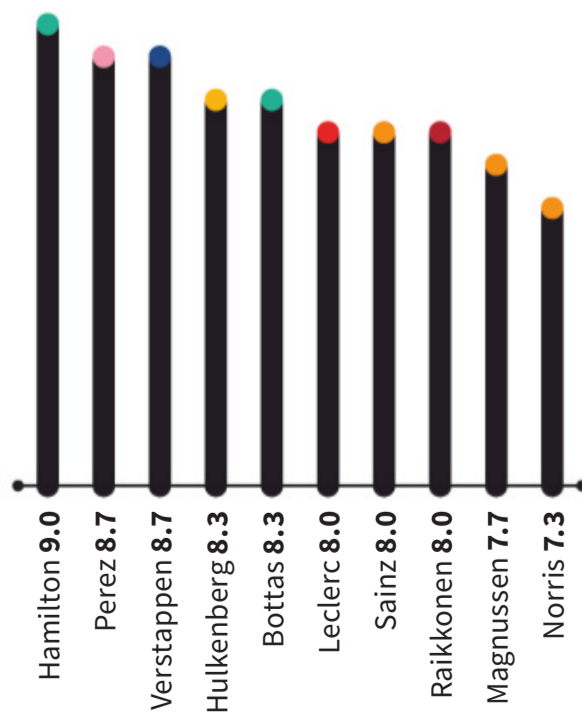


**7** It says a lot of Russell's attitude that he called his qualifying lap "rubbish", despite being the best of the Williams drivers, after struggling to get the car to respond when on maximum attack. He did what he could in the race, scrapping with faster cars before settling into his run to a distant 16th.

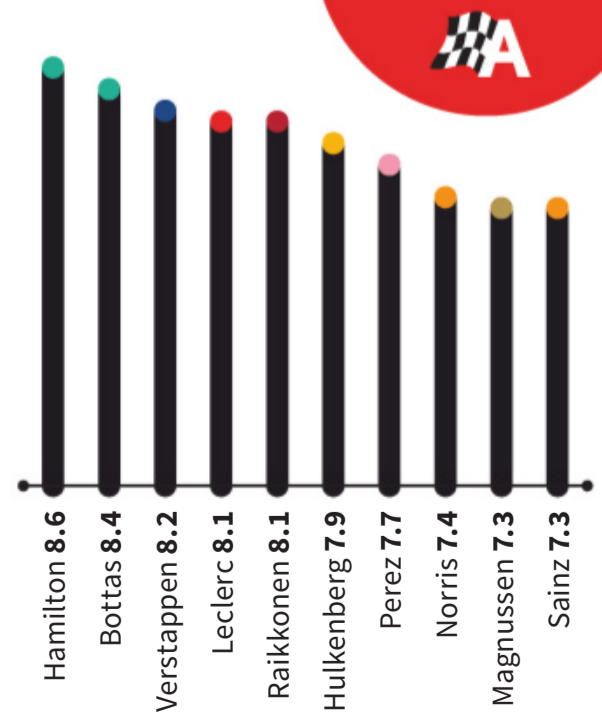
**7** Kubica's Williams didn't seem to know if it was coming or going in China and the effort he had to put in behind the wheel – all throttle stabs and steering inputs at times – suggested the car wasn't behaving. That he qualified just 0.028s behind Russell reflected well, but the race was a struggle.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS

AUTOSPORT'S RATING AFTER ROUND 3



READERS' RATING AFTER ROUND 3



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# Evans finally ends Jaguar's long wait

*The New Zealander wasn't even born when the famous British marque last won a major race, but he finally ended its drought with a fine performance in Rome*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport  
IMAGES





**T**here must be something in the Roman air that Mitch Evans likes. He shone during the ABB FIA Formula E Championship's first visit to the Italian capital last year before dramatically running out of energy late on. And this time he made history for Jaguar with a first FE victory.

There was a second similarity between the two Rome races. Not only was Evans again in the thick of the action up front, but he was also joined by Andre Lotterer, who again eclipsed his DS Techeetah team-mate Jean-Eric Vergne on his way to a podium finish. But this time around it was a gripping, gladiatorial two-chariot race.

While the race start was rather slippery due to an earlier shower, the main action was dry throughout. The same could not be said of qualifying. Lotterer had topped the group running, then the track – mainly in the second sector – was doused ahead of the superpole session. Sebastien Buemi and Maximilian Gunther lost out by having to run first, but Stoffel Vandoorne, Jose Maria Lopez and Evans all subsequently found lots of time as the track dried, moving to the head of the order.

Then came Lotterer again. He looked to be surging towards a maiden FE pole with ease when it suddenly seemed to have gone wrong. He slid wide at the Turn 13 hairpin, but the triple Le Mans winner stayed on it to wrestle pole from the jaws of (probably) fourth on the grid with a superb charge through the last sector.

Behind, the championship leaders – Antonio Felix da Costa, Jerome d'Ambrosio, Vergne, Sam Bird and Lucas di Grassi made up the top five heading to Rome – were >>

left stranded down the order due to what many reckoned was the second biggest group one-two track-evolution delta of the season, after Santiago. But that left the stage set for a tantalising race.

It started with a farce. Lotterer leaped off the line to defend firmly against Evans on the run to the first corner – technically the Turn 13 hairpin due to the track’s offset grid setting. Behind them, Lopez made a slow getaway and went too deep at the first corner, slid wide and was swallowed up by the pack. This left Lopez exposed to attack from behind and, at the Turns 11/12 chicane, he found Bird making a move around the outside. Contact was made, which put the Envision Virgin Racing driver into the wall and seemingly out of the race, with Dragon Racing man Lopez later given a penalty.

Lopez’s first-lap adventures continued when he hit the wall on the inside of the Turns 17/18 chicane and crashed into the outside barrier. The following Gary Paffett had nowhere to go and, as he suddenly slowed, he was hit from behind by Vergne, which blocked the track and brought out the red flags for a fourth race in a row.

Lotterer led the pack back to the pits and the race remained neutralised for the best part of an hour, with Paffett remarkably the only casualty. Lopez and Vergne had their cars fixed during the suspension, as did Bird, whose Virgin team rapidly repaired the major damage he had suffered.

When the racing resumed with a safety-car restart, the focus switched back to Lotterer and Evans. Most of the field opted to use their first attack-mode activations immediately under the safety car or on the following lap. Techeetah team boss Mark Preston later explained that his squad had heard “confusing” information about when the drivers could enter the higher-power mode at the restart, which meant Lotterer did not take his first activation early, and was mirrored by Evans.

The Jaguar driver stayed glued to the rear of Lotterer’s car as the top two edged clear of Vandoorne in third, whose HWA Venturi was falling back but still staying well clear of the pack behind. A tense stalemate ensued, with neither of the top



two blinking and going for the attack-mode zone in the early running.

Due to the many race interruptions so far this season, the attack-mode strategy cat-and-mouse has not really shown its full potential. But that changed in Rome, with only a short full-course yellow – called on lap 14 after Felipe Massa’s car came to a stop on the run from Turn 10 – halting the racing further.

Evans ultimately made the first move and went into the 225kW mode on lap 16. He naturally dropped back from Lotterer due to the zone’s offline position, but soon caught him again. After feigning a few moves, the defining moment of

the whole event occurred.

Evans attacked as the pair bounced over the bumps at the top of the hill approaching Turn 9 on lap 18 of what would be a 29-lap race. He was rebuffed but stayed on it, ultimately getting alongside a few corners later and diving to the inside of the Turns 11/12 chicane. The pair made contact, rubbing firmly, and Lotterer had to give way or end up in the wall. It was right on the limit, but Evans was through.

Both drivers ultimately earned FE’s first ‘yellow cards’, which was how FIA circuit championships director Frederic Bertrand described the verbal warnings that race





GRIFFITHS

director Scot Elkins can now issue (see page 34) to drivers whose behaviour he thinks is going too far.

Lotterer waited until lap 20 to take his own first attack-mode activation, but could not pay Evans back. When that boost ran out he immediately took his second bite of higher power on lap 23, which was when it all nearly went wrong for the leader. Evans played the perfect defensive tactic by heading to the attack zone on the following tour, but moved out of it too early and did not get the activation.

But still Lotterer could not make his advantage pay. Evans eventually took his final attack activation on lap 27 – by which time Jaguar had warned him to slow down to avoid doing an extra lap and running out of energy as a result – and that saw him home to a famous win, with Lotterer satisfied their clash had been on the right side of acceptable.

“I want to thank everyone at Jaguar for the hard work,” Evans said. “It’s not been easy, so I’m really delighted to be the first winner for Jaguar.”

Vandoorne faded to 6.4 seconds adrift at the finish, but that was only because he was trying hard not to take risks on the kerbs and bumps to avoid suffering another issue with the driveshaft in his customer Venturi powertrain. Both HWA drivers had driveshaft problems across the previous >>

## I-PACE eTROPHY

Rome’s circuit proved tricky for overtaking in the Jaguar I-PACE eTrophy, putting the emphasis on the drivers’ efforts in qualifying.

Jaguar Brazil Racing and Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing were the teams to beat, but only one half of each line-up was smiling after qualifying. Sergio Jimenez took pole for Jaguar Brazil, while team-mate Caca Bueno suffered a puncture and qualified seventh. To Jimenez, “the difficult part” was done.

His RLLR rivals thought those words would come back to bite him, with its driver Bryan Sellers on the grippier side of the track on the front row, while Sellers’s team-mate Katherine Legge started fourth after losing free practice to a puncture. Team Asia New Zealand’s championship leader Simon Evans, brother of Rome E-Prix winner Mitch, qualified third.

Jimenez made a great start but was quickly pegged back. But nobody got close enough to pass, and the drivers were kept on their toes as rain arrived early on.

“I had the pace [in the dry],” said Jimenez. “It started to rain a little bit, and then the next lap a lot, in just one part of the track. It was very slippery.

“I was the dog in the front that everybody could follow and find [braking points]. I changed the brake balance, I changed the torque map and I was managing the wiper because some parts were dry. I needed to do everything.”

Worsening conditions meant drivers



GRIFFITHS

Jimenez led a procession to the finish

stuck to the grippier inside line at the Turn 13 hairpin, leading to a processional finish. Jimenez won and took the points lead, with Sellers, Evans, Legge and Stefan Rzadzinski finishing in qualifying order behind.

Legge had repeatedly gambled on Turn 13’s outside line to set up a move for T14, but each time had struggled for grip.

The same corner caught out Pro-Am class diver Ahmed Bin Khanen, who had qualified sixth overall and was comfortable there until fogged-up glasses meant he missed his braking point and skated down the escape road. Yaqi Zhang did the same, but then made the race’s only overtake to beat Celia Martin to second in Pro-Am, behind class dominator Bandar Alesayi.

“It underlines the importance of qualifying, because if there’s no passing it makes it more about qualifying than racing,” was Legge’s summary of events.

ELLIOT WOOD



GRIFFITHS

Jimenez celebrates pole – race victory was a bit of a formality

IN THE HEADLINES

**FRUSTRATION FOR BIRD**

Sam Bird finished 11th after his car was hurriedly repaired under the red flags, for which he lauded his Virgin mechanics for their swift work. But it was a frustrating day for Bird, who had to contend with running a practice tyre in qualifying after getting a puncture on his quali set in FP1.

**VERGNE PENALISED**

Jean-Eric Vergne recovered to finish seventh at the flag following his time spent underneath Gary Paffett's car during the early pile-up. But the reigning champion was punished for overtaking Antonio Felix da Costa under the full-course yellow and was dropped to 14th, which enraged him as he felt similar moves had gone unpunished in Mexico.

**STRICTER RACING RULES**

Autosport revealed ahead of the race that the FIA would take stricter action against clumsy contact between drivers. This new policy, which includes a verbal warning that can be superseded if contact is immediately severe, was brought in to ease complaints that the robust Gen2 car was not 'self-punishing' drivers at fault for collisions by breaking and losing significant performance.

**TOO COOL FOR WEHRLEIN?**

Pascal Wehrlein rounded out the top 10 in the race for Mahindra Racing. The former Manor and Sauber Formula 1 driver has had a quiet time since nearly winning in Santiago and Mexico City at the start of 2019, which he feels may be down to his car struggling more in the subsequent races' colder conditions.

**MORE SIMS TROUBLE**

Alexander Sims endured another tough event with BMW Andretti. He suffered an "electrical fault" just after hitting the notorious pre-Turn 9 bump in qualifying and had to start last as a result, then "just misjudged the amount of brake pressure needed in the wet and cold" in the slippery early stages and crashed (below). He was able to keep going, get repairs under the red flag, and come home 17th.



LEICESTER



LEICESTER

two rounds, and Venturi's Edoardo Mortara and Massa both retired in Rome with what the team called "transmission problems" after the drivers suggested over the radio that they had driveshaft issues.

"There was not an energy problem [at the end]," said Vandoorne after scoring his first podium since winning the final race of the 2016 Super Formula season. "I was aware of the situation with the other [Venturi] cars and the failures. We were so lucky today to make it to the flag."

Robin Frijns beat Buemi's Nissan to secure a fine fourth in his Virgin Audi, and Oliver Rowland (Nissan) was sixth. Di Grassi led the championship leaders home in seventh ahead of d'Ambrosio and

da Costa, the trio rising through the chaos from 13th, 19th and 11th respectively on the grid due to the group-one track deficit. The title fight remains finely poised, with 13 points covering the top nine drivers.

As night fell in the paddock after the race, Jaguar reacted with well-deserved delight. It's no wonder team boss James Barclay described the "relief" his squad was feeling given that its FE story until now had contained little joy.

Its first campaign was a disaster, and the progress it did make last season amounted to one pole and podium, which it never got to enjoy for real as Evans's Hong Kong third only came after Daniel Abt was disqualified.

Evans's stealthy rise to fourth in Riyadh



SBLOXHAM

Swift repair got Bird back in the race, although he could not get higher than 11th



D'Ambrosio's qualifying travails left him playing catch-up, but he retook the points lead



Evans has a great deal to celebrate, taking his and Jaguar's maiden FE win

**RESULTS ROUND 7/12, ROME (ITA), 13 APRIL (29 LAPS – 52.307 MILES)**

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	<b>Mitch Evans</b> (NZL)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-TYPE 3	1h33m51.140s
2	<b>Andre Lotterer</b> (DEU)	DS Techeetah / DSE-Tense FE19	+0.979s
3	<b>Stoffel Vandoorne</b> (BEL)	HWA / Venturi VFE-05	+6.399s
4	<b>Robin Frijns</b> (NLD)	Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE05	+9.181s
5	<b>Sebastien Buemi</b> (CHE)	Nissan e.Dams / Nissan IM01	+9.778s
6	<b>Oliver Rowland</b> (GBR)	Nissan e.Dams / Nissan IM01	+11.262s
7	<b>Lucas di Grassi</b> (BRA)	Audi Sport Abt / Audi e-tron FE05	+24.340s
8	<b>Jerome d'Ambrosio</b> (BEL)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M5Electro	+28.633s
9	<b>Antonio Felix da Costa</b> (PRT)	BMW / BMW iFE.18	+30.651s
10	<b>Pascal Wehrlein</b> (DEU)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M5Electro	+30.735s
11	<b>Sam Bird</b> (GBR)	Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE05	+32.272s
12	<b>Alex Lynn</b> (GBR)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-TYPE 3	+42.238s
13	<b>Oliver Turvey</b> (GBR)	NIO / NIO 004	+48.616s
14	<b>Jean-Eric Vergne</b> (FRA)	DS Techeetah / DSE-Tense FE19	+49.732s
15	<b>Tom Dillmann</b> (FRA)	NIO / NIO 004	+52.253s
16	<b>Jose Maria Lopez</b> (ARG)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-3	+1m10.373s
17	<b>Alexander Sims</b> (GBR)	BMW / BMW iFE.18	+1m11.373s
18	<b>Daniel Abt</b> (DEU)	Audi Sport Abt / Audi e-tron FE05	28 laps-not running
19	<b>Maximilian Gunther</b> (DEU)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-3	28 laps-not running
R	<b>Felipe Massa</b> (BRA)	Venturi / Venturi VFE-05	11 laps-transmission/driveshaft
R	<b>Edoardo Mortara</b> (ITA)	Venturi / Venturi VFE-05	8 laps-transmission/driveshaft
R	<b>Gary Paffett</b> (GBR)	HWA / Venturi VFE-05	0 laps-accident

**Winner's average speed** 33.439mph. **Fastest lap** Vergne 1m31.016s, 70.537mph.

**SUPERPOLE** 1 Lotterer 1m32.123s; 2 Evans 1m32.483s; 3 Lopez 1m32.906s; 4 Vandoorne 1m33.233s; 5 Gunther 1m35.640s; 6 Buemi 1m36.331s.

**QUALIFYING** Lotterer 1m29.761s; Evans 1m29.942s; Lopez 1m30.099s; Vandoorne 1m30.207s; Gunther 1m30.277s; Buemi 1m30.341s; 7 Mortara 1m30.397s; 8 Frijns 1m30.422s; 9 Wehrlein 1m30.609s; 10 Massa 1m30.623s; 11 Rowland 1m30.723s; 12 da Costa 1m30.804s; 13 Bird 1m30.880s; 14 di Grassi 1m30.977s; 15 Paffett 1m30.980s; 16 Vergne 1m31.016s; 17 Abt 1m31.043s; 18 Turvey 1m31.043s; 19 d'Ambrosio 1m31.192s; 20 Dillmann 1m31.220s; 21 Lynn 1m39.657s; 22 Sims 1m46.182s.

**CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 d'Ambrosio 65; 2 da Costa 64; 3 Lotterer 62; 4 Evans 61; 5 di Grassi 58; 6 Frijns 55; 7 Vergne 54; 8 Bird 54; 9 Mortara 52; 10 Abt 44.

was as good as things had got so far in the current 2018-19 championship, and the team had shown little sign of being a frontrunner until last weekend. Plus, the race team had arrived in Rome off the back of splitting with Nelson Piquet Jr, whose replacement Alex Lynn qualified a noteworthy ninth, although Lynn would lose that position for going over the 250kW limit on his flying lap and had to battle back from 21st to a creditable 12th at the finish.

“As a young team, we’ve learned a lot of lessons,” said Barclay, who put Jaguar’s Rome form down to a focus on improving its qualifying performance. “There has been some genuine bad luck and there have been some areas where we haven’t given ourselves the best luck by maybe not making the right decisions. That’s part of why the emotion is there – we’ve felt this has been coming for a long time.”

It’s even longer for Jaguar when it comes to overall major motorsport success. Its last top international series victory came in the 1991 World Sportscar Championship at the Nurburgring, although it did take a pair of IMSA Sportscar wins with Davy Jones in 1992. Evans, at 24 years old, was not even born back then.

But he could still add further glory to the Jaguar legend. With his maiden win, which continued his streak of taking points in all seven races so far, Evans has catapulted himself into title contention, just four points off the lead in fourth. ❧

**NEXT REPORT**

**PARIS, FRANCE**  
**2 MAY ISSUE**

Can Jaguar win again as the title battle heads to France?

Rossi had Dixon on his tail for a short while, but celebrated dominant win (right)



# Storming Rossi has another California beach party

*The Andretti Autosport star was dominant on the streets in his home state in 2018.*

*Last weekend he stepped up another level to blitz the opposition at Long Beach*

DAVID MALSHER

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport  
IMAGES

**I**f you thought Alexander Rossi's performance at Long Beach in 2018 was dominant, you'd be right. He led 71 of the 85 laps, and was able to pull away whenever he was threatened.

But his latest performance at America's classic street race was something else again. As last year, Rossi started his Honda-powered Andretti Autosport car from pole, his advantage over his closest competitor reduced from 0.35 seconds in 2018 to 0.27s this year – but his pace advantage on race day appeared to have increased by at least the same amount, and this time he led 80 laps. Once or twice during an IndyCar season, the race winner makes it look

easy, and this was one such day.

To take nothing away from Rossi or the sixth win of his IndyCar career, the picture was slightly skewed in his favour during the opening stint. He, along with the three Chevrolet-engined Team Penske cars of Will Power, Josef Newgarden and Simon Pagenaud – who filled positions three through five on the grid – started on new sets of Firestone's alternate (softer) compound red-sidewall tyres. Scott Dixon, who started his Chip Ganassi Racing machine alongside Rossi on the front row, had gone for a used set of reds and, when he was hung out to dry on the outside line by the polesitter as they braked for Turn 1, he lost his best chance to get into the lead and

bottle everyone behind him as his tyres degraded towards the end of the first stint.

In fact, the five-time and reigning champ got a second opportunity to pass because the caution flags flew on lap one, as Marcus Ericsson made contact with Jack Harvey down at the Fountain turn, which left Harvey and the following Spencer Pigot stalled on the track.

AJ Foyt Racing, which hasn't looked competitive since the Indianapolis 500 last May, managed to get embroiled too. Tony Kanaan, who had qualified last after a shunt cost him his two best laps, had passed team-mate Matheus Leist in the first turn but, when the veteran swerved to avoid the Ericsson-triggered shunt, he was rammed



## ROOKIES SHOW THEIR RAWNESS

Some may still snigger at the idea that the Grand Prix of Long Beach was originally devised as the US's answer to the Monaco Grand Prix, but that notion is lent some credence by the fact that its 1.968-mile layout doesn't offer abundant passing opportunities, yet seemingly limitless chances to damage your race car. Naturally, therefore, rookies have a hard time attaining consistency.

Just a week after veterans Takuma Sato, Scott Dixon and Sebastien Bourdais mounted the podium at Barber Motorsports Park, this year's highly talented IndyCar rookies had their lack of experience highlighted again by the narrow margins of the second most famous street course in the world.

Patricio O'Ward (below), who had never before competed here, qualified a highly commendable ninth fastest for Carlin, but clouted a wall in Sunday morning's warm-up, losing vital track time. Come the race, his attempts to then also meet a fuel-mileage target saw him tumble briefly to 16th, before eventually finishing 12th, one lap down.

Fellow teenaged sensation and 2018 Indy Lights team-mate Colton Herta was caught out by a red flag in Q2, and had to start 10th. After pulling off a great pass on O'Ward into the fountain turn during the race, Herta eventually pushed too hard and struck the wall at Turn 9 on lap 51.

That red flag in Q2 had been caused by rookie Felix Rosenqvist sliding straight on at Turn 9 after he seemed destined for graduation to the Firestone Fast Six. IndyCar's deletion of his two best laps meant he started 12th, and he drove a fairly subdued race to finish 10th.

Fellow Swede Marcus Ericsson, like team-mate James Hinchcliffe, hadn't set a time on red tyres before Tony Kanaan brought out the red flags in Q1, so he started 19th. His ultimate downfall was running into Jack Harvey on the opening lap of the race, earning himself a drivethrough penalty.

IndyCar's 2019 rookies are all potential stars, but Long Beach highlighted the gaps in their knowledge.



by his young colleague. The impact broke the front wing on Leist's car and the underwing on Kanaan's, heavily reducing his downforce.

Of course there was a full-course caution while the safety team bump-started the stalled cars – Ericsson would receive a drivethrough penalty for triggering the melee – and the restart at the end of lap three gave Dixon a second chance to attack Rossi. But again as they went down the front straight, which is in fact Shoreline Drive's very gentle curve to the right, Dixon went to the shorter inside line, which again left him on the outside of Rossi for Turn 1. Again the Andretti driver had no problem matching the Ganassi star under braking, forcing him to tuck in behind.

Initially, as Rossi kept pounding out the 68s laps, Dixon was able to stay in his wake. By lap 10 the gap was still just under 1.5s, while Power was 3s adrift but 2s up on team-mate Newgarden. Behind this pair were two primary-tyred cars: Graham Rahal's Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing weapon, and the Andretti machine of Ryan Hunter-Reay, both of whom had demoted Pagnaud on the initial start.

Dixon's used reds wouldn't allow him to hold onto Rossi indefinitely, and by lap 24 his deficit was more than 7s, while Power had closed to within a second of the Ganassi car. When the lead pair stopped two laps later, both switching onto a used set of primary tyres, Power had two laps to cut

loose before his pitstop and he emerged from the pits ahead of Dixon, although on cold tyres he needed to take some defensive lines to keep the Kiwi behind. Meanwhile, Newgarden had stretched his first stint a lap longer than Power and, with the Aussie slowed by taking defensive lines to fend off Dixon, Newgarden had easily emerged in second having jumped both Antipodeans.

Power was annoyed that he hadn't been allowed to go a lap longer before pitting, thereby preventing Newgarden from getting ahead – Will is better than Josef at fuel saving, so the #12 team had the leeway to do that. But he then had a different problem on his hands. Harvey had been lapped by Newgarden, but Power caught the Meyer Shank car in the twisty sections of the course and the Briton wasn't in a huge hurry to move over. Suddenly Dixon was back on the rear wing of the silver Penske car. Emerging from the 35mph Turn 11 hairpin onto the pit straight, Power put the gas pedal to the bulkhead, the Chevrolet engine spun the rear wheels over a bump and the 'overboost' engine retardation kicked in, the ECU briefly starving the engine of power – a failsafe to prevent engines illegally exceeding 1.5-bar boost on road and street courses.

Power automatically flicked his car over to the shorter inside line for Shoreline's gentle curve to pre-empt a move from Dixon, and to force him to take the longer trajectory down to Turn 1. Power's Chevy sprang to life again, so that he remained ahead of >>

Dixon, but by now he had driven most of the front stretch running over the less-used part of the race track, the line covered with dust and tyre marbles – and still Dixon was filling his left mirror. Approaching Turn 1, Power braked late – almost impossibly so. Briefly he considered turning into the corner, thinking he might make it, but at the last moment chose caution over valour and slithered down the escape road. By the time he'd booted the car around and rejoined, he was down in eighth, behind not only Dixon but also Rahal, Hunter-Reay, Pagnaud and the second RLLR car of Barber Motorsports Park winner Takuma Sato.

Newgarden in second place had nothing for Rossi, the pair of them both now running used primaries. By lap 40 Rossi's lead was out to 10s, and the Penske driver was under pressure from Dixon, who in turn was chased closely by Rahal and Hunter-Reay, both now on fresh reds.

Hunter-Reay would have his chances of improving his position undone by stopping at the end of lap 54, leaving him 31 laps to make it to the end without a splash of fuel. RHR is quite experienced at saving fuel, but he isn't the best. And anyway, every driver will tell you that to make substantial gains fuel-mileage-wise requires the car to be absolutely *au point* in terms of handling, because it requires the driver to back off the throttle earlier for a corner but also use less braking, thereby carrying more rolling speed through the corner. This was not Hunter-Reay's situation last Sunday.

Initially, however, he did gain from the pitstop sequence because Dixon had a horrible 18.5s stop when the fuel hose just wouldn't lock into the car's buckeye. By the time he emerged from the pits and the rest of the cars had stopped, Dixon was down in fifth, behind the still-dominant Rossi, Newgarden, Rahal and Hunter-Reay, albeit ahead of Pagnaud and Power, who'd jumped ahead of Sato in the pitstop sequence.

The remaining laps played out with Rossi initially keeping his lead over Newgarden at between 10 and 11s, while Newgarden never looked under threat from Rahal, who had started the third stint on used red



alternates and was beginning to feel too much understeer as his fronts scabbled for grip. Yet Hunter-Reay was struggling to meet his target fuel mileage, so he was unable to gain on the RLLR machine ahead, and into the final 15 of the race's 85 laps was instead having to watch the recovering Dixon grow larger in his mirrors.

With three and a half laps to go Hunter-Reay was slow exiting Turn 8 as he was instructed by his team to switch to "full emergency fuel-save mode", and he politely moved out of the way along the back straight, realising it was futile to try to

restrain Dixon for another three laps.

Thus Dixon had a clear run at Rahal over the remaining five minutes of the race, and he had preserved more push-to-pass boost than his former team-mate. As they started the last lap fighting for third place, the RLLR driver used up his last P2P along the front straight, leaving himself vulnerable to attack from the Ganassi ace on the back straight, between Turns 8 and 9.

Unfortunately, Rahal locked up his right-front tyre as he slowed for the entry to the right-hand Turn 8, but kept the car under control, and moved to the right as soon as he was onto the straight. This was to try to force Dixon to go for the longer route, on the left, once they braked for Turn 9, another right-hander.

Dixon's neater line through Turn 8 had allowed him to gain on Rahal and they moved simultaneously to the right before, perhaps surprisingly, Dixon showed no interest in flicking left to make the pass, despite his better exit speed and push-to-pass boost providing additional momentum. Instead, the front wing of his car made contact with the rear tyre of Rahal's, thereby killing that momentum. So when Rahal then gradually moved to the middle of the track down the back straight to ensure a more optimal line through Turn 9, Dixon wasn't in a position to attempt to outbrake him on





Long Beach landscape gardeners were unhappy with Harvey and Ericsson

**RESULTS ROUND 4/16, LONG BEACH (USA), 14 APRIL (85 LAPS - 167.280 MILES)**

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	<b>Alexander Rossi</b> (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	1h41m35.5999s
2	<b>Josef Newgarden</b> (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+20.2359s
3	<b>Scott Dixon</b> (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+25.5745s
4	<b>Graham Rahal</b> (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+26.4589s
5	<b>Ryan Hunter-Reay</b> (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+29.3447s
6	<b>Simon Pagenaud</b> (FRA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+31.5193s
7	<b>Will Power</b> (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+33.0529s
8	<b>Takuma Sato</b> (JPN)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+34.2879s
9	<b>James Hinchcliffe</b> (CAN)	Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports / Dallara-Honda	+40.4643s
10	<b>Felix Rosenqvist</b> (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+41.3241s
11	<b>Sebastien Bourdais</b> (FRA)	Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser Sullivan / Dallara-Honda	+49.9110s
12	<b>Patricio O'Ward</b> (MEX)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
13	<b>Marco Andretti</b> (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
14	<b>Max Chilton</b> (GBR)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
15	<b>Matheus Leist</b> (BRA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
16	<b>Ed Jones</b> (ARE)	Ed Carpenter Racing Scuderia Corsa / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
17	<b>Zach Veach</b> (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
18	<b>Spencer Pigot</b> (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
19	<b>Tony Kanaan</b> (BRA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
20	<b>Marcus Ericsson</b> (SWE)	Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
21	<b>Santino Ferrucci</b> (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
22	<b>Jack Harvey</b> (GBR)	Meyer Shank Racing with Arrow SPM / Dallara-Honda	-3 laps
23	<b>Colton Herta</b> (USA)	Harding Steinbrenner Racing / Dallara-Honda	50 laps-accident

**Winner's average speed** 98.794mph. **Fastest lap** Hunter-Reay 1m07.6943s, 104.659mph.

**Q3** 1 Rossi 1m06.4811s; 2 Dixon 1m06.7479s; 3 Power 1m06.8748s; 4 Newgarden 1m06.9096s; 5 Pagenaud 1m07.1877s; 6 Rahal 1m07.3052s.

**Q2** Dixon 1m06.6566s; Rossi 1m06.7644s; Pagenaud 1m06.9328s; Power 1m06.9620s; Rahal 1m07.0414s; Newgarden 1m07.0710s; 7 Hunter-Reay 1m07.1520s; 8 Sato 1m07.2626s; 9 O'Ward 1m07.2764s; 10 Herta 1m07.7721s; 11 Andretti 1m08.3746s; 12 Rosenqvist 1m08.4410s.

**Q1 - GROUP 1** Rossi 1m06.8621s; Dixon 1m07.0080s; Pagenaud 1m07.1474s; Andretti 1m07.2040s; Herta 1m07.2201s; O'Ward 1m07.2620s; 14 Bourdais 1m07.3135s; 16 Chilton 1m07.4577s; 18 Harvey

1m07.5287s; 20 Leist 1m07.7317s; 22 Veach 1m07.7822s; 23 Pigot 1m07.8763s.

**Q1 - GROUP 2** Sato 1m07.7245s; Hunter-Reay 1m07.7307s; Newgarden 1m07.7836s; Rahal 1m07.8102s; Power 1m08.0121s; Rosenqvist 1m08.0811s; 13 Ferrucci 1m08.1008s; 15 Hinchcliffe 1m08.1811s; 17 Jones 1m08.7711s; 19 Ericsson 1m08.9516s; 21 Kanaan 3m22.3800s.

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

1 Newgarden 166; 2 Rossi 138; 3 Dixon 133; 4 Sato 116; 5 Hunter-Reay 96; 6 Power 93; 7 Hinchcliffe 93; 8 Bourdais 91; 9 Rahal 90; 10 Herta 88.

either side. Rahal held on through the final turns to pass the chequered flag third.

Dixon had by now transmitted his displeasure to IndyCar Race Control via his team, and Kyle Novak, Max Papis and Arie Luyendyk agreed with his sentiment – that Rahal's defensive move was reactionary rather than anticipatory. So Dixon was awarded third and Rahal fourth in the results.

There was no dispute over who was the deserving winner, however. Rossi had been simply unstoppable all day and had stretched his lead to over 20s by the time the chequered flag fell and, while some of the crowd may have failed to appreciate that he had rendered the race a somewhat foregone conclusion, they did appreciate his post-race comments: Rossi dedicated his win to his grandfather, who he had learned only that morning had died. 🍀

**NEXT REPORT**

**INDY GP  
16 MAY ISSUE**

The famed IndyCar 'Month of May' kicks off with the race on the Indianapolis F1 course – well, a derivative of it anyway. Who'll get the pre-500 bragging rights?

# Rins joins the MotoGP elite as Marquez tumbles



ALL PICS: GOLD AND GOOSE  
**motorsport**  
 IMAGES

**MOTOGP**  
**AUSTIN (USA)**  
**14 APRIL**  
**ROUND 3/19**

Honda's Marc Marquez was aiming for a magnificent seven at Austin, but all he received was a taste of true grit. A stunned Austin crowd gasped in unison as he tumbled from his Honda while leading, spoiling his spotless winning record there and opening the door for Suzuki's Alex Rins to claim his first MotoGP victory.

It had all been going to plan before Marquez's front wheel folded beneath him at less than 50mph at the Turn 12 hairpin, sending the five-time champion sprawling ignominiously into the runoff. There, he attempted to remount several times, but the bike steadfastly refused to restart – and he even managed to fall off it again

in comedic fashion, which was his cue to give up and walk away!

Before that moment, Marquez looked as imperious as ever around the Circuit of the Americas. Even his great rival Valentino Rossi admitted he has "some secrets and tricks" that nobody else can emulate. Perhaps the only surprising aspect about Marquez's pole lap (his seventh here) was that Rossi was just 0.273s off it.

The third member of the front row, LCR Honda's Cal Crutchlow, made the best getaway but Marquez braked late into Turn 1 and held sway, leading Rossi, Crutchlow, Jack Miller (Pramac Ducati) and Rins – who made a great start from the third row to grab fifth.

The other man making progress was Ducati's Andrea Dovizioso, who didn't even make it to Q2 in qualifying but proved he wasn't messing about on

race day by getting within two tenths of Marquez in the warm-up. From 13th on the grid, he immediately surged to eighth, and further demoted Pol Espargaro (KTM) and Maverick Vinales (Yamaha) to run sixth by the end of the opening lap.

The first part of the race ran true to form, with Marquez pulling away from Rossi. His lead reached 3.7 seconds by the end of lap eight, despite Rossi's best efforts to hang with him. But one can only imagine the emotion that occurred inside Rossi's helmet when he saw Marquez exit the race ahead of him. "I was a little bit surprised," Valentino smiled later.

Was America about to get its first Rossi win since Indianapolis 2008? Sadly for him, it was not. Rins seemed spurred on by Marquez's exit, knowing that only Rossi stood between him and his first top-level success. As with most of the younger riders of today, Rossi was Rins' boyhood hero. Again, imagine the emotions...

Rins took half a second out of Rossi on lap 10, and with five laps to go he went into full-on stalk mode, probing for an opportunity where his Suzuki was stronger. While Rossi was determinedly holding him off in the big braking zones, Rins looked elsewhere to pounce.

His move at Turn 7 on lap 17 was sublime, diving to Rossi's left side and claiming the apex at a place where little passing usually happens. Just four corners later, Rins ran wide... but Rossi followed him in doing so. Encouraged by the mistake, Rossi attacked immediately – as is



Suzuki rider Rins put paid to Rossi's hopes for a win



Dovizioso charged on race day and narrowly missed podium



Marquez retired after uncharacteristic crash

his wont – but his lunge under braking at Turn 12 was overambitious. Rossi sailed wide on the exit, and Rins reclaimed a more substantial lead.

Rossi pushed again, running wide again at Turn 11, which extended the gap to 0.7s. Undeterred he pushed Rins all the way to the finish, but Rossi's MotoGP win number 90 will have to wait, as Rins scored his maiden victory by just under half a second – putting Suzuki back on the top step for the first time since Silverstone 2016, and ending that incredible Marquez streak in America.

Marquez wasn't the only Honda faller, as Crutchlow slid out of third place on lap six while hounding Rossi. His bike had looked sketchy under braking since the start, and it bit him with zero warning at Turn 11 – like Marquez, he lost the front end beyond the point of return.

Miller finished third, but admitted his heart rate went through the roof when he saw Dovizioso on a late-race charge. Miller had opted for soft tyres, and his front was feeling the strain of the hot pace set in the early stages. Miller had to push hard on the final lap to claim his first MotoGP podium finish since his sensational Assen victory of 2016.

Thanks to Marquez's exit and Rossi not winning, fourth-placed Dovizioso came away from Austin with the championship lead on a day he should have lost ground. It was one of those days where the race just didn't follow the script.

**CHARLES BRADLEY**

**RESULTS ROUND 3/19, AUSTIN (USA), 14 APRIL (20 LAPS – 68.512 MILES)**

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Alex Rins (ESP)	Suzuki	41m45.499s
2	Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Yamaha	+0.462s
3	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+8.454s
4	Andrea Dovizioso (ITA)	Ducati	+9.420s
5	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha	+18.021s
6	Danilo Petrucci (ITA)	Ducati	+21.476s
7	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Petronas Yamaha	+26.111s
8	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	KTM	+29.743s
9	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+30.608s
10	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+31.011s
11	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Yamaha	+34.077s
12	Andrea Iannone (ITA)	Aprilia	+34.779s
13	Johann Zarco (FRA)	KTM	+42.458s
14	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Tech3 KTM	+44.272s
15	Tito Rabat (ESP)	Avintia Ducati	+44.623s
16	Karel Abraham (CZE)	Avintia Ducati	+44.740s
17	Joan Mir (ESP)	Suzuki	+48.063s
18	Hafizh Syahrin (MYS)	Tech3 KTM	+1m07.683s
R	Jorge Lorenzo (ESP)	Honda	10 laps-retired
R	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Honda	8 laps-accident
R	Cal Crutchlow (GBR)	LCR Honda	5 laps-accident
R	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	5 laps-accident

**Winner's average speed** 98.441mph. **Fastest lap** Marquez 2m04.277s, 99.231mph.

**QUALIFYING 2** 1 Marquez 2m03.787s; 2 Rossi 2m04.060s; 3 Crutchlow 2m04.147s; 4 Miller 2m04.416s; 5 P Espargaro 2m04.472s; 6 Vinales 2m04.489s; 7 Rins 2m04.534s; 8 Petrucci 2m04.696s; 9 Quartararo 2m04.941s; 10 Morbidelli 2m05.278s; 11 Lorenzo 2m05.383s; 12 Bagnaia 2m05.887s.

**QUALIFYING 1** 1 Lorenzo 2m05.855s; 2 Petrucci 2m05.891s; 3 Dovizioso 2m05.907s; 4 Mir 2m06.147s; 5 Nakagami 2m06.324s; 6 A Espargaro 2m06.464s; 7 Iannone 2m06.527s; 8 Oliveira 2m06.543s; 9 Zarco 2m06.824s; 10 Abraham 2m07.129s; 11 Syahrin 2m07.308s; 12 Rabat 2m07.417s.

**RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 Dovizioso 54; 2 Rossi 51; 3 Rins 49; 4 Marquez 45; 5 Petrucci 30; 6 Miller 29; 7 Nakagami 22; 8 Crutchlow 19; 9 P Espargaro 18; 10 Quartararo 17; 11 Morbidelli 16; 12 Vinales 14; 13 A Espargaro 13; 14 Bagnaia 9; 15 Mir 8; 16 Oliveira 7; 17 Lorenzo 7; 18 Iannone 6; 19 Zarco 5; 20 Rabat 1; 21 Syahrin 0; 22 Abraham 0.

**MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 Ducati 57; 2 Honda 51; 3 Yamaha 51; 4 Suzuki 49; 5 KTM 18; 6 Aprilia 17.



L to r: Rossi, Rins and Miller made for an unlikely podium

**WEEKEND WINNERS**

**MOTO2 AUSTIN (USA)**  
Thomas Luthi (below)  
Kalex  
Intact GP

**MOTO 3 AUSTIN (USA)**  
Aron Canet  
KTM  
Max Racing Team



**NEXT REPORT**

**SPANISH GP  
9 MAY ISSUE**

At a venue where he grabbed the spoils last year, can Marc Marquez bounce back to winning ways straight away at Jerez, or will Andrea Dovizioso be able to stretch his slender points advantage?



Second-gen 991 earned  
Porsche its first Blancpain  
Endurance win since 2012

SRO/DIRK BOGAERTS PHOTOGRAPHY

# Porsche ends seven-year Blancpain quest

## BLANCPAIN GT ENDURANCE CUP

MONZA (ITA)

14 APRIL

ROUND 1/5

A marque that hadn't won in the Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup since 2012 combined with a team making its championship debut to take an unlikely victory at Monza last weekend. The Porsche 911 GT3-R run by the Italian Dinamic squad wasn't one of the pre-event favourites, but Klaus Bachler, Zaid Ashkanani and Andrea Rizzoli prevailed at the end of a rain-affected race hit by three safety cars.

It would be wrong to say that the team, a stalwart of one-make Porsche racing, was lucky, though it benefited from others' misfortune. But in the crucial middle hour of the race, Ashkanani had the pace to propel the car from just outside the top 10 after the first round of pitstops to third place going into the second.

It wasn't clear if wet tyres or slicks were the right call as the rain eased, but it was obvious that Porsche's second attempt at developing a GT3 contender out of the 991-shape 911 was the car to have, courtesy of its rear-mounted engine. The Dinamic machine on grooved Pirellis and the two Rowe 911s – Matt Campbell on slicks and Sven Muller on wets – made rapid progress.

The Sainteloc Audi shared by Christopher Haase, Simon Gachet and Steven Palette emerged in the lead after the final stops, however. The French-run R8 LMS looked more like a top-six finisher than an outright winner before it gained massively by pitting for the final time

under full-course-yellow conditions.

Haase initially edged way from Bachler, who'd quickly passed the Rowe car that Romain Dumas had taken over from Mathieu Jaminet. The Porsche driver then started nibbling into what had stood as a five-second lead when the Audi's left-rear tyre gave out.

That allowed Bachler to ease to a 14-second win over the FFF Racing Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo driven by Andrea Caldarelli, Dennis Lind and Marco Mapelli. An early off for Lind and then a delay during a short-lived FCY at the top of the first hour blunted the challenge of Lambo's new factory-backed operation.

Reigning champions Maro Engel, Yelmer Buurman and Luca Stolz somehow brought their Black Falcon Mercedes-AMG GT3 through to third despite an incident for

Stolz in the opening stint that dropped the car as low as 25th and damaged the front-end aerodynamics.

The Auto Sport Promotion Merc team looked to be on course for victory after putting Raffaele Marciello onto slicks when he took over from Vincent Abril. The Italian led by as much as 10 seconds before a safety car robbed him of both that advantage and tyre temperature. Just to compound his ill fortune, the rain intensified and then Michael Meadows clonked a corner marker and broke a damper before the end.

The Grasser Lambo squad that led early on with Mirko Bortolotti also lost out with the same gamble, not least because the ABS on the Huracan co-driven by Rolf Ineichen and Christian Engelhart was in the process of packing up.

GARY WATKINS



Returning rain ended  
Auto Sport Promotion  
Merc's early hopes

SRO/DIRK BOGAERTS PHOTOGRAPHY

# De Wilde scores convincing win to kick off new Eurocup chapter

## FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP

**MONZA (ITA)**

**13-14 APRIL**

**ROUND 1/10**

It's debatable whether Ugo de Wilde's Formula Renault Eurocup victory at Monza on Saturday should be described as a rookie win. The start of a new era for the long-running series with the Tatuus regional F3 chassis, turbo engines and Hankook tyres means everyone is starting afresh. But there was no doubting the dominance of the youngest driver on the grid.

The 16-year-old Belgian, runner-up in last year's French Formula 4 title race, got



De Wilde soon assumed the lead and was never headed thereafter

DPPI

the jump on pole winner Lorenzo Colombo at the start and was never headed on the way to a 1.5-second victory. He controlled the gap to his JD Motorsport team-mate Leonardo Lorandi through the 17-lap race, which included a quickfire safety car thrown in before the end of the first lap.

The yellows came out after MP Motorsport driver Colombo retired more or less on the spot after a clash with Kush Maini at the second apex of the first chicane. Maini, whose M2 Competition entry was undamaged, came through to third, five seconds in arrears of Lorandi, to make it an all 'rookie' podium.

The Sunday race held on a wet track was interrupted by a trio of safety cars, so much so that there were only three full green racing laps. Alexander Smolyar won from pole for the R-ace GP squad by just under two seconds from MP driver Victor Martins, who pulled the only meaningful move of the race when he took the runner-up spot from Colombo at the penultimate restart.

**GARY WATKINS**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### BLANCPAIN GT ENDURANCE CUP

**MONZA (ITA)**

Andrea Rizzoli/Klaus Bachler/

Zaid Ashkanani

Dinamic Motorsport

Porsche 911 GT3-R

### FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP

**MONZA (ITA)**

Race 1 Ugo de Wilde

JD Motorsport

Race 2 Alexander Smolyar

R-ace GP

### SUPER GT

**OKAYAMA (JPN)**

Tomoki Nojiri/Takuya Izawa

Team Aguri Honda NSX-GT



For full results visit [motorsportstats.com](http://motorsportstats.com)

# Half points for rain-hit Super GT opener

## SUPER GT

**OKAYAMA (JPN)**

**14 APRIL**

**ROUND 1/8**

In a truncated season-opening Super GT race hit by terrible wet conditions, Takuya Izawa guided the Aguri Suzuki-run Honda NSX-GT to victory to earn maximum half-points for himself and Tomoki Nojiri.

A drenched track caused no fewer than four safety cars and two red flags before the organisers ended the race on lap 32 of the scheduled 82, before most of the crews had changed drivers.

Ronnie Quintarelli, who had qualified the NISMO Nissan GT-R on pole, led right after the safety car peeled off track at the end of lap three. But after only two tours it was back out once more because of a first-corner shunt that needed four laps to be cleaned up.

At the restart, the two NSXs of reigning champion Noaki Yamamoto (due to share with Jenson Button) and Kodai Tsukakoshi (with Bertrand



Izawa's Honda led the Nissan pack through the deluge at Okayama

MOTORSPORT.COM/JAPAN

Baguette waiting for his stint) passed Quintarelli. But then the safety car was called upon once more after a huge GT300 pile-up through the Moss 'S'.

The top two NSXs got closer on track after the restart, before Real Racing driver Tsukakoshi put Yamamoto out onto the gravel at the first corner, dropping the Team Kunimitsu car to the back of the field. After yet another accident at Moss S it was the safety car driver's turn to earn his keep once more, and before the race could resume heavier rain ended play.

At that time, Tsukakoshi was in front, but a 34-second penalty for dangerous driving in his Yamamoto clash relegated him to 14th. Izawa and Nojiri inherited

victory but, with less than 75% of the race completed, half points were awarded.

Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda were second ahead of Daiki Sasaki in the Impul Nissan he was due to share with James Rossiter. Sasaki had put the car second on the grid, but struggles with wet conditions and an engine fault held him back.

The B-Max (Frederic Makowiecki and Kohei Hirate) and Kondo (Mitsunori Takaboshi and Jann Mardenborough) Nissans finished next in fourth and fifth.

The Lexus LC500s struggled in the slippery conditions, meaning the car's best result was sixth, courtesy of Sho Tsuboi's efforts with the Bandoh team.

**JIRO TAKAHASHI**



Albuquerque (far left) and Barbosa doubled up around Long Beach streets

ABBOTT  
motorsport  
IMAGES

# Portuguese patience earns double success

**IMSA SPORTSCAR**  
**LONG BEACH (USA)**  
**13 APRIL**  
**ROUND 3/12**

Joao Barbosa and Filipe Albuquerque claimed victory in their Action Express Cadillac DPi-V.R after an enthralling 100-minute race. The Portuguese pair's second consecutive win on the Californian streets came as the result of patience, a touch of good fortune and a fine effort from Albuquerque to hold off Ricky Taylor (Acura Team Penske) in the closing stages.

Taylor's Brazilian team-mate Helio Castroneves confirmed his undiminished skills by securing the pole at a new record speed of over 99mph. It was the three-time Indy 500 winner's fourth pole position start in five years at Long Beach, following consecutive IndyCar qualifying successes between 2015 and 2017.

The drama began early when Jon Bennett

clipped the inside wall at Turn 6 and buried his CORE Nissan into the tyre wall. Next time around, with race officials electing not to call a full-course caution, Juan Pablo Montoya, in the second Penske Acura, took both Jordan Taylor (Cadillac) and Jonathan Bomarito (Mazda) by surprise when he slowed rather more than they had anticipated at the scene of Bennett's crash. Suspecting that Montoya, who had struggled for pace on the opening lap, might have a problem, Taylor slipped through into fourth but earned himself a drivethrough penalty for passing under yellow flags. At the next corner, Bomarito – a brilliant start meant he vaulted to sixth from 11th on the DPi grid after a qualifying crash which necessitated a complete rebuild overnight around a new tub – lost control after all three cars had been briefly side-by-side in the braking area. This time the race was neutralised.

A momentary hiccup from Castroneves's Acura at the exit of the Turn 11 hairpin

prior to the restart instantly cost him two positions as Felipe Nasr (Action Express Cadillac) and Tristan Nunez (Mazda) soon began to edge away from the field.

Nasr was virtually in a class of his own as he romped to a six-second lead before another caution was triggered by Bomarito's Mazda grinding to a halt.

The ensuing pitstops spelled disaster for the leading Cadillac, which was released with a loose wheel. That problem was compounded by another error when Pipo Derani brought the car back to the pits, resulting in a drivethrough penalty. Derani established a new lap record, 1.5 seconds faster than Nasr's previous standard as he fought back to an unrepresentative sixth.

Team-mate Albuquerque had been running fifth after relieving Barbosa. A slow puncture was soon detected, but the team waited to call him into the pits until he was sure of reaching the finish without the need for an additional stop. The strategy worked to perfection. Some quick laps enabled Albuquerque to lead after the final stops were completed, whereupon he managed his well-worn Michelins – and his negotiation of GTLM traffic – to perfection, remaining tantalisingly out of Taylor's reach.

Montoya/Dane Cameron finished close behind in third, well clear of Oliver Jarvis – who took over from Nunez at the first pitstop before fading in the closing stages.

Porsche comfortably controlled proceedings in GTLM. Nick Tandy extended the team's streak of pole positions to three. But it was team-mates Laurens Vanthoor and Earl Bamber who ended the day on top after Bamber found a way past Patrick Pilet soon after the pitstops.

**JEREMY SHAW**



# Penske duo clean up at Phillip Island

**AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS**  
**PHILLIP ISLAND (AUS)**  
**13-14 APRIL**  
**ROUND 4/15**

It might have ended with a pair of 1-2s for the dominant DJR Team Penske squad, but the Phillip Island Supercars round still managed to throw up a few surprises. Scott McLaughlin winning Saturday's first race certainly wasn't one of them.

Equipped with the new Ford Mustang – perfectly suited to the fast and flowing circuit – the expectation was two wins for the runaway points leader.

Saturday followed the script perfectly. McLaughlin made it seven Island poles in a row in qualifying, before he and team-mate Fabian Coulthard cruised to a Penske 1-2 in the race.

Behind the Penske Mustangs, things got a little bit interesting. Rather than a queue of Fords, there were flashes of speed from the unfancied Nissan package. Andre Heimgartner was fourth quickest in



McLaughlin managed to earn Game of Thrones seat in race one

qualifying and went one better in the race with an unlikely podium.

McLaughlin took an eighth-straight pole on Sunday and dominated the short first stint of the race in a way that made back-to-back wins seem inevitable.

But a curious first round of pitstops put him on the back foot. Despite taking on less fuel than Coulthard, and having gone into the stops with a couple of seconds up his sleeve, he ended up behind his team-mate.

He never got the lead back. Coulthard took his first win since last May from McLaughlin, both drivers baffled post-race that McLaughlin's supposedly superior

strategy didn't work. The team was initially confused as well, later suggesting that a pitlane limiter problem made McLaughlin's stop longer than required.

Anton De Pasquale took his first Supercars podium with a fine third place – despite a shift-cut sensor issue and fuel concerns – making him the best-placed Holden.

The factory Commodores, meanwhile, had a horrible weekend. Jamie Whincup scored a DNF on Saturday after losing a wheel, before finishing just 12th on Sunday. Shane van Gisbergen earned a sixth and a seventh, but never troubled the leaders.

**ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN**

# Truex opens Joe Gibbs account

**NASCAR CUP**  
**RICHMOND (USA)**  
**13 APRIL**  
**ROUND 9/36**

Martin Truex Jr scored his first victory for Joe Gibbs Racing after holding off Joey Logano and Clint Bowyer at Richmond.

It was the 2017 NASCAR Cup champion's first top-level race win on a short track in 81 attempts.

Truex was challenged by Bowyer for the final 70 laps. Although the

Stewart-Haas Ford driver had a much stronger car in traffic, he faded late on. That allowed Stage 2 winner Joey Logano to close and pass for second with just three laps to go.

Polesitter Kevin Harvick dropped back fairly early on and finished fourth ahead of Denny Hamlin, who was one of eight drivers sent to the rear of the field at the start for failing pre-race inspection.

Austin Dillon claimed his best Cup finish since NASCAR's last visit to Richmond in September, matching his efforts for sixth.

Brad Keselowski led 31 of the race's 400 laps but could only finish seventh. He was able to beat Kyle Busch, who won the first stage and led 101 laps but was hit with a pitlane speeding penalty during a caution period in the second stage. He returned to the top 10 after just 80 tours, but wasn't able to make his way through traffic to regain the lead.

Ryan Newman and Paul Menard rounded out the top 10, ahead of Kurt Busch and Jimmie Johnson – who ran the Boston Marathon on Monday, two days after the race.

**DOMINIK WILDE**



Truex Jr returned to the top step

MOTORSPORTIMAGES/NKP

## WEEKEND WINNERS

**IMSA SPORTSCAR**  
**LONG BEACH (USA)**

Joao Barbosa/Filipe Albuquerque  
 Action Express Racing (Cadillac DPi-V.R)

**AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS**  
**PHILLIP ISLAND (AUS)**

Race 1 Scott McLaughlin  
 DJR Team Penske (Ford Mustang)  
 Race 2 Fabian Coulthard  
 DJR Team Penske (Ford Mustang)

**NASCAR CUP**  
**RICHMOND (USA)**

Martin Truex Jr  
 Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

**NASCAR XFINITY SERIES**  
**RICHMOND (USA)**

Cole Custer  
 Stewart-Haas Racing  
 (Ford Mustang)



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# DragonSpeed breathes fire once more

**EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES**  
**PAUL RICARD (FRA)**  
**14 APRIL**  
**ROUND 1/6**

DragonSpeed was back on the top step of the European Le Mans Series podium at Paul Ricard, thanks to the trio of Ben Hanley, Henrik Hedman and James Allen, which delivered the squad its first spoils since Spa 2016.

Allen's opening stint defined the ORECA 07-Gibson crew's race, as he climbed from fifth on the grid to take the lead. When the order finally settled after the final round of pitstops, the car maintained a near-17-second advantage to the flag.

The four-hour race ran without incident – not so much as a safety car or full-course yellow – meaning the Idec Sport Racing crew of Nicolas Jamin/Pierre Ragues/Richard Bradley weren't offered a late joker to close the gap. The Duqueine Engineering car of Paul Lafargue/Paul-Loup Chatin/Memo Rojas



completed an ORECA podium lockout.

A battle against tyre wear compounded the woes of the polesitting G-Drive Racing crew of Roman Rusinov/Job van Uitert/Norman Nato. After stalling the car on the parade lap, they couldn't recover beyond fourth place.

Ultimate was the eventual winner in the LMP3 bout, despite Eurointernational's early control of proceedings. In the closing stages of the race Matthieu Lahaye demoted

long-time class leader Jens Petersen to give the team its first ELMS class victory.

The GTE field told a similar story to that of the overall winners. Luzich Racing controlled the field on its first time out, as the Ferrari 488 GTE of Alessandro Pier Guidi/Nicklas Nielsen/Fabien Lavergne finished over a lap clear of the similar Kessel Racing car, with its all-female crew of Rahel Frey/Manuela Gostner/Michelle Gattling.

# Vesti leads Prema premiere

**FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**PAUL RICARD (FRA)**  
**13-14 APRIL**  
**ROUND 1/8**

Frederik Vesti took two wins to claim an early series lead in the inaugural Formula Regional European Championship.

Only 10 cars assembled for the first round of the FIA-blessed European take on the Regional F3 concept, and it was Prema Powerteam trio Vesti, Enzo Fittipaldi and Olli Caldwell who shared the poles after rain-affected qualifying.

Fittipaldi had pole for the opener, but he and Caldwell ran wide at the Mistral

chicane on the opening lap as they fought for first position, allowing Vesti into a lead he never looked like losing. Igor Fraga was the revelation of Ricard – the Brazilian, an Esports champion and ace in US and Mexican single-seaters – ran second for DR Formula before he was caught napping at the final turn of the penultimate lap by the incisive Fittipaldi.

While Caldwell led race two all the way, Fittipaldi repeated his earlier move on Fraga to take second on the fourth lap, and Vesti wasted little time following him through. The Prema triplets then ran in tight formation to the finish without swapping places but, when Caldwell was excluded post-race for a technical issue, Fittipaldi inherited the win.

Vesti grabbed the lead from the start of Sunday morning's finale, and the Dane was untroubled. Fittipaldi had to battle once again, this time passing Dave Schumacher (US Racing) for second place. Caldwell emerged from a mighty dust-up with DR pair Fraga and Raul Guzman for fourth, before the Latin-Americans tangled at the Mistral chicane.



## WEEKEND WINNERS

**EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES**  
**PAUL RICARD (FRA)**

- LMP2 Henrik Hedman/Ben Hanley/James Allen  
DragonSpeed (ORECA 07-Gibson)
- LMP3 Matthieu Lahaye/Jean-Baptiste Lahaye/Francois Heriau  
Ultimate (Norma-Nissan M30)
- GTE Alessandro Pier Guidi/Nicklas Nielsen/Fabien Lavergne  
Luzich Racing (Ferrari 488 GTE)

**FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**PAUL RICARD (FRA)**

- Race 1 Frederik Vesti  
Prema Powerteam
- Race 2 Enzo Fittipaldi  
Prema Powerteam
- Race 3 Frederik Vesti  
Prema Powerteam



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BRITISH GT  
SEASON  
PREVIEW

## THE MOST OPEN BRITISH GT SEASON IN YEARS?

*A raft of new combinations makes this year's contest, which kicks off this weekend, very difficult to predict*

JAMES NEWBOLD

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP





**T**here's an air of change around the British GT Championship paddock in 2019. Of the 14 cars from seven manufacturers entered in GT3 – the biggest field assembled since 2016 – only two have competed in the championship before, while last year's championship-winning triumvirate of Jonny Adam, Flick Haigh and Optimum Motorsport has been split up. Haigh won't be defending her title, while Adam returns to the TF Sport squad with which he won the 2016 title and will race alongside Graham Davidson, a race winner at Spa last year.

After seven years of service, the Aston Martin V12 Vantage that Adam has raced to each of his three British GT crowns has been replaced by a new V8 turbo-powered model, while series stalwarts Derek Johnston – the 2016 champion with Adam – and serial runner-up Jon Minshaw are absent too.

With new machinery from Aston joined by an Evo version of the Lamborghini Huracan, a second-generation Bentley Continental, McLaren's brand-new 720S GT3 and a car new to the series – albeit proven elsewhere – in the form of the

BMW M6, British GT will have a very different feel this year. It's not hard to see why some are billing this as the most unpredictable season in recent history.

Amid the upheaval, the Mercedes-AMG GT3 has suddenly gone from young pup to the elder statesman of the grid, which Merc runners RAM Racing and Team ABBA Racing will hope to take advantage of in the early going. RAM driver Callum Macleod set the second fastest time at the Donington media day, albeit with the caveat that three Astons, Balfe's McLaren and series returnee JRM – running 2017 title-winning pair Seb Morris and Rick Parfitt – did not run and that those present had yet to receive their 2019 Balance of Performance. Macleod is now targeting a title push in his fourth season alongside Ian Loggie.

"The team knowing the car is a big help," he says. "We arrive at a circuit, they set the car up and it feels good from the off. It will be a difficult one to call with the new cars and different levels of BoP, but I think we'll be in the mix more consistently. We've got a package where we can be competitive at any circuit in any given situation, so we'll certainly be pushing hard from the off." >>



The only man to topple Macleod's time on media day – by 0.024s – was Lamborghini factory driver Phil Keen, who is joined at Barwell Motorsport by new co-driver Adam Balon. A GT4-class winner at Oulton Park in each of the past two seasons, Balon will benefit from the raft of changes made to the Huracan Evo, which follows the current trend for GT3 cars – started by the Mercedes in 2016 – to be easier for amateur drivers to handle on the limit. The latest iteration of the Huracan produces less power but more torque, boasts reworked aerodynamics to improve its pitch-sensitivity and tyre life, and more subtle details such as electro-hydraulic power-steering that give the drivers greater feedback.

With over 3000km of testing completed, Barwell Motorsport boss Mark Lemmer is confident the team will be quickly on the pace with its new Lambo, but Keen expects the same to apply elsewhere too. "We've got the strongest grid we've seen for quite a while this year," he says. "There are some good drivers, good teams and I don't think they'll need much help getting going."

Adam agrees that the grid has taken a step up this year, and believes that the Aston contingent – again the most common marque on the grid with four cars – may not have it all its own way. "It has taken a few teams a while to adjust to the new car because it's quite different to set up and drive," he says. "It's going to be a new process for all the teams going to most circuits for the first time."

That much may be true, but the cream always rises to the top in such situations and the same familiar faces will still be expected to challenge at the sharp end. Along with Adam and Davidson, TF team-mates Nicki Thiim and Mark Farmer will hope they have used up all their bad luck from last year, while at Beechdean AMR Marco Sorensen – who clocked the fastest lap in half the races last year – and double champion Andrew Howard will be in the mix too.

"You'll see guys that have changed teams and cars be a bit



stronger, but I still think you'll see the few older names that are quick anyway come up to the top," says Adam. "You can have the fastest car on the grid with the fastest team-mate but it's about execution. To win many races over a season in British GT is difficult, but the bad weekends where you still finish fourth or fifth are the ones that you win championships on, like last year."

The upcoming Easter weekend at Oulton Park can always be relied upon to supply drama, and points banked there could prove crucial later in the year. It won't take long to see who has taken Adam's mantra to heart. ❄️

GT3 ENTRY LIST

NO	DRIVERS	TEAM (CAR)	CLASS
2	Nicki Thiim/Mark Farmer	TF Sport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT3)	Pro-Am
47	Jonny Adam/Graham Davidson	TF Sport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT3)	Pro-Am
3	Ben Green/Dominic Paul	Century Motorsport (BMW M6 GT3)	Pro-Am
9	Jack Mitchell/Adrian Willmott	Century Motorsport (BMW M6 GT3)	Pro-Am
6	Callum Macleod/Ian Loggie	RAM Racing (Mercedes-AMG GT3)	Pro-Am
7	Ryan Ratcliffe/Glynn Geddie	Team Parker Racing (Bentley Continental GT3)	Silver
8	Adam Christodoulou/Richard Neary	Team ABBA Racing (Mercedes-AMG GT3)	Pro-Am
18	Adam Wilcox/Michael Igoe	WPI Motorsport (Porsche 911 GT3 Cup)	GTC (Pro-Am)
22	Rob Bell/Shawn Balfe	Balfe Motorsport (McLaren 720S GT3)	Pro-Am
31	Seb Morris/Rick Parfitt Jr	JRM Racing (Bentley Continental GT3)	Pro-Am
33	Greg Caton/Shamus Jennings	G-Cat Racing (Porsche 911 GT3-R GT3)	Am-Am
69	Jonny Cocker/Sam de Haan	Barwell Motorsport (Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO)	Pro-Am
72	Phil Keen/Adam Balon	Barwell Motorsport (Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO)	Pro-Am
96	Bradley Ellis/Oliver Wilkinson	Optimum Motorsport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT3)	Silver
99	Marco Sorensen/Andrew Howard	Beechdean AMR (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT3)	Pro-Am

CALENDAR

DATE	VENUE
20/22 April	Oulton Park
18-19 May	Snetterton
8-9 June	Silverstone
22-23 June	Donington Park
20-21 July	Spa
3-4 August	Brands Hatch
14-15 September	Donington Park



## HOW MULTIMATIC AND ITS MUSTANG COULD BE A GT4 GAME CHANGER

The 2018 GT4 class title battle was a series of ifs, buts and missed opportunities that contributed to a thriller, which remained open until the final lap of the season. If 2019's record-equalling 23-car grid can produce anything like the spectacle of last year, where the top three crews were separated at season's end by just two points, then we'll be in for a treat.

Early indications from media day – held before Balance of Performance testing – were positive, with four marques in the top five, headed by the Team Parker Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4 of reigning Pro-Am champions Scott Malvern and Nick Jones. But it's the car that ended up second, driven by Formula 4 graduate Seb Priaulx, that will be the object of close scrutiny this year.

As customer teams that receive technical support from their affiliated manufacturers, last year's title battlers Century Motorsport and Tolman Motorsport subscribe to the traditional GT4 model. But that could be ripped up by the entry of

Canadian engineering giant Multimatic. Best known for developing the Ford GT, Multimatic is the company behind the Mustang GT4, which has raced in customer hands in the US since 2017. Now Priaulx is paired with long-time driver Scott Maxwell in one car, while Gold-rated Billy Johnson will be partnered by an as-yet unnamed Bronze in the second entry.

The combination of Priaulx's youthful exuberance, Maxwell's experience and Multimatic's intimate knowledge of its creation should make for a potent combination, but Maxwell is keen to play down its prospects. "Like every car it has strengths and weaknesses so we'll see how the tracks play out, and you're always playing the BoP game too, so it's difficult to predict," he says. "No car will dominate – that's just the way it is now. But we should be one of the cars to beat I would think."

Competition for that honour will be fierce, as ever. McLaren is well-represented in its fourth year of GT4, bolstered by the addition of two



570Ss for 2017 champion HHC Motorsport. New McLaren Young Professional Michael O'Brien is the best-placed returning driver from last year and, together with 2016 champion Graham Johnson, will be a threat for Pro-Am honours at Balfe Motorsport. Renault UK Clio Cup convert James Dorlin and Formula Ford Festival winner Josh Smith head the new McLaren Driver Development Programme intake at Tolman.

Aston Martin's resurrected Driver Academy has attracted a bevy of customers for its new V8 Vantage GT4. Class returnee Optimum Motorsport will look to repeat its

2016 success with Mike Robinson, joined by former HHC man Patrik Matthiesen, while at Beechdean AMR 2018 Pro-Am runners-up Kelvin Fletcher and Martin Plowman will be a renewed threat after switching from RJN's elderly Nissan 370Z.

As the only team campaigning the new-for-2018 BMW M4s, reigning champion Century will again be a podium threat, but the jury is out on its all-new driver line-up.

With new cars from Track Focused (KTM) and GT Marques (Porsche) joining the mix, GT4 will be the usual hotbed of intrigue. But if Multimatic has its way, the game as we know it could be irrevocably changed...



### GT4 ENTRY LIST

NO	DRIVERS	TEAM (CAR)	CLASS
4	Josh Smith/James Dorlin	Tolman Motorsport (McLaren 570S GT4)	Silver
5	Lewis Proctor/Jordan Collard	Tolman Motorsport (McLaren 570S GT4)	Silver
11	Martin Plowman/Kelvin Fletcher	Beechdean AMR (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4)	Pro-Am
15	Seb Priaulx/Scott Maxwell	Multimatic Motorsports (Ford Mustang GT4)	Silver
19	Billy Johnson/TBC	Multimatic Motorsports (Ford Mustang GT4)	Pro-Am
20	Michael O'Brien/Graham Johnson	Balfe Motorsport (McLaren 570S GT4)	Pro-Am
23	Aron Taylor-Smith/Sam Smelt	RACE Performance (Ford Mustang GT4)	Silver
32	Sean Cooper/Mike McCollum	Track Focused (KTM X-Bow GT4)	Pro-Am
35	Jack Butel/Connor O'Brien	Optimum Motorsport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4)	Silver
75	Patrik Matthiesen/Mike Robinson	Optimum Motorsport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4)	Silver
42	Mark Kimber/Jacob Mathiasen	Century Motorsport (BMW M4 GT4)	Silver
43	Angus Fender/Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke	Century Motorsport (BMW M4 GT4)	Silver
44	Matthew George/Steve McCulley/Paul Vice	Invictus Games Racing (Jaguar F-Type SVR GT4)	Pro-Am
57	Dean Macdonald/Callum Pointon	HHC Motorsport (McLaren 570S GT4)	Silver
58	Luke Williams/Tom Jackson	HHC Motorsport (McLaren 570S GT4)	Silver
61	Ben Hurst/Micah Stanley	Academy Motorsport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4)	Silver
62	Will Moore/Alex Toth-Jones	Academy Motorsport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4)	Silver
66	Scott Malvern/Nick Jones	Team Parker Racing (Mercedes-AMG GT4)	Pro-Am
77	Michael Broadhurst/Mark Murfitt	Fox Motorsport (Mercedes-AMG GT4)	Pro-Am
88	Dino Zamparelli/Chris Car	GT Marques (Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport)	Pro-Am
89	TBC/TBC	Steller Performance (TBC)	TBC
95	Josh Price/Patrick Kibble	TF Sport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4)	Silver
97	Ash Hand/Tom Canning	TF Sport (Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4)	Silver

### NEXT WEEK

#### OULTON PARK 25 APRIL ISSUE

Find out who gets off to the best start with our report from the first round



BRITISH F3  
SEASON  
PREVIEW

# GRADUATES STRIVING FOR SUCCESS

*The top three from British F4 are all stepping up together. Here's why*

STEFAN MACKLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP 

**F**or the first time since the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship was created in 2016, the top three drivers from the previous season's British F4 standings are graduating into the category. Not only that, but all three are British and it's the clearest indication yet that the UK once again has a viable single-seater ladder.

Previously, drivers would often move into series in Europe, especially the Formula Renault Eurocup, or turn their back on single-seaters altogether in favour of GT racing and what was perceived as a more viable career route. But the situation in Europe has been unclear, specifically over the FIA's new Regional F3 concept and the confusion between Formula European Masters and Euroformula Open. Thanks to British F3's affordability and competitiveness, the home series has capitalised and proven itself more relevant than ever in the single-seater hierarchy.

Reigning F4 champion Kiern Jewiss took six wins last season to claim the title with Double R Racing, and the 16-year-old ended the year by reaching the final of the



British F4 champ Jewiss reckons it's logical to stay racing in the UK



McLaren Autosport BRDC Award. He will move into British F3 with Douglas Motorsport and becomes the first British F4 champion to compete full-time in the series.

“I think this year will be interesting,” says Jewiss. “Everyone goes out to win, don’t they? But for me it’s about improving myself. I know what I need to improve and that’s qualifying. It’s not like the Ginetta Juniors [where Jewiss raced in 2017] or touring cars; if you qualify fifth with them you can overtake, but with all the aero and dirty air it’s not as easy in British F3, so the qualifying is really important.”

Jewiss admits that with the uncertain situation surrounding F3-level competition in Europe, the logical step was to move into British F3. “We had eyed the series up for quite a while, especially with everything going on with other F3 series in Europe,” he says.

Jewiss’s closest challenger for the F4 title last year was Ayrton Simmons, who also competed in three rounds of British F3 with Chris Dittmann Racing. The 17-year-old qualified an impressive fourth on his debut at Spa and took a best result of fifth at Silverstone. >>



Verhagen is a former Red Bull Junior; he’ll race with Double R

## RISING STAR WANTS TO EARN HIS STRIPES

British F4 graduates may be in the spotlight this year, but that doesn’t mean they’ll be the only drivers challenging for the title. One of the highest-profile names to move into the championship is former Red Bull Junior Neil Verhagen. The 18-year-old American will drive with Double R – which has won two of the past three British F3 championships – having spent two seasons in Formula Renault Eurocup.

“It’s a good series with a proven car, which was not something that was available in other series,” he says. “For me it’s all about learning, building up more experience and improving. I definitely want to learn as much as I can.”

Other compatriots joining the series include former USF2000 driver Kaylen Frederick with Carlin, and Danish-American US F4 ace Benjamin Pedersen at Douglas Motorsport.

Also moving into the series this season will be Belgian Ulysse de Pauw, who joins Douglas after finishing third overall last year in the highly competitive French F4 Championship, in his first season of single-seater racing.

The most experienced driver in British F3, Manuel Maldonado – cousin of one-time Formula 1 winner Pastor – will return for his third full season with Fortec Motorsport, having taken two wins last year.

Continuing the F1 theme, Hampus Ericsson, younger brother of former F1 and current IndyCar driver Marcus, will return for a full campaign with Double R after the Swede impressed in his two outings with Fortec last year.

Briton Josh Mason and Thai driver Sasakorn Chaimongkol will continue with Lanan and Hillspeed respectively, and race winner Pavan Ravishankar will also be back with Double R.

Also joining the entry list are international F4 graduates Lucas Petersson (Carlin) and Nazim Azman (Chris Dittmann Racing), plus Kris Wright (Fortec).



De Pauw impressed in French F4 last season

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Hoggard will race with Fortec again



Simmons returns with Chris Dittmann

“We proved we had a lot of potential last year with the races that we did without much testing beforehand,” says Simmons. “We did well with Chris Dittmann [last season], which was another reason we came back with him. We showed great pace last year and with a bit of testing we should be up there.”

Simmons’s minimum target is “challenging for the title. The objective will be to win, but [he’ll be happy] as long as we’re in the title fight. I’m grateful to have the chance to step up from F4 and I’m going to take this opportunity to the max.”

The driver with perhaps the best form coming into the season is Johnathan Hoggard, who finished third behind Jewiss and Simmons in the 2018 F4 standings. If only results from the second half of the year were taken into account, he would have romped to the F4 title, having taken eight wins – the most of any driver all season. Hoggard will remain with Fortec Motorsport, and topped the official media day testing times at Donington Park last month.

“I think we’ve adapted to the car quite well – we’ve done a couple more tests here and there,” says the 18-year-old. “Initially it’s a big step up, but I think my driving style suits the car as I struggled in F4 with how it moved around.” Like Jewiss, Hoggard believes that qualifying will be vital in the season ahead, as the downforce levels of the Tatuus-Cosworth make it difficult to stay close to the car in front. “Qualifying is the important thing as it’s hard to overtake,” he adds. “It’s not just following [other cars], but also the different tracks we go to are quite narrow.”

For this trio of graduates, challenging for wins during the course of the season is their minimum expectation, and come the final round of the year at Donington Park they should all still be battling for the title.

But perhaps the British driver with the best chance for the title is Clement Novalak, who continues in British F3 with Carlin after contesting four rounds last season. The 18-year-old,

## ENTRY LIST

NO	DRIVER	TEAM
3	<b>Johnathan Hoggard</b>	Fortec Motorsport
33	<b>Manuel Maldonado</b>	Fortec Motorsport
35	<b>Kris Wright</b>	Fortec Motorsport
7	<b>Nazim Azman</b>	Chris Dittmann Racing
12	<b>Ayrton Simmons</b>	Chris Dittmann Racing
8	<b>Kaylen Frederick</b>	Carlin
17	<b>Clement Novalak</b>	Carlin
22	<b>Lucas Petersson</b>	Carlin
20	<b>Benjamin Pedersen</b>	Douglas Motorsport
77	<b>Ulysse de Pauw</b>	Douglas Motorsport
87	<b>Kiern Jewiss</b>	Douglas Motorsport
21	<b>Josh Mason</b>	Lanan Racing
24	<b>Hampus Ericsson</b>	Double R Racing
26	<b>Neil Verhagen</b>	Double R Racing
28	<b>Pavan Ravishankar</b>	Double R Racing
45	<b>Sasakorn Chaimongkol</b>	Hillspeed

who also campaigned in Formula Renault Eurocup, took pole on his F3 debut at Oulton Park but only managed a best result of fourth despite flashes of blinding pace.

“[The championship] is a realistic goal considering the experience we have got in the category,” says Novalak. “The only thing is I’ve not driven on some tracks yet – some are quite difficult, like Brands Hatch GP, but I’m looking forward to the challenge. Novalak and team boss Trevor Carlin “both wanted to join forces again for this year and we know that we can do something good.”

Grid numbers for the season look positive, with 16 drivers already confirmed and the possibility of several more joining – new team JHR Developments has yet to confirm any drivers – meaning that some races could feature as many as 20 cars.

For the first time, the reversed-grid second race and race three will be live-streamed by the championship on its website. It’s another sign that it is heading in the right direction. Talks are also ongoing to make the category one of the FIA’s Regional F3 categories in 2020 with a car fitted with a halo.

“This year looks to be the strongest ever, which I think is a great tribute to the championship,” says Jonathan Palmer, whose company MotorSport Vision runs the series. “British F3 is a good step up in performance and sophistication from British F4 and it gives drivers the chance to keep on a winning theme.”

And winning is all any of the British F4 graduates – and their opposition – are concerned about. ❁

## CALENDAR

DATE	VENUE
20/22 April	Oulton Park
18-19 May	Snetterton
8-9 June	Silverstone
22-23 June	Donington Park
20-21 July	Spa
3-4 August	Brands Hatch
17-18 August	Silverstone
14-15 September	Donington Park



Jewiss is aiming to improve his qualifying

AWNINGS



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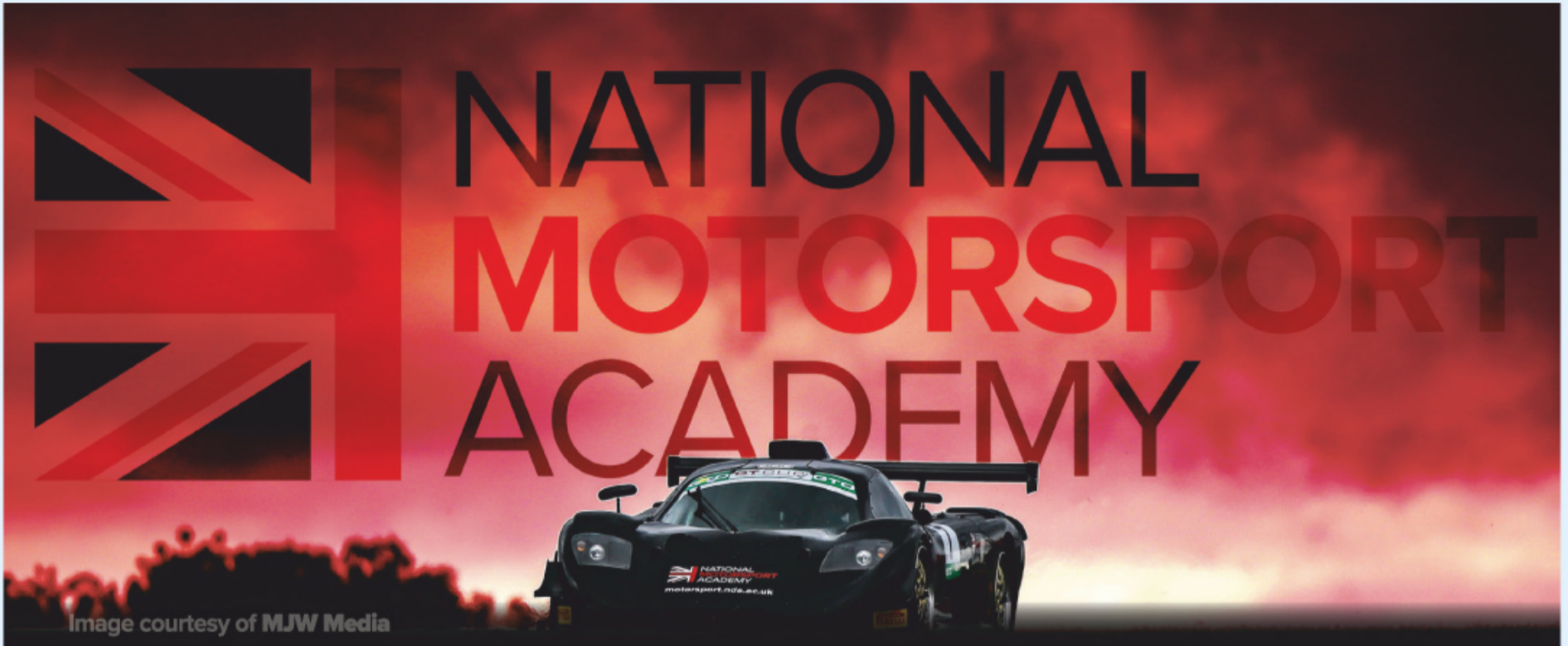


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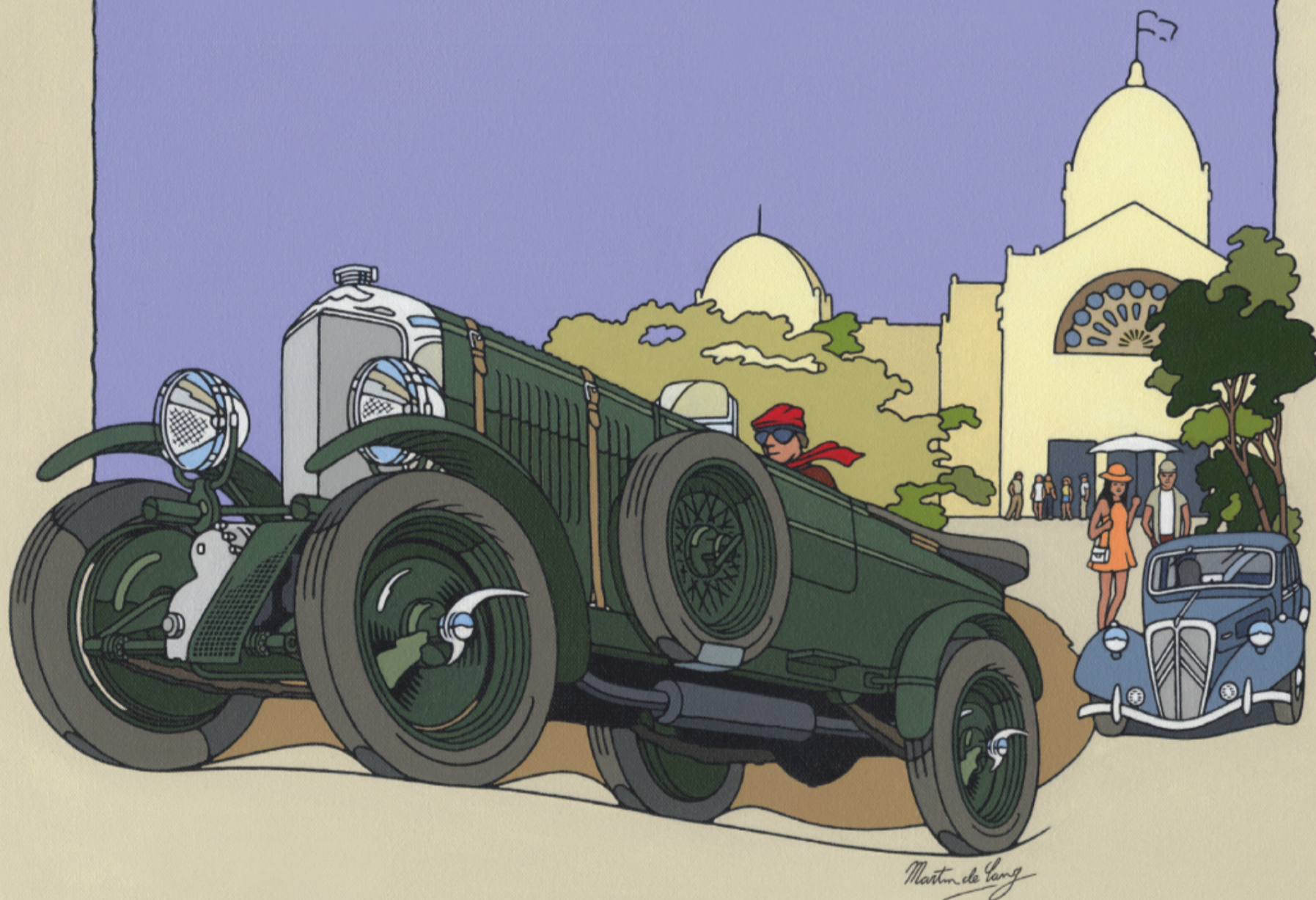


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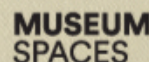
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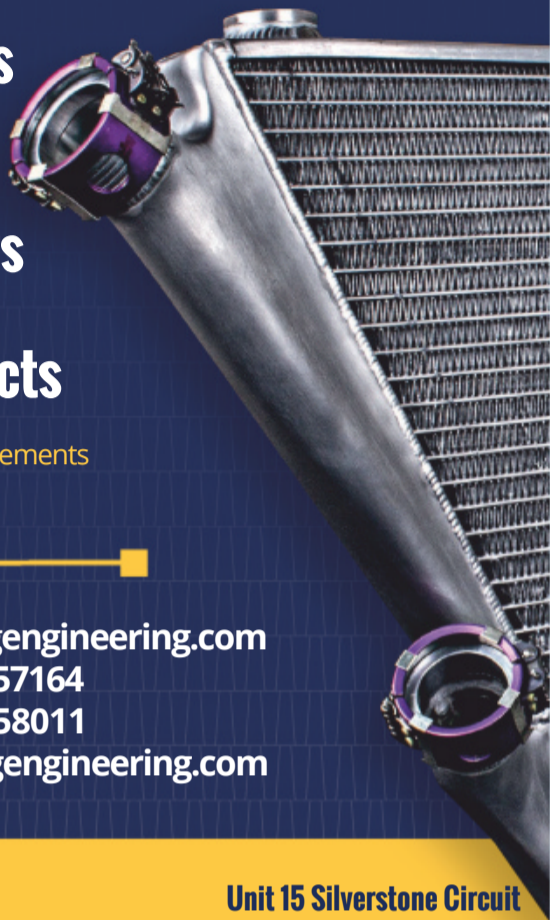


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This was Carroll's first GT Cup race since 2015

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# CARROLL AND CHAMBERLAIN RETURN TO GT CUP ACTION

## GT CUP

Ex-Jaguar Formula E driver and A1GP title winner Adam Carroll made his return to the GT Cup in the championship's season opener at Donington Park last weekend.

The Northern Irishman, who carried Team Ireland to the 2008-09 A1GP title, had not raced competitively since driving for the Jaguar squad in the 2016-17 FE season.

Carroll, 36, contested a GT Cup race for the first time since 2015 last weekend, sharing an FF Corse Ferrari 488 Challenge with Laki Christoforou. The pair claimed a best result of fifth overall plus two GTC class wins from the four races.

"I'm excited to return to FF Corse," said Carroll. "It's a team I've achieved success with in the past in British GT, and even more so at a time when they've strengthened in all areas and are putting the building blocks in

place to compete internationally in GT racing in the near future."

## REPLACEMENT HOWSON SHINES

Matt Howson, the 2015 LMP2 class winner in the Le Mans 24 Hours, was also part of FF Corse's Donington line-up. He took the place of regular driver Dan de Zille, sharing with de Zille's father Graham.

Howson, who will race for KCMG-Honda in TCR Japan this season, has spent recent years coaching drivers.

"It's good to be out in the car this weekend," he said after finishing third in the GTC class in both endurance races. "I'll be at all the rounds helping Graham and Dan, so there's a good chance I'll be out again as a substitute."

## CHAMBERLAIN'S PORSCHE RETURN

Another driver to return to GT Cup action was Richard Chamberlain, who was piloting his distinctive Porsche 935 after a 20-month rebuild. Fire

tore through the unique car during the 2017 Silverstone round and Chamberlain missed the entire 2018 season while he repaired the car.

"The car was destroyed, from the B-post back," Chamberlain said. "I think any normal person would have thrown it away. The aluminium castings and plates and caps had all melted. They were destroyed, so we thought, 'We've got to rebuild it and we may as well try and make it better.'

"The wheelbase is 320mm longer and it's now mid-engined like the latest 991 RSRs. The gearbox is at the rear too, so the weight distribution is much better and the aero has been cleaned up. It's taken 20 months to do it, but we've done it all in our shed at home and I'm really proud of it."

Chamberlain said he faced a "near vertical learning curve" having not raced during the rebuild process, but won three of the four races.

**DAN MASON AND KYRAN GIBBONS**



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Carroll (left) with Christoforou



Chamberlain's Porsche 935

TYLER

# Haigh joins up with TF Sport for part-time entry

## BRITISH GT

British GT champion Flick Haigh will not contest a full season of racing this year after failing to raise the necessary budget to compete in the Michelin Le Mans Cup.

The 34-year-old, who partnered Jonny Adam to the title in an Optimum-run Aston Martin V12 Vantage, will instead enter select rounds of various championships in a new V8 Vantage GT3 fielded by TF Sport. She turned down opportunities to defend her title with other manufacturers in British GT.

These outings are expected to include the Road to Le Mans support race, which she last contested in 2017, with potential to add the UK round of the International GT Open at Silverstone in September and the FIA GT Nations Cup at Vallelunga.

Haigh, who still intends to graduate to the European Le Mans Series for 2020, said: "It's hard to come from such a big year to accept that this is what it is, but I've come to terms with it now and I will focus on 2020 and get sorted for that."

Haigh will test the V8 Vantage for the first time at Anglesey soon and hopes that doing the running away from the spotlight will



Lack of budget will hold Haigh back in 2019

help with learning the new car.

"The car is new to everybody, so it might be a good year for me to use to learn the car and get a feel for it without the pressure of feeling like I need to win another championship," she said.

- British, European and World karting champion Mark Kimber will graduate to car racing this season, competing in the GT4 class of British GT with Century Motorsport. Kimber will drive a BMW M4 for the reigning GT4 champion team alongside Jacob Mathiasen, who previously drove for the squad in a Ginetta in British GT in 2017.

**JAMES NEWBOLD AND GRAHAM KEILLOH**



# Bumper entry of 33 drivers sign up for Mini JCWs

## MINI CHALLENGE

The Mini Challenge JCW championship has achieved a bumper entry for its final season before joining the British Touring Car Championship's support bill.

The series begins at Oulton Park this weekend and will continue to feature on the British GT undercard for the majority of its rounds this year. It will then replace the Renault UK Clio Cup on the TOCA package for 2020.

Thirty-three drivers have registered, although not all will compete at the Oulton opener. The category is therefore likely to beat its previous record grid of 31 cars during the season.

Drivers to sign up in recent weeks include 2010 Clio Cup runner-up Lee Pattison (below) who returns to the series from Clios, competing as a privateer.

"The numbers for this year are very strong, and the grid is packed with quality too," said promoter Antony Williams. "We've worked hard to make the Mini Challenge an exciting and accessible place to race, and I think we've hit the nail on the head with the Mini JCW specification. Undoubtedly the news that we're due to move onto the TOCA package for 2020 will have helped."



Golding won G40 Cup crown in 2018

# Golding moves up Ginetta ladder

## GT5 CHALLENGE

Ginetta G40 Cup champion Tom Golding has graduated to the GT5 Challenge for this year.

Golding only began racing in 2017, taking five victories in the Ginetta Racing Drivers Club series before establishing himself as the dominant force in the G40 Cup last year. He will remain with the Assetto Motorsport squad that powered him to the title last season.

"I'm extremely grateful to the team, friends and my family for their support

in every way, without them 2019 simply wouldn't be possible," said Golding. "I have been working harder than ever during the winter in order to make the grid this year. I have the best mindset I've ever had, and I believe that I have one shot at this."

Another driver on the grid for the opening rounds of the popular GT5 series at Oulton Park this weekend will be Geri Nicosia. He finished third in the standings last year and has switched to the Quattro Motorsport team.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**





# Team Hard quits VW Racing Cup on eve of 2019 season

Team Hard has won the past two titles

championship over the past couple of years has made it increasingly difficult for it to work commercially for us, our drivers and our partners.”

Gilham added that a calendar change, which meant that the VW series would race at Croft instead of at Brands Hatch’s Deutsche Fest event on 7 July, was a major blow. “Several of our drivers are based locally to Brands Hatch and losing that race was a major dent to their sponsorship prospects,” said Gilham, who was the series champion himself in 2007.

Team Hard drivers have won the past two titles: Bobby Thompson in 2017 and Jamie Bond in 2018.

The VW Cup is run by Maximum Motorsport, and its boss Stewart Lines said that there have been other changes to the way the series is operated this year.

“We are going to have control fuel, and mandate that everyone runs the same dash so we can monitor things inside the car,” said Lines. “We also have a new rolling road to measure power outputs.

“The move to Croft was done to maintain our position as the headline act at the early July meeting, so it has met with the approval of the majority of our competitors. Most people are all for the changes and we expect more than 20 cars on the grid for the opening round at Oulton Park this weekend.”

**MATT JAMES**

## VW RACING CUP

Volkswagen Racing Cup title-winning squad Team Hard has withdrawn from the series and will now place its drivers in other championships.

The Kent-based team was planning to run up to eight cars in the series this season, but has instead decided to focus on other areas of national racing.

Team boss Tony Gilham said: “Unfortunately, the evolution of the

# Ahlers finally reaches 100 wins in Morgan +8

## MORGAN CHALLENGE

A year after his 99th Morgan Challenge race victory, Keith Ahlers finally achieved the landmark ton last weekend during the VSCC’s meeting at Silverstone.

Not only that, but Ahlers doubled up over the course of the weekend in his Morgan +8.

“I had two DNFs last year, a broken leaf spring and a blown engine, and a deserved whipping from Olly Bryant at Silverstone, so it’s taken a while,” said Ahlers.

“I’ve owned the +8 from

new in 1993 and did 106,000 miles before rebuilding it into its current pure racing guise, with full cage, glassfibre wings and 4.6-litre John Eales Rover V8 engine. Fundamentally, though, the centre section and ash frame are as they were.”

Ahlers made his race debut in 1997 and scored his first victory at Brands Hatch in 1999. He has won rounds every season since – 10 in 2014 alone – and the title in 2002 and 2009. The combo also won 750MC Roadsports crowns in 2001 and 2002.



Race win 100 finally happened for Ahlers

“I’ve done lots of other racing, including GTs with an Aero 8, but the Morgan Challenge is my roots,” added Ahlers. “I always go back, because you shouldn’t forget where you started.

Rob Wells looked after the car until 2005, when we set up on our own, since when Billy Bellinger has prepared it and co-driven the historic cars very successfully.”

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## Third meeting cancelled due to resurfacing work at Silverstone

### SILVERSTONE

A third June Silverstone club race meeting has been cancelled by the circuit's bosses to allow resurfacing work to take place.

Last month it was revealed that both the MG Car Club's MG Live event and a two-day 750MC meeting had been axed by the circuit.

A two-day MotorSport Vision fixture on the National Circuit has now also been cancelled so that resurfacing can be carried out. The 29-30 June event was due to play host to the GT Cup, one of MSVR's most popular categories, along with the F3 Cup, Heritage Formula Ford, Elise Trophy, Radical SR1 Cup, Trackday Championship and Focus Cup.

MSVR is looking at alternative options

but will not run a meeting at Silverstone on a different date.

An MSVR spokesperson said: "We have huge sympathy with the competitors and championship coordinators who have been disrupted by this late change, and appreciate their support and understanding while we arrange revised calendars for their series across other events and venues. This is very much an ongoing process."

The 750MC has secured a fresh date at the Northamptonshire venue on 27 October. It will use the GP layout a day after the traditional season-closing Birkett Relay event.

The MGCC revealed last month that it will not run MG Live this year.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

### LAP TIMES TUMBLE AS DRIVERS APPROVE OF NEW SURFACE

### CROFT

Drivers have given their approval to the newly resurfaced Croft circuit after it was christened in competition for the first time last weekend.

Competitors noted that the new surface offered more grip and several lap records were broken during the weekend. The surface was also considered to be smoother and kinder to tyres, although the circuit remains bumpy.

"It's very fast compared to the last time I was here," said Mini Miglia racer Lee Deegan. "I've been here in three different cars, and just jumped in the Mini and it's already a second under the Mini Miglia lap record. There's going to be a lot of lap records beaten this year. It's improved

the track; you can keep it flowing.

"The bumps are still there, and sometimes they do catch you out because there are probably slightly different places where there are bumps where there weren't before.

"If it rains, because you can still smell the Tarmac, I think the oil will start to lift through the Tarmac and there won't be a dry or a wet line like there normally is."

Reigning Max5 champion Paul Roddison added: "I'm pleased they haven't taken all the character out of it and made it billiard-table flat. It's still got character; into Tower you've still got a little bit of a crest."

Work on the resurfacing began in early April, and was completed less than two weeks later.

**GRAHAM KEILLOH**

### IN THE HEADLINES

#### YOUNGEST FUN CUP WINNER

Riley Phillips became the youngest ever Fun Cup winner when he shared the winning DespatchBay.com car with Andy Bicknell and Marcus Clutton at Oulton Park last weekend. Phillips, who will be 17 in May, will be sharing the car again with Bicknell at the next round at Croft, where the previous youngest podium finisher Harry Mailer joins them.

#### CORRECTION

Last week Autosport printed a photo caption of Alex Taylor's Mazda RX-7. This car is owned jointly by Taylor and his father Trevor, and was converted for circuit use by Taylor Sr. It was never raced in Australia.

#### RODNEY GOOCH 1946-2019

Rodney Gooch, Castle Combe's long-time inspirational marketing director, died last week having battled cancer for two years. A keen motorcycle racer, Gooch joined the fabled Aerosigns company, masterminding trackside hoardings, before joining John Webb's staff at Brands Hatch. When the late Howard Strawford approached him to bolster his team at Castle Combe he never looked back, staying for more than three decades before retiring in 2018.

#### FIRST TEST ON MALLORY OVAL

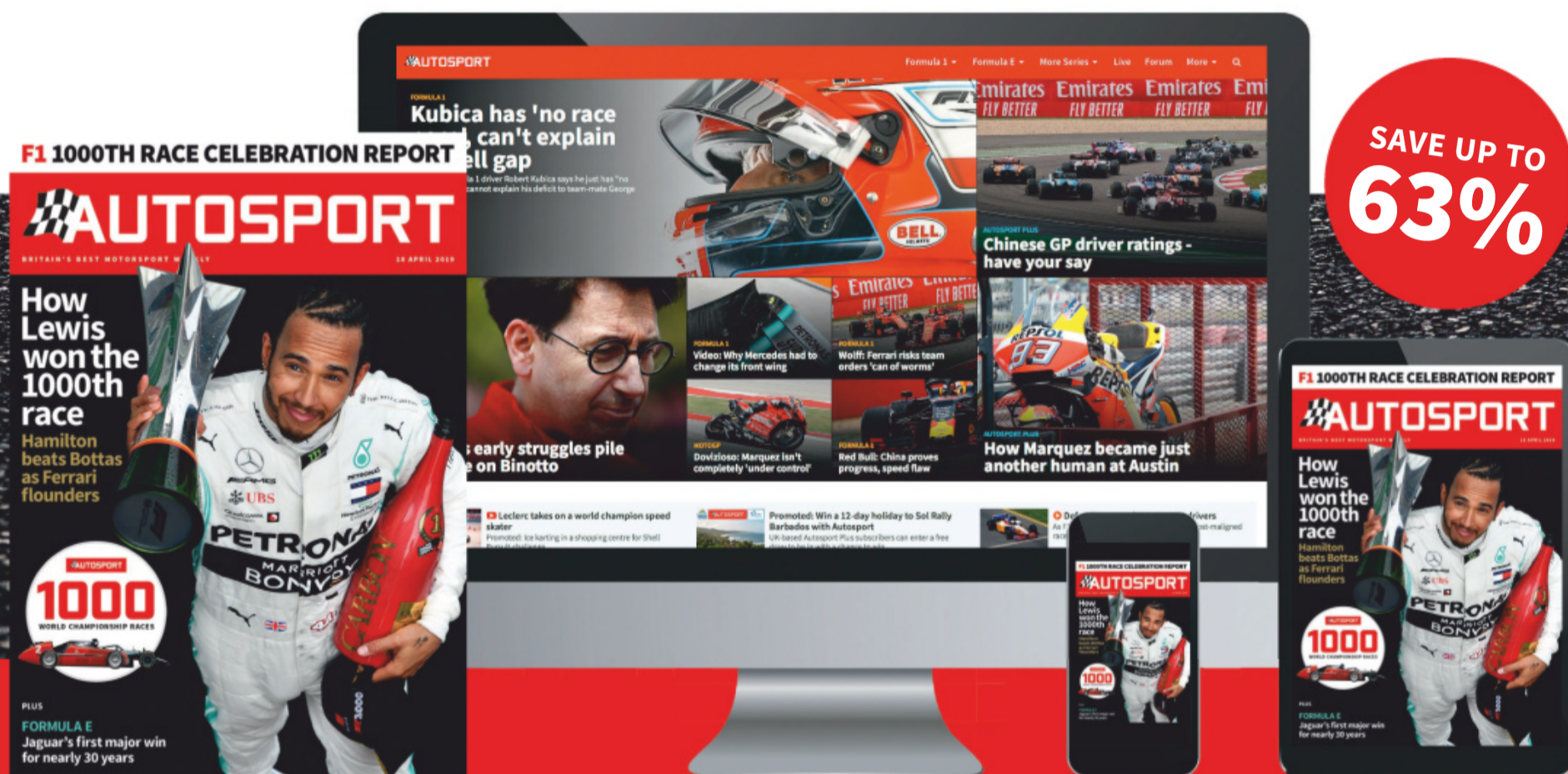
Pickup Truck Racing Championship drivers have conducted a first test on the Mallory Park oval (below) ahead of its return to use after a 14-year hiatus. Two Pickup meetings will be held on the Leicestershire oval this season, ensuring that the category retains an oval circuit on its calendar following Rockingham's closure at the end of last year. Round one of the championship takes place at Brands Hatch this weekend.



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# Cricklewood characters

*A celebratory race to commemorate 100 years of Bentley was only the headline attraction of the VSCC's near-perfect season opener at Silverstone*

MARCUS PYE

**A**n extraordinary centrepiece race celebrating 100 years of Bentley made the Vintage Sports-Car Club's 85th anniversary season opener – which also marked 70 years since the club's first race meeting at Silverstone – a very special weekend.

While I'm not convinced that the Formula Vintage branding of recent times has achieved its aim of engaging younger generations of fans – most of whom are hooked in by family devotees or friends who compete, or have spectated for decades – the cars and characters in the paddock have always been compelling to me.

I have attended many spring events, and that excitement in anticipation of quality motorsport still sustained me as I set off at 0600 en route to the circuit, which I first attended as a baby in August 1958. Heading east over the New Forest into the sun – a vermillion fireball over Southampton – was an encouraging start.

It is rarer these days to see racing cars on the way. Most now travel within clamshell trailers or trucks, robbing people of the spotting opportunities of my childhood.

In the environs of Silverstone I did see a couple of vintage cars on the A34, and followed a delightful BMW onto the campus, within which the paddocks were packed as ever with exotica. Behind the pits, a tent housed the 40 Bentleys taking part in the Benjafield's 100 feature race – together with 'celebrity' alumni including two mighty monoposti: the Pacey Hassan Special and

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**“The atmosphere on the grid as Saturday's racers lined up for a 45-minute blast was wonderful”**

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the rebuilt Barnato-Hassan Special that competed at Brooklands in the 1930s. Many roadsters were parked nearby. I couldn't help feeling that company founder Walter Owen Bentley would have been proud, incredulous, or both.

Bentley Motors survived little over a decade before being taken over by Rolls-Royce, but what a sporting legacy it left. Le Mans 24 Hours victories in 1924, through dealer John Duff and Frank Clement, then from 1927-30 with works entries, was a remarkable achievement for the Cricklewood firm. Sadly it haemorrhaged money prior to being rescued.

The atmosphere on the Le Mans-style echelon grid as Saturday's racers lined up for a 45-minute blast was wonderful. Prince Michael of Kent, a Bentley enthusiast who drove vintage machines on record runs and is an honorary member of the British

Racing Drivers' Club, owner of Silverstone, was among the guests. That cars from 1919-31 could race so hard, the youngest 88 years old, for 45 minutes will live long in onlookers' memories. Fewer than a quarter fell by the wayside as the 1925 Le Mans team car finished. Off track, the works three-litre known as 'Bitch', now the only survivor of the 1927 White House crash, and fresh from an extraordinary Graham Moss restoration, delighted aficionados.

I've always been an ERA fan, thus the strongest turnout at VSCC Silverstone in five years (Nick Toppliss's R4A, Mark Gillies in Dick Skipworth's R3A, Charles McCabe's ex-Bira R5B 'Remus', Julian Wilton's R7B, Paddins Dowling's ex-Peter Whitehead R10B, Terry Crabb's R12C, and the Tony Merrick-built AJM1 of Ben Fidler were on track) was a very welcome sight. As was the beautifully restored Reg Parnell-built Challenger-ERA of Duncan Ricketts, until its engine dropped a cylinder in the perishing cold conditions. Nonetheless, Ricketts (with a Goodwood finish behind him the previous Sunday) is adamant that the engineering behind the ambitious GP car project was sound.

In many ways the VSCC staple was the perfect 'clubby' with close, safe racing across the board. It was effectively two meetings packaged as one, for a sporting chance of covering costs. Julius Thurgood's Historic Racing Drivers Club subscribed to three grids on Sunday, the Morgan Challenge two, FiSCar co-promoted a 1950s sportscar race, and a 500cc Formula 3 grid closed the day. Only the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association double-header spanned both. Saturday's club Autosolo in the outer paddock and the tyre-screaming British Autotest Championship opener on Sunday added diversity and intrigue.

Returning to the 77th Goodwood Members' Meeting, David Coulthard's splendid Tony Gaze Trophy win in the IWC Schaffhausen Mercedes-Benz 300SL 'Gullwing' was not unprecedented. In September 1958 for the 32nd MM, Dennis Barthel drove a sister car to victory in a five-lap handicap race. The science behind the handicappers' calculations might not have been as all-encompassing as Colin Ayre's at current VSCC or 750 Motor Club events, but Barthel, who started a minute and 15 seconds after Harry Moore's Ford Consul and 65s after the Riley 1.5s of Goffe and Cooper, was beaten to the line by Goffe in a shower of sparks having lost a wheel and clobbered the chicane wall. The excursion brought disqualification, favouring his Merc rival...

Where to next? Easter Monday means Castle Combe and next weekend's celebration of 50 years of the resident Formula Ford championship promises to be special. Most extant champions have accepted invitations to attend, and alongside the Castle Combe Racing Club opens a Classic FF1600 (Pre-1982) double-header stars the evergreen Rick Morris, who defends his points lead. ✨

# Chamberlain's unique Porsche back on song

**DONINGTON PARK**  
**MSVR**  
**13-14 APRIL**

Richard Chamberlain's hat-trick of victories in the opening GT Cup weekend of the 2019 season was nearly two years in the making. His distinctive orange Porsche 935 was "absolutely destroyed" in a fire at Silverstone in 2017, triggering a repair job that took 20 months and was only completed three weeks before the Donington Park curtain-raiser.

Two wins from pole on Saturday hinted at a possible clean sweep, but Chamberlain faced renewed threats on Sunday.

Last year's GTO champion Gareth Downing was anonymous on the opening day after a three-car squeeze at Schwantz Curve in practice resulted in a broken steering column on his Mosler. But a close qualifying tussle on Sunday morning ended with Chamberlain delivering a 1m04.569s benchmark to narrowly beat Downing's time by 0.029s.

The sprint race promised a titanic battle for victory between the two, but this was prematurely cut short when the Mosler developed a water-temperature issue, allowing Chamberlain to cruise to victory.



It was then Dan Gibson in his McLaren 650S who took the fight to the Porsche in the final race. The two battled for the lead early on, with Gibson prevailing in a thrilling wheel-to-wheel exchange as a cutback through Redgate allowed him to complete the pass descending the Craner Curves. Gibson would be denied victory, however, by John Seale and Jamie Stanley in their Lamborghini Huracan. Seale's pace before the pitstop meant that Pro driver Stanley only had a 20s margin to catch and pass

Gibson in the final 25 minutes. Stanley delivered blistering laps to take the lead with eight minutes to spare.

For the first time in the series' history, Champion of Brands played away from home as Donington staged the first round of 2019. In a 1-2 for Medina cars, Rory Smith held off Oliver White – who had won both of Saturday's Heritage Formula Ford races in his older Van Diemen RF89 – to claim race-one victory.

Smith led throughout race two, building a four-second lead before

# Car woes no barrier to McIntyre's Saxo success

**CROFT**  
**BARC**  
**13-14 APRIL**

Scott McIntyre won both Junior Saloon Car races at Croft from pole to seize the championship lead, despite race-one gearbox problems that meant he had to swap units between races.

McIntyre had a couple of strokes of good fortune: in race one he dropped to eighth place after

struggling to get third gear after the start, but was able to resume his pole position after an early red flag.

Also, the man he replaced at the top of the points table, Lewis Saunders, qualified far down the grid for both races after suffering understeer caused by the wrong length of part being fitted after his drive flange broke. He recovered to take third and second-place finishes.

"It's going to be very close throughout the year," McIntyre promised, "but I look forward to the racing because I do trust him [Saunders] as a driver.

"We had about an hour window to change the gearbox. It's the first time we've had the gearbox out of this car; Alex Solley actually lent me a gearbox for this race. It normally takes 45 minutes [to change it], it took us 30.

"It was good luck that we had a restart [in race one], because I had a really bad start due to the gearbox and probably myself."

Both Mini Miglia races featured thrilling

battles between Lee Deegan and reigning champion Aaron Smith, the pair taking a victory apiece. Deegan won the first after dropping to eighth place early on when he ran wide under braking.

Smith took the race-two win after outdragging Deegan early on the final lap to take the lead, then pipping him to the line as they finished almost side-by-side. "That was so close!" Smith exclaimed. "Each driver gave the other just enough room and it made for awesome racing." Deegan added: "There was literally an inch or two between us through Sunny In and Sunny Out."

Joe Thompson just held off a recovering Jeff Smith to win the opening Mini Se7en contest. Smith had had to change his engine the day before, then found that his new unit had electrical problems and he had to sit out qualifying, meaning he started the race from the back. Smith and Thompson swapped places late on, each driver in turn taking advantage





a late safety car. White challenged Smith into the final corner on the last lap and, when both drivers braked too late and skipped across the gravel at the chicane, White emerged in the lead to seize the win.

Paul Donkin drew Ford Focus number 64 and propelled it to victory from pole in the arrive-and-drive Focus Cup opener. David Rowe claimed victory in the reversed-grid race. Trade Price Cars Racing BTCC team principal Andy Wilmot had led in the opening stages, but slipped back while grappling with power dropouts. Donkin

was running third when a turbo failure curtailed his progress.

Mechanical unreliability also intervened in Production BMWs, when Matthew Swaffer suffered a fuel-pump issue while leading race one, handing victory to David Graves, who swept the weekend's races.

Jason Timms would also secure a clean sweep of victories from pole in Monoposto 1400, overcoming wheelspin off the line and dropping to fourth in race one before battling back in his bike-engined Dallara.

**KYRAN GIBBONS**



of the one ahead being compromised by oil on the circuit from an earlier blow-up.

Thompson came within two laps of a double victory, but Dom Burger passed him on the outside of Tower for his first win.

Samuel Wilson made it four wins from four in Caterham Graduates this year by taking the Sigmax class in both Croft races. Both were comfortable victories. In race one he moved clear after an early battle with reigning champion Jamie Ellwood.

In race two Wilson led all the way, while Ellwood passed Stephen Clark for a distant second on the last lap.

Paul Brydon (BMW M3) was another double victor in the Northern Saloon and Sports Car Championship. The only close challenge was from poleman Matty Cobb, but his Lotus Elise pulled off seconds after a red-flag restart in race one and didn't take part in the second race.

**GRAHAM KEILLOH**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### DONINGTON PARK

#### GT CUP

**RACE 1, 2 & 3** Richard Chamberlain (Porsche 935)

**RACE 4** John Seale/Jamie Stanley (Lamborghini Huracan GT3)

#### CHAMPION OF BRANDS FF1600

**RACE 1** Rory Smith (Medina Sport JL18)

**RACE 2** Oliver White (Medina Sport JL17)

#### HERITAGE FORMULA FORD

**RACE 1 & 2** Oliver White

(Van Diemen RF89)

#### FOCUS CUP

**RACE 1** Paul Donkin

**RACE 2** David Rowe

#### PRODUCTION BMWs

**RACE 1 & 2** David Graves (BMW 320i)

#### MONOPOSTO MOTO 1000/CLASSIC/1400

**RACE 1 & 2** Jason Timms (Dallara F301)

#### MONOPOSTO MONO F3/2000/1800/1600

**RACE 1** Kevan McLurg (Dallara F399)

**RACE 2** Mark Harrison (Dallara F397)

#### RACING SALOONS

**RACE 1 & 2** Marcos Burnett (BMW E36 M3)

#### Z CARS

**RACE 1 & 2** Edd Giddings

#### CROFT

#### JUNIOR SALOON CARS

**RACE 1 & 2** Scott McIntyre

#### MINI MIGLIA

**RACE 1** Lee Deegan

**RACE 2** Aaron Smith

#### MINI SE7EN

**RACE 1** Joe Thompson

**RACE 2** Dom Burger

#### CATERHAM GRADUATES

**RACE 1 & 2** Samuel Wilson (Sigmax, below)

#### NORTHERN SALOON AND SPORTS CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

**RACE 1 & 2** Paul Brydon (BMW M3)

#### MAX5 CHAMPIONSHIP

**RACE 1, 2 & 3** Paul Roddison (Mk4)



For full results visit:  
[tsl-timing.com](http://tsl-timing.com)

# Ex-Hamilton rival Brown shows class with F1000 double

**BRANDS HATCH**  
750MC  
13-14 APRIL

Lewis Hamilton's old karting adversary Colin Brown was the star of the opening event of the 750 Motor Club's 80th anniversary year at Brands Hatch.

Brown, who reached Euro 3000 in the early 2000s, returned to the cockpit in the F1000 series. He raced into the distance in the first and third races and finished a strong third in the reversed-grid contest. Dan Gore was victorious in race two after absorbing last-lap pressure from Paul Butcher.

A standout performance from Matthew Booth in his first F1000 event bodes well for his season after he took two second places; the same goes for Robert Welham, who showed

strong pace but suffered a broken driveshaft on Saturday and an exclusion for an underweight car in the next race.

There were two tight races in the Classic Stock Hatch Championship, with Lee Scott diving round the outside into Druids in his Ford Fiesta XR2i to take the lead from the Citroen AX of Andrew Thorpe in the first bout, while behind an intense battle raged for the final podium spot. In the second race Scott had to settle for third, with Matt Rozier's Peugeot 205 taking second and Pete Morgan's Fiesta flying to victory.

The Formula Vee races were fragmented by a number of red flags. Ian Jordan (Sheane Jordan) was the eventual race-one winner ahead of the GAC of Daniel Hands, while Graham Gant in his WEV FV01 took the second-race spoils.

Peter Bove looked up for the challenge

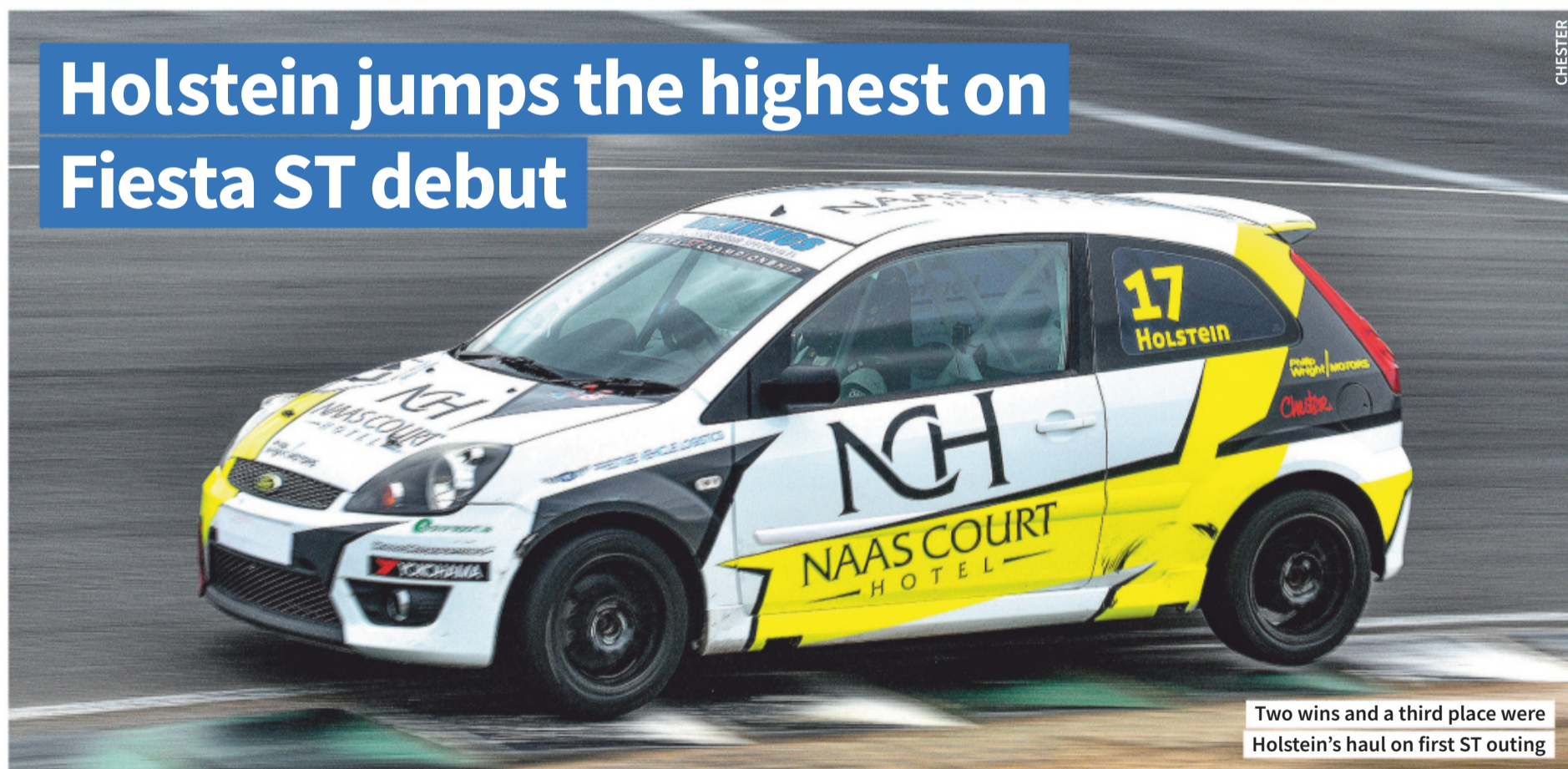


of passing Mark Glover's Racekits Falcon for 750 Formula race-one victory until he had to back off when the lapped Tonin Matia spun in front of him. Oliver Collett had been running in second when a nose failure left him stranded at the bottom of Paddock Hill Bend. His luck didn't improve in the second race after contact once again caused a nose issue, although this time he was able to recover to sixth place.

Race two featured another dice for Glover and Bove, but this time it was Bove who took the win in his Darvi Mk5.

Ben Rushworth made it two from two in the Hot Hatch Championship, holding a 28-second lead in his Honda Integra

# Holstein jumps the highest on Fiesta ST debut



**MONDELLO PARK**  
IMRC  
13-14 APRIL

Erik Holstein starred at the opening meeting of the season at Mondello Park, the former champion showjumper romping home to take race-one victory on his Fiesta ST debut.

This earned him a sixth-place reversed-grid spot for race two. No doubt buoyed by his earlier glory, Holstein swept round the outside of the Murray Motorsport

trio of Alex Denning, Michael Cullen and Dave Maguire at Turn 1. He subsequently displaced Barry-John McHenry for second and closed down leader Graham McDonnell. McDonnell put up a stern defence, though, and when Holstein eventually managed to get around the outside at Turn 1, the resulting contact dropped McDonnell way back, while Holstein rejoined in third behind Cullen and Denning.

As Denning grabbed the lead into Turn 1, Holstein got his head down and closed up

on the pair. He ran out of laps, though, and the trio crossed the line in close formation. In race three, Holstein worked his way up from sixth to take win number two.

Matthew Nicholl took a thrilling Ginetta Junior opener. Race two was equally exciting, as Nicholl had to overcome Christopher Grimes and Robbie Parks to do the double, the trio crossing the line together.

Paul O'Connell's newly acquired Dallara World Series by Renault machine took a pair of BOSS Ireland wins, despite the



DC2 in race one as the sleet began to fall.

In the Armed Forces Race Challenge Chris Bialan led from lights to flag in race one, but in the second outing Bialan's BMW E46 M3 GTR stopped on the grid and it was Mark Inman (Vauxhall VX220) who won from the Honda Civic of Will Ashmore.

Bialan had further success during the weekend, taking third in the Roadsports contest, in which the win went to Paul Cook's similar BMW after a race-long duel with Matthew Weymouth. Meanwhile, the inaugural 116 Trophy race was won by the Britcar entry of Bobby Trundley.

The first Clio 182 race was extremely

tight, with James Bark just holding on from Ryan Polley for victory. Polley qualified on pole but dropped back at the start, before putting in fastest laps in the later stages of the race. Don de Graaff was the race-two winner, while Polley lost out on another second-place finish to Jack Kingsbury.

Christopher Wesemael made it look easy in the first RGB Sports 1000 race at the wheel of his Mittell MC-53. He had to work much harder for his second win of the weekend, although he benefited from the engine failure of the similar Mittell of rival Paul Smith.

**ANNA DUXBURY**



early attentions of the fast-starting Barry Rabbitt in race one. Fergus Faherty's F3 Dallara was runner-up on both occasions.

Owen Purcell dominated the opening Fiesta Zetec race, easing away from a hectic battle for the final podium spots. The top six was reversed for race two, but Purcell managed to come through for the double. William Kellett took the race-three win, with Purcell grabbing runner-up spot from Andy Kavanagh on the run to the line. Kavanagh was later excluded for a technical infringement.

Greg Kelly grabbed Irish Stryker pole, setting a time a fraction under the long-standing lap record. Stephen Ross was on form, though, and battled his way past the fast-starting Andy D'Alton and Kelly to take a dominant race-one victory. He managed the double in race two, after an early red flag and restart.

Despite poor numbers, the Formula Vee race was an absolute cracker, with Anthony Cross coming out on top of a hectic scrap with Dan Polley. Jack Byrne was right there too in third, and Ken



Browne impressed in fourth.

Similarly, Formula Sheanes were thin on numbers but not on entertainment, Richard Kearney just beating polesitter Brian Hearty to the line after a thrilling battle. In race two, Hearty led away and managed to hold Kearney at bay to make it one-all.

Pat McBennett took the honours in a pair of poorly-supported Closed Wheel Libre races, his Lotus crossing the line well ahead of the SEAT Supercopa machines.

A tardy getaway meant Jackie Cochrane's Sunbeam Tiger entertained as he charged through for the HRCA win, with Bernard Foley's MGB GTV8 his closest challenger. Hillclimb convert Brendan Keane ran with the leaders before retiring with mechanical issues at half-distance.

In race two, the Tiger's rumbling V8 led away but an inspired Foley stayed closer and, when the Sunbeam faltered, he was through for the win. Cochrane subsequently retired, leaving Keane to take runner-up spot and Clive Brandon's well-driven Lotus 47 to complete the podium.

**LEO NULTY**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### BRANDS HATCH

#### F1000 CHAMPIONSHIP

**RACE 1 & 3** Colin Brown

**RACE 2** Dan Gore

#### CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

**RACE 1** Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i)

**RACE 2** Pete Morgan (Ford Fiesta XR2)

#### FORMULA VEE

**RACE 1** Ian Jordan (Sheane Jordan)

**RACE 2** Graham Gant (WEV FV01)

#### 750 FORMULA

**RACE 1** Mark Glover (Racekits Falcon)

**RACE 2** Peter Bove (Darvi 88P)

#### HOT HATCH

**RACE 1 & 2** Ben Rushworth (Honda Integra DC2)

#### ARMED FORCES RACE CHALLENGE

**RACE 1** Chris Bialan (BMW E46 M3 GTR)

**RACE 2** Mark Inman (Vauxhall VX220)

#### ROADSPORTS

Paul Cook (BMW E46 M3)

#### CLIO 182 CHAMPIONSHIP

**RACE 1** James Bark

**RACE 2** Don de Graaff

#### RGB SPORTS 1000

**RACE 1 & 2** Chris Wesemael (Mittell MC-53)

#### HISTORIC 750 FORMULA

**RACE 1 & 2** Christian Pedersen (Austin 7)

#### SPORT SPECIALS

**RACE 1 & 2** Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)

For full results: [www.theresultslive.co.uk](http://www.theresultslive.co.uk)

#### MONDELLO PARK

##### FIESTA STs

**RACE 1 & 3** Erik Holstein

**RACE 2** Alex Denning

#### GINETTA JUNIOR IRELAND

**RACE 1 & 2** Matthew Nicholl

#### BOSS IRELAND

**RACE 1 & 2** Paul O'Connell (WS Dallara)

#### FIESTA ZETECs

**RACE 1 & 2** Owen Purcell

**RACE 3** William Kellett

#### IRISH STRYKERS

**RACE 1 & 2** Stephen Ross

#### FORMULA VEE

Anthony Cross (Sheane Vee)

#### FORMULA SHEANE

**RACE 1** Richard Kearney

**RACE 2** Brian Hearty

#### CLOSED WHEEL LIBRE

**RACE 1&2** Pat McBennett (Lotus Elise)

#### HRCA

**RACE 1** Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)

**RACE 2** Bernard Foley (MGB GTV8)

For full results: [speedhive.mylaps.com](http://speedhive.mylaps.com)



The Hudson/Morley Bentley leads Getley/Tuluie car in Benjafield's thriller

STYLES

## Fitting Bentley tribute at Silverstone meeting

**SILVERSTONE**  
**VSCC**  
**13-14 APRIL**

Organised by the Benjafield's Racing Club to celebrate the marque's centenary, the spectacle of 40 vintage Bentleys thundering round Silverstone immortalised the Vintage Sports-Car Club's 85th Anniversary season opener.

From the first Le Mans-type running start in the UK since 1962 to a 1.26s margin of victory, it was a magnificent tribute. For victors Richard Hudson and Stuart Morley,

who deposed Ewen Getley/Robin Tuluie after a thrilling full-blooded duel, it was unforgettable.

In a field spanning 1919 to '31, graced by a 1925 Le Mans team car, Bentley tuning wizard Getley set a punishing pace to the pitstops, chased by Morley's brother James, Hudson and Randal Stewart. But German physicist-turned-Bentley uber-engineer Tuluie was hounded down by Stuart Morley, who squeezed ahead seven laps from home. Tuluie countered, but Morley's greater confidence in traffic proved decisive.

Poleman Richard Pilkington delighted

fellow BRDC members in the clubhouse by battling back past Marcus Black (Talbot Lago T23), then repelling young Oliver Llewelyn (Bentley 4½) to complete a hat-trick of Fox & Nicholl Trophy wins in his Talbot T26 SS in Saturday's opener.

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash Super Sports) was shocked that the aero-engined cars he was chasing – Tuluie's Riley Menasco Pirate and Tom Walker's Amilcar Hispano – all broke, handing him GP Itala Trophy victory. PBE went straight back out to beat Tom Thornton's fast BMW 329/328 in the Silverstone Trophy. Thornton



DespatchBay.com came out on top after late safety car

BOURNE

## Late safety car drama leads to Fun Cup dash to the flag

**OULTON PARK**  
**BRSCC**  
**13 APRIL**

The DespatchBay.com trio of Andy Bicknell, Riley Phillips and Marcus Clutton came out on top of a tremendous Fun Cup four-hour enduro, after a late

safety-car deployment bunched the field when there were still 13 cars on the lead lap.

It was the Truman's car of Colin Kingsnorth and Jonathan Hoad that led much of the race, but Kingsnorth lost out to Bicknell when the track went green with 16 minutes left on the clock. DespatchBay.com had enjoyed spells in

the lead and always been among the frontrunners, and Bicknell timed his charge perfectly. He was second into Cascades and snatched the lead into Island. JPR Uvio's Fabio Randaccio and JPR Axiometrics' Kristian Rose moved into second and third.

After briefly surging clear the leading trio settled into formation, enabling the following trio of Henry Dawes (2Rent Dominos), Kingsnorth and Steve Walton (Team FNS) to close in and make it a six-car battle for the lead. With eight minutes to go just 1.6s separated the six cars. It was Randaccio who made the decisive move, challenging for the lead into Old Hall and losing the rear. Rose was too close to take evasive action and went off after the ensuing contact. Randaccio had to settle for second as Bicknell made a late but decisive break.

Dawes completed the podium, while Walton sealed a late fourth, with JPR GT Radial's Martin Gibson and Track Focused's Sean Cooper completing the top six.

It was a lights-to-flag victory for Ian Jones in the first BMW Compact Cup race, his escape aided by the three-way fight



dug deeper to harass the ERAs of winner Paddins Dowling (R10B) and Julian Wilton (R7B) in the Pre-War finale.

Earlier, Mark Gillies (R3A) had ambushed Nick Topliss (R4A) to grab third overall and the Patrick Lindsay Trophy behind Philip Walker (Lotus 16) and Fred Harper (Kurtis-Offy), battling for concurrent Amschel Rothschild post-war honours. Walker also scored in Sunday's VSCC/FiSCar '50s' sportscar race, in his Lotus 15.

HGPCA Pre-'66 poleman Barry Cannell won twice in his ex-Carlo Vogele Brabham BT4, but had to come from behind on both days. On Saturday he threw it sideways into Brooklands on lap one avoiding out-of-shape Tom Dark (Cooper T51), narrowly missed Andrew Beaumont (Lotus 18/21), overshot and rejoined seventh.

After Jon Fairley's Brabham BT11/19 halted with ignition failure, Cannell calmly charged down leader Peter Horsman (18/21) who, with only fourth and fifth gears, was easy prey. Horsman kept second as Mark Daniell, gifted third when Dark spun at Luffield, held his Cooper T45 in second.

behind. David May and Wayne Flint both had spells in second as Ben Huntley looked on, but after Flint went off at Cascades on the last lap May just fought off Huntley to retain second. Steven Dailly, May and Keith Towers got away on the second lap of race two. While the lead duo ran nose-to-tail throughout, Towers fought off a brief challenge from Skeats for third.

After Jones had an off at Old Hall on the first lap, Huntley endured race-long pressure from Dailly to win race three, with Tom Griffiths a close third.

Ross Martin (Van Diemen) and Rory Smith (Medina) shared the victory spoils in Northern Formula Ford 1600. Martin led from the start of race one, while Smith had to combine challenges for the lead with defending his second place from Jack Wolfenden's Firman. Smith managed to nose alongside, but all three held station and were only 0.303s apart at the flag. Jamie Sharp (Van Diemen) snatched fourth from David McArthur (Medina) on the last lap.

Although Martin made the best start again in race two, his defence finally yielded



Cannell led the sequel sooner, while Dark and Beaumont – from the back – shot through to second and third, chased by the 18s of John Chisholm and Charles McCabe.

HRDC Allstars gold fell to Chris Clarkson in his big Healey after his buddy David Smithies's sister car and Pete Chambers's Lotus Cortina retired while leading.

Clarkson's Ford Falcon blew spectacularly at Copse on lap two of the Coys Trophy enduro, leaving Chambers – following a gearbox change – to outrun the brakeless Mustangs of Nick Ruddell and Bill and Fred Shepherd. Peter Snowdon (GTV6) aced the Classic Alfa set, as Richard Merrell screamed his Giulia Sprint GT from the back to second.

Almost a year after his last victory, the indefatigable Keith Ahlers won his 100th Morgan Challenge race in his faithful +8. The first 500cc F3 race since the death of triple contemporary Autosport British champion Jim Russell fittingly fell to fellow East Anglian George Shackleton in his Cooper-Norton.

**MARCUS PYE**



to Smith's challenge into Knickerbrook on lap two. Smith then eased clear to victory, with Wolfenden and Sharp completing the top four again.

It was a virtual dead heat between the XR2s of Adam Brown and Greg Speight in the first ST-XR Challenge race. Speight ousted William Heslop from second on lap five of nine, but Heslop remained in touch as Speight pushed Brown all the way to the flag, losing by a thousandth of a second. Heslop led race two from the start, as Brown and Speight again made it a three-way battle. Speight grabbed second at Old Hall with a lap to go.

**PETER SCHERER**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### SILVERSTONE

#### BENJAFIELD RACE FOR VINTAGE BENTLEYS

Richard Hudson/Stuart Morley (3/4½)

#### FOX & NICHOLL TROPHY

Richard Pilkington (Talbot T26 SS)

#### GP ITALIA & LANCHESTER TROPHIES

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards  
(Frazer Nash Super Sports)

#### SILVERSTONE TROPHY

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards  
(Frazer Nash Super Sports)

#### PRE-WAR SCRATCH

Paddins Dowling (ERA R10B)

#### AMSCHEL ROTHSCHILD & PATRICK LINDSAY MEMORIAL TROPHIES

Philip Walker (Lotus 16)

#### HAWTHORN INTERNATIONAL & TOM COLE 1950s RACE

Philip Walker (Lotus 15)

#### HGPCA PRE-1966 GRAND PRIX CARS

**RACE 1 & 2** Barry Cannell  
(Brabham-Climax BT11A)

#### HRDC ALLSTARS

Chris Clarkson (Austin-Healey 3000)

#### HRDC COYS TROPHY

Peter Chambers (Ford Lotus Cortina)

#### HRDC CLASSIC ALFA CHALLENGE

Peter Snowdon (GTV6)

#### MORGAN CHALLENGE

**RACE 1 & 2** Keith Ahlers (+8)

#### 500CC F3

George Shackleton (Cooper-Norton Mk11)

#### PRE-WAR ALLCOMERS

Eddie Williams (Frazer Nash Super Sports)

#### PRE-WAR HANDICAP

**RACE 1** Michael James (Riley 12/4 Special)  
**RACE 2** Roland Woodtli (Riley 15/6 Special)

For full results visit:  
[theresultslive.co.uk](http://theresultslive.co.uk)

### OULTON PARK

#### FUN CUP

DespatchBay.com (Andy Bicknell/  
Riley Phillips/Marcus Clutton)

#### BMW COMPACT CUP

**RACE 1** Ian Jones  
**RACE 2** Steven Dailly  
**RACE 3** Ben Huntley

#### NORTHERN FF1600

**RACE 1** Ross Martin (Van Diemen)  
**RACE 2** Rory Smith (Medina JL18)

#### ST-XR CHALLENGE

**RACE 1** Adam Brown (XR2)  
**RACE 2** William Heslop (XR2)

For full results visit:  
[tsl-timing.com](http://tsl-timing.com)



## WRC STAR TANAK TAKES A BIG-



### FILM REVIEW OTT TANAK: THE MOVIE

The star of *Ott Tanak – The Movie*? Simple. His grandma. No contest.

The very concept of a fly-on-the-wall-style documentary about Tanak caused much mirth

in the Autosport office. The Estonian is, after all, famous for his lack of tolerance of the media.

“I haven’t been the easiest guy to work with,” says Tanak with a wry smile. “They told me what they wanted to do and I didn’t want to do it. I did it because Markko [Martin, fellow Estonian world rally winner, early mentor and now very good mate] said it would be a good idea.”

Martin laughs at the memory. “It’s true,” he said.

Would you have done it? “No... but it was good for him.” And very, very good for Palmi Leppik.

Leppik is Tanak’s grandma. Despite the success her grandson has achieved, Leppik – like the rest of the family – remains entirely grounded, living on the same Estonian island of Saaremaa where Tanak was born and raised.

It’s to her house that we’re transported during Rally Turkey, the first half of which was far from Tanak’s finest hour last season. Grandma Leppik is sitting at her table staring intently at an iPad, which sits in a modified shoebox, utterly practical and beautifully un-Apple. She’s bothered by her grandson’s lack of speed. But her concern goes deeper than just the results.

“He seems to drive cautiously,” she offers. “He’s not among the leaders. Mikkelsen was the only one who picked soft tyres. Everyone else opted for hard tyres. And now it seems Mikkelsen is in the lead.”

There was a brief moment when the 200-odd friends, family and media – but sadly not Leppik herself; she’d seen the movie the night before and decided the spotlight of this screening wasn’t for her – took in Tanak’s grandma’s insight.

“Mikkelsen was the only one who picked soft tyres.” Brilliant. She brought the house down without even trying.

Film company Sterotek took a punt on Tanak’s 2018 being *the one*. Following 13 World Rally Championship rounds with a full crew doesn’t come cheap but, as Tanak’s season came good in the second half, it looked like company owner Eero Nogene’s decision was increasingly inspired.

Had Tanak won the title, it would have been the perfect record for thousands of Estonian rally fans. That he didn’t – and the manner in which he didn’t – delivered the sort of drama Nogene, director Tarvo Molder and film writer Kaidi Klein could only dream of. The elation of victory; the bitterness of the Sweet Lamb, Rally GB retirement; the squabble that followed a Spanish puncture; and, ultimately, the end of the road in Coffs Harbour, Rally Australia are all portrayed perfectly.

The film, like Tanak’s season and career, is a rollercoaster. What’s perhaps the most impressive aspect is the way the bigger, year-on-year picture is sewn into a round-by-round analysis of 2018.

Molder’s ability as a director is exquisite. For example, when we discover the true motivation for Tanak’s career. “Our teacher tried to motivate



Title-challenging 2018 season makes for a thrilling backdrop

# -SCREEN LEAP



Tanak's grandma is the film's unexpected star

me to study harder," Tanak says. He wasn't sure and told her: "I know one day I'm going to race a car and I don't care [about studying]."

The reply: "Ott, you'll never be a racer. Don't even dream about it."

Tanak: "That is what motivates. I said to myself, 'F\*ck it! I'll go through heaven and hell, but I'll make it – no matter what.' It was just to spite her."

And the next interview? Maret Arge, Tanak's teacher. Her view now? "Speaking of Ott as a rally driver, he had it in him since childhood."

The film is full of humour. But above that, it's a staggering insight into the emotion of a person who loves their job and adores their family.

Predictably, a rare glimpse into the life of one of rallying's high-profile stars is proving popular in Estonia. Cinemas have packed in the crowds for multiple showings and there's no sign of demand dipping. If you want to see it, you'll have to fly to Tallinn. But Sterotek's working on that, and Tanak could well be coming to a big screen near you...

DAVID EVANS



[youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom](https://youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom)



Join Autosport from the Shanghai paddock as we look back at the races from Formula 1's history that have most defined the way it's changed over the years. To relive the key important moments that have got us to the 1000th world championship race, go to <http://bit.ly/5F1moments>

## WHAT'S ON

### INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

#### Super Formula

Rd 1/7  
Suzuka, Japan  
21 April

### UK MOTORSPORT

#### Donington Park MSVR

20 April  
Porsche Club, Classic Restoracing, Historic F3, GT Challenge, AMOC GT4/Inter Marque, Jack Fairman Cup

#### Pembrey BRSCC

20-21 April  
Mazda MX-5s, Mazda MX-5 Super Series, Fiestas, Fiesta Juniors, Welsh Sports and Saloons

#### Snetterton BRSCC

20-21 April  
National FF1600, FF1600 Triple Crown, Porsches, Mazda MX-5 Super Cup, Alfa Romeos, Civic Cup

#### Oulton Park MSVR

20 & 22 April  
British GT, F4, Ginetta GT5, Ginetta G40s, Radical

SR1s, VW Racing Cup, Mini Challenge

#### Brands Hatch BARC

20-22 April  
Clubmans, Pickups, Legends, Hyundai Coupes, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre '03 Touring Cars, Pre '05 Production Saloon Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons, Tin Tops, Super Silhouettes

#### Cadwell Park BARC

21 April  
Mighty Minis, 2CVs, Sports/Saloons, Karts

#### Donington Park 750MC

22 April  
Club Enduro, BMW Car Club, Locosts, Toyota MR2s, Bike Sports

#### Castle Combe CCRC

22 April  
Castle Combe FF1600, Classic FF1600, Castle Combe GT, Saloons, Hot Hatch, Kumho BMWs, Mazda MX5s





#### FROM THE ARCHIVE

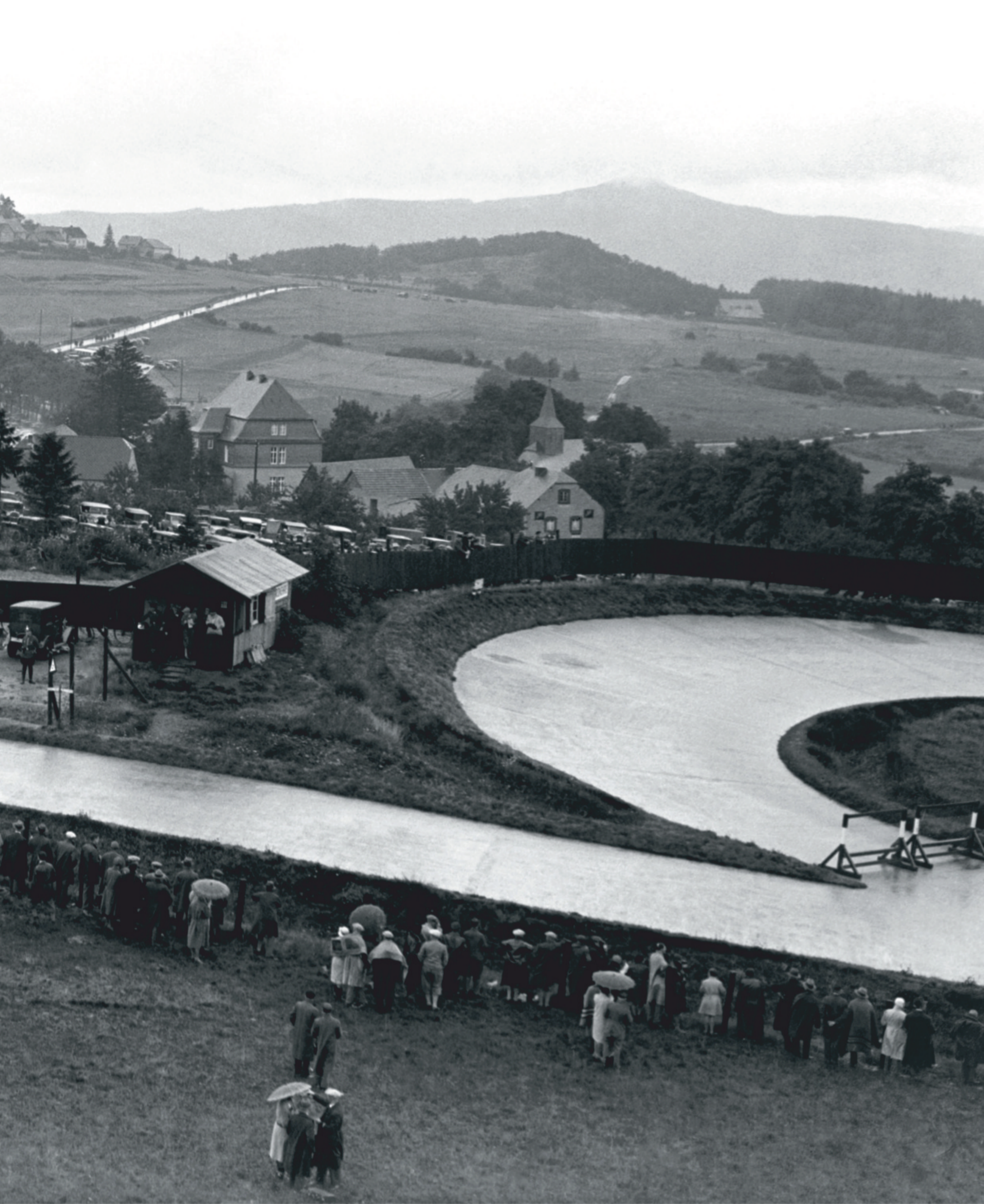
Phil 'Red' Shafer strikes a slightly lonely figure as he conducts his Buick-powered Shafer Special through the majestic – and in this instance meteorologically

unbecoming – Eifel landscape during the German Grand Prix at the Nurburgring on 19 July 1931. Des Moines, Iowa native Shafer – who made seven Indianapolis 500

starts, finishing as high as third in 1925 – was forced to retire with a suspension problem after 13 laps. The race was won by Rudolf Caracciola in a Mercedes-Benz SSKL.

**DUKE**<sup>®</sup>

For a DVD charting the genesis of Formula 1 head to [bit.ly/Birthoff1](http://bit.ly/Birthoff1)



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**ADVERTISING**

**Tel** +44 (0) 20 3405 8106 **Email** [autosport.ads@motorsport.com](mailto:autosport.ads@motorsport.com)  
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**ADVERTISING PRODUCTION**

Production Controller **Ben Webster**  
**Tel** +44 (0) 20 3405 8131 **Email** [ben.webster@motorsport.com](mailto:ben.webster@motorsport.com)

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**UK** +44 (0) 344 848 8817 **Overseas** +44 (0) 1604 251451  
**Email** [help@asm.secureorder.co.uk](mailto:help@asm.secureorder.co.uk) **Back issues** 0344 8488817  
**Main office** +44 (0) 20 3405 8100

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QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?

WHO IS THIS?

From a renaissance hotbed, this hard-charger was also capable of great artistry behind the wheel. After a typically patriotic start he was bitten by a scorpion, before he was adopted by a wolf to buck the trend. He stayed with the pack as it made an unlikely graduation to the great wide open, but there was little to howl about.

An opportunity to fail was grabbed with both hands, and there were unexpected opportunities to shine as he received new motivation. A berth with a fallen great was a hiding to nothing, while a raging bull had blunt horns. This led to a shift of focus and rich reward as he led the charge for a reinvigorated icon.

An unexpected recall brought success in dark times, although there was little to cheer from an Alpine sojourn.

A late career switch to Motown kept him in the hit parade even if the number one spot eluded him.

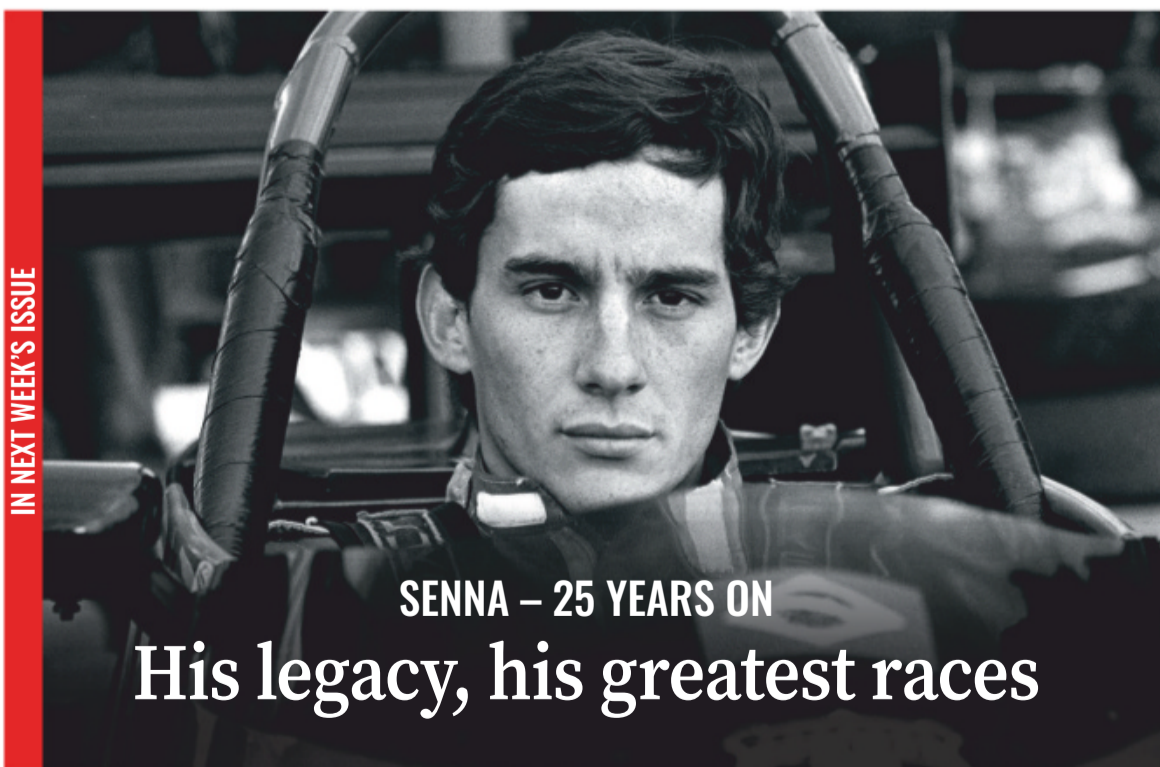
ON THIS DAY

- 1 Anthony Davidson turns 40 today. In which year did he win the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award?
- 2 Which marque claimed its first Formula 1 win on this day in 1971?
- 3 Jochen Rindt was born on this day in 1942. Who was his official team-mate for his 1965 Le Mans 24 Hours win?
- 4 Which track held its first car race on this day in 1938?
- 5 It's Garry McCoy's birthday. How many 500cc World Championship motorcycle races did he win?

NAME THE HELMET



**LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS** Who, what, where, when? Andre Lotterer, Lola-Ford B02/00, Mexico City, 17 November 2002. **Who is this?** Eddie Irvine. **On this day** 1) Stephane Sarrazin. 2) 1. 3) Marco Simoncelli, Hiroshi Aoyama. 4) He won the first race held at Laguna Seca. 5) Subaru Legacy. **Name the helmet** Luciano Burti.



IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

SENNA – 25 YEARS ON

His legacy, his greatest races

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MyGamer.com

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SportsGamersOnline.com



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