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needs to be
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Welcoming MotoGP to Autosport magazine

WITH THE FORMULA 1 SEASON FINALLY GETTING under way, it's time for the proverbial to stop. So rather than adding to the growing anticipation of the Australian Grand Prix, instead I'm going to turn in an unexpected direction – to the world of two wheels.

When regular readers get to page 54, you will probably have cause to exclaim, "What the hell is MotoGP doing in *Autosport* magazine?" While occasionally grand prix motorcycle racing has been talked about in these pages, this is the first time we have committed to full coverage in the magazine.

Sacrilege? To some, but *Autosport* has always evolved. Glance at a copy of the first issue, published on August 25 1950, and it's clear how much things have changed over the years. But why cover two-wheeled racing?

Since the start of 2007, we've covered MotoGP on our website autosport.com. That in itself is no reason to bring it into the magazine, but what we have learned definitively is that our four-wheeled audience has a keen interest in the top level of motorcycle racing. So this move is to serve our existing readers, those who love car racing and rallying but who have an interest in MotoGP and would enjoy seeing what might be called the *Autosport* treatment applied to it by our new correspondent, Mitchell Adam.

That's our reasoning, but please let us know what you think on autosport@haymarket.com.



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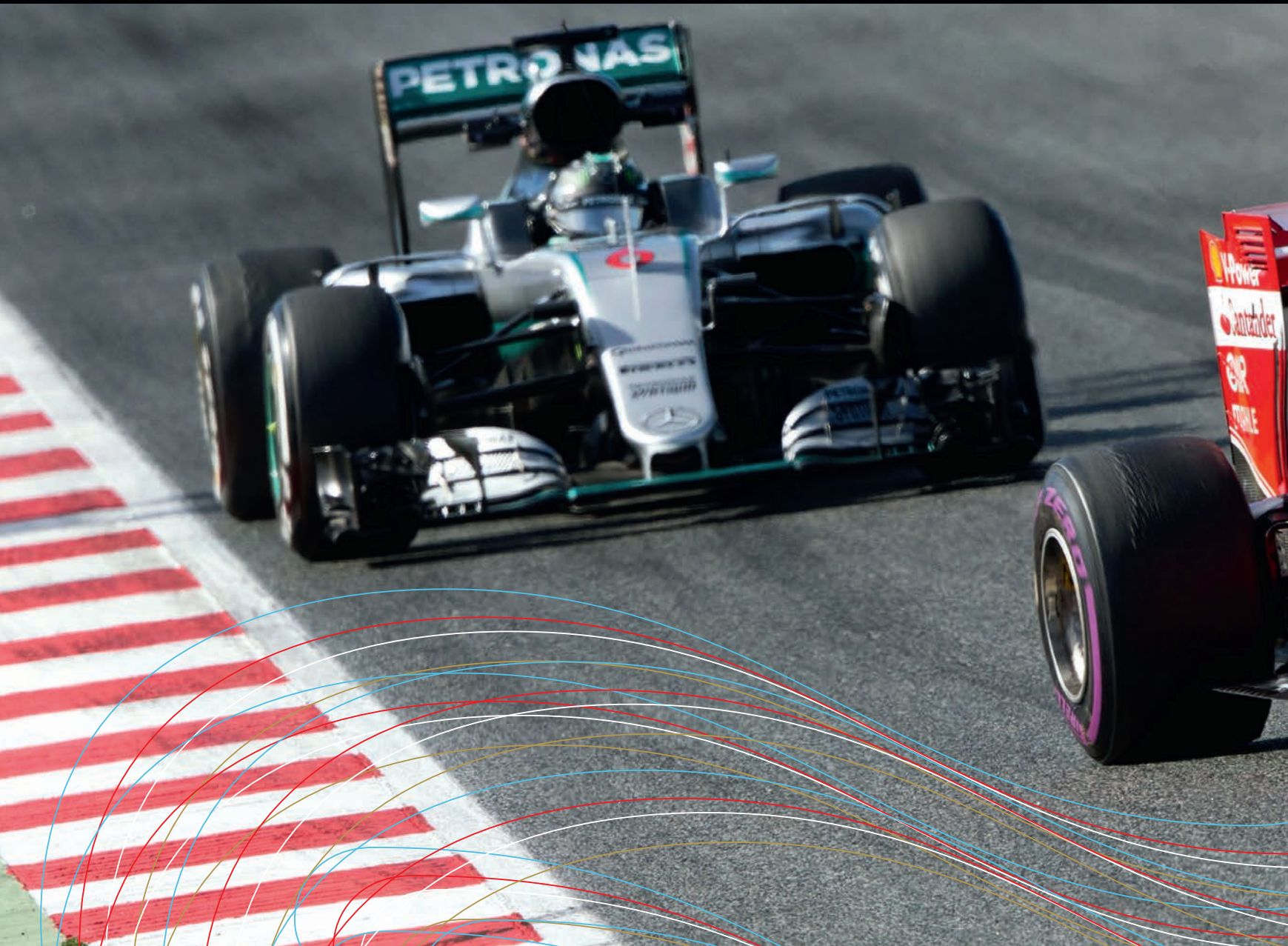
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F1 2016'S BIG QUESTIONS



ONS

The phoney war of testing is behind us and the real battle begins when the red lights go out for Sunday's Australian Grand Prix. Here's what to look out for

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)



“TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, THE FIRST TEST IS ABSOLUTELY USELESS IN TERMS of understanding performance. Fuel load, tyres, mapping... you have no idea what everyone is doing. By the end of the second test, because there will be some race simulations and qualifying modes – because people have to try low fuel to test their tanks – you will have information to create a basic understanding of the order, but you don’t know exactly until you turn up on Saturday afternoon in Melbourne.”

McLaren racing director Eric Boullier is a man who knows Formula 1 racing, and he knows the hour of reckoning is fast approaching. As you read this, F1’s 11 teams will already be gearing up for the first free practice sessions of the new season (or will have recently finished them if your postman/purchasing is not prompt). And when 22 drivers emerge from their garages to gun for pole position on Saturday, the stopwatch will finally have its say.

A day later, the chequered flag will fall on the first race of 2016 and F1 will finally have what it’s longed for all winter. Answers. Who’s got it right? Who’s got it badly wrong? Who will surprise? Who will disappoint? The questions won’t cease, but at least they

won’t merely be questions anymore. Testing is all well and good, but there really is nothing like the real thing...

Can Hamilton make it four?

Like all champions, winning naturally motivates Lewis Hamilton, who stands to become only the fourth driver ever to win three world titles in succession if he retains his crown. He has the best car at his disposal again and will start as favourite. But it’s not as simple as that. The way Nico Rosberg bossed Hamilton over the final three races of 2015 shows how easily he can be toppled if he is not totally on his game.





Hamilton has already voiced disquiet about F1's current sporting and technical direction, spoken enthusiastically of the excitement offered by MotoGP, and expressed dissatisfaction at the feeling of the latest Pirelli tyre compounds.

Rosberg will be desperate to win a first title; Sebastian Vettel will be going all-out to give Ferrari its first driver's championship in nearly 10 years; where will Hamilton's big motivation come from this year, now that the legacy of Ayrton Senna no longer provides a focal point? Is he hungry enough to be the best for its own sake?

"My mind shifted after I won the championship last year. The intensity of the championship was over and I enjoyed it more than

I have enjoyed the end of a season in my whole career, both in the car and out," Hamilton says. "Let's see where it goes from the beginning of this year. I feel very strong, I feel absolutely determined to get back in and win. That's just in my DNA. It's not like I have to go and reinvent myself and find extra motivation, it's just there thankfully. I'm sure the competition is going to be stronger than ever this year, and I have to make sure that I'm stronger than ever."

Easier said than done.

Can Ferrari take on Mercedes?

The most relevant elements of pre-season testing data suggest Ferrari is in its best shape since the introduction of the V6 hybrid-turbo regulations. Kimi Raikkonen matched Rosberg to the tenth during qualifying simulations on the soft tyre, and there was very little to choose between the SF16-H and F1 Wo7 for large portions of their respective race simulations on the medium compound.

Whether that translates to a grand prix, we won't know until Sunday in Australia, but the early signs are encouraging. No one got near Rosberg on the soft tyre during 2015 pre-season, so Ferrari will feel it has a real chance of putting Mercedes under real pressure. The fact that Pirelli has re-engineered the tyres to increase the rate of degradation should also favour Ferrari, which tended to look after its tyres better than Mercedes last year.

The big question marks concern how much Mercedes still has left in the tank, and the extent of the strain that Ferrari's radical redesign of its car over the winter will place on its reliability record.

Rosberg admitted his soft-tyre run was genuine qualifying practice, but later said that Mercedes went out of its way to hide its pace. Ferrari had to take grid penalties late last year, and suffered more problems in pre-season than its main rival.

So the jury is still out.

Will Raikkonen enjoy an Indian summer?

Raikkonen is drinking in F1's last-chance saloon. Ferrari extended his contract by taking up an option for 2016, but team principal Maurizio Arrivabene made clear that's it for now. No special clauses, no option to extend. One year to put up or shut up.

It's no secret that Ferrari has touted around for a young driver to succeed Raikkonen, who will turn 37 this year. The general feeling in the paddock is that fellow Finn Valtteri Bottas is the frontrunner to take over when Raikkonen's second spell at Maranello comes to an end. Many think it would have happened already had Ferrari been prepared to stump up the cash to buy Bottas out of his Williams contract.

Raikkonen's second spell at Ferrari has been disappointing. Good results have been few and far between. He's been firmly shaded by his team-mates, and has admitted to making too many errors at crucial times. But a lot can change in a year. Raikkonen is already happier with the handling of this Ferrari than either of the previous two, he's popular with key figures inside the team, and if he can rediscover his best form then maybe, just maybe, he could earn another stay of execution.

But that will mean pushing Vettel a lot harder than he did last year, though Raikkonen insists he won't change his own approach. >>

Above: on raw pace, Ferrari was ahead of Mercedes in testing – but that was probably not a fair read

Above left: Raikkonen is under pressure to deliver after two lacklustre years



There's every chance Hamilton will repeat these scenes in 2016

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“We always try to do our best,” he says. “We made mistakes as a group. With the engineers we looked at what we can improve and obviously there were mistakes from my side and from other issues. You just have to cut those down.”

Can McLaren-Honda dig itself out of a new hole?

Everyone knows that the main reason why McLaren struggled so badly last year is because Honda’s engine, and specifically its energy recovery systems, was too weak to compete with established technology from Mercedes, Ferrari and Renault.

Honda has been away, done its homework, and come up with a revised engine layout, redesigned turbine and compressor, and a new ERS package that everyone within the alliance feels is a big step forward. No longer should we expect Jenson Button to feel like a ‘sitting duck’ at the end of long straights, or Fernando Alonso to bemoan a ‘GP2’ standard from the power unit.

But Honda is still behind on good old-fashioned grunt. The team estimates its output is roughly equivalent to Renault and still well behind Mercedes and Ferrari. What’s more, the new McLaren chassis was not working well during pre-season testing.

Button began complaining about the handling when a partial aero upgrade was fitted for the sixth day of testing, and the team says it will be unable to cure the resulting oversteer until the factory finishes producing delayed parts. That means it’s difficult to gauge how big a step forward McLaren-Honda has made over the winter, but for now it looks as though it’s creating new problems just as quickly as it’s fixing the old ones.

Will the new qualifying format make any difference?

F1 is terrified that Mercedes will dominate again and even more people will stop watching. But this is not really the best way to try to stop Hamilton and Rosberg sweeping to pole position after pole position in a superior car.

In theory, knocking out cars individually at 90-second intervals, rather than collectively at the end of each segment, should make things more complicated and unpredictable for the teams. But without corresponding alterations to rules concerning refuelling and tyre allocations it’s not likely to change the world.

Previously drivers tried to get through Q1 on a harder tyre, to save an extra set of softer rubber for Q3. Those who couldn’t simply did fewer new-tyre runs later on. Without being given extra sets, or told to remain on one for the duration, drivers will still do the same number of runs in each segment, but perhaps vary the timing of their second runs depending on where they are in the pecking order.

In isolation the move won’t change much at all, except make it more difficult for slower cars to react when they are in trouble. Really this is a pointless exercise – an attempt to fix something that isn’t broken, rather than repair what really is. No wonder some drivers met with the FIA to complain.

Who will win the battle for third?

Williams has to start as favourite. Felipe Massa was encouragingly quick on the soft tyre during short runs at Barcelona, lapping within two tenths of Mercedes and Ferrari, and he averaged a laptime two tenths quicker than Raikkonen on hard tyres during a race simulation.

That sort of form has Williams thinking it can challenge Ferrari for second, but more probably it will be fending off Red Bull, Force India and Toro Rosso, depending on how well the various cars develop.

Red Bull poses the biggest threat, thanks to its mighty resources and chassis expertise, but a lot will depend on how much the Renault engine improves. Force India shares the advantage of Mercedes customer power with Williams, so its hopes rest on how much potential is left in the VJM08 B-spec concept, which it’s carried over to the VJM09.

Toro Rosso will fancy it can again produce one of the best >>

Pre-season testing has been far from encouraging for McLaren-Honda



XPB IMAGES

Williams should start ahead, but Red Bull expects to lead the way later in the year

chassis on the grid, particularly at high speed, and will make immediate progress by replacing Renault power with last year's Ferrari engine. Max Verstappen and Carlos Sainz could be a real force during the early races, but Toro Rosso will struggle to stay in the fight as others receive engine upgrades.

Will Toro Rosso beat Red Bull?

Red Bull boss Christian Horner thinks so; Toro Rosso driver Sainz thinks not. Much will depend on the relative potency of Toro Rosso's old Ferrari engine versus the updated Renault unit that has been rebadged for Red Bull's marketing purposes.

Toro Rosso started last season with a better chassis than its parent team, but the RB11 came on strong post-Silverstone and this year's RB12 looks to have maintained that impressive progression.

Toro Rosso is not far behind (perhaps fourth best in the chassis stakes), but technical director James Key admits his team has work to do mechanically and in the low-speed corners.

Expect 2015 Ferrari power to be better than '16 Renault motivation to begin with, which should give Sainz and Verstappen a real chance – *if* Red Bull cannot make up the deficit with its chassis.

But Toro Rosso won't receive engine upgrades through the year, and standing still in F1 is as good as going backwards. Red Bull has the resources to outdevelop its junior team through the year and, once Renault starts adding extra horses, Horner's squad should gallop off into the distance.

Will more tyre choice mix up the strategies?

The new rules are not as radical as first proposed, but allowing each driver to select his 13 sets of dry tyres from a range of three

compounds instead of two for each race will definitely lead to more pitstops and some strategic variation.

Last year's Australian GP was a nailed-on one-stopper for most cars, starting on the soft, then switching to the medium. There were a few two-stoppers further back, but they were the exception.

This year's race will throw up a choice between two or three stops, as most cars will start on the super-soft (which will be the de facto qualifying tyre) and have to make an early first stop.

Pirelli has mandated use of at least one set of soft or medium tyres in the race, so that means that all those who start on the super-soft will have to choose whether to do an extended stint on mediums, or go for shorter, faster stints on the soft.

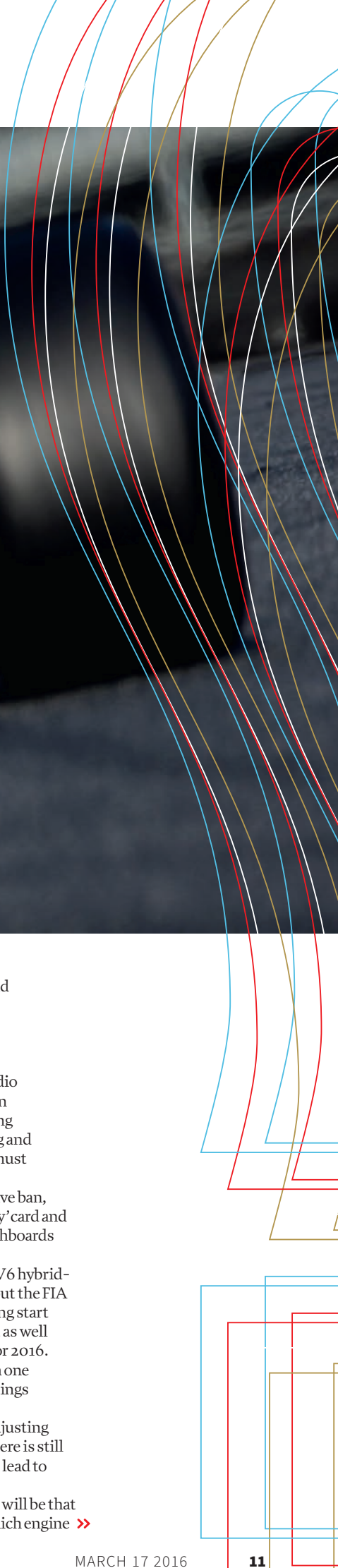
Some may even choose to do one stint on the soft then go back to the super-soft, or a long stint on mediums and a punt for glory on the super-soft at the end, depending on how well it holds up.

When you add in Pirelli's work over the winter to re-engineer the tyres to degrade faster than before, there is the potential for strategy to become more complicated again. This can only be good for the spectacle.

A new team in the points

It's clear that Haas F1 is nothing like the last influx of new teams that entered F1 under the false promise of budget capping in 2010. Gene Haas means business. He's budgeted for the job and enlisted the help of as many unlisted Ferrari parts as he could lay his hands on.

The result is a tidy car that already looks as though it will be capable of seriously bothering the lower reaches of the midfield.



The new Haas has looked the part in testing - when moving

Renault, Sauber, McLaren and Manor should all be nervous of getting upstaged by the newcomer, which is already targeting points from its race debut this weekend.

Haas will need to find more reliability from the VF-16 than it showed during the final pre-season test to make that ambition a reality, and the American team will also need a big slice of luck because Mercedes, Ferrari, Williams, Red Bull, Toro Rosso and Force India theoretically already have the top 10 sewn up between them.

But those teams will slip up at some point, and Haas should be able to engineer itself into a position to take advantage.

It has a better engine than Renault and McLaren and a bigger budget than Sauber and Manor.

Haas is not to be dismissed lightly.

Will there be more radio silence?

The FIA's crusade to crack down on unnecessary radio communication between teams and drivers began in 2014, when it decided that messages regarding racing lines and braking points equated to driver-coaching and thus were in breach of rules that dictate the driver must drive the car 'alone and unaided'.

The governing body originally wanted an extensive ban, but the teams limited its scope by playing the 'safety' card and arguing that it would unfairly hurt those whose dashboards contained more limited information than others.

There is still a feeling that the complexity of the V6 hybrid-turbo engines makes extra radio chatter essential, but the FIA pushed on regardless and changed the rules regarding start procedures for races from the middle of last season, as well as releasing a 31-point list of permitted messages for 2016.

This list will be enforced as of this weekend, with one extra point – concerning adjustment of engine settings when sensors fail – added.

Most teams spent the latter part of last season adjusting communications accordingly in preparation, but there is still an expectation that full enforcement of the ban will lead to more errors and unpredictability.

The biggest difference between last year and this will be that drivers will no longer receive information about which engine >>

settings to use at particular points during races.

"We like radio transmission and the emotion around it," says Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. "Maybe we've gone too far in cutting it back. Whether it's better for the fans I'm not sure. They will have less understanding of what's going on in the car because the driver will be on the radio less. But it will create more error, therefore more variability in the result, which is important for the sport. People want to see the underdog win. They get bored with a dominant car winning."

Will diminishing returns on development close up the grid?

The rule of thumb goes that F1 grows more competitive the longer it remains under stable regulations. Now heading into the third season under the present rules, the teams should converge around similar solutions aerodynamically, as best practice becomes more widely known.

The big variable remains engine development. Mercedes leads the way still, but Ferrari no longer looks too far behind, Renault has some catching up to do still and Honda is a year behind on track experience. But theoretically the grid should still be closer this year than at any point since the end of the V8 era.

The extra variable this season will be the looming demands of 2017. The biggest fish (Mercedes and Ferrari) will have to maintain dual-development programmes while they fight for the title, but the others will all have to make a decision as to when best to divert attention to next season's technical demands.

For some this will be a financial necessity; for others, particularly Williams, McLaren and Renault, a tactical opportunity to gain an edge when the new rules come into force.

Will anyone care that the cars sound louder?

F1 has come in for a lot of criticism, even from within, concerning the lack of noise produced by the current hybrid power units. Hybrid systems recovering energy, allied to lower-revving combustion units, means that a quieter sound than screaming V8s is inevitable, but that doesn't mean nothing can be done.

Mercedes trialled the much-ridiculed 'trumpet' during in-season testing at Barcelona in 2014, and the FIA has now altered the rules to mandate extra tailpipes for the turbo wastegate, instead of forcing everything to feed into a single exhaust.

Removing the physical blockage of feeding the wastegate pipes into the main exhaust pipe has led to a 4dB increase in noise, according to Mercedes' dynos, which places the 2016 V6s within 1.5dB of V8 levels.

But the tone of the engines remains similar, which means perception of that increase – and the reaction to it – remains personal. When reporters suggested the engines sound louder this year, Hamilton replied: "It's exactly the same."

In the car?

"It's exactly the same. I don't like how the new engines sound. It sounds like... It's not a good sound."

It's all a matter of perspective, but work remains ongoing in this area, so expect further developments in the near future.

What can we expect from the reformed Renault works team?

Not a great deal to begin with. The fact that Renault has renewed its commitment by becoming a factory entity again is a real boost for F1, but it will take time to deliver results.

Success requires serious investment, and that is something

Below right: Renault won't be ahead of Mercedes this year, but it's ambitious

Below: there are big restrictions on what the pitwall can say to the drivers on track





MAUGER/LAT

Mercedes has high hopes for Wehrlein at Manor

the Enstone operation that forms the basis of Renault's plans seriously lacked last season. Renault needs to reopen closed departments, get in-season development back to normal and hire new staff to expand the operation – something which isn't easy in these days of extended 'gardening leave'.

The deal to repurchase Lotus came together very late last year, which meant compromises in mating the latest Renault power unit to the RS16 chassis (which itself is based on last year's Mercedes-engined Lotus E23).

Renault's new racing director, Frederic Vasseur, points out that it took Mercedes five years to win the world championship, having bought a title-winning infrastructure from Brawn GP.

That is the 'roadmap' that he must now chart for Renault.

This is year one, so don't expect miracles. Kevin Magnussen expects to be fighting for the lower reaches of Q3 on a good day and picking up points where possible. Repeating Lotus's top-six effort of 2015 without the advantage of Mercedes power is a tall order. Top seven in the championship is probably the realistic target.

Will Pascal Wehrlein be the new Jules Bianchi at Manor?

Mercedes clearly has a lot of faith in Pascal Wehrlein. He impressed the manufacturer by finishing runner-up to Daniel Juncadella in the first season of the revived European Formula 3 Championship in 2012, and has since gone on to become the youngest ever DTM champion.

Meanwhile he's tested for the works Mercedes F1 team, become its reserve driver and tested for customer squad Force India. Now he has the chance to graduate to F1 proper with Mercedes' latest customer squad Manor.

Mercedes doesn't have a formal junior-driver programme, but now has the chance to evaluate Wehrlein's potential in the way that Ferrari monitored Jules Bianchi during the Frenchman's time at Manor, before his accident at the 2014 Japanese Grand Prix.

Wehrlein is unlikely to make huge waves racing for F1's smallest team, but Mercedes will be able to analyse his data and monitor his progress closely. Both of Mercedes' current drivers are now into their thirties, so the German manufacturer is duty-bound to keep one eye on the future.

Having failed to secure Verstappen's signature in 2014, it seems Wehrlein is now the horse it would most like to back. ❖



XPB IMAGES

News stories to watch in 2016

If paddock hot air could be harnessed for the cars, there'd be a massive power boost. Here's what we'll be talking about this year

By Ian Parkes, Chief F1 Correspondent

[@ianparkesf1](#)

The driver market

F1 LOVES NOTHING MORE THAN SPECULATION TO enliven proceedings, and this year there's likely to be plenty to chew over given the number of drivers out of contract with their current teams.

Nico Rosberg heads the list of those looking for a new deal, although if the words of Mercedes motorsport boss Toto Wolff back in December are anything to go by, he may have to wait until the summer at the earliest to start negotiations.

Is this Kimi Raikkonen's final year in F1? He was given a surprise one-year extension last season at a time when he was being comfortably outperformed

by Ferrari team-mate Sebastian Vettel. If there is a repeat, this season may be his swansong.

It's a similar story for Jenson Button at McLaren. He still has plenty to offer at the age of 36, not least experience, talent and enthusiasm. But the team may finally prefer to promote one of its young guns in Stoffel Vandoorne for 2017, having released Kevin Magnussen towards the end of last year.

Up and down the grid, though, there are potential seats available that could lead to a merry-go-round of swaps, arrivals and exits, and in turn to a feeding frenzy for those that love to gossip.



Will Button have to make way for McLaren young gun Vandoorne next year?

Pirelli's 2017 tyre battle



THE RULES FOR 2017 SHOULD BE FINALISED BY THE end of April after a consensus as to their make-up was finally reached towards the end of last month. But that's when the fun and games will really begin, as teams determine when the focus should switch from development of this year's car to the build of next season's radically different challenger.

For a team like newcomer Haas, in particular, no sooner will it have managed to understand the current regulations than it must turn its attention to a new set of rules. But key to everything next season – and success or failure in ensuring the cars are three seconds per lap quicker as planned – is Pirelli, and whether it can supply tyres that are up to the task.

To that end, Pirelli is fighting its corner over testing, given that it's allowed 12 days this year following a change in the regulations. Conversely, it remains blocked from using any kind of test car, albeit there are plans in the pipeline that could allow it to use an old V8 or GP2 model.

It's a battle that could fester over the season if not swiftly resolved.

Qualifying knockout – hit or miss?

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING: IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T fix it. Well, F1 chose to do exactly the opposite and tinker with a qualifying system that no one had uttered a word of complaint about. The format in place since 2006 had worked perfectly well.

The problem was, attempting to force through a new procedure just four weeks before the season-opening race in Australia initially proved to be beyond the technical might of Bernie Ecclestone's Formula One Management. No sooner had the FIA confirmed the change than Ecclestone was forced to put its debut on hold due to issues over the software,

leading to suggestions that the Spanish Grand Prix had been pencilled in for its introduction.

A further tweak is then understood to have been debated, with Q1 and Q2 to include the new elimination format and Q3 to remain unaltered. Finally, after the usual palaver, it was decided that all three sessions would incorporate the knockout formula and it should be up and running in Australia.

It can only be hoped that it adds unpredictability to proceedings, but the word from the teams is that it should be relatively straightforward to master, and we'll end up with similar grids to before.



Haas has performed well in testing, partly thanks to its Ferrari and Dallara links

STALLEY/LAT

Haas swimming with sharks

OF THE LAST THREE NEW ENTRANTS TO FORMULA 1 in 2010, two are now out of business, while the other was saved by the skin of its teeth.

F1's shark-infested waters are no place for small fry hoping to do no more than survive, as over the years there have been many teams chewed up and spat out. Upon close inspection, the credentials of the new Haas squad make for interesting reading. Its owner is a man steeped in motorsport and its nuances, even if Gene Haas's more-renowned venture in NASCAR is far removed from F1.

Haas is also a savvy businessman and, while

he may be using F1 as a global platform to promote his machine-tools company, he is not foolhardy enough to go for broke and stretch his finances beyond his means.

So brokering a deal with Ferrari for power units and a variety of other parts – allowed at the time under the regulations – proved to be a remarkable piece of business. In an era when starting an independent team would appear to represent financial suicide, Haas looks to have the wherewithal to not only survive, but go on to turn the team into a true success story.

EU investigation looms

IT WAS IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR THAT FORCE India and Sauber opted to put their necks on the line and make a formal complaint to the European Union Competitions Commission with regard to F1's governance and payment structure.

The midfield teams cited financial bias by F1 owner CVC Capital Partners towards the five biggest teams: Ferrari, Red Bull, Mercedes, McLaren and Williams.

Force India in particular claimed the system of dividing revenues and determining how Formula 1 rules are set was “both unfair and unlawful”.

Bernie Ecclestone was aware that the complaint would be lodged, and has long stated that he has no concerns over what the EU may find, believing the contracts in place are legal and above board. The complaint from Force India and Sauber, however, allowed EU competitions commissioner Margrethe Vestager to formally look into the matter.

Vestager is currently determining whether there is a case to answer and, if so, only then will a full investigation be launched. But the wheels within the EU turn slowly, and it may be some time before we learn of any outcome.

The engine debate



JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO, FIA PRESIDENT JEAN Todt and F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone were using the threat of an independent engine as a stick to beat the collective heads of the manufacturers. Determined to avoid the disparity of a two-engine formula, Mercedes, Ferrari, Renault and Honda agreed to accept the changes the two wanted.

Come mid-January they agreed to a cost cap on customer supply of €12 million per year from 2018, along with assurances that all teams will have an engine deal, so avoiding last year's saga when Red Bull could not find a supplier.

There was also initial agreement on stabilising

the rules from 2018-20, but it's understood that this remains under discussion as Ecclestone is keen on units with identical power outputs for all teams.

There is also some suggestion that the independents are unhappy with a €1m price cut for 2017 as an interim measure before the introduction of the cost cap, believing it does not go far enough.

Throw in the fact that Red Bull team boss Christian Horner has suggested the FIA should reconsider the independent-engine proposal, which has been met with stern resistance from the manufacturers, and you can see why talks are going to continue.



S BLOXHAM/LAT



Channel 4 has recruited a big-name line-up for its F1 coverage

Murray Walker

Ben Edwards

Susie Wolff

Nic Hamilton

Mark Webber

FORMULA 1 BROADCASTING

Channel 4's Formula 1

TIME WAS AGAINST CHANNEL 4 WHEN IT secured the UK's Formula 1 broadcast rights from the BBC in December 2015 – it had just over three months to get itself sorted. By contrast, when the BBC did the deal to reclaim the coverage from ITV ahead of the 2009 season, it had 10 months.

The easy path would have been to take the BBC's model and simply apply it to this season. Then Channel 4 could have put its own stamp on the coverage in 2017, having had time to get its ideas together. But it hasn't. It will retain what worked on the BBC and add a Channel 4 touch.

The challenge is to freshen up the coverage and appeal to the channel's younger audience without alienating the sport's hardcore fans. To achieve the first target, the plan is to accentuate the personalities, including those behind the scenes, and really play on the human element. The objective is to make Formula 1 accessible to a mainstream audience.

One example of this is its documentary *Speed with Guy Martin F1 Special* – one of many planned – in which Isle of Man TT rider Martin pits two wheels against four with David

Coulthard in a Red Bull grand prix car. It is eye-opening for the non-follower, but perhaps too obvious for the purist.

It has also rolled the dice by bringing in Steve Jones to front the coverage. He boasts excellent live TV credentials, having hosted the channel's breakfast show *T4* and more recently *X Factor USA*, but lacks experience in F1 broadcasting.

What he does have is enthusiasm, and buckets of it. Jones spent six weeks watching every single qualifying session and race from last season. He even watched some twice.

"I wanted to get myself to a point where I feel confident talking about the sport," he says. "There is talk about the sport being broke, but I thought every race last season was fascinating."

That last quote is telling. Jones enters F1 with a fresh perspective, which is always valuable in preventing sports broadcasting becoming too samey. And if Jones is genuinely excited having watched last year's races, and he can get that across on the output this year, C4 has a very strong chance of engaging a younger audience, something F1 is struggling to do.

To cater for the purists, Channel 4 has formed



Steve Jones

Bruno Senna

Lee McKenzie

Karun Chandhok

Eddie Jordan

David Coulthard

Alain Prost

coverage aims to boost audience

an impressive presentation team whose opinions carry weight given their achievements. Signing Alain Prost is quite a coup. Bringing in the likeable and forthright Mark Webber for a contemporary viewpoint and Karun Chandhok for his contacts and expertise is smart too.

Access to ex-F1 drivers Alex Zanardi and Bruno Senna, Lewis Hamilton's brother Nic and former Williams development driver Susie Wolff will provide varied insight.

Channel 4 has kept familiar faces in Coulthard, Ben Edwards and Lee McKenzie, who excelled in their roles at the BBC. It has even found a way to keep Eddie Jordan, albeit in small doses. He will be involved only in a limited number of races, alongside his commitments on the relaunched BBC *Top Gear* programme.

As you'd expect, the racing will remain at the core of the programme but Channel 4 is working hard to ensure the packaging is strong. In-depth

and reactive interviews will remain key to the overall coverage. The channel has made a shrewd move by signing Murray Walker to do a series of chats with key personalities during the season.

But there will be twists. Celebrities will feature heavily across the coverage across the season. In one feature, Wolff takes comedian Johnny Vegas and British boxer David Haye, among others, for passenger rides around Brands Hatch.

Off screen, the coverage is in safe hands. The production team, with editor Mark Wilkin at the helm, is largely unchanged. That ensures efficiency of the broadcast. Production company Whisper Films, co-owned by Coulthard, Humphrey and former BBC Sport producer Sunil Patel, has F1 experience after producing video content for several teams in recent years.

There have also been nice touches such as keeping Fleetwood Mac's *The Chain* and ensuring adverts will not be run during the race. Both are going to be surefire hits with fans.

During a live weekend, of which there are 11, C4 is planning a dedicated build-up package, which will include its big features, ahead of qualifying and the race, but it is not certain what the plan will be ahead of practice. It will devote significant airtime at the end of live broadcasts to allow the talent to speak to the key protagonists and properly analyse qualifying and races. It will look to avoid cutting away quickly after the race to something the channel might have considered more important on the schedule. The fact that the final day of Royal Ascot, an important piece of output for the channel, gives way to ensure the grand prix coverage can stay on the main channel shows the broadcaster is taking the coverage seriously.

With this weekend's Melbourne opener not being a live Channel 4 broadcast, your first chance to find out whether the mix is right will come with the qualifying show at half past midday on Saturday. With Formula 1 as a product having a hard time of late, attracting criticism from all angles, perhaps the move to C4 could provide a much-needed shot in the arm.

LAWRENCE BARRETTO

“Signing Murray Walker is a shrewd move”



FORMULA 1

F1 ROLE FOR ASTON WITH RED BULL

THE NEWS THAT JOHNNIE Walker has renewed its partnership with McLaren suggests that the drinks company's parent Diageo, which recently settled a long-standing dispute with Force India majority owner Vijay Mallya, has gone off the concept of a Johnnie Walker-themed team.

That does not, though, mean Aston Martin will be absent from Formula 1 this season. Although Red Bull's plans to run Aston-badged Mercedes engines, in exchange for a joint supercar-road-car project designed for the sportscar company by Adrian Newey, came to nought after Daimler (a five per cent shareholder in Aston) nixed the plan, sources are adamant that some deal is in the offing.

Aston Martin plans to list by 2020 and, in the words of a source close to the deal, believes "F1 can add sparkle to Aston imagery". Given Red Bull's engine-badging deal with TAG Heuer, Aston Martin branding is likely to appear on RB12's nose from the Australian Grand Prix onwards. The road-car project is set to be announced in Melbourne.

Diageo continues to sponsor Force India via its Smirnoff brand, while Johnnie Walker branding will appear on McLaren's cars, and its drivers' overalls and helmets. The McLarens will also carry the logos of Chandon, a sparkling wine brand owned by Diageo competitor LVMH, which owns TAG Heuer.

DIETER RENCKEN



FOR THOSE WHO LOOK BACK ON THE HEYDAY – however short – of the old FIA GT1 World Championship as a halcyon era, the entry list for the Blancpain GT Series Sprint Cup makes for glorious reading. And it's not just that there are 38 cars entered for the series that is its lineal successor.

More significant when the entry list was revealed at Paul Ricard last week was the presence of 31 pro cars. That must at least put it on a par with GT1 World – as series boss Stephane Ratel encouraged us to call it – during the golden 2010 and '11 seasons.

The quality of the drivers who'll be present on the grid when the Sprint Cup kicks off at Misano on April 9/10 looks every as bit as good as when GT1 World was in its pomp. There are established GT names in Rene Rast, Laurens Vanthoor, Robin Frijns, Alvaro Parente, Steven Kane and Jeroen Bleekemolen. And then there are star newcomers from other disciplines, including Felix Rosenqvist, Philipp Eng and Will Stevens.

When it comes to overt manufacturer participation –

which to many is an important measure of the quality of any entry list – there are full-factory teams from Bentley and Nissan. Then there are heavily supported squads from Audi, McLaren and BMW, and customer cars from Lamborghini and Mercedes boasting drivers from their works rosters.

Ratel has hailed the BGTS as the most competitive GT series in the world. The quality, quantity and diversity in a series fought out by just one class of car mean it is difficult to disagree with him.

He also reckons that the most prestigious of the three Blancpain titles this year will be the overall BGTS crown, rather than the sprint or endurance elements. But that remains to be seen.

The prospect of 40-odd cars doing battle through a pair of one-hour sprints at circuits such as Brands Hatch and Barcelona is mouthwatering. There is a strong chance that the shorter races are not just going to emerge from the shadow of the enduros, but perhaps become the major attraction.

GARY WATKINS



GASLY ON TOP AFTER TEST Prema Racing's Pierre Gasly topped last week's GP2 test at Barcelona. The French Red Bull junior was 0.244s quicker than the next-fastest driver, Racing Engineering's Norman Nato. European F3 runner-up Antonio Giovinazzi was the best rookie in third for Prema, ahead of DAMS driver Alex Lynn. **Photograph by Sam Bloxham/LAT/GP2 Series Media Service**

IN THE HEADLINES

DI RESTA RETURNS AS F1 RESERVE

Williams has signed Paul di Resta as its reserve driver for 2016. Di Resta, who drove for Force India from 2011-13, will dovetail his F1 duties with his Mercedes DTM season.

RENAULT SIGNS LATIFI AS TESTER

Canadian Nicholas Latifi has joined the Renault F1 team as test driver. He will have the opportunity to take part in at least one Friday practice session this season, and will combine his duties with a DAMS GP2 campaign.

FERRUCCI GETS HAAS ROLE

Formula 1 newcomer Haas has signed the first American driver to its books in Santino Ferrucci. The 17-year-old will serve as the team's development driver, combining the role with a full campaign in GP3 with DAMS.

ROSSI STAYS ON MANOR TEAM'S BOOKS

Alexander Rossi has been named as Manor's reserve driver for the 2016 Formula 1 season. He will fulfil the role alongside his IndyCar campaign for Andretti Autosport.

SMITH LEAVES SAUBER

Sauber technical director Mark Smith has left the team with immediate effect. A team statement thanks Smith for his efforts and put his decision to return to the UK down to "family reasons".

WOLFF WILLIAMS INVOLVEMENT ENDS

Mercedes motorsport boss Toto Wolff has severed all ties with Williams by selling the final five per cent of his shares in the Formula 1 team. In 2014, Wolff sold five per cent of his original 15 per cent holding to healthcare entrepreneur Brad Hollinger, followed by a further five per cent to the American in February last year, and now the remainder.

TAGLIANI LANDS BLANCPAIN SEAT

IndyCar veteran Alex Tagliani will contest his first season of racing in Europe in this year's Blancpain GT Series. The 2011 Indianapolis 500 pole-winner will race a Mercedes-AMG GT3 for the German Zakspeed team in the Endurance Cup element of the BGTS, alongside Darryl O'Young and Jean-Frederic Laberge.

KUBICA TO CONTEST MUGELLO 12 HOURS

Robert Kubica will return to circuit racing for the first time since his life-threatening rallying accident in February 2011 in the Mugello 12 Hours this weekend. Kubica will partner World Rally Championship regular Martin Prokop in a Mercedes SLS GT3 entered by the MP-Sports team.

STEVENS AND RAST LINK UP IN AUDI

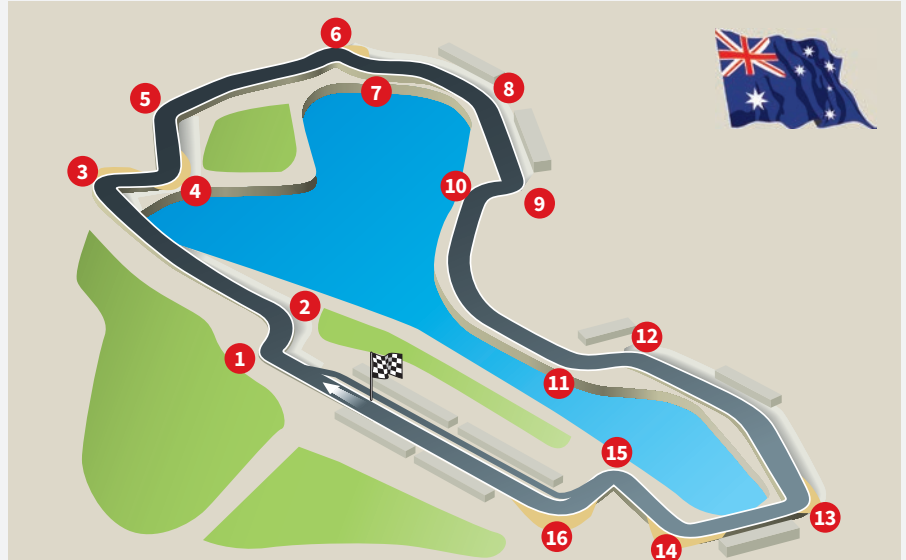
Ex-Formula 1 driver Will Stevens and Audi factory racer Rene Rast will share a WRT Audi R8 LMS in this year's Blancpain GT Series. The late deal for Stevens, who tested the car at Paul Ricard last week (below), and Rast means they become the Belgian team's sixth entry in the BGTS Sprint Cup and its fifth in the Endurance Cup.



F1 PREVIEW

Australian Grand Prix

March 18-20



ALBERT PARK

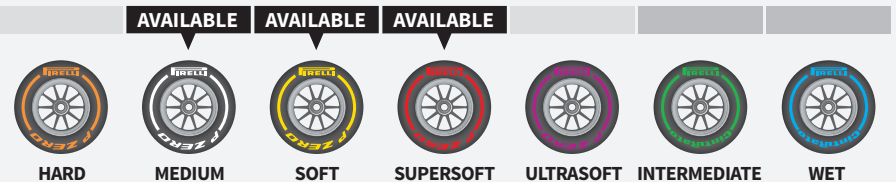
LENGTH 3.295 miles **NUMBER OF LAPS** 58

2015 POLE POSITION Lewis Hamilton 1m26.327s

QUALIFYING LAP RECORD Sebastian Vettel 1m23.529s (2011)

RACE LAP RECORD Michael Schumacher 1m24.125s (2004)

Slick tyre allocation



UK start times

LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1

FRIDAY

FP1 0130 **FP2** 0530

SATURDAY

FP3 0300 **QUALIFYING** 0600

SUNDAY

RACE 0500

HIGHLIGHTS ON CHANNEL 4

QUALIFYING SATURDAY 1230 **RACE** SUNDAY 1330

Previous winners

2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2013	Kimi Raikkonen	Lotus
2012	Jenson Button	McLaren
2011	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2010	Jenson Button	McLaren
2009	Jenson Button	Brawn
2008	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren
2007	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari
2006	Fernando Alonso	Renault

Themes to watch

FERRARI'S CHALLENGE

Ferrari was quick over a lap in testing, but it won't be until qualifying on Saturday that we'll get a clear indicator of whether it can challenge Mercedes.

SURPRISE PACKAGES

Both Williams and Toro Rosso showed encouraging pace in testing. Could either be in the mix for a podium finish in the opening race of the year?

THE DEBUTANTS

Jolyon Palmer, Pascal Wehrlein and Rio Haryanto all make their F1 debuts, with the first of those most likely to score. There's also a first race for the Haas team.

FORMULA E CAR FACELIFT ON CARDS FOR SEASON THREE

FORMULA E IS evaluating a bodykit update for season three designed to give cars a more futuristic look.

The facelift has not been finalised but could comprise a new nose shape and front wing. It is understood to have been instigated by FIA president Jean Todt.

It is not intended to yield an aerodynamic gain, and is being done for aesthetic reasons.

Autosport understands that it could cost anywhere from €5000 to €20,000, depending on the complexity of the redesign.

"It's on the cards to do something with the look of the cars," said series CEO Alejandro Agag. "There are a few options to change. The easiest is to change the nose and front wing. There are some cool designs in there. That takes about three months so we'll have to make a decision in May."

The appearance of the cars is likely to take a more dramatic shift from season five, when the new chassis, the tender for which was launched last week, is introduced.

"It will look radically different in phase two from phase one, and look like the single-seater of the future," Agag added.

While technology changes are at a minimum for season three, the Williams

Advanced Engineering batteries will have improved cooling and the brakes will be improved too.

Drivers will also be able to regenerate energy at 150kW instead of 100kW, meaning there should be more energy available if the drivers/powertrains can harvest it successfully.

For season three, constructor Spark is also likely to upgrade the steering wheel – it is believed that this could cost up to €40,000 if it allows for quicker brake-bias adjustment.

"It's from the same company – it's just an upgraded wheel," said Andretti Autosport's Roger Griffiths. "It has a lot more functionality, and is essentially future-proofing the car. We've tried to encourage it to be a carry-over part for season five.

"There has been a request to go towards a faster-acting, electrically adjustable brake-bias system – not active, just a button on the wheel with some pre-set settings, and not needing the driver to take their hand off the wheel.

"It's becoming a little more complex than first thought and with complexity comes costs, so there's a chance it could get postponed. If it costs too much and we've got four cars to update, we're not going to be too keen."

SCOTT MITCHELL

The future of electric racing

What are the implications of Formula E revising its technological roadmap to delay competition?



IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS, THE FIA HAS LAUNCHED a tender process to retain Formula E's single-make ethos on the battery and chassis in the short term. It was easy to feel frustrated by that. This championship is supposed to be a testbed for electric-vehicle technology and all that seems to have happened of late is the downscaling of season-by-season power and energy targets and the postponement of open competition.

The championship was one-make in season one. Powertrain development – the motor, gearbox and inverter – has been opened up for season two, with peak race power upped from 150kW to 170kW. For season three, the regulations will be consistent. Power will then increase to 220kW for season four and 250kW for season five (that's 50kW fewer than the original target).

Energy capacity is likely to remain at 28kWh throughout (down from a target of 32kWh). Throughout this period, a Dallara-built chassis and Williams Advanced Engineering battery will remain mandatory. Season five is the turning point – for the 2018-19 campaign, there will be a new chassis and a new battery. With that comes the realistic prospect of the series' chief target – single-car races.

This is a huge challenge. Battery-cell technology does currently not exist to double output without doubling cell quantity. But it's a fast-developing industry – with capacity on average improving by eight per cent each year – so it's reasonable to assume that the technology will be mature enough for more power and more useable energy in season five.

Plus, doubling the current 28kWh energy limit is not strictly what's required. The new chassis and enhanced regeneration methods mean drivers/powertrains should be able to harvest more energy from season five. So that shaves off a few kWh in terms of battery requirements.

For cost reasons, Formula E is unlikely to become an open-chassis formula in the near future. But on the battery side, that's possible.

The tender reveals a two-to-three-year plan for single-battery supply. But it's understood that the next rule cycle – batteries weighing 330kg, with 250kg of cells, 54kWh of useable energy and a peak power output of 250kW – will again last four years. So seasons five and six should be single-battery, then competition comes in for season seven – giving those who cannot, or don't want to, invest in new battery technology a further two years with the spec battery to work out the best supply strategy.

Formula E is getting there; it's just had to revise its targets. This season, the on-track action has been entertaining for the right reasons. So if it needs to live off that for a year or two before its technological interest escalates, that's fine. The posts have moved, but the end goal – more energy, more performance, more *relevance* – is still in sight.

SCOTT MITCHELL





INDYCAR

Power misses opener

WILL POWER'S BID FOR A SECOND IndyCar championship was dealt a blow after he was unable to race in Sunday's St Petersburg season opener, thanks to a mild concussion suffered in a practice crash.

The Team Penske star somehow managed to break his own track record to take pole position in qualifying the day after the accident. Afterwards, the Australian felt dizzy and Penske team president Tim Cindric sent him to his motorhome.

Power was originally cleared after his practice crash by the IndyCar medical team, which used data including that gathered from his in-ear accelerometers. After learning of Power's symptoms, he was again evaluated by medical director Geoffrey Billows and diagnosed with a mild concussion.

He is now subject to IndyCar's concussion protocol, and will be re-evaluated before he is cleared to drive. The next IndyCar round is at Phoenix on April 2, and Power is expected to be cleared for action. But with zero points on the board and team-mate Juan Pablo Montoya already having scored 51, it means Power is on the back foot in the championship.

Cindric knew he needed a driver in reserve after Power's crash. That driver was Oriol Servià, who had 197 starts under his belt in CART/IndyCar. Cindric had contacted Servià before qualifying in case Power was unable to participate and arranged for the Spaniard's seat and kit to be transported to Florida.

"Oriol put in a great effort and was going to be top-10 until that big wreck," said Cindric. "As for Will's championship,

double points will be his friend for once."

There are two double-points races on the IndyCar schedule – the Indianapolis 500 and the season finale at Sonoma.

"A lot of guys have started out in the hole here and sometimes the guys that don't do well at St Pete are OK," said Cindric. "We certainly won't give up and hopefully it will all come back around for him.

"Will has had some concussions in the past but that was more a discussion when the doctor saw him this morning. He came here with an inner-ear infection that he has been fighting for the last month or so. And we had a guy on the team with the stomach flu, so looking at all those things we didn't think what happened Friday was that hard of a hit. Right now, it's a very mild concussion."

Despite being eager to get Power back out, the Penske team has not ruled out a longer layoff. In a worst-case scenario, that could mean Power is not ready until May's Indy 500.

"The key thing for Will Power is to be 100 per cent physically," said team boss Roger Penske. "The big focus is to get ready for the 100th Indianapolis 500. It's always a disappointment when one of your top rabbits is not able to run."

Servià was running ninth before the pile-up, which happened on a restart at Turn 4. He ended up 18th. "It was crazy," said Servià. "I was pleased I had the pace in the warm-up, although the last few tenths is what we didn't have time to find. In the race, I was the limit, not the car."

BRUCE MARTIN

IN THE HEADLINES



CHILTON 17TH ON INDYCAR DEBUT

Max Chilton finished 17th on his IndyCar debut in Sunday's season opener at St Petersburg (above). The Chip Ganassi Racing driver started 16th, and was delayed after debris clogged up his radiator. "Apart from the first half of the race, we could have had a top 10," he said.

CARLIN QUITS FORMULA V8 3.5

Carlin has withdrawn from this year's Formula V8 3.5 Championship. "In the current market we're seeing that drivers at the top end of the sport are limited and we have taken the decision to put all our efforts into the GP2 Series," said team boss Trevor Carlin.

JACKSON BAGS AMD BTCC DEAL

Ollie Jackson will return to the British Touring Car Championship with the AmD Tuning Audi S3 team this year. He previously raced in the BTCC from 2011-14 before racing in the Ginetta GT Supercup last year.

COOK AND SUTTON LAND MG DRIVES

Josh Cook and Ashley Sutton will lead MG's attack in the British Touring Car Championship in 2016 after signing for Triple Eight Racing. Cook finished 15th last year for Power Maxed Racing, while Sutton won the Renault Clio Cup.

MERHI TESTS FOR GREAVES LMP2 SQUAD

Former Manor Formula 1 driver Roberto Merhi tested for the Greaves LMP2 team at Motorland Aragon last week. Merhi, who drove the team's Nissan-engined Gibson 015S and its Ligier JSP2 during the test, is evaluating a move either to sportscars or to IndyCar.

FISICHELLA TO MAKE SPA 24 DEBUT

Giancarlo Fisichella will make his debut in the Spa 24 Hours this July. He will share an AF Corse Ferrari 488 GT3 with fellow ex-F1 racer Olivier Beretta.

DIXON TO RACE AT LE MANS IN 2016

Four-time IndyCar champion Scott Dixon will make his Le Mans 24 Hours debut with the Chip Ganassi Ford squad in June. He is already confirmed as part of the Ford line-up for the Sebring 12 Hours this week.

BARRICHELLO TO RACE AT SEBRING

Rubens Barrichello will rejoin Wayne Taylor Racing for the Sebring 12 Hours this week. He again fills in for the ill Jordan Taylor, who he also replaced in January's Daytona 24 Hours, in the team's Dallara-Corvette DP (below).





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FEEDBACK

Don't judge new qualifying format



I am astounded by the negative reaction to the 'devil take the hindmost' qualifying format in F1. Yes, the old system worked, but the situation remains that, when the fastest cars start at the front, they usually win.

Reversed grids were never going to be approved, so I applaud the sport's decision-makers for having the gumption to inject new pressure and chaos into qualifying; yes, it will have teething problems, but let's see how it works before damning it.

Confusing for the public? No. The slowest driver drops out – that seems pretty simple to me. And exciting too.

Peter Goodchild
By email

BT and BRC show how it's done

I have just watched the first round of the new British Rally Championship on BT Sport and I would like to congratulate both them and Hayfisher productions on a superb programme.

For the first time in many years the major part of a rallying programme showed the cars on a stage with a few interviews here and there to provide a background story.

The WRC providers appear to believe that thrusting a microphone in the face of driver at the end of every section, with a very limited time actually showing the cars on a stage, provides entertainment to motorsport fans.

They would do well to watch the first round of the BRC to understand what a rallying programme should be about.

Richard Birt
By email

Let's talk Libre

In his excellent column (*In praise of 'run what you bring'*, March 3) Marcus Pye ends with 'Discuss'. Well...

There is a Libre race for single-seaters at Snetterton on March 19, one of several runs under the MSVR Mono banner each

Will the new qualifying system shake up the grid, or will it be the usual suspects on top?

year (even on Silverstone GP in 2015).

While not 100 per cent Libre, the two highly successful Monoposto championships attract full grids (usually two grids and four races per meeting) with diverse single-seater cars eligible for seven different classes and completely reflecting the spirit of the article.

Car sharing is not uncommon and during 2015 there was one nice example of a 'dad and lad' pairing of novice drivers who shared their car over the same race weekend.

Steven Connor
Sporting services manager,
Monoposto Racing Club

Two wheels better?

Your correspondent Paul Caldwell (March 10) raised some interesting points. May I suggest a visit to a MotoGP event – he will be very impressed in every way.

Let anyone should think I am biased, I have loved car and bike racing since I was 12 years old; I'm 75.

David Brady
By email

What goes around...

The guy from Red Bull did not say anything during the four years when he dominated F1 with a Renault engine! So let him go back to selling sodas!

Richard Jegou
By email

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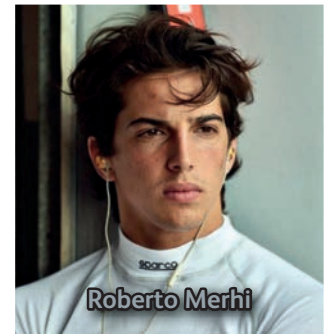


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Racing uncertainty

Mercedes is to be applauded for allowing its drivers to race each other, but will the need to win overrule the good intentions?

By Lawrence Barretto, F1 Reporter

[@lawrobarretto](#)

ACCORDING TO MERCEDES TEAM BOSS TOTO WOLFF, Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg will have more freedom to battle each other on track this season. Mercedes has previously allowed its drivers to race, but within limitations, including boundaries on how far their strategies could differ from each other. Stood between his two charges like a mediator at last week's pre-season launch event in Stuttgart, Wolff declared that Mercedes had loosened the shackles. But, given Mercedes' success in the past couple of years, why tweak the policy now? The team has to rein in its control over the drivers anyway, given there will be stricter enforcement of the regulations requiring each driver to drive his car 'alone and unaided' this season. But Wolff suggested that the dominance of the past two seasons had also afforded it some more wriggle room.

"When we started the project in 2013, there was a lot of pressure on the team in order to win races," he said. "We have done OK. In 2014, we won the championship and we confirmed it wasn't a one-off in 2015. In order to do that, we tried to put framework around that. Sometimes it functions, sometimes it doesn't. We learned some interesting lessons and we improved as an organisation. We owe it to Lewis and Nico and we owe it to Formula 1 to let them race. The ride will be a bit more difficult but I think that is absolutely necessary."

Wolff was speaking on the eve of a new season at a time when Formula 1 as a product has been criticised heavily. Hamilton, for example, agreed that F1 was broken. So the prospect of a battle between its drivers provides a much-needed shot in the arm. It's a nice thing to be able to do, but tricky to go through with when the chips are down.

Towards the end of last season, in Mexico and Brazil, Hamilton questioned the team's strategic calls as he tried to beat Rosberg. On both occasions he was denied the opportunity to change, but Mercedes achieved a one-two for its brand. Employing a less-restrictive code of conduct would put that type of result at risk.

First and foremost, Mercedes' priority is delivering to the board. If the drivers battle each other all season long and Mercedes wins both titles, that's not a problem. But if there's a repeat of 2014, when Rosberg and Hamilton made contact at Spa and put points in jeopardy, it's difficult to see how Mercedes will be able to maintain this approach.

This season it looks like Ferrari will provide a sterner challenge. Both Hamilton and Rosberg suggest that it will be much closer this year. Should that challenge materialise on

a more regular basis, can Mercedes really afford to stick to its plan to let its drivers race each other?

Ferrari threatened last season, but it was not sustained throughout the year. That meant that, all too often, Mercedes was able to plan its races from the front with minimal threat from behind. Allowing your drivers to race, when you have a buffer, eases the pressure. When that dominance was threatened on occasion, cracks began to emerge.

In Monaco the team made a split-second error in a safety-car period that saw Hamilton lose a certain victory to Rosberg. In Malaysia Ferrari's threat was clear – a decision to use the medium in the first part of qualifying meant Mercedes only had one fresh set for the race. That forced it to use the hard in the final stint, a call Hamilton questioned, because the only other option was a used set of mediums.

Admittedly, those two examples are just small errors in an otherwise faultless season. But they are proof that, if you put Mercedes under pressure, it can be beaten. When asked if it would be a risk if Mercedes did not change its framework

should Ferrari challenge seriously, Wolff said: "No, I don't think so. We are reducing the rules because we have got more comfortable in working with each other."

He then pointed to the move coinciding with the regulation changes to reduce guidance from teams to drivers.

But Merc will have to be pragmatic because its funding and existence in the sport rely on continued success. Wolff will no doubt want his drivers to race, because that is what they want. And keeping the peace will be a key factor in ensuring success. It is easy to make the declaration in a pre-season press conference, but when sat on the pitwall, with intense pressure from Sebastian Vettel or Kimi Raikkonen, and a race win on the line, will it be so easy then? Of course it won't be.

Mercedes has done and will continue to do Formula 1 a good service if it keeps team orders to a minimum and lets Rosberg and Hamilton fight on track. The 2014 Bahrain Grand Prix remains the most thrilling race of the past few years.

But if things get heated, as they have done all too often in the past, Mercedes will have to step in and ask its drivers to obey. That will not go down well with the drivers – nor the fans – but it is something that comes with the territory when you employ two top-line drivers.

Ultimately, it is trophies that matter to those who pay the bills and they will always be at the heart of every decision. ✂

“The prospect of a battle between Mercedes’ drivers is much needed”



Lightweight Lucas loses lead

Lucas di Grassi took victory and the points advantage. But a couple of hours later it all fell apart, and the win handed to Jerome d'Ambrosio

By Scott Mitchell, Features Editor

[@ScottAutosport](#)





The Mexico City ePrix had been a microcosm of the Formula E title fight. Then, just before 9pm at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, Lucas di Grassi was stripped of victory, thanks to his first car weighing in at 1.8kg under the 888kg minimum. Jerome d'Ambrosio inherited the win and Sebastien Buemi reclaimed the points lead. Oddly, it still felt like a microcosm of the season.

Di Grassi trailed Buemi by four points heading to Mexico, which was impressive given the pace advantage that the Renault e.dams team has over Abt Audi Sport. The Brazilian's explanation is simple, but pertinent: "We need to get points where we can, and in adverse circumstances [for Buemi] we take the chance and win."

In the two preceding races, Buemi recovered from qualifying errors to finish ahead of di Grassi, retaking the points lead in Punta del Este and then extending it in Buenos Aires. Yes, Buemi was making a meal of things, but his speed and racecraft were getting him out of trouble. It's true that you make your own luck, but Buemi himself acknowledges the good fortune he had in the recoveries in those two races.

In Mexico, the Swiss driver finally paid a price bigger than the usual uphill struggle in the race and a points lead not as big as it should be. The qualifying mistakes keep coming for Buemi, who is unable to put his finger on the issue but suspects it could be a particularly knife-edge nature of the Renault at 200kW that makes it tricky to drive on the limit.

In the race, Buemi's well of luck seemed to have run dry — for a few hours at least. Buemi's latest qualifying blunder and d'Ambrosio's robust defensive driving

Buemi did briefly lead d'Ambrosio, but had to let him back past

prevented his habitual rise to the front of the field, and put a significant dent in a title campaign that many believed was certain to end in victory thanks to the superiority of the Renault ZE15.

Then di Grassi was excluded, and Buemi's six-point deficit became a 22-point lead. Instead of being symptomatic of Buemi making hard work of winning the title, the race leaves you with the certainty that the crown really is destined to go to him. There are six races to go, but di Grassi's campaign is built on not losing too much ground and scoring big when the opportunity is there. Persistent, dogged but no way to turn around that big a deficit.

Once the frustration subsides, di Grassi can take heart from how things played out on track in Mexico as he earned his on-the-road win as much as Buemi lost it. He was sublimely decisive, as his passing moves on Nico Prost and race leader d'Ambrosio on the in- and out-laps respectively proved. More importantly, he was genuinely fast.

"Since Berlin, I haven't controlled a race like this," said di Grassi immediately after the race. Ironically, that was in reference to last season's race at Berlin Tempelhof, where he was excluded and victory went to d'Ambrosio. "I knew I had the pace, but here it's very difficult to overtake. So, just before the pitstops, Prost did a small mistake. He went a bit wide, I saw the gap and went for it. Jerome seemed to be struggling on cold tyres, so I got close, used the Fanboost and the overtake was very on the edge.

"After that I made sure I used more energy, three good laps to open a gap and then after that there was all that



D'Ambrosio, Buemi, di Grassi, Prost and Abt run line astern



Di Grassi: “Renault has the best car – by far. The more the straights, the bigger the gap”

mess. I could feel for the first time I could manage it for the win.”

So, if the stars align for di Grassi, even powertrain superiority doesn’t guarantee that Buemi can beat him. At circuits with a twistier configuration and a shortage of long straights, like in Mexico, the Renault ZE15’s advantage diminishes. The gap in performance is still there, as di Grassi acknowledges, but the package is clearly not undefeatable.

“Look, Renault has the best car – by far,” di Grassi reiterated. “The more the straights, the bigger the gap. In these positions the key is consistency, but also using the other’s mistakes to attack in the right moment.”

What’s equally encouraging is that d’Ambrosio’s drive from pole position rammed home that nobody should expect the title protagonists to be left to play out their duel without interference.

The Belgian was nothing short of phenomenal in qualifying. He matched Buemi in the first sector, and was a tenth quicker in the last – the performance in the superpole was immense and there’s no guarantee that Buemi would have been able to match the Dragon Racing driver had he not locked up at Turn 4. D’Ambrosio and team-mate Loic Duval have invaded the Buemi/di Grassi fight already this season – their VM200-FE-01s locked out the front row in Punta

del Este – and in Mexico d’Ambrosio in particular was a match for the favourites.

“We’ve always been a real challenger,” he said. “Buenos Aires [where the team struggled] was a one-off – we made a choice technically that didn’t come off. It happens. We went back to what we knew here and turned it around.”

D’Ambrosio led the entire first stint, although never more than a second clear of Prost and with the next three cars – di Grassi, Buemi and Daniel Abt – covered by only a further second or two.

“I was never in control,” he reckoned. “It was a real challenge to keep them all behind, but I had the speed and the track really played for me. The intense pressure was clearly with Seb in the second half...”

Powerless to keep di Grassi at bay when the Brazilian deployed Fanboost on the main straight, d’Ambrosio was determined not to let Buemi through. So the two combined to put on a fierce, at times over the edge, fight for the packed grandstands. Buemi attacked into Turn 1. Blocked. Two laps later, Turn 4. Blocked. Same lap, Turn 15. Blocked.

Buemi was getting frustrated but d’Ambrosio held firm. They traded radio complaints, and circulated nose-to-tail for half a dozen laps. Then Buemi got a superb run out of the Turn 15 chicane and the second half of the Peralta. >>

IN THE HEADLINES



DA COSTA ENDURES NIGHTMARE

Antonio Felix da Costa had a disastrous event. The Team Aguri driver lost track time in practice due to a battery and gearbox change, but still qualified seventh. He started 17th after a grid penalty for the replacement ‘box, picked up a 10-second penalty for a team transgression on the grid, a mechanical-failure flag for a broken front wing and a drive-through for cutting the chicane, the Portuguese claims after contact. He retired after crashing out.

FRIJNS CLAIMS FIFTH PLACE

Robin Frijns continued his 100 per cent scoring record in Formula E with fifth in Mexico. The Andretti driver battled with team-mate Simona de Silvestro for 10th in the early stages before breaking clear after the car swaps. He passed Bruno Senna, Sam Bird and Nick Heidfeld, then later benefited from Daniel Abt’s crash and Lucas di Grassi’s exclusion.

DE SILVESTRO’S STRONG SHOWING

De Silvestro’s fight with Frijns was the highlight of her strongest performance of the season. The Swiss driver has struggled to adapt to the Formula E car and is yet to score a point, compared to seventh-placed Frijns’s 31. She scored her best qualifying result of the season with 11th but faded in the second stint and had an off as well.

NEXTEV TCR’S WEEKEND TO FORGET

NEXTEV TCR’s strongest show of pace this season came to nothing in Mexico. Oliver Turvey starred in practice with the third and sixth-fastest times, but struggled to find a balance in qualifying, in which a mistake left him 16th. He finished 11th. Team-mate Nelson Piquet Jr started last after crashing in qualifying, and finished 13th.

VERGNE FAILS TO SCORE

Contact with Loic Duval early in the race ended Jean-Eric Vergne’s chance of scoring points for only the second time this season. Vergne (below) outqualified DS Virgin Racing team-mate Sam Bird but his sixth-place start ended in a lapped 16th after suffering a technical problem with his second car. Buenos Aires victor Bird earned sixth.





MAUGER/LAT

UNNATURAL HABITAT

ALEJANDRO AGAG'S GAZE WANDERED TO THE window, and to the view of Abt Audi Sport mechanics wheeling one of their cars down the pitlane. "I've never seen a Formula E car like this," he said. "It looks so different."

He was right. The championship's first race in the confines of a 'proper' circuit split opinion when it was first revealed. One driver pointed out it wasn't really in the spirit of Formula E to be removed from the city centre, albeit so marginally. Others loved the mix of the smooth Formula 1 circuit used by parts of the Formula E layout and the tight, bumpy, dusty parts that linked it all together. Fans inevitably drew comparisons to the Formula 1 machinery that took to the full version of the circuit last October. Others simply acknowledged how cool it was that FE made use of the famous Peraltada (even though a chicane bastardised it).

Maybe Formula E should stick to traditional street venues for the most part, but this track worked. The chicanes need to be opened up if the series returns here, but that might require approval from a higher power – it's understood that the positioning of the chicanes was compromised because the kerbs could not be drilled in on the F1 circuit. That change would aid overtaking.

But the circuit was a real challenge. Several corners required braking and turning at the same time, which led to mistakes such as Nelson Piquet Jr's crash in qualifying at Turn 1, and Sebastien Buemi ruining his pole effort with a lock-up. And it was a nice change to have proper, permanent facilities.

Formula E's about looking to the future, but there was something poetic about this clash of the old and the new.



MAUGER/LAT



MAUGER/LAT

He moved to the right but did not manage to get alongside and, as he jinked back to the left, they collided. It was an unfortunate racing incident, nothing more nothing less, and they got away with it by missing the first chicane.

Buemi's initial feeling was that d'Ambrosio had instigated the crash by making a slight move across him: "I felt it was not really fair. I don't have a problem with closing the door but I was already committed to passing him and he moved. I was not side-by-side but I was already kind of there at the rear wheel. It could have been a big crash."

"He goes into my back, I don't see how I can be in the wrong with that," was d'Ambrosio's response...

A few laps later, Buemi got another good run onto the straight and, even though d'Ambrosio didn't defend, Buemi opted for a different strategy, this time jinking to the right and attempting to pass him round the outside (as he had Abt earlier in the race).

It was a bold move but d'Ambrosio was slightly ahead in the braking zone and with a gentle squeeze – nothing significant at all, really – Buemi had nowhere to go and cut the chicane. Had he been more forceful in trying to take the corner, perhaps d'Ambrosio would have had to yield, but Buemi felt his adversary was already in the wrong.

A farcical situation developed as Buemi slowed through Turn 12 to try to hand the place back, but he held the inside line and d'Ambrosio slid on the dust, losing places to Prost and Abt, with Duval briefly joining the train too. Buemi then cut the Turn 15 chicane slightly, but d'Ambrosio skipped it entirely after getting on the outside of Abt to jump back up to third. He was then given second back by Buemi at the exit of the first chicane, ending a lap he aptly summarised: "He didn't make my life easy giving the position back – he made a big mess."

Although it is understood that the incident was looked at by the stewards



Strong in- and out-laps were key to di Grassi's first place



after the race, d'Ambrosio's corner-cutting did result in the right order being restored. Even Buemi said he was happy with it, admitting "it would have been difficult to give the position back [without conceding further places]".

Their battle continued to the end, although it was very much a party of two after Prost was given a drive-through penalty for a harshly judged unsafe release and Abt crashed out of fourth. Abt's error handed that place to Duval, who did not quite have d'Ambrosio's pace but was not helped by a steering problem in the second half of the race, which contributed to a series of chicane-cutting and a 15-second time penalty that would drop him back behind Prost.

The intensity of the fight for second diminished in the closing laps, emerging again briefly for a near-wheel-to-wheel finish and a bit more gesticulating from Buemi. But the place was d'Ambrosio's.

Of course, hours later the battle gained even greater significance... Which brings us back to di Grassi. A flawless performance meant he briefly moved from plucky underdog to surprise-but-deserving points leader at the halfway stage of the championship. So when his exclusion was confirmed, more than just the results sheet changed with it.

Di Grassi had said of Buemi: "He has the best car. He should win this championship very easy." This was a barb at Buemi's expense, a nod to his errors and spoken in the context of a title fight that di Grassi had no real business leading.

Now those same words have a prophetic feel about them. ❄️

Di Grassi celebrated on (above) and off track (above right), but win was an illusion



RESULTS ROUND 5/10, MEXICO CITY (MEX), MARCH 12 (43 LAPS – 55.896 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Jerome d'Ambrosio (B)	Dragon Racing Venturi VM200-FE-01	48m28.409s
2	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renault e.dams Renault ZE15	+0.106s
3	Nicolas Prost (F)	Renault e.dams Renault ZE15	+25.537s
4	Loic Duval (F)	Dragon Racing Venturi VM200-FE-01	+26.358s
5	Robin Frijns (NL)	Andretti Autosport Spark SRT_01E	+28.477s
6	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing Virgin DSV-01	+28.928s
7	Daniel Abt (D)	Abt Audi Sport Abt Schaeffler FE01	+30.051s
8	Nick Heidfeld (D)	Mahindra Racing Mahindra M2 ELECTRO	+36.373s
9	Stephane Sarrazin (F)	Venturi Venturi VM200-FE-01	+37.291s
10	Bruno Senna (BR)	Mahindra Racing Mahindra M2 ELECTRO	+37.603s
11	Oliver Turvey (GB)	NEXTEV TCR NEXTEV TCR 001	+38.598s
12	Mike Conway (GB)	Venturi Venturi VM200-FE-01	+38.790s
13	Nelson Piquet Jr (BR)	NEXTEV TCR NEXTEV TCR 001	+42.351s
14	Simona de Silvestro (CH)	Andretti Autosport Spark SRT_01E	+43.971s
15	Salvador Duran (MEX)	Team Aguri Spark SRT_01E	+1m03.082s
16	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	DS Virgin Racing Virgin DSV-01	-1 lap
EX	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Abt Audi Sport Abt Schaeffler FE01	-5.416s
R	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Team Aguri Spark SRT_01E	32 laps - accident

Winner's average speed 69.187mph. **Fastest lap** Prost, 1m04.569s, 72.475mph.

Super pole 1 d'Ambrosio, 1m03.705s; **2** Prost, 1m04.013s; **3** di Grassi, 1m04.023s; **4** Abt, 1m04.335s; **5** Buemi, 1m05.183s.

Qualifying 1 Buemi, 1m03.667s; **2** Prost, 1m03.877s; **3** di Grassi, 1m03.990s; **4** d'Ambrosio, 1m03.992s; **5** Abt, 1m04.077s; **6** Vergne, 1m04.268s; **7** da Costa, 1m04.371s; **8** Duval, 1m04.492s; **9** Heidfeld, 1m04.523s; **10** Sarrazin, 1m04.583s; **11** Bird, 1m04.594s; **12** de Silvestro, 1m04.606s; **13** Frijns, 1m04.959s; **14** Conway, 1m05.108s; **15** Duran, 1m05.452s; **16** Turvey, 1m06.166s; **17** Senna, 1m07.724s; **18** Piquet, no time.

Championship 1 Buemi, 98; **2** di Grassi, 76; **3** Bird, 60; **4** d'Ambrosio, 58; **5** Duval, 44; **6** Prost, 38; **7** Frijns, 31; **8** Sarrazin, 30; **9** Heidfeld, 27; **10** da Costa, 16.

When TAG engines ruled F1

A powerplant bearing the name 'TAG' will start a grand prix for the first time in almost 30 years this weekend. In the mid-1980s, the name was a byword for supremacy

By Gary Watkins, Special Contributor

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TAG badges – those of TAG Heuer to be precise – will once again adorn a Formula 1 powerplant in 2016. Political expediency, complete with an acrimonious back story, explains their presence on the Renault V6s in this year's Red Bulls. The reason for those three letters appearing on the engines that took McLaren to three world championships in the 1980s was much more simple. It was all about the pursuit of perfection.

McLaren technical director John Barnard was a no-compromise designer. And he didn't like what was out there when McLaren, along with the rest of the Cosworth-powered *garagistes*, began a gold rush for turbocharged engines as the dust settled after the turbulent winter of 1980-81 and the signing of the first Concorde Agreement.

"We'd won the 1981 British Grand Prix with John Watson more through luck than judgement," recalls Barnard. "I turned around to Ron [Dennis] and said that we were going to need a turbo engine if we were going to compete in the future."

There were options out there for McLaren in the summer of 1981. Teddy Mayer, still a director of the newly created McLaren International organisation for a few more months, reckoned he could source a supply of Renault V6s. Barnard wasn't interested.

"Teddy came to me with a drawing of a Renault engine he'd got from somewhere and said that he could do a deal with them," he explains. "My response was, 'Well, I don't think it's very good.' It was based on a road-car block, had a 90-degree 'v' angle, and had all the pumps and bits and pieces scattered around the sides."

There was also a trip to BMW to see the straight-four 1.5-litre turbo already run in practice and qualifying by Brabham at Silverstone that year. Again, Barnard didn't like what he saw.

"It was all mounted on subframes," says Barnard. "I turned to Paul Rosche [BMW's long-standing motorsport engine guru] and asked if I could change the way it was mounted. He said,

'No, you have to mount it exactly with those subframes.' As we left, I said to Ron, 'Forget it – it's a compromise. I'm not going to run that.'"

There was even a trip to Liechtenstein to see a mock-up of a straight-six turbo produced by star BMW Formula 2 engine builder Max Heidegger. That was a non-starter, too. "He wanted to mount it in this carbon-reinforced box," remembers Barnard. "It was missing the point of an F1 engine."

Barnard knew what he wanted: "It had to be a stressed engine, mounted in the back of the tub in what I would call the Cosworth manner. I wanted all the pumps off the side and on the front of the engine. I didn't want anything down the side because we were still working on ground-effect underfloors at that point.

"Ron and I sat down, and said, 'If there isn't an engine out there that we want, we'll have to get someone to build us one.' We went through a list of names – Cosworth, Weslake and people like that – before I think Ron suggested Porsche. "My first thought was that Porsche wasn't going to mess around with someone like us, but he picked up the phone and a day or two later we were over in Germany talking to them."

Porsche engine boss Hans Mezger, who led the manufacturer's

development of turbo engines in sportscar racing, remembers the simple question Dennis put to him that day: "He asked, 'Does Porsche have an F1 engine that can win races and, if not, can it develop one?'"

The answers to those questions were "No" and then "Yes". Porsche was

open to McLaren's approach

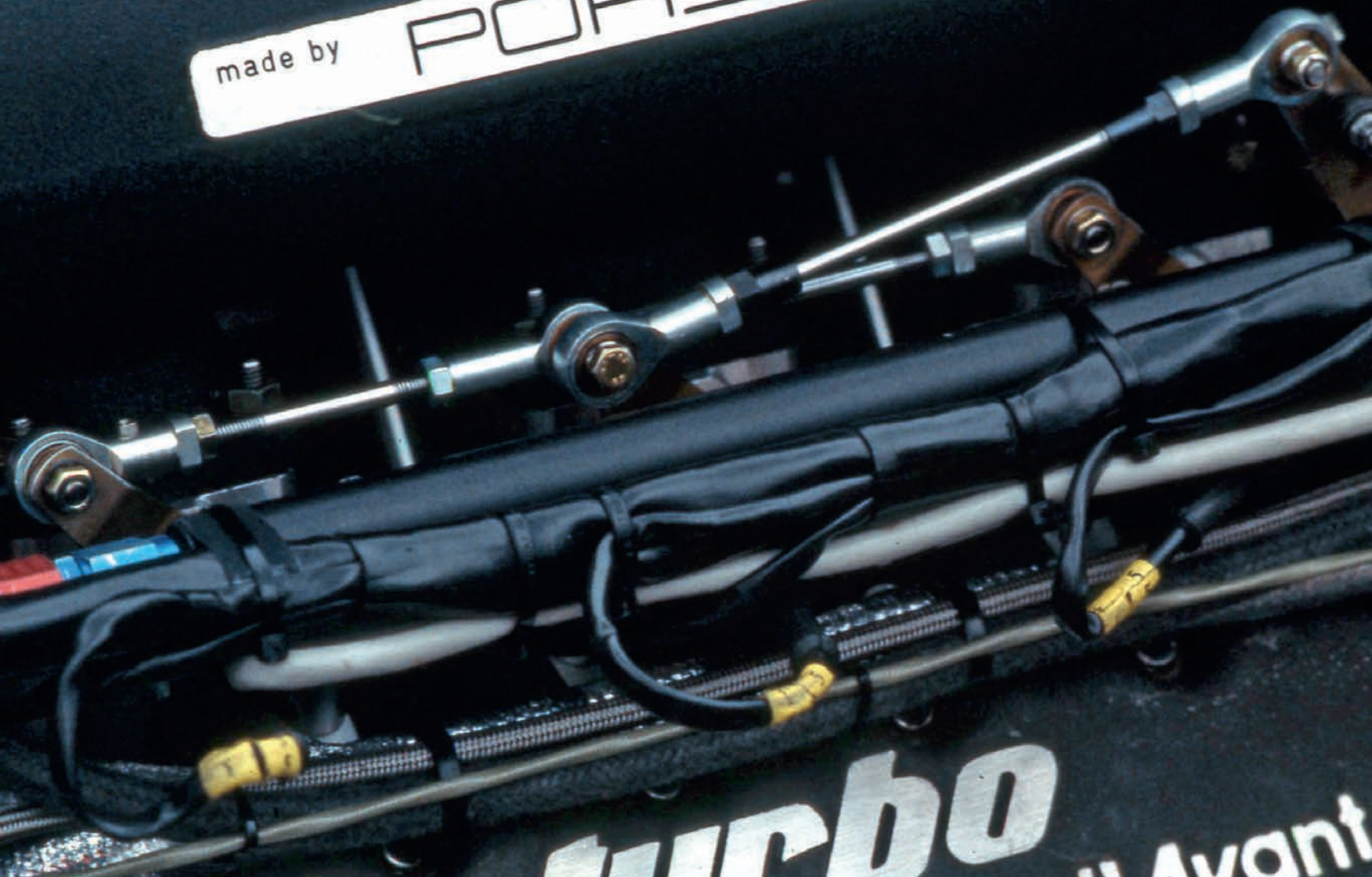
because, then as now, it operated as an engineering consultancy as well as a car maker. There was never the idea of a traditional team-manufacturer deal, even though Mezger admits that he had always tried to stay up to date with F1 technology and attended a couple of grands prix per year. The engine was produced for McLaren on what Horst Marchart, then manager of customer sales at Porsche, says was "an external development basis". That meant McLaren had to pay for it.

Or rather, had to find someone to pay for it.

"Within McLaren, we had enough money to pay for the >>

"Ron and I said, 'If there isn't an engine we want, we'll have to get someone to build us one'"

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Dennis, Ojeh and Lauda announce plans for the TAG Porsche engine at Monza in 1982



Mezger (right, in blue jumper) oversees the first track test of the McLaren-TAG at Silverstone in 1983

design of the engine only," recalls Barnard. "I forget how long that part of the process was, maybe six months, but Ron said within that time he was going to find the money."

There was an approach to Marlboro, the team's primary sponsor and broker of the merger between the ailing McLaren team and Dennis and Barnard's Project Four squad at the end of the previous season. That road turned out to be a dead end.

"It was neither part of our strategy nor affordable within the budget constraints that we had," says John Hogan, who looked after the tobacco company's motor racing sponsorship. "But if you look at it in the context of today, it would have been pretty cheap."

There was success, however, at the door of Mansour Ojeh and his family's Techniques d'Avant Garde organisation, already a Williams sponsor. That led to the creation of a joint-venture company between the race team and technology company to be known as TAG Turbo Engines. (TAG would not become a shareholder in McLaren until the end of 1984 when Barnard decided, for reasons he neither fully understands nor remembers, to sell his 40 per cent stake in the team.)

Barnard was very exacting in what he wanted from Porsche and was in a position to be so because McLaren was the customer. "There was no way I was going to tell Porsche what to do inside the engine, but I certainly was telling them what to do on the outside. It was my spec," he says.

The 'v' angle was decided by Porsche, although Barnard was pushing for the narrowest possible engine. The powerplant that became known as the TTE-PO1 would be an 80-degree V6.

Porsche decided that this was as narrow as it could go. This, explains Mezger, was because it needed the provision to incorporate a mechanical fuel-injection pump, albeit an electronically controlled one, in the 'v'. Its initial plan had been to experiment with both an electrical/mechanical and a fully electronic system, although supply issues meant the planned >>

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How duplicity led to TAG's early debut

JOHN BARNARD DIDN'T want to race the TAG Turbo until 1984. It wasn't in his plan – “and Ron would have gone along with what I wanted”, he says – even when the new V6 started running in a mule car in the summer of 1983. That it ended up on the grid as early as the Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort in late August was the result of some heavy-duty politicking on the part of Niki Lauda.

Barnard wanted to hit the ground running with an all-new car fully optimised for the TAG Turbo. Lauda, on the other hand, was convinced of the benefits of bleeding the new engine in competition as early as possible.

The Austrian went behind McLaren's back and started lobbying Marlboro. His actions that summer are described as “duplicitous” by John

Hogan, who looked after Marlboro's motor racing sponsorship. “I don't think that word is either incorrect or too strong,” he says.

John Watson, Lauda's team-mate at McLaren in 1982 and '83, recalls a similar story: “He got in the ear of Aleardo Buzzi [Marlboro's president] and started telling him that it was necessary to get race experience of the engine, and there was a lot of sense to what he was saying.”

Barnard didn't agree at the time. “You have to remember that we are talking about a relatively small team at the time: the drawing office was probably four or five people,” he says. “We were doing an all-new car for '84 and trying to keep the Cosworth car as competitive as possible. The workload was already pretty intense.”

Today, Barnard says:

“I suppose it was a good thing to do, looking back on it.” Alan Jenkins, who was given the responsibility of designing the car known as the MP4/1E, is more dogmatic. He reckons it was crucial to McLaren's success in 1984.

“Those races taught us a lot of things that we wouldn't have had a clue about otherwise – we learnt an absolute ton,” he says. “If you look at the aero changes we made over those races in '83, they were massive. It took us a while to realise how much wing we would have to run.”

McLaren also learned valuable lessons about carbon brakes. It was when it successfully tried drilled carbon discs at the curtain closer in South Africa in 1983 that Barnard made the final decision to use the still-new technology on the MP4/2.



Packaging critical in design brief

“The first meeting between McLaren and Porsche had been in August 1981”

back-to-back tests never took place and the decision was taken to go the latter route and use the Bosch Motronic system.

The 80-degree ‘v’ also met Barnard's design brief. “After comparing the contour of an 80-degree V6 engine with the contour of the McLaren monocoque, we determined that such a design would not protrude at any point,” explains Mezger. “It would allow all of McLaren's packaging requirements to be met.”

Those requirements were extreme. Barnard remembers one trip to Porsche's development headquarters in Weissach where discussions centred on a bolt boss that protruded beyond the designer's dimensional framework. “They had done a joint between the sump and the block, a bolted joint, whereby the boss for the bolts stuck out past the maximum dimension I had given them,” he explains. “It stuck out by three quarters of an inch or so, but I said it was a compromise and had to be changed. That's an illustration of the power we had.”

The first meeting between McLaren and Porsche had been in August 1981. The contract had been signed on October 12 and the first engine was running little more than a year later, the first dyno test taking place on December 18 1982. In between times, at the Italian GP in September, the TAG deal had been announced. >>



Lauda was quick in 1983 finale at Kyalami

The TAG V6 ran in a racing car for the first time on May 6 the following year in the back of a Porsche 956 Group C car. This turned out to be a bone of contention between McLaren and the German manufacturer. Mezger reckoned it was the “best way to detect and eliminate potential problems with the new fully electronic injection technology”; Barnard thought it a complete waste of time.

“I was telling them that they shouldn’t do it, but they went ahead and did it anyway,” says Barnard. “It gave a false impression. The turbo lag was masked by the weight of the car.”

Watson was the first driver to sample the TAG engine in the back of an F1 car at the end of June 1983. He undertook the first mileage in a converted ’82 McLaren, now known as the MP4/1D, and immediately complained about throttle lag. “When I said this, their reply was, ‘Yes, but we never had that in the 956,’” explains Watson. “When Ron walked up and asked me what had happened, he wasn’t very happy.”

Early testing and the first grands prix the TAG engine completed in 1983 weren’t without their difficulties. The new Bosch system proved to be problematic. Barnard and Alan Jenkins, who engineered Watson in ’83 and Alain Prost in ’84, suggest that it was barely fit for purpose.

“It was all built by their R&D department, so I had to teach them about F1,” says Barnard. “The first system they built was in two metal boxes from a road car anti-lock braking system. It was like that until the end of 1984.”

“It was frustrating. Sometimes we’d spend hours trying to fire the thing up”

Jenkins remembers that accessing the EPROM microchips involved levering the lid off one of the boxes with a knife. “It wasn’t like today when you walk up to the car with a USB connector,” he says. “It was incredibly frustrating to begin with because sometimes we’d spend hours just trying to fire the thing up.”

Niki Lauda might have won the South African GP at Kyalami in 1983 at the end of the TAG Turbo’s short programme of races that season. The car went out with electrical problems when the Austrian was lying just a couple of seconds behind race winner Riccardo Patrese’s Brabham-BMW six laps from home. This was explained by the failure of a relay switch, which was sourced from a road car. Barnard recalls being told that it was from a Citroen 2CV and Jenkins, perhaps more plausibly, a Volkswagen Kombi van.

By 1983, of course, ground-effect aerodynamics had been banned as the result of a late edict from autocratic FISA president Jean-Marie Balestre. Barnard was furious – “My first thought was, ‘Who can I strangle?’” – and reckons the introduction of flat bottoms robbed McLaren of a significant proportion of the advantage it should have enjoyed with the TAG V6.

“The whole thing was designed around ground effects,” he says. “We were already running stuff in the tunnel at the end of ’81 and were attaining incredible numbers.”

Jenkins goes even further: “Everything we knew about downforce and the spring rates to deal with it would have gone out the window. The forces were bending bits of the model in the wind-tunnel. We were looking at various ways of trimming it and even had a version with inverted front wings because the downforce always tended to move towards the front.”

The true potential of the TAG Turbo engine, or rather the aerodynamic potential it would have allowed McLaren to exploit, might never have been seen. But it didn’t do too badly over the course of four and a bit seasons. ❧



There were problems for the TAG Porsche engine in testing, but improvement was rapid



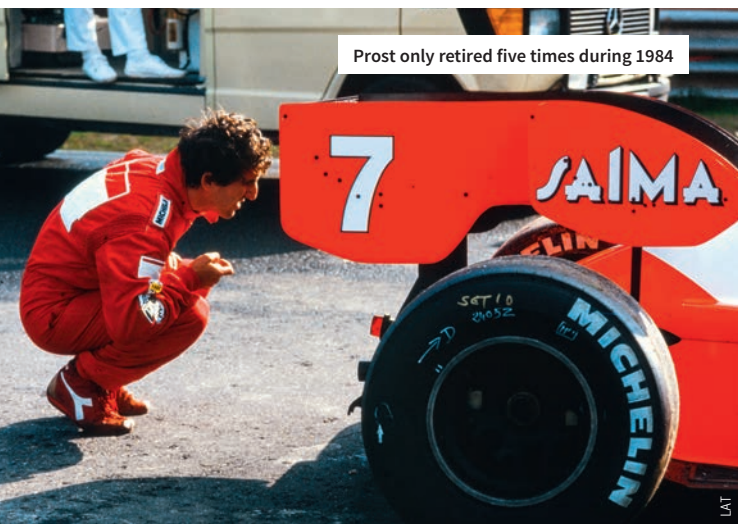
Barnard (left) and Jenkins



Lauda (left) pipped Prost (centre) to the 1984 title by just half a point



The McLaren-TAG MP4/1D test mule in 1983



Prost only retired five times during 1984



McLaren-TAG carried number 1 in 1985



Prost leads the Austrian GP, but Lauda would win

McLaren: dominant or just lucky in 1984?

TWELVE WINS FROM 16 races, a one-two in the drivers' championship and a domination of the constructors' rankings – the statistics of the first full season of the TAG Turbo suggest a clear dominance for McLaren. Yet it wasn't quite as simple as that: John Barnard suggests that there was a significant amount of luck involved.

"We had engine problems – reliability issues – pretty much all the way through the season," he says. "But what was significant was that we seemed to get lucky in the races."

Time after time, the two McLaren MP4/2s would run into technical snags in practice and qualifying, only to come good when it mattered. So dire were the problems that engines were being shuttled around Europe over the course of a grand prix weekend. "Mansour Ojeh's plane even had the seats removed so we could put the engines in there," recalls Alan Jenkins, who also points out that Alain Prost took two of his seven wins in the spare car.

A clean-running McLaren-TAG MP4/2 was, however, almost certainly the best package in the

field, although not in qualifying. McLaren and Porsche didn't play the high-boost game like many of their rivals. Eventual champion Niki Lauda never sat on pole, while Prost took the top spot on three occasions. Nelson Piquet, meanwhile, would start from the front in his Brabham-BMW no fewer than nine times.

The resources available had a lot to do with that, reckons Barnard.

"We had 25 engines, if I remember correctly. Five of those we used for

"We didn't take a chance with big-boost qualifying runs"

development, and that was it," he remembers. "That might sound a lot, but we really didn't want to lose too many. We didn't want to take the chance with big-boost qualifying runs."

The combination of the MP4/2 chassis and the TAG powerplant made for a useable racing car. Its driveability was central to McLaren's 1984 successes.

"Aerodynamically, the car was really good: it gave the drivers lots of confidence and lots of rear-end grip, so they could open the throttle early in the corner," says Barnard. "The car would sit down and take off."

"We did have some turbo lag, of course, but it wasn't a big issue. That was a combination of the chassis and the engine."

The TAG powerplant was also fuel-efficient. Jenkins suggests that McLaren didn't always run the full 220-litre load allowed by the regulations.

The difference at the end of the season between Lauda and Prost was just half a point. Jenkins reckons the deciding factor was Lauda realising the inherent weaknesses of the McLaren's gearbox earlier than his team-mate.

"The 'box was a beefed up version of the Cosworth one and the final drive was only really good for one start," explains Jenkins. "Niki figured that out ahead of Alain and was more gentle off the line."

Lauda would win the restarted British GP at Brands Hatch. Prost would retire with gearbox problems.



Speed: where do they all stack up?

Ever wondered how the world's racing categories compare on laptime? We did too. So we decided to work it out

By Marcus Simmons, Deputy Editor

[@MarcusSimmons54](#)

T

his all started with one of those random office conversations. In this case, we were grumbling about the increasing and irritating habit of those who are fans of one type of motorsport denigrating all others – in particular, one or two observers who made the claim that LMP1 cars are now quicker than Formula 1 machinery.

This was clearly nonsense, as laptimes at Silverstone, Spa, Austin, Shanghai and Bahrain prove. But then we got thinking... Where does LMP1 stack up against GP2? How could we compare IndyCar against them? Or even Japan's Super Formula? Come to think of it, where does everything else fit in? GTE against DTM? NASCAR?

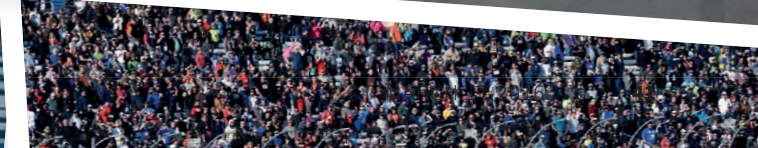
Sadly, we don't have the budget to hire a circuit and organise the ultimate 'Formula Libre' race – Lewis Hamilton in his Mercedes against Mark Webber in his LMP1 Porsche versus Kyle Busch in his NASCAR Toyota and Gordon Shedden in his BTCC Honda – but there is a way of calculating a speed index for each category based on comparing their performances against each other around as many different circuits as possible during the 2015 season.

The absolute key to this was that for each of the 50 categories we chose, they shared at least one venue with at least one other category. Without that, the chain would have been broken and there would have been no way of integrating that category into our list. >>





ISHIHARA/LAT, KINRADE/LAT, STALEY/LAT, LEVITT/LAT,
VAN DER LAAN/LAT, F. PIERCE WILLIAMS/LAT, EBREY/LAT,
MAUGER/LAT, S. BLOXHAM/LAT, TRIENITZ/XBP



SPEED COMPARISON

So how did we do it?

We took the fastest qualifying times of each of our categories at every circuit they raced on during the season, ignoring wet sessions. In the case of endurance series we also included free practice times as some of them have formats that don't necessarily mean the fastest driver will be on track in qualifying.

Then we set about comparing this data in as many ways as possible. The crude way to do it would be, where possible, to compare simply against Formula 1 – the fastest category, and the one that was always going to represent the 100,000 point on the index. But that would be unfair because the characteristics of a category may not suit it on the F1 circuits, for example a GTE car is unusually slow against an F1 car at Silverstone because of the high proportion of long, medium and high-speed corners.

Therefore we compared the categories against each other on each circuit in as many different ways as possible to come up with the most accurate index figure possible for each one. Also, we doubled the prominence of data that came from the same race meeting (ie F1 against GP2, GP3 and Porsche Supercup) as conditions would be more equal than those of a category racing at the same venue six months earlier or later.

The biggest cluster of data came from the European-based series on the European circuits, and this gave us the best possibility of being as accurate as possible. This was crucial not just to get a read on how they compare against each other, but also when we began to bring in the other categories around the world, where there was not so much comparison data...

The important hinges

It sounds bizarre, but our ability to compare IndyCar and NASCAR to the non-American series is based on one weekend of sportscar racing at Austin... That's because the United (now IMSA) SportsCar Championship shared the bill with the World Endurance Championship at the Texas circuit, and also with IndyCar at Long Beach and Detroit.

Having established indices for LMP1, LMP2 and GTE based on their comparisons against the other European-based categories, we were able to work out an IMSA index against those three WEC classes based on lap times that weekend at Austin. Based on that index, we compared IndyCar to IMSA at Long Beach and Detroit. As these are both street circuits, we decided to factor in the IndyCar test at Road America – where you'd expect the >>

“The biggest cluster of data came from the European circuits”



So... from LMP2 at Austin, how did we work out the speed of a NASCAR Cup car?

The 50 categories in

Formula 1

No argument – F1 remains at the top of the tree in new hybrid-turbo era

Super Formula (Japan)

Japan's premier series for two-litre turbo-powered Dallaras is seriously fast

IndyCar

Competition on aero kits has made lap times faster in 2015

LMP1

Huge gains in 2015 for the big prototype class; could go second to F1 in '16

GP2

F1 feeder class is in exactly right place, on edge of F1 107% qualify rule

Formula V8 3.5 (Formula Renault 3.5)

Faster than GP2 at crisp autumnal Silverstone but slower elsewhere

Indy Lights

New package for 2015 was big step forward from ageing oval-based racer

Auto GP

Modified old A1GP cars had just two events in '15 to take data from

GP3

GP2-GP3 gap is similar to F1-GP2. But new car could change it in '16

Super GT (Japan)

The fastest GT series in the world thanks to engines and tyre war

LMP2 (from WEC)

This growth area of the sport is gaining in competitiveness, and pace

IMSA SportsCar

Daytona Prototype/LMP2 mash-up but control tyres slow things down

Formula 3 (European championship)

Increased power since 2014 has pushed F3 further ahead of Renault 2.0

DTM

Way ahead of the other tin-top series, but then it's GT in all but name

Euroformula Open

F3 cars with spec Toyota engines provide fast, cheaper alternative

Brazilian Formula 3

Elderly F3 chassis still going strong with Berta-built engines

Toyota Racing Series (New Zealand)

'Off-season' single-seater series gives impressive performance

Renault Sport Trophy (RS01)

Regie's new showcase has blown doors off Megane V6 predecessor

Formula Renault 2.0 (Eurocup/NEC/ALPS)

Junior class remains perfect training ground for F3 and above

GTE (from WEC)

Ultra-competitive class for sophisticated cars is pegged back on top speed

Pro Mazda

Second rung on Road to Indy ladder is small step up from first

GT3 (Blancpain Endurance/Sprint)

This arena is getting stronger and stronger, but BoP well in play

LMP3

European Le Mans Series 'baby' class will take big step forward in '16

Lamborghini Super Trofeo

Close to GT3, which is no surprise for this GT3-spec Huracan racer

Super TC2000 (Argentina)

Fast racers in zippy Radical-powered multi-manufacturer series

order as a percentage of F1

100.000	USF2000 Road to Indy's first step looks strong – and not far off Pro Mazda	131.479
105.780	V8 Supercars (Australia) Indigenous racers give power over grip – as the Aussies like it	131.716
106.014	Formula Masters China Strong showing for VW-powered ex-Formula Abarth Tatuus chassis	132.241
107.188	MRF Challenge Indian-run Dallara-Renault series loses out on F1-style power tracks	132.595
108.114	FIA Formula 4 (Tatuus-Abarth, Germany/Italy) Strong car also used in SMP series, but that's on different tyres	133.170
110.674	BRDC Formula 4 (old specification) New car will be much quicker: 124.028 based on Snetterton test	133.321
114.624	Formula E Index worked out from Donington Park test times; not natural habitat	133.353
115.289	World Touring Car Championship Good showing for latest-spec racers, which have power and grip	133.423
115.697	NASCAR Sprint Cup Not built for road circuits, so position doesn't do it justice	133.607
116.218	Porsche Supercup/Carrera Cup Germany Porsche's two flagship series have similar pool of competitors	133.885
117.485	FIA Formula 4 (Mygale-Ford, MSA Formula, UK) Mygales run in Britain are one year less developed than Tatuus equivalent	134.849
118.998	French Formula 4 Centrally run Signatech-Renaults are outside the FIA F4 umbrella	136.398
121.351	New Zealand V8 Touring Cars Less-modified Holdens/Fords/Nissans not far off Aussie versions	136.717
122.353	Scandinavian Touring Cars Silhouette series hard to compare as very rare circuit 'crossover'	136.952
123.538	NASCAR Xfinity Series Exactly where you'd expect NASCAR's second-tier series to stack up...	137.403
123.631	NASCAR Truck Series ...but third-tier series could fight it out with cars from next step up!	137.778
123.747	V8 Stock Cars (Brazil) Chevy-vs-Peugeot series has a claim to closest-matched grid in the world	138.072
125.821	FIA Formula 4 (Dome-TOM'S, Japan) First year of new initiative provided bumper grids for new talent	138.421
127.180	Ginetta GT4 Supercup Staple of the BTCC circus is another class faster than the headliner	139.767
127.273	British Touring Car Championship Bumper grids and great racing. Fast enough, but that's not everything	140.868
127.960	TCR International Bargain-basement international tin-top racers are creating a storm	142.515
128.721	European Touring Car Championship Very similar to TCR – in 2015 both were won by same model of SEAT	142.598
129.196	GT4 (European series) Production-based GT series has a relatively low profile	143.909
129.525	Renault Clio Cup Another TOCA favourite. Lacks power so not the quickest	155.021
130.460	Ginetta Junior Underage series is a favourite in the UK – low power, and sideways!	169.548



WHERE DO THE BIKES FIT IN?

FORGET THE FEUD between Valentino Rossi and Marc Marquez; we need a battle between Jorge Lorenzo and Andrea Pizzitola.

We can now imagine most of those with a penchant for two-wheeled stuff wondering who on earth Pizzitola is. The talented Frenchman won the 'professionals' championship in last year's Renault Sport Trophy, and our speed-index figure for the series based on the extremely rapid RS01 one-make racer puts it almost identical to Lorenzo's MotoGP realm.

The Moto2 and Moto3 classes are quite equally spaced, with Moto2 coming in a fraction ahead of the combined hordes in the FIA's various Formula 4 initiatives, and Moto3 jostling for space among a host of tin-top disciplines.

MotoGP
125.708

Moto2
132.094

Moto3
138.794



Toyota v Honda drives speed up in Super Formula, with Nissan joining them in Super GT

“Motorsport in Japan is still very pure – a great manufacturer battle”

James Rossiter

cars to perform relatively better – and compare against the IMSA SportsCar Championship event there. This brought the IndyCar average down a small amount, but surprisingly only by about half a per cent.

Critically, with our decision to ignore ovals from this survey, the second-tier NASCAR Xfinity Series raced at Mid-Ohio (so we had a comparison here against IndyCar and all the Road to Indy categories) as well as Road America (where we could compare it with IndyCar and IMSA).

With a NASCAR Xfinity index now calculated, we were then able to compare the blue-riband NASCAR Sprint Cup against Xfinity’s index on the Watkins Glen short circuit, while the NASCAR Truck Series was compared to IMSA at Mosport.

Similarly, we wanted to include the British Touring Car Championship and its support categories (although the Carrera Cup GB is taken care of in the Porsche Supercup figure), but there wasn’t much crossover on circuits here either.

But we could work out a British GT figure by comparing to the Blancpain series at Silverstone, Brands Hatch and Spa, and then compare the various UK series against this. This also gave us the opportunity to work out a Formula E index by comparing its best summer testing time against British GT on the Donington Grand Prix circuit.

But how can we compare them?

You could argue that we can’t compare the categories unless we’ve got, say, Lewis Hamilton driving every single car to set a target time. Also, you could say that Category X will be quicker with a new control tyre/new aero kit or whatever this year.

But here we just have to take each category as we found it. In any series, the frontrunning drivers – while they may not have the overall talent of a Hamilton or a Jose Maria Lopez – will be performing at close to the ultimate level for their series, just because of their familiarity with the equipment and the circuits. And whatever the tyres, or aerodynamics, or air restrictors, or anything else that is mandated for a series, they all go into making that category what it is, and consequently determine its laptime in comparison to everything else.

The most doubt we have over our table is obviously those cases where all categories on a continent depend on one little ‘hinge’. But we can still be pretty confident that their index figures are accurate to within a couple of per cent. ❧

Opinions: explaining

RICHARD WESTBROOK

Richard Westbrook’s experience from IMSA (or United SportsCar as it was last year) prototypes, which run on control Continental rubber, leaves him well-placed to comment on how they compare to the LMP2 cars from the WEC, which has open competition between tyre manufacturers. “It’s always a problem when you’re using a control tyre, because it leaves the level of performance much lower than when there’s a tyre war,” he says. “The control tyre has to be durable and suit any type of vehicle.

“When they announced that P2 would join Daytona Prototypes it was a panic of how they could get DP fast enough. They gave the DPs ground-effect, more power, carbon brakes... but they hadn’t considered what happened when you put the

P2 on the Continental tyre. So then they had to bring the DPs back, and we ended up with less power than when it was Grand-Am. They’re still trying to find a balance now, but you’ll never do that for a whole year. It’s track-dependent, but that makes it interesting.”

Westbrook, racing the Ford GT this season in IMSA, is also experienced not only in GTE but in GT3. “The GT3s have got more top speed,” he says. “GTE is sophisticated, but it’s limited on speed because they don’t want problems for the LMP2 cars lapping them at Le Mans.

“You can see that at Spa. At the end of the Kimmel straight the GT3 is 10-15km/h quicker, even though the GTE is quicker through Eau Rouge. It’s a nightmare when they race together in America – lapping the GT3s is so difficult because they’re quick on the straight and they brake late with ABS, and they’re getting more development all the time.”

“On Kimmel straight the GT3 is 10-15km/h quicker than the GTE”

ROB HUFF

The TC1 cars, which first appeared in the World Touring Car Championship in 2014, gave the series a big boost in performance that allows it a very respectable position in our table.

“Engine-wise we’re now at least 100bhp up on where we were about 10 years ago,” says Rob Huff, the 2012 champion who has switched from Lada to Honda for this season. “Everyone’s got well over 400bhp now – that’s pretty serious for a front-wheel-drive touring car.”

Huff also has experience in GT3, which the TC1 cars aren’t too far off. “The high-speed handling of the WTCC cars is very good, comparable to GT3,” he says, “and they’re nimble so they’re quicker through the slow corners. And they stop very quickly, even if you can’t hit the brake pedal with the same force as a GT3, with its ABS.

“I wouldn’t say the GT3 is lazy, but the WTCC you have to set up to be very reactive. Around the Nurburgring Nordschleife, with all its compressions and bumps, three laps in the touring car is harder than two hours in the GT!”

Based on laptimes at Rio Hondo, the WTCC isn’t far off the Super TC2000 used in Argentina, which comes out as the fastest non-DTM tin-top. Huff hasn’t driven the latest STC2000 car, but says: “From what Jose Maria Lopez tells me, the power’s quite similar – about 450bhp – but they’ve probably got about 25 per cent more downforce, more towards what the DTM has.”

Huff also has experience in the new TCR series. The cars aren’t the fastest, but that’s not the point. “The revelation for me is what they’ve built for the money you’re allowed to spend,” he says. “You can tell it’s derived from a road car, but it’s a fantastic car for what it is.”

“Handling is very good, they’re nimble and they stop quickly”

the differences in speed between classes



JAMES ROSSITER

Ex-Formula 1 test driver James Rossiter says that Super Formula cars corner substantially faster than F1 machines – even with spec Dallara chassis and on control Bridgestone tyres (although the series switches to Yokohama for 2016).

“We have not much power compared to downforce and grip, but it’s quicker than F1 through the corners quite comfortably – I know that for a fact,” says Rossiter, who drives with Kondo Racing. “I was doing sim work for Force India in 2013, and I overlaid the data from when I drove the new Super Formula at Suzuka at the beginning of 2014, and in some places the Super Formula was more than 10k faster.

“Qualifying is an art. Your first lap will be a second and a half faster than you’ve been all weekend, so

“The fastest F1 pace was in the tyre war. Super Formula is very close”

you have to go into the first corner not knowing whether it’s going to come out the other side. The performance of the new Yokohama is almost identical – maybe even more grip over one lap.”

Rossiter goes as far as to suggest that Super Formula cornering is on a par with the ultimate F1 pace: “The fastest ever was the end of the tyre war in 2006, when I was testing for Honda, and Super Formula is very close.” On Super GT, factory TOM’S Lexus driver Rossiter says: “I came from LMP2 in the WEC and certainly Super GT was a step up from that. We have a tyre war and this is where a lot of the

performance comes from – the mechanical grip is unbelievable; more than I’ve ever had in anything.

“Motorsport in Japan is still very pure – there’s such a great battle between the three manufacturers in Super GT and with the tyre war the cars are just super-fast. They’re certainly enjoyable and fun to drive.”



SEBASTIEN BUEMI

Toyota World Endurance star and former Formula 1 racer Sebastien Buemi reckons LMP1 would be closer to F1 with identical fuel regulations.

“The biggest difference that makes F1 quicker right now is limited fuel flow on the engines – F1 has 100kg and LMP1 has 80kg,” he says. “It’s pretty impressive. From a normal combustion engine you have a lot less power. The second thing is the weight. F1 is still quite a lot lighter. If you could make LMP1 have the same weight, it would be quicker.

“F1 is quick over one lap and then it’s a lot slower when you’re driving in race mode with a lot of fuel and tyre degradation.

“In LMP1 you can match your qualifying time in the race sometimes. In terms of pure driving, it’s nicer to drive LMP1 because you

“If you could make LMP1 the same weight as F1, it would be quicker”

can push, you can slide a bit. In F1, as soon as you slide you’ll pay in the next corner.”

There are also differences in performance due to the LMP1 cars being allowed to run in four-wheel drive configuration.

“It gives an amazing initial pullaway,” says Buemi. “It honestly feels out of slow speed like better acceleration compared to F1. Then the acceleration reduces in LMP1 and in F1 it accelerates strongly. In slow-speed corners you feel P1 is heavy, you feel it’s a big car, whereas in F1 it’s much more agile – when the tyres are new, you feel how agile even in medium and high speed.

“The performance of LMP1 is amazing considering the weight and size but it’s never going to be F1. LMP1 is so much driven by fuel efficiency you never arrive flat and brake. You never get that feeling of going flat-out and bam! You lift, let the car roll and then you brake.”





Montoya gave Penske anniversary silver a dream start

LE PAGE/LAT

Montoya cocoons hims

INDYCAR
ST PETERSBURG (USA)
MARCH 13
ROUND 1/15

ONE OF FAMED AMERICAN FILMMAKER Ron Howard's breakthrough movies came back in 1985, and was based in what was then the sleepy retirement town of St Petersburg, a rundown place on Florida's Gulf Coast.

Howard's film was *Cocoon* and told the story of alien beings known as the Antareans that had left behind rock-like formations – cocoons – that provided a life force. In the film, when several retirees from a nearby retirement home swim in the same pool that contain these cocoons they are re-energised as if they have discovered the 'fountain of youth'.

Thirty years later, the same could be said for Juan Pablo Montoya.

When he arrived in the United States in 1999 he was a racing sensation, won the CART title in his rookie season, won the Indianapolis 500 in his first attempt in 2000 and was off to Formula 1 by '01. He abruptly left F1 midway through the

'06 season and spent 2007-13 racing NASCAR Chevrolets for team owner Chip Ganassi.

With Montoya older, wiser and wanting the best chance to win again, he was lured back to IndyCar by Roger Penske. After scoring a victory at Pocono midway through the 2014 season, Montoya began last year with a decisive victory on the streets of St Petersburg. He would go on to win the 99th Indianapolis 500 and led the points standings every race of the season before losing the championship to Scott Dixon in a



Two men of the moment: Montoya and Pagenaud

LEVIT/LAT



elf in front

dramatic final race at Sonoma.

Montoya returned to St Petersburg last weekend to find his life force for the 2016 season. A re-energised Montoya raced through this now modern Florida resort community that has become home to the rich and famous to win the season-opening race for the second year in a row. "Winning – to come back here after being down, start the season with a win again, it shows everybody, 'We're here. It's good,'" said the 40-year-old Colombian.

This time Montoya didn't battle Team Penske team-mate Will Power for St Pete victory because the 2014 champion missed the race because of a mild concussion, the result of contact with the wall in Friday's first practice session (see page 21). In the intervening period, Power had set a wickedly fast pole position. "To be honest, I was surprised he qualified," Montoya said of Power. "He wasn't feeling that well before qualifying. To tell you the truth, he qualified really well. He did an amazing job, how sick he was. I think over one lap he does the best job out of the four of us [Penske drivers]. In race pace, you can >>



Turn 4 pile-up triggered by Munoz and Rahal (nose to nose)

RESULTS ROUND 1/15 ST PETERSBURG (USA), MARCH 13 (110 LAPS – 198.000 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Juan Pablo Montoya (CO)	Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	2h13m28.4650s
2	Simon Pagenaud (F)	Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	+2.3306s
3	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport Dallara-Honda	+8.8764s
4	Helio Castroneves (BR)	Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.3237s
5	Mikhail Aleshin (RUS)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports Dallara-Honda	+9.7167s
6	Takuma Sato (J)	AJ Foyt Enterprises Dallara-Honda	+26.0373s
7	Scott Dixon (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	+40.7056s
8	Carlos Munoz (CO)	Andretti Autosport Dallara-Honda	+55.9459s
9	Tony Kanaan (BR)	Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	+59.1204s
10	Charlie Kimball (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	109 laps-accident
11	Jack Hawksworth (GB)	AJ Foyt Enterprises Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
12	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
13	Conor Daly (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
14	Spencer Pigot (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
15	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Autosport Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
16	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
17	Max Chilton (GB)	Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
18	Oriol Servia (E)	Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
19	James Hinchcliff (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
20	Luca Filippi (I)	Dale Coyne Racing Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
21	Sebastien Bourdais (F)	KVSH Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	87 laps-accident
22	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	47 laps-electrical
NS	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	concussion

Winner's average speed 89.005mph **Fastest lap** Newgarden, 1m02.2307s, 104.128mph.

Q3 1 Power, 1m00.2450s; 2 Pagenaud, 1m00.4421s; 3 Castroneves, 1m00.4995s; 4 Montoya, 1m00.5312s; 5 Dixon, 1m00.5395s; 6 Hunter-Reay, 1m00.8803s.

Q2 Power, 1m00.0658s; Dixon, 1m00.2318s; Pagenaud, 1m00.3805s; Montoya, 1m00.4431s; Castroneves, 1m00.5168s; Hunter-Reay, 1m00.5530s; **7 Rahal, 1m00.5893s; 8 Bourdais, 1m00.6711s; 9 Hinchcliff, 1m00.6724s; 10 Hawksworth, 1m00.7188s; 11 Sato, 1m00.9745s; 12 Newgarden, 1m01.0571s.**

Q1 – GROUP 1 Power, 1m00.5678s; Pagenaud, 1m00.6503s; Montoya, 1m00.7060s; Castroneves, 1m00.7320s; Sato, 1m00.7920s; Hunter-Reay, 1m00.9830s; **14 Kimball, 1m01.0433s; 16 Filippi, 1m01.1699s; 18 Aleshin, 1m01.2934s; 20 Kanaan, 1m01.3414s; 22 Pigot, 1m01.3881s.**

Q1 – GROUP 2 Dixon, 1m00.8921s; Rahal, 1m00.9578s; Hinchcliff, 1m00.9973s; Newgarden, 1m01.0836s; Hawksworth, 1m01.1322s; Bourdais, 1m01.1450s; **13 Munoz, 1m01.1856s; 15 Andretti, 1m01.2417s; 17 Chilton, 1m01.5372s; 19 Rossi, 1m01.5794s; 21 Daly, 1m01.9385s.**

NB Everyone moved up one place on the grid due to Power not starting.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Montoya, 51; 2 Pagenaud, 43; 3 Hunter-Reay, 36; 4 Castroneves, 32; 5 Aleshin, 30; 6 Sato, 28; 7 Dixon, 26; 8 Munoz, 24; 9 Kanaan, 22; 10 Kimball, 20.

cover him. Not easy, but you can cover him.”

With Oriol Servia starting Power’s polewinning car from last (he finished 18th), Penske’s Simon Pagenaud assumed the pole and led the first 48 laps of the contest. He was hotly pursued by Montoya during that stretch, with the first 46 laps all under green-flag conditions, before Marco Andretti spun after hitting Luca Filippi at Turn 1.

Rookie Conor Daly, who’d started at the rear but pitted early, leapfrogged to the front as the leaders stopped and led the next 18 laps. Daly was impressive in his ‘worst-to-first’ drive mainly because he was able to hold off Tony Kanaan – on the same pit strategy – on a

restart. Daly drove hard into the tight Turn 1 and the Dale Coyne Racing man maintained the lead. But further back in the field, Carlos Munoz attempted to pass Charlie Kimball going into Turn 4 when he locked up the tyres and hit Graham Rahal. The result was a 10-car pile-up that ruined the chances of some of the biggest names in the race.

“I ended up making a mistake trying to overtake [Charlie] Kimball, so we ended up crashing because of my move,” Munoz said. “It’s racing and I apologise to all of those who were involved in that incident.” After the race Munoz approached Rahal, who was initially visibly upset. Rahal shouted: “This isn’t your

first year in racing. How can you make such a **** move?” Munoz took full responsibility and Rahal eventually shook his hand.

After that incident was cleared, Montoya made a perfectly timed pass heading into Turn 1 to pick off team-mate Pagenaud and the leader, Daly, although Pagenaud tried to fight back. “I’m surprised Simon took that big jump to try to come back,” said Montoya. “I thought I had him pretty much clear – ‘Oh, no you’re not.’ I did push him wide a little, but I felt it was pretty fair. Then he did the same thing. We both gave each other room. Close. Left a little mark, but it’s OK.”

Montoya would lead the final 25 laps of the race: “I backed off. I had a five-second lead, so just take it easy and bring it to the end.”

Behind Pagenaud, a late move from Andretti Autosport’s Ryan Hunter-Reay on Helio Castroneves denied the Penske Dallara-Chevrolets of a 1-2-3. Hunter-Reay was best of the Honda contingent, beating returnee Mikhail Aleshin (fifth with Schmidt Peterson Motorsports) and Takuma Sato (sixth with AJ Foyt Racing after recovering from a first-lap puncture).

While they could all be satisfied, Montoya was able to celebrate in front of some wildly enthusiastic fans. He came to St Petersburg to regain his ‘life force’, just as in the movie *Cocoon*. And at 40 years old he is proving he’s just as good as ever.

BRUCE MARTIN



Hunter-Reay claimed Honda ‘honours’ in third position

LEPAGE/LAT



Rosenqvist leads team-mate Veach

Felix the cats purr in Victory Lane

INDYLIGHTS
ST PETERSBURG (USA)
MARCH 12-13
ROUND 1/11

FELIX SERRALLES AND FELIX ROSENQVIST claimed the first two Indy Lights wins of the season at St Petersburg, with Serralles adding a fourth place to leave Florida with the series lead.

Rosenqvist qualified in second for the first race behind Kyle Kaiser, but the reigning European Formula 3 champion lost a host of places over the first couple of laps. Finger trouble meant the engine had been switched onto rain mode, meaning Rosenqvist was driving with just 70 per cent power! The Swede’s Belardi Auto Racing team-mate, series returnee Zach Veach, stormed

into the lead from third on the grid, ahead of Serralles (who had surged through from seventh on the grid), Scott Hargrove and Kaiser.

Veach controlled the race but an electrical fault just after half-distance ended his hopes. He plummeted down the field until he retired two laps from the chequered flag.

That meant Carlin driver Serralles inherited first, and he secured the win by a comfortable 5.8s over rookie Hargrove and Kaiser.

Somehow Rosenqvist managed to finish seventh, and with full power for race two he burst into an early lead over Kaiser.

Rosenqvist opened up a 3.6s lead over the Californian, but several laps stuck behind Shelby Blackstock, who had lost time in an opening-lap collision with Hargrove, narrowed his lead to 1.8s

by two-thirds distance. Once Blackstock followed the example of the also-delayed Santiago Urrutia – running ahead of him on track – and moved over, Rosenqvist sped to an untroubled 4.3s win over Kaiser and Veach.

Dean Stoneman finished eighth and sixth on his Lights debut. Ed Jones, dominant here in ’15, was 10th in race one and seventh later on after a spin while trying to pass Andre Negroa.

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Felix Serralles, 30 laps in 34m14.4964s; 2 Scott Hargrove, +5.5336s; 3 Kyle Kaiser; 4 Santiago Urrutia; 5 RC Enerson; 6 Andre Negroa. **Race 2 1 Felix Rosenqvist**, 45 laps in 51m45.8621s; 2 Kaiser, +4.3675s; 3 Zach Veach; 4 Serralles; 5 Negroa; 6 Dean Stoneman. **Points 1 Serralles, 49**; 2 Kaiser, 48; 3 Rosenqvist, 47; 4 Hargrove, 32; 5 Negroa, 32; 6 Veach, 29.



Edwards (19) fell millimetres short against Harvick

Harvick hangs on – just

**NASCAR SPRINT CUP
PHOENIX (USA)
MARCH 13
ROUND 4/36**

KEVIN HARVICK MUST HAVE been cursing his luck, despite leading with six laps left in Arizona.

The 2014 champion enjoyed lavish praise from all corners on the day of his 500th consecutive start – putting him 15th on the all-time list – at the circuit he dominates.

Victory for the eighth time in Phoenix seemed inevitable from the moment he first took the lead just after half-distance, after climbing from 18th, until Kasey Kahne slammed his car into the wall with six remaining. Then, all hell broke loose.

Harvick and second-placed Dale Earnhardt Jr made the split-second decision not to pit for fresh tyres; third-placed Carl Edwards and the rest of the top five did. Overtime

beckoned and Harvick was no longer guaranteed that precious win.

When the flag dropped, Edwards disposed of Earnhardt instantly. With Harvick's Stewart Haas Chevrolet struggling on old tyres ahead, surely Edwards couldn't have asked for a simpler win. But Harvick refused to let a cruel twist of fate rain on his parade. He positioned his car expertly, frustrating the eager Gibbs Toyota driver and prolonging the seemingly inevitable until the last lap.

The pair were neck and neck. Bumping and grinding along to the line, it was one of the closest finishes NASCAR had ever seen. For Harvick, the end was perfect – he won by 0.01 seconds.

In among the chaos, Denny Hamlin sneaked third ahead of his Gibbs team-mate Kyle Busch, while Earnhardt slumped to a disappointed fifth.

Earnhardt chased Harvick hard

earlier on, but his tyres gave up, while polesitter Busch botched his chances when he overshot his pit box and fell from second to 18th. Busch, Earnhardt and Edwards all enjoyed spells in the lead, but only Harvick looked truly dominant when he took over. Victory was inevitable, after all.

RESULTS

1 Kevin Harvick (Chevrolet SS), 313 laps in 2h45m53s; 2 Carl Edwards (Toyota Camry), +0.010s; 3 Denny Hamlin (Toyota); 4 Kyle Busch (Toyota); 5 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy); 6 Kurt Busch (Chevy); 7 Matt Kenseth (Toyota); 8 Chase Elliott (Chevy); 9 Austin Dillon (Chevy); 10 Ryan Blaney (Ford Fusion). **Chase grid**
1 Harvick, 1 win/154 points; 2 Jimmie Johnson, 1/140; 3 Hamlin, 1/131; 4 Brad Keselowski, 1/110; 5 Kyle Busch, 0/154; 6 Kurt Busch, 0/137; 7 Edwards, 0/136; 8 Joey Logano, 0/127; 9 Dillon, 0/122; 10 Martin Truex Jr, 0/117; 11 Earnhardt, 0/115; 12 Blaney, 0/104; 13 Aric Almirola, 0/100; 14 Kasey Kahne, 0/96; 15 Jamie McMurray, 0/94; 16 Kenseth, 0/90.

Lukyanuk after Ostberg bins it

**EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
RALLY ISLAS CANARIAS (E)
MARCH 10-12
ROUND 1/10**

RUSSIAN ALEXEY LUKYANUK made it back-to-back asphalt ERC victories by adding a win on his Canaries debut to the one he achieved on the Rally du Valais at the end of last season.

The Ford Fiesta R5 driver moved in front on the final morning, when reigning champion Kajetan Kajetanowicz lost the lead as a result of setting his tyre pressures too high, leading to excessive wear that cost him more than half a minute.

The Pole salvaged second place ahead of local expert Luis Monzon in a Citroen DS3 R5, after Robert



Lukyanuk got the better of champ Kajetanowicz

Consani forfeited third place as the result of overheating brakes.

Visiting WRC star Mads Ostberg held the lead until Friday's final stage when he went off on a fast left-hander, following some brake issues. Having flown in directly from the world championship round in Mexico, the Norwegian tackled the event with no testing.

ANTHONY PEACOCK

RESULTS

1 Alexey Lukyanuk/Alexey Arnavov (Ford Fiesta R5), 2h13m52.4s; 2 Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Jaroslav Baran (Ford), +32.7s; 3 Luis Monzon/Jose Carlos Deniz (Citroen DS3 R5); 4 Jonathan Perez/Alejandro Lopez Fernandez (Ford); 5 Wojciech Chuchala/Daniel Dymurski (Subaru Impreza STI); 6 Jaroslav Koltun/Ireneusz Pleskot (Ford). **Points** 1 Lukyanuk, 38; 2 Kajetanowicz, 29; 3 Monzon, 25; 4 Perez, 20; 5 Chuchala, 11; 6 Robert Consani, 11.

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

An utterly dominant performance by the Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota team resulted in a third successive Xfinity win Kyle Busch at Phoenix. Busch led home team-mates Erik Jones and Daniel Suarez, with best-of-the-rest Justin Allgaier 14 seconds down in fourth. The rear toe of Jones's car at post-race scrutineering was found to be illegal and a penalty could be handed down this week. Mexican Suarez, meanwhile, extended his series lead.

PRO MAZDA

Mexican Pato O'Ward and Wisconsin's Aaron Telitz shared the spoils from the St Petersburg opener. O'Ward won the first race from Telitz and Jake Eidson. Telitz returned the favour in the second, leading O'Ward and Weiron Tan in a 1-2-3 for the local Team Pelfrey.

USF2000

Reigning Australian Formula 4 champion Jordan Lloyd was unlucky not to score a double in St Pete. After early chaos among the big field, Lloyd beat Pabst Racing team-mate Yufeng Luo in the first race, with Robert Megennis third. Lloyd was clear in the second race when a late caution bunched the field up, and he was jumped by Luo on the restart. Another crash meant a caution finish, giving China's Luo the win. Britain's Jordan Cane picked his way through the late dramas for third.

PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE

While Felix Rosenqvist starred in Indy Lights, his 2013 Formula 3 team-mate Michael Lewis broke his duck in the GT ranks at St Petersburg with a double win in his Effort Racing Porsche. In the first, he finished over 10 seconds up on the McLaren of Alvaro Parente, with Johnny O'Connell (Cadillac) third. Lewis (below) doubled up in a caution-infested race two, with Nissan's James Davison second. Cadillac newboy Michael Cooper pipped the Porsche of Patrick Long in a fight for third.



Magnificent March

The revived Goodwood Members' Meeting runs for the third time this weekend and is already set to be a classic

By Marcus Pye, Special Contributor

🐦 @autosport



The inaugural Members' Meeting of the modern era was an immediate hit. With Goodwood festooned with daffodils, summer-like temperatures and sensational racing, for which the former RAF Westhampnett perimeter track has been renowned since Lord March reopened the place 18 years ago, how could it have failed?

Now the first of Goodwood Road Racing Club's three showpieces, the Members' Meeting – reborn in 2014 with the 72nd of a series dating back to 1949 – the Members' Meeting fits seamlessly into the fabric of each season. It perfectly complements the hillclimb-based Festival of Speed and the Revival, established in 1993 and '98 respectively. At this weekend's 74th MM, the range of track activities is the widest yet, spanning a race for wild Edwardian cars, in which the oldest is a 1903 Mercedes 60hp, to a Super Touring demo bookended by a Volvo S40 from 2000.

Unlike the original MMs, for many years open only to BARC members jousting in sports and saloon cars, the modern equivalent is loosely built around an inter-team challenge rather than individual performances. With heraldic names

plucked from host Lord March's noble family tree, the Aubigny, Darnley, Methuen and Torbolton 'houses' have celebrity captains – Nic Minassian, Jochen Mass, Anthony Reid and Emanuele Pirro respectively – urging their players on in a splendid motorsport-themed school sports day.

Bragging rights aside, you're probably making the pilgrimage for the track action and the 2.4-mile circuit is the perfect canvas. Although their wartime aerodrome roots are similar, unchanged Goodwood is far removed from its contemporary Silverstone. With little other than a grass airfield in the centre, the former still offers uninterrupted views of a flowing track from two thirds of its fringes over gently undulating West Sussex countryside, overlooked by rolling downs.

While it is deliberately lower-key than the Revival, thus there is plenty of room to enjoy all aspects of the event, get to Goodwood early whichever day you attend. That way you can meander round the paddock, grab a succulent estate-produced bacon sarnie and take a closer look at competing cars and (for the first time at the MM) motorcycles. Mechanics love to chat if not busy, and keep an eye open for early-rising drivers/riders. Don't forget your camera and, if you have youngsters in your party, a pen so they can collect autographs.

Members' Meetings of yore were about rising stars rather

The Gerry Marshall Trophy attracts a field of classic tin-tops and modern star drivers



“Jim Clark, Jackie Stewart and Derek Bell were among the Goodwood winners”

than the establishment – Jim Clark, Jackie Stewart and local man Derek Bell were among the winners in the infancy of their careers – and Goodwood offers owner/drivers the chance to race on hallowed ground each spring. But British Touring Car champions Andy Jordan, Matt Neal, Gordon Shedden and Jason Plato, emerging talent Adam Morgan and 2012 WTCC champ Rob Huff will be among the big names in Sunday’s fan-pleasing double-driver Gerry Marshall Trophy saloon car race.

Go along with eyes open, drink in the atmosphere and support your house in some light competition should the fancy take you. But primarily enjoy the most relaxed major motor racing event of the season. >>

THE RACES

GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY

Group 1 Saloons 1970-82

Bludgeoned by the Bastos Chevrolet Camaro of David Clark/Matt Neal last year, a strengthened Rover SD1 squad sees Gordon Shedden and 2015 runner-up Chris Ward battle Chewies and Ford Capris crewed by Rob Huff, Frank Stippler and Steve Soper in Sunday’s final.



ALAN MANN TROPHY

Ford GT40s

Almost 52 years after the prototype chassis GT/102 was tested at Goodwood, a field of svelte coupes and an open roadster will race in memory of Ford’s trusted British acolyte and entrant Alan Mann. His son Henry is among the drivers in one of the weekend’s most open races.



BROOKS TROPHY

2.5-litre F1 cars 1954-60

The historic crossover between front and rear-engined grand prix cars is beautifully illustrated by this race, which encapsulates the greater part of the F1 World Championship’s first decade. Maseratis, Ferraris, a BRM, Coopers, Lotuses and the four-wheel-drive Ferguson take centre stage. Sam Wilson and Will Nuthall start favourites.



DEREK BELL CUP

1000cc F3 cars 1964-70

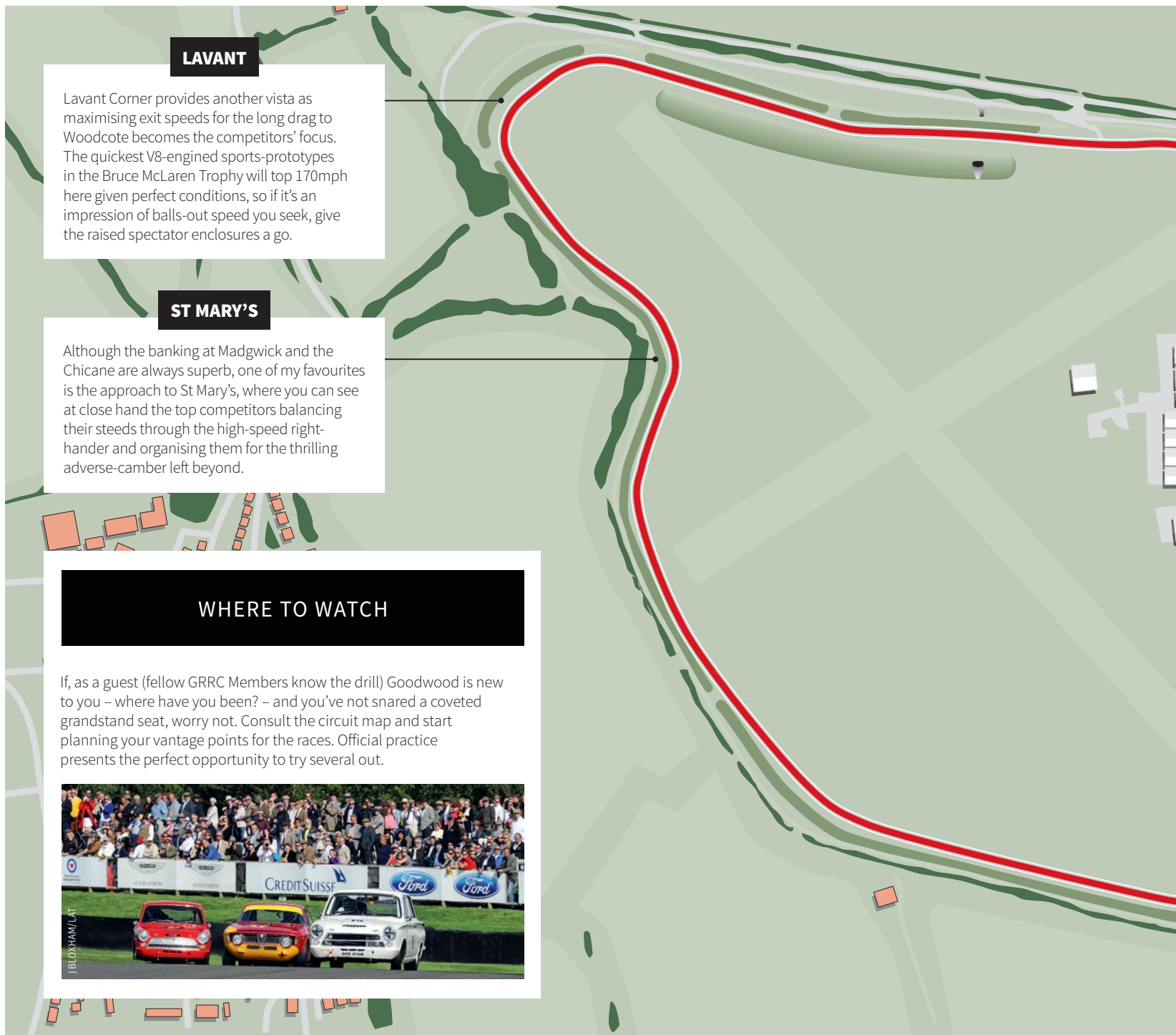
Topping last year’s inaugural retrospective, in which American class debutant James King punished long-time leader Simon Armer’s final-corner error to win the drag race to the line by 0.018s, is a very tall order. Both are back, but Jonathon Hughes (Merlyn) is the man to beat in a representative 10-marque entry.



SF EDGE TROPHY

Edwardian cars to 1923

As Vintage Sports Car Club racegoers will attest, the performance of the oldest machines at the event is a guaranteed thriller. From spindly GNs to Mark Walker’s throbbing Darracq 200hp, Saturday’s showpiece is bound to generate some indelible memories.



LAVANT

Lavant Corner provides another vista as maximising exit speeds for the long drag to Woodcote becomes the competitors' focus. The quickest V8-engined sports-prototypes in the Bruce McLaren Trophy will top 170mph here given perfect conditions, so if it's an impression of balls-out speed you seek, give the raised spectator enclosures a go.

ST MARY'S

Although the banking at Madgwick and the Chicane are always superb, one of my favourites is the approach to St Mary's, where you can see at close hand the top competitors balancing their steeds through the high-speed right-hander and organising them for the thrilling adverse-camber left beyond.

WHERE TO WATCH

If, as a guest (fellow GRRC Members know the drill) Goodwood is new to you – where have you been? – and you've not snared a coveted grandstand seat, worry not. Consult the circuit map and start planning your vantage points for the races. Official practice presents the perfect opportunity to try several out.



THE DEMONSTRATIONS

GROUP 5 SPORTSCARS

Was there a better-looking age of sports-prototype racing than the late '60s/early '70s, when Porsche's 917 battled Ferrari's 512 in the world championship arena?

At Goodwood we are treated to Italian stallions and German *pferdestärke* at the gallop. Representing the Latinos are 512S and 512M derivatives in triplicate, one '69 car updated to *coda lunga* (long-tail) spec. And in the Teutonic corner, nine 917s, including the ACO's Martini-striped *langheck* and the JW Automotive Gulf car in which Brian Redman, Leo Kinnunen and Pedro Rodriguez won the 1970 Daytona 24 Hours.



Joining the thoroughbreds are Anglo-American hybrids – Lola-Chevrolet T70 Mk3B coupes of the type in which Mark Donohue and Chuck Parsons beat the establishment at Daytona in '69 and a rare and beautiful McLaren M6B GT, based on Bruce's '67 Can-Am dominator.

GROUND-EFFECT FORMULA 1

Goodwood's first heyday (1948-66) was a fading memory by the time Team Lotus's Peter Wright and Colin Chapman-designed Type 78 introduced the world to the game-changing concept of ground effect for 1977. Nonetheless, F1 teams continued to test cars on the Sussex airfield long after its gates closed to racing for 32 years.

Classic Team Lotus, run by marque founder Chapman's son Clive, is bringing a sensational selection of 'JPS-era' cars, spanning 78, 79, 80, 86 and twin-chassis 88B models, plus 81 and 91 cars it prepares for clients. Black-and-gold will thus colour the high-speed demonstrations against a



wonderful Cosworth DFV V8 soundtrack. A Brabham BT49 joins a McLaren MP4, Tyrrells from 009-011 and Williams FW07B and FW08 among a fine set of British-built machines sharing the track with high-pitched V12 Alfa Romeo and Ligier-Matra rivals and a flat-12 Ferrari 312T5.



WOODCOTE

Woodcote is the outbraking zone par excellence – watch Minis run rings round larger opposition in the Whitmore race – but is a devil of a double-apex right, particularly in traffic, which can make the chicane a bottleneck. Many a time the leader's exit has been compromised during lappery, or through error, favouring a closing rival who may be blessed with a clear run to the finish. Last year's Derek Bell Cup 1000cc F3 race result was reversed on the line!

MADGWICK

If the art of four-wheel-drifting trips your trigger, Madgwick is the place when the big GTs are on track. Quicker than it looks, the rising double-bite right has a spectacularly open exit where rivals jostle for position towards Fordwater in early-race gaggles. The Edwardian cars, of every shape and size, will belie their venerable age as they grapple for places, so remember to wave your programmes in appreciation once their intrepid drivers are safely home.

SUPER TOURING CARS

Contrasting perfectly with races for saloon cars of the 1960s and '70s, the daily Super Touring demos update a popular story, bringing the '90s into focus and illustrating the relentless development demanded by cash-splashing manufacturers committed to winning within the two-litre regulations, which the FIA espoused to succeed Group A in '93.

Advertising to a lucrative BTCC marketplace, Great Britain (which had pioneered a two-litre class in 1990) was blessed with sensational racing.

Alfa Romeo 155 (recalling Gabriele Tarquini's 1994 title), Audi A4 Quattro



1997 Renault Laguna

(Frank Biela, '96), BMW 320i, Ford Mondeo (Alain Menu, 2000), Honda Accord, Nissan Primera (Laurent Aiello, '99), Peugeot 406, Renault Laguna (Menu, '97), Vauxhall Cavalier GSi and Vectra plus a Volvo S40 (Rickard Rydell, '98) are programmed to appear in private hands.



GRAHAM HILL TROPHY

Goodwood GT cars 1960-66

Double F1 champion (above) triumphed here in single-seaters, sportscars and saloons, but this GT showcase celebrates his '63 and '64 TT victories in Ferraris, albeit over a sprint format. Cobras, Bizzarrinis, TVR Griffiths and a Ginetta G10 (with David Brabham up) head the V8 onslaught tackling Jaguar and Aston Martin 'sixes'.

BRUCE McLAREN TROPHY

Can-Am & Group 7 cars to 1966

It's Lola T70s versus McLaren M1s in Sunday's big-banger sports-prototype cauldron. Phil Keen, Ollie Bryant and Tony Sinclair, and Andrew Beaumont, Chris Drake and Calum Lockie head the respective 'sides'. Canadian Chinook, US-built Hamill, a Crossle from Northern Ireland plus Lotus and Cooper 'home guard' add meaty flavour.



PARNELL CUP

GP, F2 & Voiturettes to 1953

A star of Goodwood's early days, Reg Parnell (above) went on to manage F1 teams in the '60s. This front-engined flashback embroils ERA, Maserati, Talbot-Lago, Riley and Parnell-MG from the '30s with a range of post-WW2 stock, including Ferrari, Alta, Connaught, Cooper derivatives, Gordini, HWM and a rare artisan-built Aston Butterworth.

WHITMORE CUP

2-litre Saloon cars 1960-66

Named for 1965 European Touring Car champion Sir John Whitmore, this tin-top-fest naturally pitches Ford Lotus Cortina, Alfa Romeo GTA and BMW 1800 TiSA models into battle anew with a horde of three-wheeling Mini Cooper Ss. Outright Historic lap-record holder Nick Padmore swaps Lola-Chevrolet T70 for Mini here.



PETER COLLINS TROPHY

Sports racing cars 1948-55

Martin Melling's glorious Aston Martin DB3 – Collins and Pat Griffith's inaugural Goodwood Nine Hour race winner of '52 – faces another tough struggle against a quartet of Jaguar C-types, younger DB3Ss, HWM-Jaguars and Italian exotica. Ben Shuckburgh's spectacular Cunningham C4R recreation should be quickest in a straight line at least.

HAILWOOD TROPHY

GP motorcycles 1970-82

The MM gets its first two-wheeled race, with 250cc and 350cc two-stroke machines from the heady era of Giacomo Agostini, Phil Read, Barry Sheene and Johnny Cecotto in period liveries! Charlie Williams and Gordon Russell head the numerically-dominant Yamaha set.



Can anyone stop the dream team?

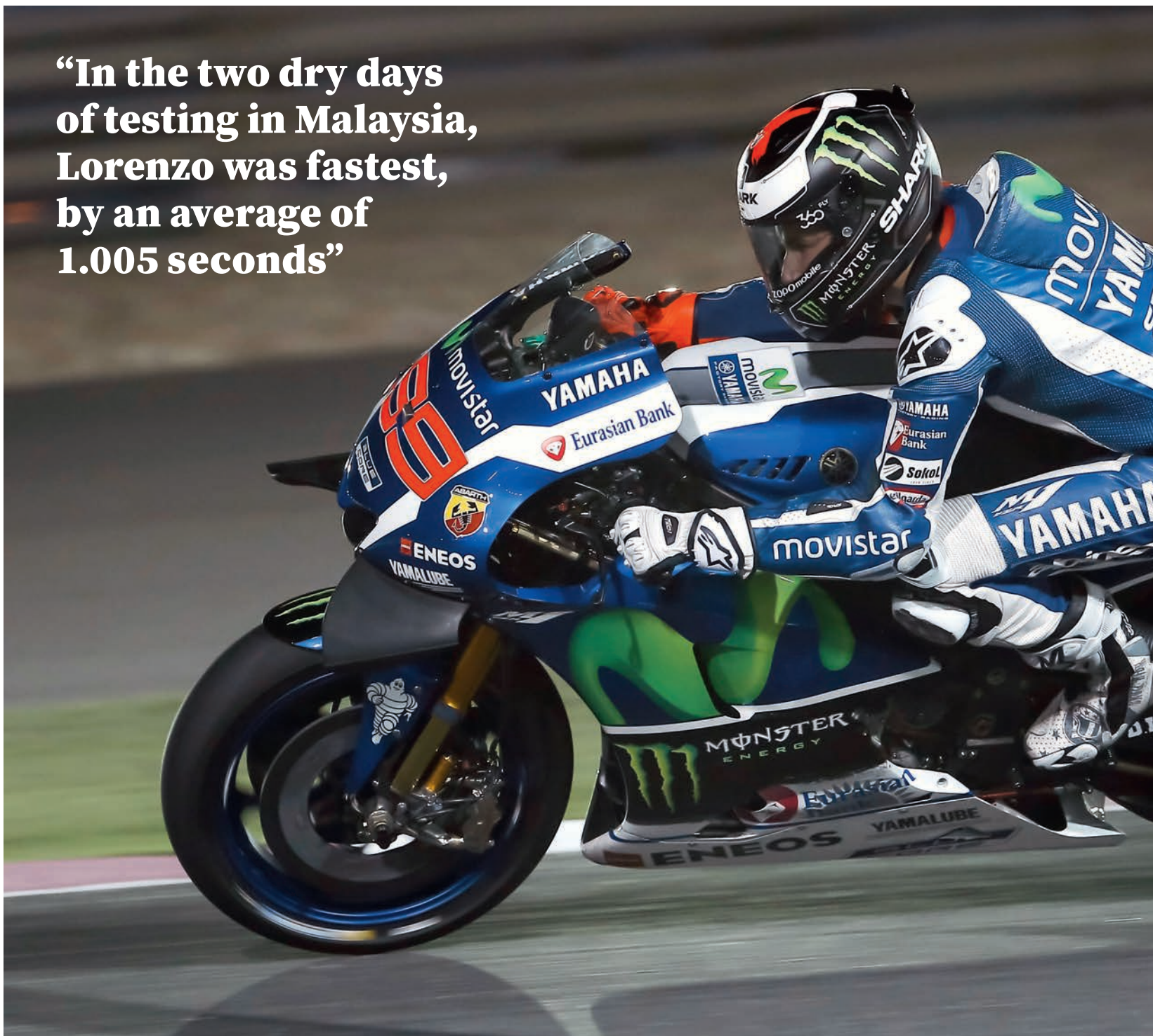
Yamaha's duo dominated in 2015. Starting with this weekend's opener in Qatar, who can rival Lorenzo and Rossi this year?

By Mitchell Adam, International Editor

[@DrMitchellAdam](#)



“In the two dry days of testing in Malaysia, Lorenzo was fastest, by an average of 1.005 seconds”



The laptimes speak for themselves,” Jorge Lorenzo admitted at the end of the first MotoGP pre-season test at Sepang last month. A lot had changed in the 85 days between the Spaniard sealing his third world championship, amid

the controversial end to the 2015 season at Valencia last November, and the unofficial start of the new campaign, which kicks off in anger at Losail in Qatar this weekend.

The one thing that didn’t change was the rider on top – the one on the #99 Yamaha. In the two dry days of running in Malaysia, Lorenzo was fastest, by an average of 1.005 seconds. More than merely a good way to get back to work and start his title defence, it was a statement.

That Lorenzo won the 2015 title by just five points over

team-mate Valentino Rossi, and at the final hurdle, says a lot both about his slow start and uncharacteristic errors, and the mercurial Italian’s effort to turn back the clock and lead it from the start to nearly the finish.

Rossi won the season opener in Qatar as Lorenzo lost vision due to a problem with his helmet lining, and after three races led by 29 points. Lorenzo then won the next four, setting the scene for a mid-season arm wrestle. When Lorenzo fell at Misano – one of the wet-weather races in which he struggled – Rossi had a 23-point lead with five races remaining. Having cut that to seven, Lorenzo probably would have gone to Valencia as the favourite to deny Rossi an eighth MotoGP crown. Much of that was lost amid the massive controversy that was sparked by Rossi’s comments on the eve of the Malaysian Grand Prix.

Rossi was sick of what he deemed Marc Marquez’s “childish” interference in a bid to help compatriot Lorenzo’s title bid, and went public with his comments in the pre-race



Champion Lorenzo topped four of the nine days of testing



press conference. Three months on, he says it was a “last resort”, having been unsuccessful in efforts to have race control intervene. Marquez’s involvement in the lead battle at Phillip Island a week earlier had been the final straw, prompting Rossi’s own, public, headline-sparking manoeuvre.

Three days after Rossi’s comments, Rossi and Marquez clashed during the Sepang race. Cue one of motorsport’s – let alone MotoGP’s – biggest stories of this generation.

Rossi was penalised for the incident, incurring a rear-of-grid start at Valencia. He made it up to fourth, but that was not enough as Lorenzo won the race and the title.

Without the saga, Lorenzo’s recovery from a slow start to secure a third title would have gone down as a masterpiece.

Lorenzo only qualified off the front row of the grid once in the last 10 races, finishing the year with an average qualifying result of 2.83, compared to Rossi’s 5.29, Valencia excluded in the latter’s case.

Lorenzo won seven races and, while the ultra-consistent

Rossi made three more visits to the podium, Lorenzo led a mammoth 274 of the year’s 448 racing laps. The next best was Marquez on 86, while Rossi finished with 50.

Lorenzo starts his quest for a fourth title incredibly well placed, even with MotoGP’s off-season technical overhaul, considered the biggest the category has seen. Paired with a move to a control ECU, Michelin returns as the control-tyre supplier, bringing with it very different tyres for riders to adapt to.

Michelin’s last season was Lorenzo’s first, and he hypothesised that his 2008 experience could help. “You have to anticipate a little bit the braking, to release the braking a little bit sooner,” he said in January. “And this kind of riding style can be, theoretically, a little bit better for me.”

Based on his output during the first test in Malaysia, Lorenzo’s hunch was correct. While he was quieter in the second week of running at Phillip Island, there was no cause for concern. He did admit that the faster, more flowing >>

Top: The Yamaha pair won 11 of last year’s 18 MotoGP races...

Middle: ...and stood on the podium together 10 times

Bottom: But it was at Sepang that the title fight came alive



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circuit was an area where more work was required, and observed that different venues would suit different manufacturers, with the new Magneti Marelli ECU.

Lorenzo ultimately finished pre-season as he started it – fastest on two of the three days in Qatar, by a casual average margin of 0.472s, third on the other and less than tenths shy of top spot on his ‘slow’ day.

A strong race simulation in the final session rammed home the point that Lorenzo appears the master of his own destiny this year, very in control and relaxed about what is ahead.

On the other side of the garage, Rossi has been regrouping from 2015’s title loss. The 37-year-old has been there or thereabouts in the pack just off Lorenzo’s testing pace, but has enough experience to know titles are not won in February.

Two tough – and winless – seasons with Ducati dented Rossi’s reputation, but since returning to Yamaha he has found a second wind. Last year’s haul of four race wins was

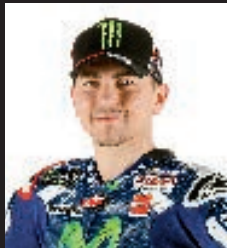


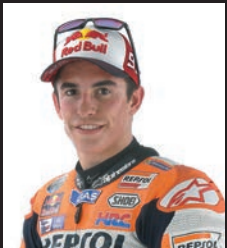
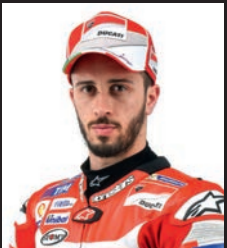
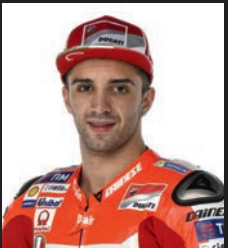
his most in a season since winning his last title in 2009, and it’s easy to forget that he finished the year just five points behind Lorenzo, having been 97 and 67 points off top spot in 2013 and ‘14, Marquez’s championship seasons.

Without that upswing, MotoGP’s biggest character might already be in retirement. As it stands, he enters the final season of his Yamaha deal determined to keep performing at that level and challenging for what would be a 10th title across the classes.

In Lorenzo and Rossi, Yamaha has the best line-up in the field, and one of the strongest ever seen in MotoGP, with 126 grand prix wins between them. Even amid last year’s tense finish, Yamaha managed to keep heads cool enough and ensured that a return of the infamous wall it had in its garage to separate them in 2010 was not necessary.

If Yamaha does not end up handling another private title fight this year, it is likely to be because of Honda. From >>

Rossi and Marquez clashed several times during 2015, including at Assen, before the Sepang collision

YAMAHA		HONDA		DUCATI	
					
JORGE LORENZO (E)	VALENTINO ROSSI (I)	DANI PEDROSA (E)	MARC MARQUEZ (E)	ANDREA DOVIZIOSO (I)	ANDREA IANNONE (I)
AGE 28	AGE 37	AGE 30	AGE 23	AGE 29	AGE 26
STARTS 138	STARTS 270	STARTS 166	STARTS 54	STARTS 142	STARTS 51
WINS 40	WINS 86	WINS 28	WINS 24	WINS 1	BEST FINISH 2ND
DEBUT 2008	DEBUT 2000	DEBUT 2006	DEBUT 2013	DEBUT 2008	DEBUT 2013
BEST 1ST ('10, '12, '15)	BEST 1ST ('01, '02, '03, '04, '05, '08, '09)	BEST 2ND ('07, '10, '12)	BEST 1ST ('13, '14)	BEST 3RD ('11)	BEST 5TH ('15)



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700,000 UK spectators



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Marquez winning the first 10 races of the 2014 season on his way to a second title in his second MotoGP season, Honda suffered a mighty fall last year. The aggressive power delivery of its engine was not a happy fit with the 2015 chassis, and Marquez fell three times in five races before electing to revert back to the '14 frame. He eventually won four more races, lingered in the title fight and finished third in the standings.

His approach will be interesting to observe. The all-out-attack mode that served him so well when the Honda was on song in 2013 and '14 was a factor in last year's crashes on an unpredictable bike, and he has conceded over the winter that a different mentality might have paid off.

Honda's attempts to avoid a repeat have been compromised by the new ECU, with which it started well behind other manufacturers. It has had a tough winter in general. Struggles in Malaysia were followed by apparent breakthroughs in Australia, but then more trouble in Qatar.

Marquez reckons he finally felt comfortable on the bike in the last hour, but there was no such luck for Dani Pedrosa, who was more downbeat after the test and acknowledges he heads to the opener "behind".

Pedrosa's career was in serious doubt 11 months ago, when he required what became radical surgery to overcome persistent arm-pump problems. He missed three races, but finished the year strongly, taking a pair of October wins on his way to fourth in the standings.

It has now been five seasons since someone other than a factory Yamaha or Honda rider finished inside the top four of the standings. Or won a MotoGP race, for that matter, going back to Casey Stoner's last season with Ducati in 2010.



That appears to have a reasonable chance of changing this year, given the progress both Ducati and Suzuki have made.

The Italian manufacturer actually started last year strongly, and could have broken its drought in Qatar, if not for Rossi's last-lap move on Andrea Dovizioso. It went off the boil briefly, but Dovizioso and team-mate Andrea Iannone still accrued five and three podium finishes respectively.

Ducati does have more relevant experience with the incoming control ECU, and after a solid but unspectacular programme finished the pre-season with competitive times in Qatar and a quiet confidence.

Success for Ducati would arguably be overdue, you could argue, but Suzuki's rise has been considerably steeper. What became a weak programme was closed at the end of 2011, and after a three-season hiatus Suzuki returned last year. It was a promising comeback, with Aleix Espargaro taking a pole position and rookie Maverick Vinales a front-row start, and three sixth-place finishes between them. Suzuki has made big engine gains, now has a seamless gearbox, and Vinales has shone in testing. The 21-year-old topped two days of pre-season running, one each at Phillip Island and Losail, and was second and third on the days he didn't top in the final test.

But there is a big difference between turning heads during the pre-season and winning a grand prix, let alone taking the fight to Yamaha's dream team over the course of 18 races between now and November. ❄

Honda has had a mixed pre-season - Marquez goes to Qatar content, while Pedrosa feels underprepared



Ducati worked its way into its 2016 bike and Michelin tyres

MARC VDS HONDA		PRAMAC DUCATI		TECH3 YAMAHA	
JACK MILLER (AUS)	TITO RABAT (E)	DANILO PETRUCCI (I)	SCOTT REDDING (GB)	BRADLEY SMITH (GB)	POL ESPARGARO (E)
AGE 21	AGE 26	AGE 25	AGE 23	AGE 25	AGE 24
STARTS 18	STARTS 0	STARTS 68	STARTS 36	STARTS 54	STARTS 36
BEST FINISH 11TH		BEST FINISH 2ND	BEST FINISH 3RD	BEST FINISH 2ND	BEST FINISH 4TH
DEBUT 2015	2014 MOTO2 CHAMPION	DEBUT 2012	DEBUT 2014	DEBUT 2013	DEBUT 2014
BEST 19TH ('15)		BEST 10TH ('15)	BEST 12TH ('14)	BEST 6TH ('15)	BEST 6TH ('14)



Smith believes satellite riders will have early chances to shine

Brits set to lead the satellite pack

THIS OCTOBER WILL MARK 10 years since Toni Elias's victory in the 2006 Portuguese Grand Prix, the last time a satellite rider won a race.

On paper, the uncertainty around MotoGP's dual tyres-and-electronics change could open the door to that run ending, if enough of the factory teams get it even slightly wrong on any given Sunday.

Bradley Smith led the way for the satellite crop last year, finishing every race inside the points – Valentino Rossi was the only other rider to do that – on his way to sixth in the standings, even finishing one spot ahead of Ducati's Andrea Dovizioso. The Tech3 Yamaha rider feels the early part of the season is when upsets are most likely, before factory development ramps up.

"I think originally we can look for that, for maybe the first five races or so," says Smith.

"But then after that, MotoGP will develop and factory teams are going to develop. Yamaha is going to bring new things for Valentino and new things for Jorge, and you don't need to give those guys any advantage to pull away.

"I expect for us to maybe mix it up in those first five or so races. That's going to be my target, to try to hit that as hard as I can and show that I can run with those top factory boys. And if developments come, I just have to accept that I have to wait my turn and see if they filter down to me."

Eighth last year, Cal Crutchlow was the next Brit in the standings with LCR Honda, a team scaling back to a single bike this year. He

agrees with Smith that the factory dominance will be tough to break.

"I think the top four riders will still be the same top four riders, because a factory rider is a factory rider for a reason," he says.

"I don't think it's just about the riders, I don't think it's just about what package they're on as such, it's a whole combination of things. Obviously, we always want to break that duck, to try and go with those guys, and there's no reason why we can't do it again."

Scott Redding flew the flag for both the British and satellite contingent in the final Qatar test, finishing second to Lorenzo. It capped a strong winter for the 23-year-old, who moves to Pramac Ducati after two tough first seasons on Hondas, during which he admits his confidence took a major hit.

"I am very happy, I feel that the confidence is coming," he says. "When I say that my goal is the top six, some start to laugh. I'm proving to be able to stay at that level and I will try to do even better."

"I believe I've got the bike that's got the potential, and the team is pushing behind me, and so is the factory, Ducati is there. Just because the colours are different, doesn't mean I'm going not to be contending.

"I'm going to be making the factory riders' life hard work."

Eugene Laverty completes the UK interest. The World Superbike race winner stays with the Aspar squad for his second season in MotoGP, as it switches from Honda to Ducati machinery.

CONTROL ECU

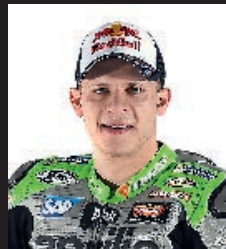
First flagged nearly a decade ago, a standard ECU was finally announced for this year in 2014, despite Honda's misgivings. The Magneti Marelli system is aimed at stopping one element of the manufacturers' arms race, and removes much of the automated adjustments riders had grown accustomed to in races.

TYRES

Michelin returns to MotoGP, bringing with it a move from 16.5-inch wheels to 17-inch, a natural change of construction and philosophy from Bridgestone and a new intermediate compound. The front tyre has required plenty of finessing, and different batch supplies limited some riders, but has now been finalised.



APRILIA

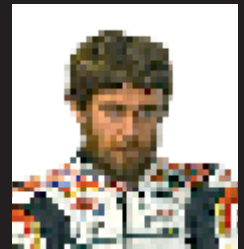


STEFAN BRADL (D)
 AGE 26
 STARTS 69
 BEST FINISH 2ND
 DEBUT 2012
 BEST 7TH ('13)



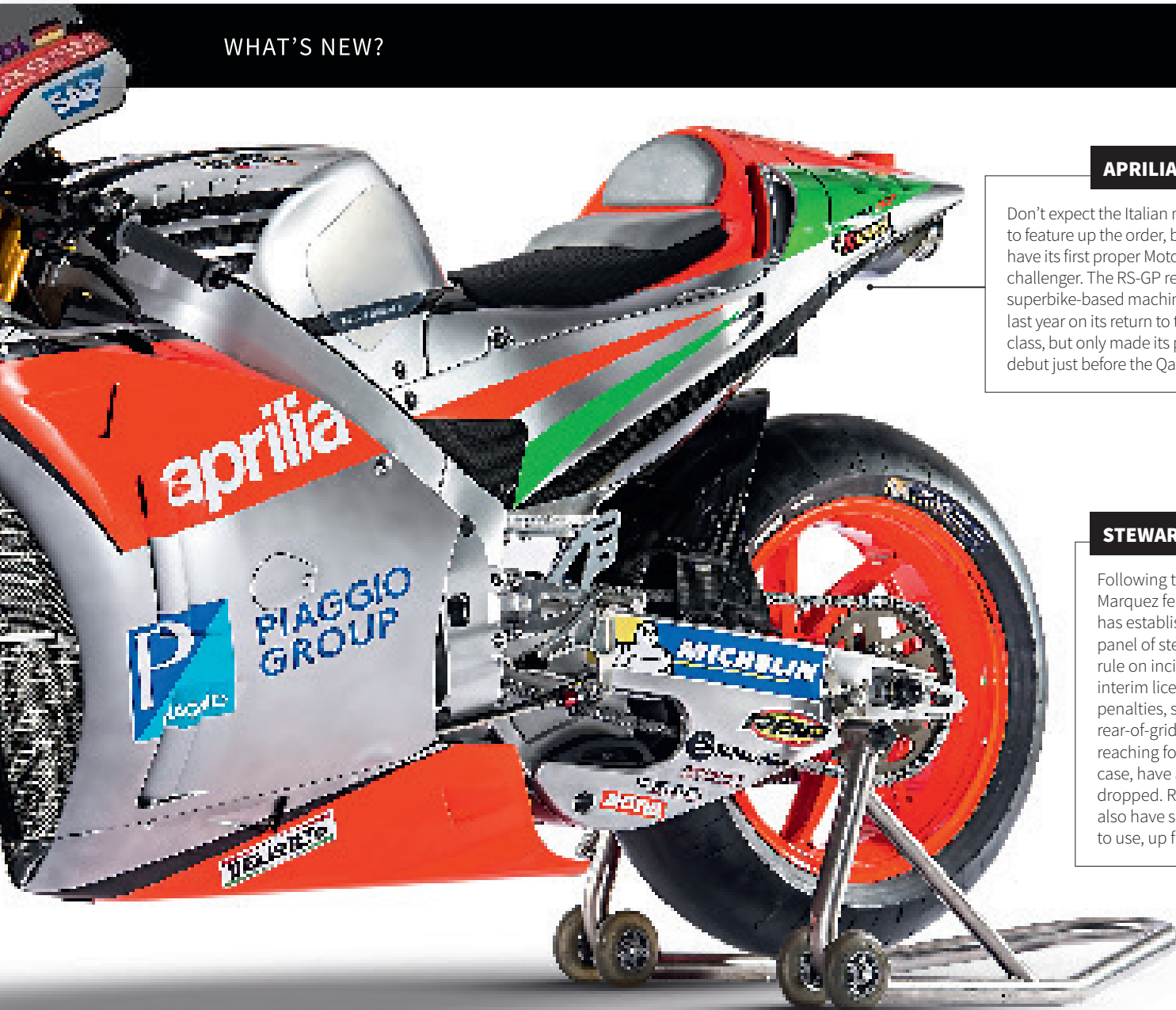
ALVARO BAUTISTA (E)
 AGE 31
 STARTS 103
 BEST FINISH 3RD
 DEBUT 2010
 BEST 5TH ('12)

LCR HONDA



CAL CRUTCHLOW (GB)
 AGE 30
 STARTS 87
 BEST FINISH 2ND
 DEBUT 2011
 BEST 5TH ('13)

WHAT'S NEW?



APRILIA

Don't expect the Italian manufacturer to feature up the order, but it does have its first proper MotoGP challenger. The RS-GP replaces the superbike-based machine it raced last year on its return to the premier class, but only made its proper debut just before the Qatar test.

STEWARDS PANEL

Following that Rossi and Marquez feud, MotoGP has established a new panel of stewards to rule on incidents. The interim licence points penalties, such as the rear-of-grid start for reaching four in Rossi's case, have also been dropped. Riders will also have seven engines to use, up from five.

SUZUKI



MAVERICK VINALES (E)
 AGE 21
 STARTS 18
 BEST FINISH 6TH
 DEBUT 2015
 BEST 12TH ('15)



ALEX ESPARGARO (E)
 AGE 26
 STARTS 93
 BEST FINISH 2ND
 DEBUT 2009
 BEST 7TH ('14)

ASPAR DUCATI

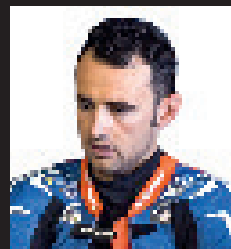


EUGENE LAVERTY (GB)
 AGE 29
 STARTS 18
 BEST FINISH 12TH
 DEBUT 2015
 BEST 22ND ('15)



YONNY HERNANDEZ (CO)
 AGE 27
 STARTS 69
 BEST FINISH 7TH
 DEBUT 2012
 BEST 14TH ('15)

AVINTIA DUCATI



HECTOR BARBERA (E)
 AGE 29
 STARTS 103
 BEST FINISH 5TH
 DEBUT 2010
 BEST 11TH ('11, '12)



LORIS BAZ (F)
 AGE 23
 STARTS 17
 BEST FINISH 4TH
 DEBUT 2015
 BEST 17TH ('15)



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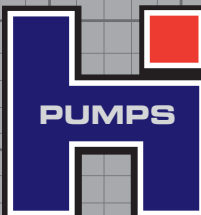
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Hakkinen tops list of Goodwood stars

DOUBLE FORMULA 1 WORLD champion Mika Hakkinen headlines this weekend's 74th Goodwood Members' meeting with a demonstration run in a Mercedes-Benz W196.

Hakkinen, the 1998 and '99 world champion, will drive the 1954/55 Silver Arrows grand prix car on Saturday.

The Finn has appeared at the Goodwood Festival of Speed on three previous occasions, most recently in 2011, but this is his first appearance at the Members' meeting.

Also part of the demo is Jochen Mass, who will pilot one of the streamlined versions of the W196.

Ex-grand prix ace Mass will also play a part in the weekend's competition, racing in Sunday's Gerry Marshall and Peter Collins Trophy races, in a Ford Capri and a Mercedes-Benz 300SL 'Gullwing' respectively.

Joining Mass in the Gerry Marshall Trophy field for Group 1 touring cars from the 1970s and '80s will be 10-time grand prix winner Gerhard Berger, who teams up with Emanuele Pirro behind the wheel of a 1977 BMW 530i.

Past and present names from the British Touring Car Championship will also be out in force on Sunday,

and are in good attendance in the Gerry Marshall Trophy.

Current BTCC drivers taking part in the race include Andrew Jordan (in a Mini 1275GT), Adam Morgan (Capri), reigning champion Gordon Shedden (Rover 3500 SD1), Matt Neal (Chevrolet Camaro) and Mat Jackson (Triumph Dolomite Sprint).

They will be joined by former stars including Steve Soper and Jeff Allam (Capris), Robb Gravett and Anthony Reid (Dolomites), Tim Harvey (Rover), Stuart Graham (Camaro), Patrick Watts (Mazda RX7) and Paul O'Neill (Mini).

Shedden, who will race the Rover with Chris Ward, said being involved in the weekend is a privilege.

"It's going to be an interesting experience at the Members' Meeting this year, because I don't even know what the car I am supposed to be racing looks like," he said. "I will basically walk up and down the paddock until someone tells me to stop and get in!"

"It doesn't really matter whether you finish first or 31st – the atmosphere of the Members' meeting is very special. I imagine it's what the Revival would have been like 10 years ago, with less pressure. It's a break from the day



Gerry Marshall races are popular, with a strong touring car contingent in action

job and it's genuine fun. I love being able to go around the paddock and chat to the car owners."

Rob Huff is another tin-top star in the Gerry Marshall Trophy race, in which he will be racing a Capri on one of his outings over the weekend.

The 2012 World Touring Car champion will also contest the Alan Mann Trophy, where one of his rivals will be Indy 500 winner Kenny Brack, in a field of 29 Ford GT40s, and will race in the Whitmore Cup for 1960s tin-tops in a Morris Mini Cooper S.

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GINETTA JUNIORS

Collard steps up to Juniors

JORDAN COLLARD WILL MAKE HIS CAR RACING debut in Ginetta Juniors this season, completing a trio of sons of recent West Surrey Racing British Touring Car Championship drivers to sign up to the series.

The 15-year-old son of Rob Collard will drive for Total Control Racing, where one of his team-mates will be Nick Foster's son Harry. Andy Priaulx's son Sebastian will also race, with JHR Developments.

Collard reached the final stages of the Ginetta Junior Scholarship last year and graduates from karting, having raced in the Super One National Rotax Mini Max Championship last year.

"The Ginetta Junior Championship is a great stepping stone to move from karting into car racing, and the fact it is shown live on ITV4 is fantastic exposure for young racers," enthused Collard. "I had a great time at the Scholarship and I am really looking forward to putting

everything I learnt there into practice with TCR at Brands Hatch [scene of the opening round] next month."

Team principal Lee Brookes added: "It's fantastic news to have Jordan joining TCR for Juniors. Jordan has so much experience he can learn from through his dad and I know our drivers will work well together.

"Jordan did a great job in the Scholarship final last year, and he's obviously done well in karting, so we're sure he'll have a strong first season in cars.

"He has great family support, which is so important for these young drivers, and we're very much looking forward to working with him."

Meanwhile, HHC Motorsport has completed its 2016 line-up by signing karting star Tom Gamble.

The younger brother of Ginetta regular George, Gamble joins HHC following a successful karting career, having most recently won the 2015 Rotax Max Winter Cup.

MINI MIGLIA

MIGLIA CHAMPION SOLLIS TO RETURN

DOUBLE MINI MIGLIA champion Bill Sollis will return to the championship for his first full campaign in nine years to celebrate the Mini 7 Racing Club's 50th anniversary season.

The former fire fighter will handle his own 1300cc Miglia and gun for a third title. Sollis, the 1997 and 2006 Miglia champion, last made a competitive appearance in the class at Silverstone in '09.

"I'm really excited about this year and it's about time I got back out and had another go," said Sollis. "The Mini 7 Racing Club has been a life-long addiction for me. I love what it stands for and the Miglia racing.

"I sold my title-winning car after 2006 and bought this one, which was built by Pete Vickers. I've spent a lot of time rebuilding it with a new Swiftune engine, new suspension and cooling and getting it to the weight limit. I want to be fighting for wins and hopefully the title."

Sollis is the only man to have won races in four of the M7RC's formulae - the 850cc and 1000cc Se7ens and 1000cc and 1300cc Miglias. He lifted the Se7en titles twice, in 1990 and '91.

Sollis will miss one round owing to existing commitments with the Oakfield Motorsport Mini Challenge team.

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Breeze on Supercup sideline after losing backing

FORMER GINETTA GT4 Supercup champion Carl Breeze will not be racing this year after losing his main sponsor.

The 36-year-old has competed on the TOCA package for the past 17

years, winning the Formula Renault UK title in 2001.

He also had stints in the British Touring Car Championship and the SEAT Cupra Championship before spending the past seven years in the Supercup.

"I've just got no money coming in," said Breeze, who was second last season with HHC Motorsport. "I won't be racing unless a freebie turns up - that's my only option.

"It's a shame because I love racing and it will be

difficult watching the first round not taking part. I've been part of the TOCA package for so long and been successful."

Breeze is now considering a switch to British GT, and is focused on returning in 2017.

BRDC FORMULA 4

HHC snaps up Jedi star Hingeley

REIGNING FORMULA JEDI CHAMPION Ben Hingeley is to race in this season's BRDC Formula 4 Championship.

The 18-year-old (below) has joined HHC Motorsport, which carried Will Palmer to the 2015 crown, and will line up with Sisa Ngebulana and Omar Ismail.

Hingeley won last year's Formula Jedi title with eight race wins and three lap records. "I've had the chance to do some limited

testing and I've found the F4 car awesome," he said. "HHC is a fantastic team. I hope to be up to speed quickly."

Hingeley won the 2011 Welsh Mini Max crown before finishing second in Super One's Junior Rotax division in 2013 and winning the British Rotax British Open title. Those performances earned him an assessment with the Ferrari F1 team's Young Driver Academy training programme.



EBREY

BRITISH GT

Mitchell, Graham paired for GT assault

NEW TEAM MACMILLAN Racing has joined the British GT Championship for 2016, and will campaign a brand new Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4 for young drivers Jack Mitchell and Matty Graham.

Entering as Generation AMR Macmillan Racing, the team hopes to create a ladder for drivers to move through the team from GT4 competition to race at Le Mans. It will also

receive support from David Appleby Engineering.

Its two recruits arrive into British GT with differing junior racing experiences, with Graham having competed in Formula Renault in the past two seasons after a stint in BRDC F4, and Mitchell having last season raced in the Mini Challenge and Renault Clio Cup after winning the Ginetta Junior championship in 2014.

"I'm really excited that I've been given the opportunity to race with Macmillan in the British GT Championship in their Vantage GT4," said 19-year-old Graham. "I tested the Aston Martin with the team and felt comfortable with the car and with them."

Team-mate Mitchell added: "This is such a great chance for me. GT racing is where I want to build my career."



WALKER

FORMULA JEDI

King aims to be queen of Jedis

KARTING GRADUATE BRYONY KING, a protege of ex-Williams Formula 1 development driver Susie Wolff, is to contest this season's Formula Jedi Championship.

King, 17, has made the move with a factory-run car after also testing MSA Formula

machinery with two different teams.

MSA Academy member King was part of Arden's Young Driver Academy Scheme, where she met reigning Jedi champion Ben Hingeley (see story top), who suggested the category to King.

IN BRIEF



CROSS/MANNING

GRADUATE MITCHELL RETURNS TO OSS

Craig Mitchell will return to the BRSCC's OSS series this season driving a Ligier JS49S. The 22-year-old (above) was second in Class B in 2014, finishing on the podium in every race, but took a break from racing last year to complete his degree. "We chose OSS as there's not too much long-distance travelling," said the Scot.

JONCK JOINS SWR IN BRDC FORMULA 4

Danish driver Jan Jonck will join Sean Walkinshaw Racing for this year's BRDC Formula 4 Championship. The 17-year-old graduates to UK single-seaters having raced in the German-based ADAC F4 series last year. "The BRDC F4 car is really fast with great aerodynamics and amazing power; it's a joy to drive," he said.

PYRO CUTS BACK JUNIORS PROGRAMME

Team Pyro will run a restricted programme in Ginetta Juniors this year. The title-winning Clio Cup squad will field Zak Fulk in selected rounds but has been unable to find any other drivers for its first year in the category. Fulk's school commitments have ruled out a full season.

CHADWICK TO CONTINUE GT5 CHASE

Ollie Chadwick will again compete in the Ginetta GT5 Challenge this season, driving for Xentek Motorsport. Chadwick, who has finished runner-up in the series for the past two years, also plans to contest selected GT and endurance events.

WENHAM SIBLINGS BACK FOR FUN

Brother-and-sister racers Guy and Zoe Wenham will return to the Fun Cup this season with Apollo Motorsport. British GT4 race winner Zoe and ex-Saxmax champion Guy will share with Ginetta Junior racer Harry Mailer.

LOTUS AND ASTON FOR STRATTON IN GT

Stratton Motorsport will field a two-car attack on the British GT Championship this season. The team has entered a single Lotus Evora GT4 (below) for Robin Shute and Will Hunholz, as well as an Aston Martin Vantage GT4 for David Tinn and Robin Marriott.



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Having a ripper time at Phillip Island

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

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AUSTRALIA'S PHILLIP ISLAND CLASSIC FESTIVAL OF Motor Sport just gets better and better. The quality of cars and racing at last weekend's 27th edition – my third, having 'debuted' for a day while on holiday in 2003 and returned after far too long a gap in '15 – was absolutely sensational, in the Formula 5000, FF1600 and Group A/C Touring Car classes. Travelling 12,000 miles for my 2016 opener was gruelling but I suspect I won't see better action than the F5000 feature all year.

Perhaps due to the vast distances competitors travel (it's a 2500-mile hike from Western Australia for the Wanneroo [Barbagallo] brigade, while eager international entrants jetted in to Melbourne from New Zealand, the USA, Great Britain and Ireland) there is a palpable bond in the paddock. Warm welcomes, exceptional camaraderie and a superlative circuit bring folk back, but when a large appreciative crowd appears, many in classic cars parked overlooking the main straight, the ambience becomes very special.

The work put in by the Formula 5000 Australia group bore exceptional fruits. With Paul Zazryn and Peter Brennan injecting fresh impetus, and a real will to carry the torch to new heights as an historic class – with the support of period racers – Australia is where it is all happening right now. Friday's barbeque outgrew the original venue, but 200 plus devotees were fed at Newhaven community centre, where we gasped at films of scary Sandown Park and Adelaide events of yore in the company of 'survivors' Bruce Allison, Kevin Bartlett, Warwick Brown, Alfie Costanzo, Jon Davison, John Goss, John McCormack, Vern Schuppan, Ken Smith, Chas Talbot and Johnnie Walker.

Looking forward, such is the groundswell of support for F5000 that the Aussies and Kiwis are plotting a new Tasman

Challenge aimed at re-creating the spirit of the 1960s and '70s, when, of course, F1 drivers raced in the Antipodes each European winter. The thought of this potentially kicking off at Barbagallo (Perth) in October, then progressing notionally via Sandown Park (Melbourne) and Eastern Creek (Sydney) to Hampton Downs (celebrating Ken Smith in January '17), Taupo's rebranded Bruce McLaren Motorsport Park and Raupuna (Christchurch) on the NZ leg is mouthwatering. By no means a done deal, but...

Event host the VHRR, under Ian Tate, knows about networking. It put on a fine dinner for loyal sponsors and invited international guests at the Cape Kitchen, on a stunning seafront promontory location a few miles from the Phillip Island GP circuit, on Saturday. As patron of the meeting, touring car legend Jim Richards took part in an entertaining Q&A session afterwards. He also wowed onlookers with prodigious speed in a glorious 450bhp BMW 635 at the meeting.

The nearby town of Cowes comes alive on race weekends – it must be crazy when World Superbikes are there – but is another vibrant social hub, bringing fans and racers together. I stayed with Brian and Tony Lawrence (brothers of Tasman champion Graeme who couldn't be there, alas), friends since 1990-'91 when 'BL' invited me to NZ to cover the Peter Jackson International series, and their lifelong motor trader pals Gary Keith and Ian 'Fox' McLeod. PI Classic virgins, they can't wait to return.

British marshals are long addicted to it and book 12 months ahead to rejoin their Australian comrades. Jon Tillott and Trevor 'B Boy' Jackson had already done the Bathurst 12 Hours and Clipsal 500 events, while Steve White and Tony Smith joined them for the Classic. All will work at this weekend's Australian GP before heading home. I'm back for Goodwood, hurrah! ✨



MORRIS MAKES AUSTRALIAN DEBUT

British Formula Ford 1600 veteran Rick Morris, 69, demonstrated that none of his old jostling skills have deserted him by climbing to fourth in the penultimate Pre-'90 race at Australia's sensational Phillip Island circuit on Sunday. Any chances of further improvement were scuppered when his leased Reynard 87F (tended by Souley Motorsport's Brian Soule, who also travelled out specially) was nerfed off in the last stanza. Miffed but undeterred, Morris will be out this weekend at Zwartkops in South Africa.



COSTANZO SEES DOUBLE IN M10BS

Multiple Australian drivers champion Alfredo Costanzo raced two F5000 McLaren M10Bs at Phillip Island last weekend, giving long-time mentor Alan Hamilton's car (owned by Niel Allen and Hamilton in period) its first outing after restoration by Joe Ricciardo, father of F1 Red Bull ace Daniel. Italian-born Costanzo, who raced in the Rothmans International Series, battled to 13th in the final, best of the early cars. Ricciardo raced his ex-Greg Cusack Scuderia Veloce Formula Junior Brabham BT6.

Tim Berryman leads the way in his Lola T332



CLASSIC FESTIVAL
PHILLIP ISLAND MARCH 12-13

Berryman wins Thunder Down Under

WITNESSED BY A HOST OF TASMAN Cup and Rothmans International Series racers who tamed the beasts 40 years ago – indeed Ken Smith and Alfredo Costanzo slugged it out anew – Sunday’s scintillating Formula 5000 finale turned the decades back, enthralled a bumper audience at the Victorian Historic Racing Register’s Phillip Island Classic Festival. That 38-year-old Radical champion Tim Berryman won it to cap a sensational class debut in the ex-Alan Jones Lola T332, in which Alex Davison dominated last year, was a remarkable achievement. Berryman also set the weekend’s fastest lap and was deservedly named man of the meeting.

The ‘old-firm’ rivalry between competitors from Australia and New Zealand guaranteed spice on the spectator banks, but the panache with which the 500bhp machines were conducted – including the notably respectful lappery of slower cars – delighted period racer Kevin Bartlett, the VHRR’s driving standards enforcer. “I was very impressed,” said the veteran, who was kept busy interviewing drivers from other categories during the ambitious two-day programme, interrupted several times when the barriers took more than the usual hammering.

As if the ground-shaking phenomenon



POWELL

Jim Richards in action in the JPS-liveried BMW 635 CSI

of 24 stock-block V8-engined F5000 sluggers stampeding towards the sea, dominating drivers’ eyelines at the rolling start, was not spectacular enough, the eight-lap feature saw red-blooded battles rage throughout the pack, which graphically told the US Formula A-originated class’s story. Spanning early Lola and McLaren chassis – Tony Roberts’s wondrous high-winged M10B a big crowd-pleaser – to the ubiquitous tall-airboxed, late-model Lolas via Australian Elfin and Match cars, it included three of the five American Talons and a trio of intriguingly different-looking Chevrons, including the rebuilt B24 in which Peter Gethin uniquely won the 1973 Race of Champions at Brands Hatch to F1’s chagrin.

Aussie F3 class champion and V8 Supercar Development Series racer Tom Tweedie, 27, dominated the three earlier salvos, carrying more speed in his Chevron B24 through the undulating circuit’s final turn and calmly slipstreaming past fast-starting Kiwi legend Smith’s ex-Danny Ongais T332 in Saturday’s opener. Smith, 73, clung on, just 0.02s splitting their best laps. Berryman stayed with them, buoying his confidence, with Smith’s protege Tom Alexander (guesting in Greg Thornton’s famous B24 Chevron) a brilliant fourth in his mirrors, having explored both the demanding track and the car in five wet laps in Friday testing.

Local men Paul Zazryn and Peter Brennan, prime movers in F5000 Australia, led the chase in the ex-Evan Noyes T332 and ex-Lella Lombardi T330 respectively, while fellow Melbourne man Andrew Robson charged his T330/332 – the ex-Brian Redman US back-up car saddled by Smith to win Adelaide’s Rothmans round in ’76 – from 27th to eighth in four laps, having missed practice through feeling unwell.

Smith changed to a stiffer front anti-roll bar in an attempt to find grip in the tricky cambered bend after Lukey Heights, but despite finding some mechanical grip could not counter Tweedie’s newer tyres in race two.



Winslow (leading, in red Van Diemen RF89) took four FFord wins



Alexander, clearly loving the blue Chevron, squeezed boldly past Berryman on the opening lap to land his first podium.

Tweedie completed his hat-trick on Sunday morning, but Berryman on new tyres bravely went round Smith at Turn 1 on the second lap. Robson moved up to fourth since Alexander had ceded the Chevron to owner Thornton, whose March-Ford GAA V6 had resisted crew chief Tom Smith's tireless coaxing to run properly, a broken throttle linkage having followed electrical issues. The 2013 FIA Masters Historic F1 champion scythed from the back through constant traffic to grab seventh on the line from Sefton Gibb (T332). Brennan, Kiwi veteran Russell Greer (ex-Graeme Lawrence T332) and Zazryn were not far ahead.

The much-anticipated final showdown was probably the best of F5000's Historic era. After a beautifully clean start, Berryman hurtled round the outside of Tweedie at Turn 1 and resisted everything that "TT" subsequently threw at him in a breathtaking duel. While the man from Stockinbingal in rural New South Wales eked his slender advantage out to 0.7s after three laps, Tweedie was back on his gearbox next time round and remained there until the chequer. Despite the pressure, no mistake came.

Tony Roberts was a crowd favourite in his high-winged McLaren M10B F5000 car

"I'm stoked," grinned Berryman afterwards. "That was awesome."

Smith could only watch from an increasingly distant third, floundering for grip. "Those boys drove very well, but I've never known a circuit to eat tyres like this one," he said, having been chased in by Robson. Zazryn and 70-year-old Greer completed the top six, with Gibb (who made a sensational getaway), David Banks (ex-Jon Woodner Talon MR1A), Brennan and Ian Clements (T332) on his tail in line astern.

Thornton benefited at the first corner, climbing from ninth – briefly behind Gibb's ex-Tuck Thomas/Bob Lazier car – to fifth before a broken steering rack forced retirement.

First of the early cars back, after a fabulous scrap with Glenn Richards's Lola T400, was the McLaren M10B of Alfie Costanzo in 13th. Having broken a rocker in Alan Hamilton's red 'Animale Salvaggio' on Saturday, preparer Joe Ricciardo (F1 racer Daniel's dad) pulled his green version out of the container, reforming last season's combo.

Formula Ford 1600 also attracted a superlative entry, more than 40 Pre-1990 cars filling the pit lane, with UK commuter James Winslow emerging as top gun with four wins from five in backer Dean Koutsoumidis's Exedra Motorsport Van Diemen RF89. The former Australian F3 champion-turned-prototype racer was beaten only by David Hardman (son of eponymous racecar constructor Jim) in a similar car. Sidelined by an upright failure in the ex-Hiroshi Kazato March 722 F2 car, West Australia's Andrew Goldie did well as a late reserve in the ex-Mark Larkham RF88.

Making his PI debut, evergreen Briton Rick Morris, 69, jostled Andy Nethercote's Reynard 87FF up to a splendid fourth in race three, only to be sidelined in the penultimate stanza by Andrew McInnes, whose RF89 nosedived under Rick's gearbox, pitching the car off.

Also in the wars was returning '88 Aussie champion David Roberts, whose Swift FB89 was unavoidably nailed by Anthony Mann's equally pristine RF86 last time out. Gaius Ghinn (Lola T642A) and Irish racer Jennifer Mullan (in Chris Davison's Reynard FF84) bested at 13th and 24th under the Ecurie Australie banner.

Groups A and C Touring Cars are also big business in Australia. While Anthony Alford's Nissan Skyline had the legs of a remarkable field of original cars spanning 1973-92, both event patron Jim Richards (the Kiwi-born four-time Australian champion reunited with Peter Sturgeon's magnificent JPS BMW 635) and Carey McMahon (Benson & Hedges Ford Sierra Cosworth) kept him on his toes. Among the other wonderful cars that thrilled onlookers were Edward Singleton's massive '77 Ford Falcon XC – the ex-John Goss/Henri Pescarolo car fresh from restoration – and Mike Roddy's '84 Spa 24 Hours-winning Jaguar XJS.

Among the many other races, the battles between brilliant twin-cam Elfin pedallers Richard Carter (ex-Johnnie Walker '66 Mono) and Laurie Bennett (ex-Vern Hamilton '69 600), who diced wheel to wheel, passing and repassing each other all weekend, were event highlights. The wily Carter was unbeaten, thrice by hundredths!

Tasmanian ace John Bowe exercised a March 741 with customary precision at the head of a pack including Simon Gardiner's F2 Chevron, squabbling Ralt RT4s and interesting Australian Cheetah, Kaditcha, Richards and Birrana chassis, plus Andrew Wareing's ex-Alan Jones Williams FW06/3. Sadly, Ian Ross's F1 Beatrice Lola THL-1 turbo car hit the wall on Sunday. A similar fate befell Brit Andy Newall in Lilo Zicron's wild McLaren M8F, leaving Queensland Duncan Mackellar (M8E), Jamie Larner ('podded' Ralt-Hart RT2) and Aaron Lewis (ex-Mark Donohue Lola T163) as the leading Sportscar protagonists.

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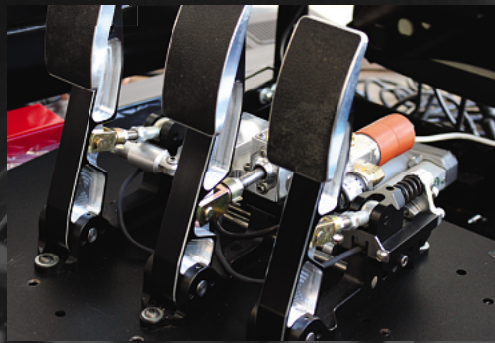
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RESULTS

IRISH TOURING CARS (15 LAPS) 1 Ciaran Timmons (Honda Integra) 15m27.883s (66.90mph); 2 Grzegorz Kalinecki (VW Golf) +5.606s; 3 Eddie Kinirons (BMW M3); 4 Jay O'Reilly (Honda Civic); 5 Nicole Drought (Honda Integra); 6 Anthony Murtagh (VW Corrado).

Class winner O'Reilly. **Fastest lap** Timmons 1m00.235s (68.70mph). **Pole** Timmons.

Starters 13. **RACE TWO (8 LAPS) 1 Timmons 8m19.784s (66.24mph);** 2 Kalinecki +3.274s; 3 Kinirons; 4 Shane Rabbitt (Mazda RX7); 5 Drought; 6 David Cassidy (Nissan 200SX).

CW Drought. **FL** Timmons 1m00.655s (68.23mph). **P** Kevin Doran (Honda Civic). **S** 11.

FIESTA ZETEC (13 LAPS) 1 Philip Lawless 15m38.584s (57.32mph); 2 Michael Tumulty +1.756s; 3 Trevor Farrar; 4 Mark Johnston; 5 Adam Johnston; 6 Gary Wheeler. **FL** Tumulty 1m11.428s (57.94mph). **P** Lawless. **S** 23.

RACE TWO (16 LAPS) 1 Lawless 20m27.008s (53.96mph); 2 Farrar +1.066s; 3 Darragh McMullen; 4 Tumulty; 5 Shane Kenny; 6 A Johnston. **FL** McMullen 1m11.437s (57.93mph). **P** Lawless. **S** 21.

LEGENDS (8 LAPS) 1 James Holman 8m36.263s (64.13mph); 2 Niki Meredith +0.472s; 3 Paul O'Brien; 4 Bobby King; 5 Ian Conroy; 6 Jonathan Taylor. **FL** Holman 1m03.720s (64.95mph). **P** Holman. **S** 9.

RACE TWO (8 LAPS) 1 O'Brien 8m42.920s (63.31mph); 2 Meredith +5.841s; 3 Taylor; 4 King; 5 Des Foley; 6 Ken Elliott. **FL** Meredith 1m04.541s (64.12mph). **P** Conroy. **S** 8.

RACE THREE (10 LAPS) 1 Holman 10m51.296s (63.54mph); 2 Meredith +0.018s; 3 Conroy; 4 King; 5 O'Brien; 6 Foley. **FL** Holman 1m03.906s (64.76mph). **P** Holman. **S** 8.

GLOBAL LIGHTS (14 LAPS) 1 Jake Byrne 15m30.367s (62.27mph); 2 Peter Drennan +3.771s; 3 Mark Twomey; 4 Alan Macken; 5 Conor Farrell; 6 Ivor Miller. **FL** Byrne 59.633s (69.40mph). **P** Byrne. **S** 9.

RACE TWO (15 LAPS) 1 Byrne 15m12.362s (68.04mph); 2 Drennan +1.572s; 3 Mark Braden; 4 Farrell; 5 Miller; 6 Michael Conway. **FL** Byrne 59.617s (69.42mph). **P** Byrne. **S** 10.

FUTURE CLASSICS (12 LAPS) 1 Timothy Duggan (SEAT Ibiza Cupra) 15m53.224s (52.10mph); 2 Martin Moore (Honda Civic) +0.273s; 3 Richard Kearney (Fiat Punto); 4 Aidan Byrne (Fiat Punto); 5 Dennis Brennan (Fiat Punto); 6 Tommy Byrne (Fiat Punto). **FL** William Tighe (Peugeot 306) 1m08.310s (60.58mph). **P** Kearney. **S** 19.

Holman took a brace of wins in Legends races



CHESTER

Timmons started season in terrific form with two wins



MONDELLO PARK
MPSC MARCH 13

CHESTER

Timmons does the double in Mondello season opener

MONDELLO PARK KICK-STARTED THE 2016 season last Sunday, with Ciaran Timmons doing the double in Irish Touring Cars in his Honda Integra.

Timmons took a lights-to-flag win in race one despite the early attentions of Dean Reilly. When Reilly retired mid-race Grzegorz Kalinecki's new Golf GTI took second, with Eddie Kinirons third in his newly acquired BMW M3. Jay O'Reilly claimed Production honours with his Honda Civic from the recovering Nicole Drought, who had challenged for the lead before being rotated by Anthony Murtagh.

In race two, Shane Rabbitt launched his Mazda RX-7 off the line to somehow snatch the lead from the fourth row of the grid. Almost immediately the red flags flew as Murtagh and Gareth Jennings tangled at the final corner.

Undeterred, Rabbitt duplicated his technique and again led into Turn 1 at the restart. He hung on despite pressure from Kevin Doran, until fuel starvation slowed him at the Esses. Doran's Civic grabbed the lead but, in turn, came under pressure from the flying Timmons, who finally made it stick at Southside Corner. When Doran slowed with overheating problems, Kalinecki moved to second and closed the gap slightly in the closing stages, but nothing was going to deny class returnee Timmons from making it two out of two.

Drought drove superbly to take the Production win despite starting at the back with grids reversed, David Cassidy being her closest challenger.

Phil Lawless won the first Fiesta Zetec race from pole, with Darragh McMullen holding off Michael Tumulty in a hectic race for second – but McMullen was later disqualified for a technical infringement.

In race two, Trevor Farrar nailed the start to lead Lawless away and held on for a few laps before

Lawless reclaimed it with a cracking move round the outside at Mobil. As Lawless eased away for the double, Farrar came under attack from Tumulty and McMullen with the trio circulating as one for the duration. Farrar just held on for second, with McMullen taking third.

James Holman fought off Niki Meredith in the first Irish Legends race, the pair crossing the line well clear of Paul O'Brien. In race two, O'Brien took the honours with Meredith charging up to second and Jonny Taylor pipping the impressive Bobby King for third, with Holman stranded in the gravel at Turn 3 after an early spin. In race three, Meredith worked his way to the front but Holman climbed to second and gradually closed him down. With a couple of laps to run Holman snatched the lead at Southside corner, but Meredith fought back and the duo crossed the line side by side, Holman getting the nod by a fraction. Ian Conroy was a distant third.

Motorsport Ireland Young Driver of the Year Jake Byrne jumped into one of the family ABR team Global GT Lights and decimated the regulars, crossing the line well clear in race one despite a late-race safety-car intervention. Peter Drennan was second with Mark Twomey completing the podium. In race two, Byrne dropped to the back of the grid on the rolling lap and yet was well clear by the end, with Drennan second and Mark Braden third.

Timothy Duggan and his SEAT Ibiza took a fine win in the Future Classics, fighting off impressive Civic-driving Fiesta graduate Marty Moore. Class rookie Adrian Dunne completed the podium in his Citroen Saxo, but he was later docked four places for improper driving. That handed the spot to Formula Sheane regular Richie Kearney (Fiat Punto 140).

LEO NULTY

WHAT'S ON



Endurance racing doesn't need to be

WHEN THE 2016 IMSA SPORTSCAR Championship opened with the Daytona 24 Hours in January, questions arose on both sides of the pond concerning the lower quality and quantity of television coverage – with the race entirely absent from UK screens. That will be the case again for this weekend's Sebring 12 Hours. But does it matter?

Motors TV had traditionally been the UK broadcaster for America's premier sportscar series in its various guises, and last year aired all the then-United SportsCar races in their entirety, using the Fox Sports feeds direct from the US. Fans could choose between that and watching it streamed on the series' website with Radio Le Mans commentary.

But as Daytona neared it became apparent that choice was gone, with no sign of the race on Motors TV schedules. This presents little problem in theory for those with a computer and reliable internet access, but is a blow for the international field, reckons Corvette factory driver Oliver Gavin.

"[Motors TV] definitely missed a trick missing this year's race," says Gavin, who won the GT Le Mans class at Daytona by just 0.034 seconds. "I think the fact it's not broadcast on a channel that's viewed through satellite or terrestrial TV is something the series is missing out on if it's not able to reach out to British fans. Sportscar racing is well liked within the UK – you only have to look at how many people go to Le Mans each year."

Motors TV dropping the coverage doesn't have to be seen as a negative for the series, though. It's a TV channel that

UK TV viewers weren't able to watch the Daytona 24 Hours winners raise the trophy this year



many British households don't receive, and the coverage is interrupted regularly for advert breaks. Sure, sportscar fans would relish the opportunity to see the Daytona 24 Hours live on a terrestrial channel such as BBC or ITV, but, in the Formula 1-orientated British market, this isn't going to happen.

The internet stream is easily accessible, and, above all, it was very good quality. The images were clear, the feed was uninterrupted, and the commentary was top-notch. For sportscar fans in the UK, the absence of the race from TV wasn't a problem.

"The feedback seems to have been extremely positive, so overall I would suggest the feeds are perhaps far more readily accessible than if they were broadcast simply on cable TV channels, for which I presume most people have to pay," argues Jeremy Shaw, who was part of the Radio Le Mans commentary team for the livestream.

The drawback lies in trying to attract first-time viewers, who are less likely

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Website streaming of endurance races is likely to become the norm

on TV

to stumble across the race if they don't find it on their TV guides. But this isn't necessarily so relevant for long-distance racing. Sportscar championships have always been a niche subject, especially as endurance races require the dedication of an entire day – or more. That makes it harder to keep the attention of a casual channel-hopper anyway.

Although disappointed his IMSA season can't be followed on UK tellies, Gavin acknowledges that more championships are likely to become online-only in their broadcasts.

"You can't just rely on having TV coverage and more often than not now you are able to follow sport online. That's the way it's shifting and going," he admits.

So, while you won't find Sebring on Motors TV this weekend, just head for the IMSA website feed and be grateful you don't have to deal with the multiple TV channel changes throughout the race that American fans have to face.

JAKE KILSHAW



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YouTube RYAN'S FLYIN' ON ST PETE STREETS

Search for: Visor Cam: Ryan Hunter-Reay St Petersburg

Eye-popping footage shot from Ryan Hunter-Reay's Dallara-Honda during practice for the first round of the 2016 IndyCar season in Florida. This visceral driver's-eye video had attracted the highest number of views for the event coverage on IndyCar's YouTube channel when *Autosport* went to press.



TV PICK OF THE WEEK

1993 MONACO GRAND PRIX

SKY SPORTS F1
Monday 20:30

This was Ayrton Senna's sixth, and last, victory on the streets of the principality as he broke Graham Hill's record. Driving the underpowered McLaren-Ford, Senna wasn't able to haul the car onto the front row but still came through to take a famous victory.

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX

Formula 1
Rd 1/21
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
March 20
WATCH ON TV
Live: Sky Sports F1, Sunday 05:00

V8 SUPERCARS

Non-championship
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
March 18-20

SEBRING 12 HOURS

IMSA SportsCar Championship
Rd 2/11
Sebring, Florida, USA
March 19
WATCH ONLINE
www.imsa.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 5/36
Fontana, California, USA
March 20
WATCH ON TV
Live: Premier Sports, Sunday 17:00

MUGELLO 12 HOURS

24 Hour Series
Rd 2/7
Mugello, Italy
March 19
WATCH ON TV
Live: Motors TV, Friday 12:30. Saturday 08:00

SUPER TC2000

Rd 1/12
Trelew, Argentina
March 20



SEBRING 12 HOURS



NASCAR SPRINT CUP

UK MOTORSPORT

GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING

March 19-20
See our preview, page 50

OULTON PARK BARC

March 19
Clio Cup, 2CV, MaX5, MGOC, Sports/Saloons, Junior Saloons

SNETTERTON MSVR

March 19
Lotus Elise, Lotus Cup, Monoposto, Allcomers, Lotus Sprint

DONINGTON PARK

750MC
March 19-20
Clio 182, Enduro Series,

Formula Vee, Locost, Toyota MR2, 750 Formula, 750 Trophy, Classic Stock Hatch, Stock Hatch, Hot Hatch, M3 Cup, Super Cooper Cup



GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING





THE ARCHIVE

Nino Vaccarella on his way to third place in the 1970 Targa Florio behind the wheel of the Ferrari 512 S Spyder he shared with Ignazio Giunti

LAT Photographic

INTRODUCING



ASHLEY SUTTON

Ashley Sutton is a man in a hurry – and not just because he’s a racing driver. The Renault Clio Cup UK champion has leaped straight in to the British Touring Car Championship after signing for the factory MG team this season to cap a remarkable career resurrection.

Sutton had only just begun car racing when progress was halted by a road accident in 2011. “I had to sit out 18 months,” he explains. “It was hard to watch others getting on with their careers. That gave me the motivation to get back even stronger. It was a hard time.”

Sutton, now 22, had begun his career in single-seaters in Formula Vee in 2010. It was a category choice made for a couple of very solid reasons. “Part of the decision was budget-led; but I wanted to develop my skills in a category that taught me the circuits before I graduated to the BTCC bill, and also a formula that allowed me to hone my racecraft skills. That’s exactly what I got,” he says.

After some races in Ford Fiesta STs in 2011, his world was turned upside down by the road crash. “The injuries weren’t apparent because they were internal. I had punctured a kidney, and that didn’t present itself until about a month afterwards,” says Sutton. “The doctors said I might not race again. There were dark moments.”

When he did return in 2014, it was thanks to a last-minute deal to join the British Formula Ford Championship. Despite missing a round, he clinched the Scholarship class. Sutton explains: “I wanted to be on the BTCC package, I knew that, and this chance just appeared at the last minute so I grabbed it.”

That season in Formula Ford brought him to the attention of BTCC racer and Team BMR boss Warren Scott. Scott introduced himself to Sutton and, when BMR wanted to expand into Clios, Sutton was the first person on Scott’s list.

“Clios is a great series, but I didn’t want to be one of the guys who spent years doing the same category,” says Sutton. “I knew I had to go out and win it – because I had missed a chunk of my career through injury, I had to push on fast.

“It went down to the wire, but I won it. And I’d always said that I didn’t want to stand still in my career. Once I’d taken the title, I wanted to progress. Thanks to Warren and my backers, that has now happened.” ❦

MATT JAMES



CV

- Age** 22
- From** Harlow, Essex
- 2016** Factory MG driver in the British Touring Car Championship
- 2015** Renault Clio Cup UK champion with Team BMR and Pyro 6 wins
- 2014** 3rd in British Formula Ford 5 wins
- 2013** London Karting Cup
- 2011** Part-season in Ford Fiesta ST, withdrew on medical grounds
- 2010** 4th in Formula Vee 3 wins



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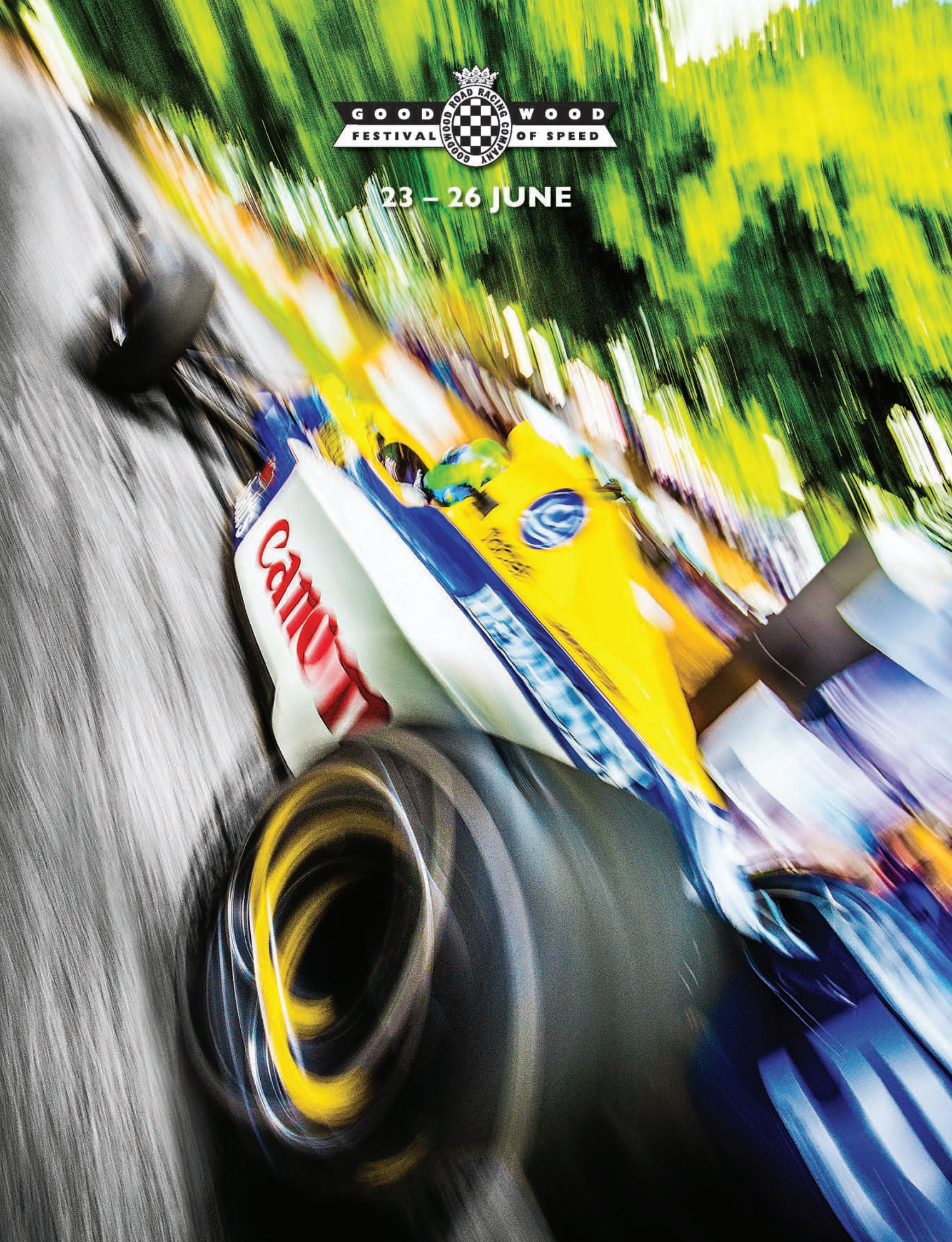


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