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Nigel Mansell leads the 1986 Australian GP, one of the most dramatic races of all time

# Selecting the best from over half a century

## WE'VE HAD A GOOD YEAR FOR GREAT DEBATES.

During 2017 Autosport has argued about motorsport's all-rounders, finest street races, best wet-weather performances and who the greatest British Formula 1 driver is, not to mention the pluses and minuses of recent developments such as the introduction of the halo.

This week, however, one man picks out his personal F1 highlights. Nigel Roebuck has been to over 500 grands prix (more than half of the world championship events so far) and, in a special edition of his column (page 8), he looks back at the most memorable moments from his career, ranging from his first visit to the British GP in 1965 to the best drive of current world champion Lewis Hamilton's career so far.

We also have the annual assessment of the financial state of F1 from our political journalist Dieter Rencken. He's pieced together a picture of the budgets and incomes for each of the 10 teams during the first year of the post-Bernie Ecclestone era. He found a mixed bag...

Two of the other stories of 2017 were rising star Charles Leclerc's domination of Formula 2 and Billy Monger's fight to return to racing following his terrible British F4 accident at Donington Park in April. We speak to both in this issue, as well as the three ART drivers who fought for the GP3 crown: George Russell, Jack Aitken and Nirei Fukuzumi.

That just leaves me to wish everyone a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you in 2018, starting with the Autosport International show in Birmingham on January 11-14.



**KEVIN TURNER EDITOR**

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Ex-Porsche men Lotterer (right) and Jani spearhead formidable line-up



## WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

# Rebellion bids for revolution

THE ANGLO-SWISS REBELLION RACING team will make a swift return to the LMP1 ranks in the World Endurance Championship in 2018 after a single season away. The logic is simple for a team that was the top P1 privateer in the series from its rebirth in 2012. And it can be summed up in one word: competition.

Rebellion couldn't compete with the factory hybrid cars with its R-One chassis and, before that, its fleet of venerable Lolas. And it didn't have anyone to race with in the privateer ranks save the low-key ByKolles team. That has all changed for the 2018-19 WEC superseason.

The WEC rulemakers were quick to shore up the P1 division in the wake of Porsche's withdrawal from the top class of the series with a promise of lap time parity with factory machinery for non-hybrid cars run by privateers. That built on rule changes put in place for 2017 designed to increase the performance of the independents, and motivated Ginetta, and SMP Racing with BR Engineering, to instigate P1 projects.

The promise from the rulemakers, made in September, further boosted the lot of the privateers, who will be no longer racing in their own subclass. A real chance to compete for overall

honours, combined with a massive increase in the number of independents, has lured Rebellion back after a successful season in the LMP2 ranks that yielded the drivers' and teams' titles.

Rebellion will be looking to continue the successes of the past — it has taken no fewer than 35 class victories since the rebirth of the WEC in 2012. That explains why it has brought Porsche drivers Andre Lotterer and Neel Jani onto its books for the 2018-19 superseason. That is clearly a declaration of intent by the team.

Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Lotterer and Jani, who made his name in sportscars with Rebellion, are joined by team regulars Bruno Senna and Mathias Beche and two newcomers from the P2 ranks: Gustavo Menezes, who was given a first outing with Rebellion at the Petit Le Mans IMSA finale in October, and Thomas Laurent have been two of the standouts in P2 over the past two years.

Exactly what they will be driving isn't clear for the moment. Rebellion has only said that its car will be unveiled at the Geneva motor show in March. It can be expected, however, that it will be built by ORECA, which designed and developed the Rebellion R-One raced by the



PORSCHE

## against Toyota

team in 2014-16 and supplied the P2 machinery run by the team last year.

The engine, most likely, will be the 4.5-litre version of British builder Gibson's normally aspirated P2 V8. The truncated timescale involved in Rebellion's P1 return makes the choice of a non-turbo unit the most likely.

The two Rebellions – and we can expect them to be called that – will be part of what could be a 10-car field of non-factory cars in the 2018-19 superseason. They will now definitely go up against a pair of Toyota TS050 HYBRIDS.

The Japanese manufacturer finally put its commitment to race on in the WEC down in black and white in the run-up to Christmas. The apparent confirmation of its return made by Toyota Motorsport GmbH president Hisatake Murata in the immediate wake of the Bahrain series finale in November was made official on the publication of the rules for next season.

TMG has stated that it will head into 2018 with an unchanged driver roster. How Fernando Alonso, who tested a TS050 in Bahrain last month, could be incorporated into the line-up should he agree a deal for Le Mans is unclear.

GARY WATKINS



DTM

SPORTSCARS/DTM

# BMW promotes talent as Martin joins Aston

A DESIRE TO RETURN TO THE SPORTSCAR ranks and to race in the international arena motivated Maxime Martin's move from BMW's DTM squad to Aston Martin Racing's World Endurance Championship line-up.

Martin's departure from BMW and Tom Blomqvist's new focus on Formula E with Andretti has freed up two seats in the RBM DTM squad. Joel Eriksson has been promoted from BMW's junior ranks after finishing runner-up in the 2017 European Formula 3 Championship to take one, while Philipp Eng moves over from the manufacturer's GT3 programme to fill the other. Marco Wittmann, Timo Glock, Augusto Farfus and Bruno Spengler stay on in the DTM.

Former Spa 24 Hours winner Martin revealed that he chose to leave BMW, his employer of the past five years, when Aston Martin came knocking with the offer of a drive in the WEC aboard its all-new Vantage GTE.

"If I had stayed with BMW my main focus would have been the DTM, but with some GT racing, including some races in GTE," said Martin, who notched up three victories after switching to the DTM in his second season as a BMW driver. "There were many reasons to make the change from BMW, and one of them was to go back to endurance racing and do something more international.

"I've never done a full WEC programme, so coming to the WEC with a manufacturer like Aston Martin when it is introducing a new car is perfect timing."

John Gaw, motorsport boss at the Prodrive organisation that runs Aston's GT programmes, revealed that Martin had been one of his targets for some time. He explained that Aston Martin's decision to fully fund AMR's GTE Pro attack from the start of 2017 had given him greater

freedom in choice of drivers.

"I have been trying to sign Max for five years," said Gaw. "Before, I didn't have the budget to bring him in, but I do now."

Martin is the second newcomer on Aston's driver roster for next season after Alex Lynn, and joins a line-up that includes Nicki Thiimi, Marco Sorensen, Darren Turner and Jonny Adam. How they will fit into the WEC line-up has yet to be determined.

"The pairings have not been decided; it hasn't been decided how many cars we will run," said Gaw, who hinted that Aston could expand its GTE Pro class attack from two to three cars. "We won't make those decisions until we get further into testing."

Swede Eriksson, who is understood to be hoping to continue his single-seater career in non-clashing Formula 2 races in 2018, said: "When I joined BMW, it was always my goal to make it to the top, to make it to the DTM. It's fantastic that I have achieved this."

Former DTM champion Martin Tomczyk, who led development of the new BMW GTE M8 in 2017, moves over from the IMSA SportsCar Championship to the WEC programme with the MTEK squad. Farfus, Antonio Felix da Costa and Nicky Catsburg will be the other full-time drivers.

Jesse Krohn has been promoted to the BMW junior ranks – in which he has achieved success in the GTD category in IMSA – to a full-time seat in the Rahal-run IMSA squad, while Connor De Phillippi moves to BMW from Audi's GT pool. They will join Alexander Sims and John Edwards, who stay on in the manufacturer's US-based line-up. American veteran Bill Auberlen will now only contest the long-distance races alongside a new ambassadorial role with BMW North America.

GARY WATKINS

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## FORMULA 1

# Mercedes on verge of 1000bhp F1 powerplant

## MERCEDDES FORMULA 1 ENGINE BOSS

Andy Cowell says his team is close to producing a powerplant that can deliver a power output of 1000bhp.

Power-unit development has been such that in 2016 Cowell said Mercedes had exceeded 900bhp, and now he reckons it's on course for four figures. "We're close," said Cowell. "I'm sure that'll happen at some point."

This year, Mercedes hit a landmark on the dyno when it broke the 50% thermal-efficiency barrier for the first time. Its progress is thought to have made its Mo8 EQ Power+ the most efficient racing engine ever.

Thermal efficiency, which is calculated on the amount of useful energy that can be produced from a given amount of heat input, has become a key focus

for modern engine builders. In F1, it is particularly important because of the strict fuel-flow limit of 100kg/hour. When asked how long it will take until 50% thermal efficiency is transferred from the dyno to the track, Cowell said: "It's an answer for the early part of next year. We need to see how the power-unit development goes through the winter, and it's a balance with the car as well.

"There are engines running on the dyno – that's one thing. When you go to total lap time, that's the bit where there's work being done to improve the technology on the car to enhance both aerodynamic and power-unit performance. Let's see how it all works out."

Mercedes' first turbo-hybrid engine, introduced in 2014, had an efficiency rate of 44%.

LAWRENCE BARRETTO



## FORMULAE

# Montreal double-header cancelled

MONTREAL'S FORMULA E double-header season closer in July has been cancelled.

The move, announced in a press conference before Christmas by the city's new mayor Valerie Plante, follows the postponement of FE's inaugural race in Sao Paulo until the 2018-19 season.

While Sao Paulo has been replaced by a revival of the Punta del Este event in Uruguay – on

the Brazilian event's projected date of March 17 – it is unclear whether an alternative event can be found for the Montreal date.

Series CEO Alejandro Agag told Autosport that racing in another Canadian city was not out of the question, but with only seven months before the planned finale it leaves the series with little time to source and execute a replacement.

It is understood that the

promoter – 'Montreal, c'est électrique', a not-for-profit organisation formed by the local authority – is yet to pay FE for the 2017 edition and has \$CDN6.2million in unpaid bills. The event was backed by the state-owned utilities company Hydro-Quebec and attracted no private sponsorship, something Plante said the city could not afford to repeat.

SCOTT MITCHELL AND RENE FAGNAN

## IN THE HEADLINES

## MASSA TEAM IN PUNCH-UP

A punch-up resulted in Felipe Massa's team being excluded from Brazil's 500 Milhas de Kart event, allowing Rubens Barrichello's squad to win. Tuka Rocha was lying second, trying to catch leader Massa, when he was held up by the sister kart to Massa's, driven by Rodrigo Dantas. Rocha punted Dantas off, before Dantas pinned Rocha to the ground, repeatedly punching his helmet. Barrichello inherited the win, with his son Dudu among his co-drivers. Massa apologised for the fracas. "This is very sad, and sadder still to see my team within that," he said.

## HARVEY'S INDYCAR DEAL

Ex-British Formula 3 champion Jack Harvey has secured himself at least four IndyCar Series races in 2018 with Schmidt Peterson Motorsports in a programme run in conjunction with Michael Shank Racing. Harvey is expected to race at St Petersburg, Long Beach, the Indy 500 and Sonoma. Shank said the partnership with SPM could become a multi-year deal.

## GOUNON FOR BENTLEY

Spa 24 Hours winner and ADAC GT Masters champion Jules Gounon has joined Bentley's Blancpain Endurance line-up for next year in place of IMSA Joest Mazda-bound Oliver Jarvis. Gounon will drive with Guy Smith and Steven Kane, with Andy Soucek, Maxime Soulet and Vincent Abril continuing in the other M-Sport-run Continental.

## WINSLOW INJURED

Versatile British racer James Winslow suffered a broken vertebra in a heavy shunt in the Gulf 12 Hours race at Yas Marina. Winslow had suspected brake failure of his Graff Ligier LMP3 car. He climbed out of the car unaided before fainting, and also sustained heavy bruising to his chest and ribs.

## ONCE ROUND THE GLOCK

Ex-Formula 1 racer-turned-DTM hardman Timo Glock will contest the Bathurst 12 Hours in February. Glock, who also did the race this year, will share a Team SRM BMW M6 GT3 with new BMW DTM stablemate Philipp Eng and Aussie veteran Steven Richards. Porsche is also sending some big guns as part of an attack on the Intercontinental GT Challenge: Frederic Makowiecki, Romain Dumas and Dirk Werner will share a Manthey-run 911 GT3-R.

## MAZEPIN'S GP3 SEAT

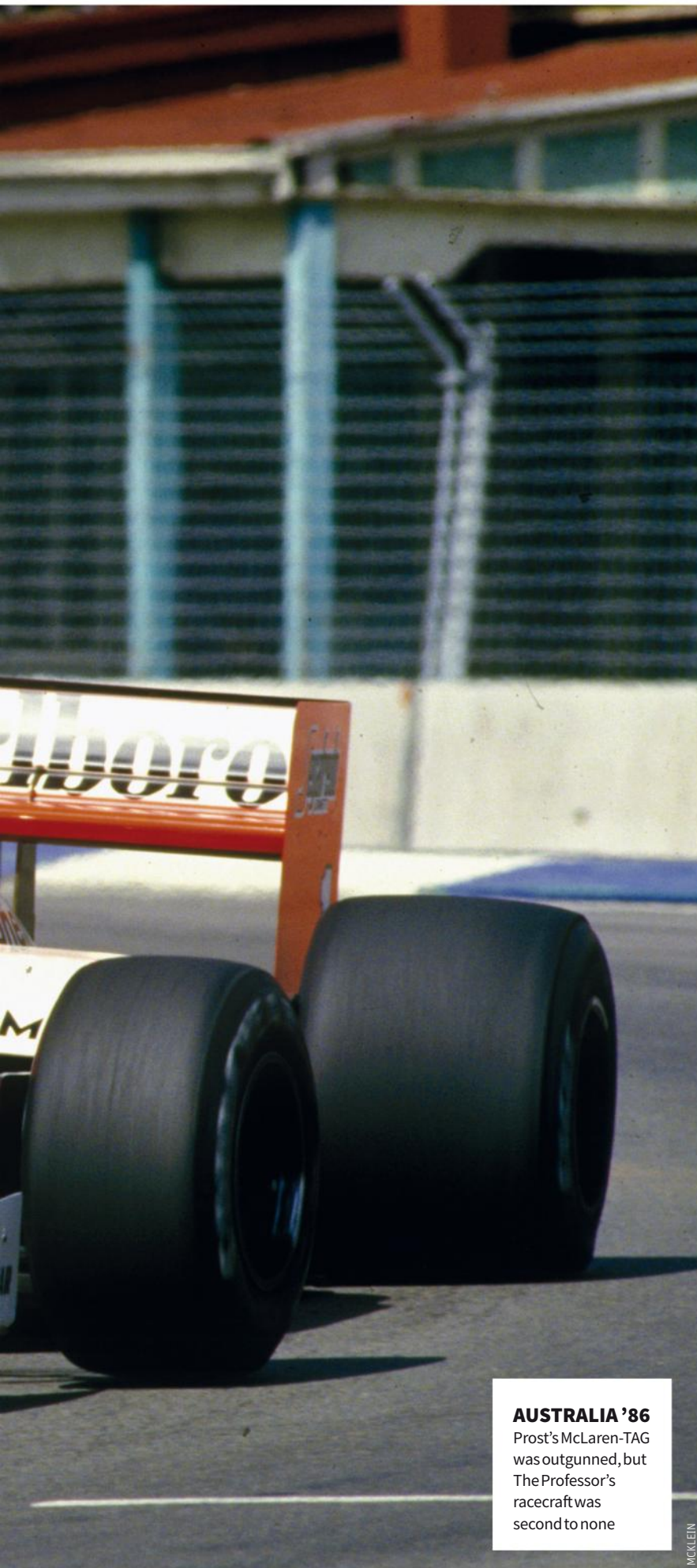
Force India development driver Nikita Mazepin has grabbed a seat at top GP3 team ART Grand Prix for 2018. He joins Ferrari junior Callum Iott at the squad, with two drivers yet to be announced.

# NIGEL ROEBUCK

## My greatest races

As the doyen of Formula 1 scribes – 547 grands prix down and still counting – our weekly ‘Fifth columnist’ has witnessed many magic moments. Here are the best





#### AUSTRALIA '86

Prost's McLaren-TAG was outgunned, but The Professor's racecraft was second to none

MCKLEIN

**Q**uite often I am asked which are the greatest races I have seen, and it's not as straightforward a question as it might seem: are we talking here of the best 'pure races' or, for one reason or another, the most momentous race weekends?

Very high on my list, for example, would be Pedro Rodriguez's mesmeric drive in the Porsche 917 at the BOAC 1000Km at Brands Hatch in 1970. While this could never be considered a great race *per se* – in the atrocious conditions no-one ever threatened Pedro – his astounding superiority that day keeps it in my mind as one of the most memorable I ever spent at a race track.

Then there was the Indianapolis 500 in 1991 – and this, by any measure, was a great race, coming down in the late laps to a fight between Rick Mears and Michael Andretti. With less than 20 to go, Andretti passed Mears on the *outside* going into Turn 1 – and on the very next lap Rick did exactly the same to Michael. It was drama at the highest level, at fearsome speeds, when CART was at its apogee, Indycar racing in its pomp. Unforgettable.

For the purposes of this story, though, I will concentrate on Formula 1, focusing particularly on what has come to be regarded as a Golden Age: what follows is a collection of race weekends, with emphasis on a few indelible favourites.

As a kid I was an obsessive fan, and by the time I began working as a journalist, in 1971, already I'd been going to races for more than 15 years. Although school terms meant that, maddeningly, I missed most British Grands Prix, by 1965 I was free, so let me begin with that year's race at Silverstone.

On paper it was going to be a cakewalk for Clark's Lotus, and after passing Richie Ginther's Honda on the opening lap Jimmy duly pulled away. By the late laps, though, his Climax engine was seriously low on oil, and to keep it alive he slowed, eventually on occasion *switching off* into corners – I clearly remember him coasting silently through Woodcote – then firing it up again at the exit! Graham Hill, running second, started eating into Jimmy's sizeable lead, but he, too, had his problems, being short of brakes.

All this prompted a priceless quip from the circuit commentator, complete with cut-glass accent: "So now we've got Jim Clark in a car that won't go being pursued by Graham Hill in a car that won't stop!" With 10 laps to go, the Lotus led the BRM by nearly half a minute; at the flag the margin was three seconds.

These days there's a lot of talk about 'managing a race': this was as consummate a demonstration of it as ever there has been. "There should have been no way for Jimmy to finish that day," Colin Chapman told me. "It was just brilliant improvising – no-one else could have done it..."

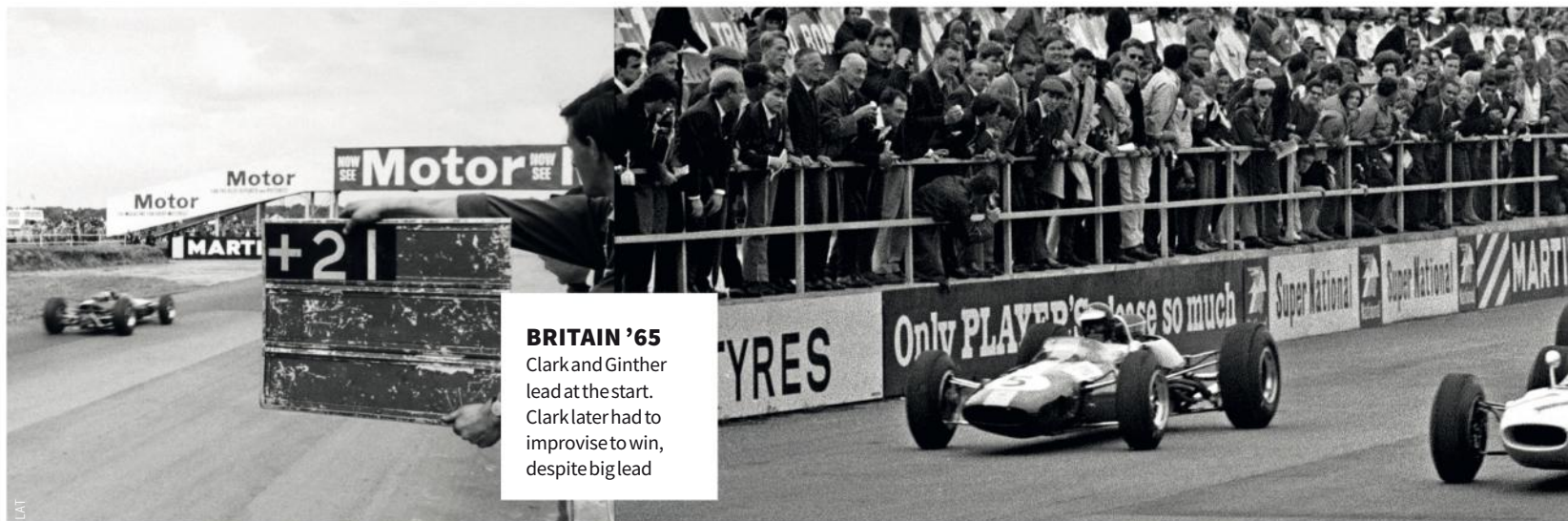
Although I've never been overly concerned with statistics, one that says much about Clark, I think, is that only once did he finish second in a grand prix.

At Silverstone four years later there was a fantastic battle between Jackie Stewart and Jochen Rindt, and JYS speaks wistfully of it to this day: "How many times are you going to have a race like that? The ingredients were perfect: there was as good as no difference between Jochen and myself, and the same was true of our cars.

"The great thing about racing in that era was that it was hard, but also so *clean*: for one thing, the drivers were all good friends, and for another, there was no weaving or blocking – we didn't mess around with any of that stuff, but if we had, obviously the others would have got closer, wouldn't they? We went hard at it from the start, and the fight went on and on..."

Back in the day all practice sessions counted for the grid, and for the final two-hour period at Silverstone there was a bonus of £100 for the fastest man in each 30-minute segment. Stewart took three of the four, but the last – which decided pole position – went to Jochen, and it delighted him. Ah, what a man would do for a hundred quid in 1969. For that matter, there was only a thousand for the race winner.

Given that Rindt's Lotus was marginally better on top speed and Stewart's Matra a shade superior under braking, >>

**BRITAIN '65**

Clark and Ginther lead at the start. Clark later had to improvise to win, despite big lead

there was nothing to choose, as Jackie said. For 62 of the 84 laps they passed and repassed, but then Jochen headed for the pits: a loose rear-wing endplate was chafing a tyre. After his mechanics had wrenched it off with their bare hands, he went back out, still second, but then ran out of fuel with six laps to go, and ultimately finished a livid fourth.

If Stewart won, Rindt duly had his day of days, and I'll always rejoice I was there for it. By the late 1960s I'd begun – as funds allowed – to attend the odd race abroad: in '67, for example, I was at Le Mans when Dan Gurney and AJ Foyt won for Ford, and saw the greatest collection of drivers – from Formula 1, Indycar and NASCAR, as well as sportscar racing – ever assembled for a single event. The following year I went for the first time to Monaco, starting a run unbroken until 2014, by which time I'd had enough of a place once loved, and now prefer to spend that weekend at Indianapolis.

The 1970 Monaco Grand Prix, though, was one for the ages, and by luck I had a grandstand seat at the old Gasworks Hairpin,

## “Rindt had his day of days, and I'll always rejoice I was there”

the final corner, where the drama unfolded. As Jack Brabham started his last lap, Rindt was a second and a bit behind.

In truth, Jochen had approached the race with something close to indifference. “That was how he was sometimes,” Chapman said. “If he felt there was no chance of winning, quite often he just went through the motions...”

At Monaco he was in that frame of mind because Colin's latest wonder car, the 72, had so far proved anything but, and while fundamental modifications were made Lotus had to revert to the venerable 49. Jochen felt it no longer had a prayer.

In the first session, on Thursday, he was sixth fastest, but almost two seconds from Stewart; the following day it poured down, and on Saturday, feeling queasy, he was way off his Thursday time. Rindt's problem, believe it or not, was seasickness. As usual at Monaco he was sharing a yacht with close friend Bernie Ecclestone, and while the future czar of F1 slept soundly through a choppy Friday night, Jochen did not. “No chance,” he said to his wife Nina before the race. “I'll just drive around...” And for most of the afternoon that was what he did.

By and by, though, his position improved, albeit by attrition. Jacky Ickx retired, then Jean-Pierre Beltoise, and then runaway leader Stewart lost three laps with a misfire. Now Brabham led,

followed by Chris Amon, Denny Hulme, Henri Pescarolo – and Rindt. At this stage, 28 laps in, he was already 16 seconds down, but there were signs that his interest was awakening, for he got by Pescarolo and Hulme, and now only Brabham and Amon were ahead. It was the old thing, a whiff of possible victory – and Jochen never needed more than that. He began lapping at the leader's pace, and was further encouraged by the retirement of Amon on lap 61. Brabham, though, looked set: with only four laps left, he still led by nine seconds.

Then everything began to unravel for Jack. On lap 77 he encountered Jo Siffert's March, stuttering along with a fuel feed problem, and – forced almost to stop – instantly dropped five seconds to Rindt, who by now was unleashing all of his genius, sideways everywhere, forcing the Lotus beyond its limits.

Thus to the final lap – and still the fates were working against Brabham. At Tabac he came up on three tailenders, and had to back off, leaving him unsettled when he came across Piers Courage at the final hairpin. What Jack should – and, ordinarily, would – have done was duck in behind Courage, for still Rindt was not close enough to make a move. As it was, though, he tried to get by before the hairpin, going off the line, where no-one had been all weekend. On full right lock he slid straight on, thumping into the barrier at my feet. Rindt, flicking into the corner, shook his head in disbelief.

When it was all over, I ran the length of the pit straight, arriving near the Royal Box in time to see Jochen shake hands with Rainier and Grace, accept the garland and trophy. Trembling, with tears rolling down his face, he looked like a man in a trance: his final lap – another record – had been 2.7s quicker than his qualifying time.

That night, after the Gala Ball at the Hotel de Paris, Jochen came down to the Tip-Top Bar, as drivers did in those days. We were waiting for him, and at midnight he and Nina arrived, swinging the trophy between them, staying until well after two.

Nearly half a century on, my eyes still moisten at the memory of that day, not least because four months later I made my first trip to Monza, and it was there, in final qualifying, that Rindt was killed, never knowing that the world championship was his.

If my first touch with Monza came at a terrible moment – and I was to see further tragedy there – still it stirred my soul as no other circuit has ever done, and the Italian Grand Prix weekend remains my favourite the year round. Yes, I know these days the race itself is invariably a boring procession, but the ghosts still abide of Nuvolari and Ascari, and so do my memories of Monza when it was a flat-out blast. Let me take you back to the 1971 race, when Howden Ganley – six-tenths behind the winner – finished fifth.

Nothing more than a race victory was at stake, for Stewart had already clinched his second world championship, but still the grand prix promised to be something, because in those days it always was.

This was my first season inside the sport, and through a >>



LAT IMAGES



**LE MANS '67**  
Roebuck saw cream of Formula 1, Indycar, NASCAR and sportscars ply their trade in 24-hour enduro

**MONACO '70**

Seasick Rindt not too fussed about making much of an effort – until he got a whiff of glory...

summer of getting to know everyone, of particular help to me was Amon, who would become one of my closest friends. At the time he was with Matra, who had probably the best chassis, but a V12 engine that sounded glorious, but was well off on power. So hopeless had it been at the Nurburgring that the team gave Austria a miss, but by Monza a persistent oil churning problem had been solved, and Amon reckoned his engine on par with Cosworth, if not Ferrari and BRM. Running a rear wing about the size of a tea tray, he put the Matra on pole.

At the start – or rather, *before* the start – Clay Regazzoni leapt away from the fourth row, but back then they didn't worry about things like that, particularly when it was a Ferrari at Monza. Gianclaudio duly led the first lap, but the pack soon caught him, and most of the early leading was done by Ronnie Peterson's March, with Regazzoni and team-mate Jacky Ickx, the Tyrrells of Stewart and Francois Cevert, and the BRM of Siffert close at hand. Amon for the moment sat back.

In those days reliability was not something to be taken for granted, and at Monza the attrition rate was always particularly high. Long before half-distance both Ferraris were gone, and so were Stewart and Siffert, but others were coming through, including Mike Hailwood, who had not been near a Formula 1

among eight drivers – and, most remarkable of all, on only eight of the 55 laps was the order unchanged from the previous time round. Gethin never had another world championship race victory, but 46 years on he remains the winner of one of the fastest grands prix ever run: 150.754mph.

To some degree that 1971 race was something of a last hurrah for Monza, for when we went back the following year chicanes had been installed, utterly changing the character of the circuit, reducing the lap speed by 20mph. Again Amon and Ickx shared the front row, but neither finished, and it was left to Emerson Fittipaldi's Lotus to win from Hailwood's Surtees. "A better result than last year," Mike remarked, "but much less fun. They've ruined the place with these poxy chicanes..."

So they had, but still there were to be memorable days at Monza. Ask Stewart to name his greatest race, and he does not, as you might expect, go for the Nurburgring in 1968, when in appalling conditions he won by four minutes: rather he chooses the '73 Italian Grand Prix, a race he didn't win.

"The thing is, *anyone* can go fast at Monza. There are some testing corners – particularly the Lesmos – but basically you're flat-out for a lot of the lap, so it's difficult to make up time. On the eighth lap I got a puncture, and then came through from last to fourth – I think it was probably my best drive, because it was a matter of being fast *and* ultra-smooth, of not scrubbing off speed anywhere. I don't know how many times I broke the lap record, but I kept getting pit signals from Ken Tyrrell, saying things like, 'Minus 25 Fangio!'"

This was indeed one of the great comeback drives, but Amon's at majestic Clermont-Ferrand the year before stands as the best I have seen. On pole with the Matra – using a Le Mans sportscar engine! – Chris comfortably led until picking up a puncture. After a slow lap back, and a 50-second pitstop, he began a charge from 10th place, repeatedly shattering the lap record, passing Peterson and Cevert in a single lap, finishing on the heels of second man Fittipaldi – and taking a minute out of Stewart, who won. 'Bravo Stewart, but thank you, Mr Amon' ran next day's headline in *L'Equipe*.

When Amon retired in 1977, the wheel of his Wolf Can-Am car was taken over by one Gilles Villeneuve, then the sensation of Formula Atlantic. "Is he quick?" I asked on the phone. "Quick?" Chris retorted. "He's as quick as anyone I've ever seen!"

Once Gilles moved into Formula 1 with Ferrari (via a one-off drive with McLaren), the legends began almost immediately: a disarmingly honest man, he was, I believe, the fastest racing driver I have seen. If his greatest drives came at Monaco and Jarama in 1981, his last full season, more than any other race it is Dijon '79 that most resonates with me. The battle between Gilles and Rene Arnoux is embedded in racing folklore.

"That was my best day," said Jean-Pierre Jabouille. "The first win for me and for Renault – and in France. Sadly for me, though, no-one remembers who won – only the fight for second place! And when I saw the video, I understood..."

## “That day the lead changed 25 times, among eight drivers”

car for six years. "I didn't know what this slipstreaming lark was all about," he laughed afterwards. "I'd never done it before..."

After running easily in the pack, with 20 laps to go Amon asserted himself, the Matra screaming past in the lead, where it stayed until lap 47, when Peterson came by in front once more, and Chris – one hand shielding his eyes – was dropping back. "I'd been losing tear-offs," he said, "so this time I taped it more firmly – too firmly, as it turned out, because when I pulled it off, the whole bloody visor went! Actually, in the end it didn't make a lot of difference, because then I started to get fuel starvation as well..."

Mortified as I was by this development, still there was an epic fight to watch. On the last lap Cevert and Peterson arrived at Parabolica together, but left their braking too late, and got out of shape, at which point Peter Gethin – fourth going into the last lap – dived past them, taking his BRM V12 a thousand revs over its limit before snatching top gear: at the line he was a couple of feet ahead of Peterson, with Cevert third and Hailwood fourth.

Believe this if you will: that day the lead changed 25 times,



**ITALY '71**

Regazzoni leads Ickx, Amon, Ganley, Siffert and Cevert at the start of an epic Monza race

In qualifying only Villeneuve got near the turbocharged Renaults, and he duly led from the start, running away from Jabouille at a second a lap: "To go for it was all I could do. For straightline speed we had to run very low downforce, and I knew I was hurting the tyres, but what was the alternative – run third all the way, and go to sleep?" That was him.

Soon after half-distance the inevitable happened, and Jabouille whistled past the Ferrari on the pit straight. "I could see his tyres were finished when I passed him," Jean-Pierre said. "How he got to the end, I'll never know..."

In the Ferrari pit they had new Michelins ready, for Jody Scheckter – running at nothing like his team-mate's pace – had already been in for a change. Villeneuve, though, stayed out, and Arnoux began to reel him in: going into the last five laps the cars were as one, and with two to go Arnoux came by ahead. That was that, we thought: Villeneuve's gamble had failed.

But Gilles was not like that. "I thought Rene would run away down the straight, like Jabouille had: I was in really bad shape with the tyres, but I could stay with him – so >>



**ITALY '73**

Stewart rates epic comeback charge from last to fourth as his finest drive and it secured him his third drivers' title

SUTTON

he had to have a problem, too...”

He had, in the shape of faltering fuel pick-up. “I thought I’d try to get him back as soon as possible,” Villeneuve said, “because he wouldn’t be expecting it. At the end of the pit straight I wasn’t really close enough, but I went for the inside and left my braking really, really, late...”

No-one – not even Gilles and Rene – really knew how many times they passed and repassed, how many times they banged wheels, slid wide, went off, rejoined, touched again. Halfway round the final lap, Arnoux seemed to have it done, and at the uphill hairpin felt secure enough to take the conventional line in – whereupon Villeneuve, braking later than late, dived through on the inside, and that settled it.

An abiding memory is that on their slowing-down lap Villeneuve gave a wave of respect, immediately acknowledged by Arnoux, and when they climbed from their cars, they embraced. “I thought for sure we were going to get on our heads,” Gilles giggled, “because when you start interlocking wheels it’s easy for one car to climb over the other. I don’t know how many times we touched – but it was never because we were trying to push each other off. It was fun!” Nearly 40 years on, we have seen nothing like it since.

Mario Andretti described the scrap as, “Nothing to get upset about – just a couple of young lions clawin’ each other”, but at the next race, Silverstone, Villeneuve and Arnoux were grilled at a GPDA meeting by other elder statesmen, Niki Lauda, Scheckter and others calling them irresponsible. Gilles was unfazed: “From where they were, what the hell could they see?”

While on the subject of Villeneuve, I should mention Watkins Glen at the end of that year – and not so much the race, which he won, but the first day of practice, when the rain was so bad that few drivers ventured out. Denis Jenkinson and I were in the pits, taking what shelter we could, when Jacques Laffite got our attention. “Gilles!” he shouted. “He’s going out!” And sure enough there was a Ferrari mechanic, carrying the tiny helmeted figure across the pitlane river to his car.

Only eight drivers took to the track, and clearly Michelins, as used by Ferrari, were the thing to have. The fastest Goodyear runner, Vittorio Brambilla’s Alfa Romeo, lapped in 2m25s, then Scheckter – who admitted to scaring himself – went



**FRANCE '72**

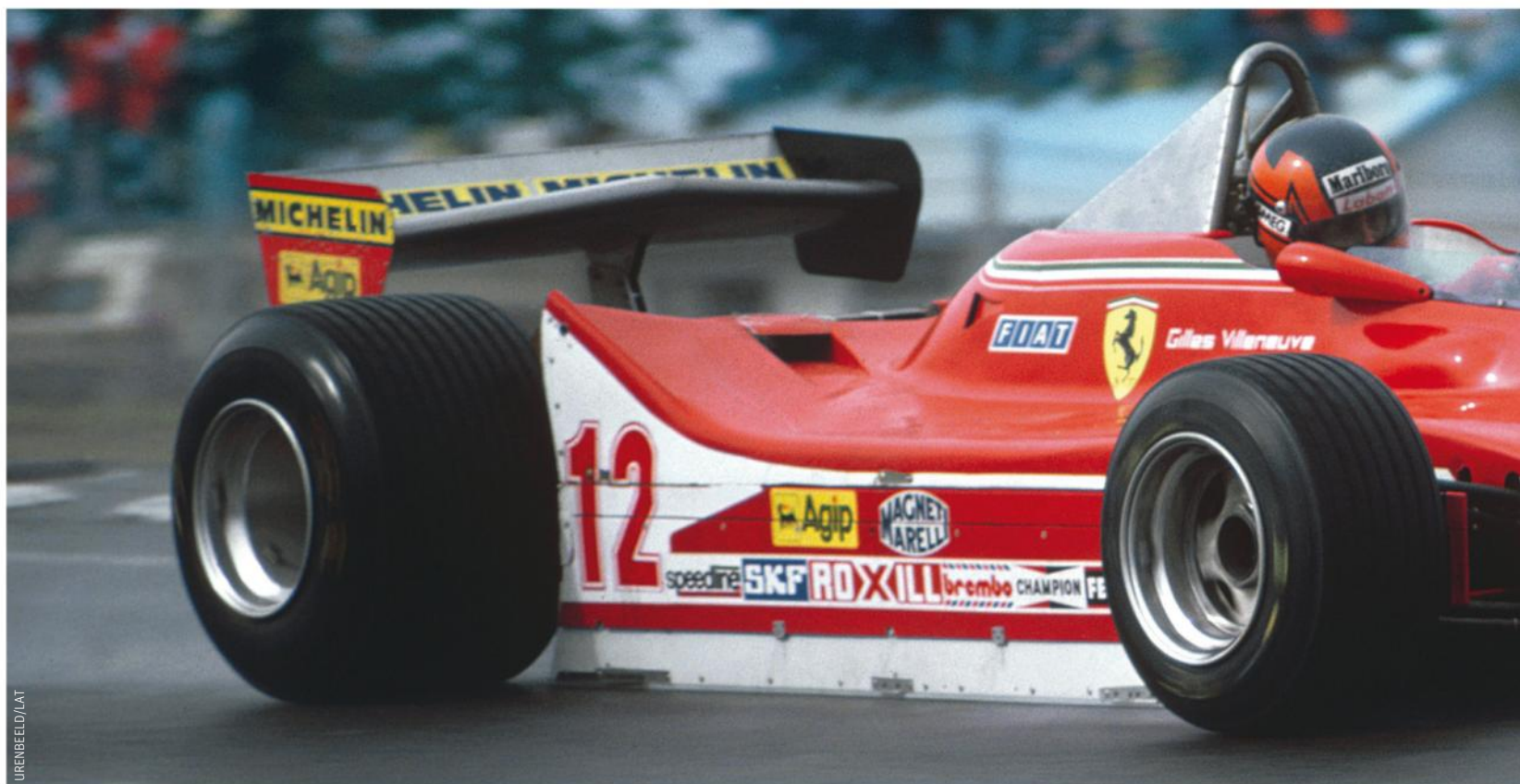
Roebuck reckons Amon’s fightback at Clermont-Ferrand is the best he’s ever witnessed

round in 2m11s. That made him second fastest, 11 – eleven – seconds behind Villeneuve.

It was surreal. “Look at him,” murmured Laffite. “He’s different from the rest of us...” So he was. The only racing man who has since reminded me of Gilles is Marc Marquez.

In the 21st century we have become accustomed to endless periods of domination by one team – Ferrari, then Red Bull, then Mercedes – which makes the statistics of 1982, the year of Villeneuve’s death, seem barely credible: 16 grands prix produced 11 winners, from seven teams. No-one had more than two victories, and the man who took the championship, Keke Rosberg, won only once. At the time Rosberg’s Williams team was still using the Cosworth DFV (now in its 16th season!), and struggling to stay with the turbos. At Monaco in ‘83, though, Keke scored his greatest victory, choosing slicks for the damp start, and leaving his wet-shod rivals behind. It was like sleight of hand, all deftness and flair: the rest looked clumsy.

A year later at Monaco came the celebrated wet race that was





**FRANCE '79**  
 Arnoux and Villeneuve's ding-dong battle for second place eclipsed Jabouille's first turbo victory

stopped before half-distance. After Nigel Mansell crashed while leading, Alain Prost took the chequered flag, with the Toleman of rookie Ayrton Senna at his heels – and the Tyrrell-Cosworth of Stefan Bellof catching both of them. Knowing little of Senna at the time, we assumed he would be thrilled by his great showing; instead he was incensed that the race had been stopped.

Eleven months later, at Estoril, there was another race in terrible conditions, and this one – because he was in the lead – Ayrton *wanted* to be stopped! His first grand prix victory came, appropriately, after a drive for the gods. “Villeneuve all over again, isn’t it?” Jenks said as he took the flag. “A driver who’s ahead of his car...”

Senna led from the start, and drove away. For a man in only his 16th grand prix – and in conditions unthinkable today – it was a numbing performance, and the pity was that so few were there to see it. Thanks to the miserable weather, and high ticket prices, the crowd was generously estimated at 10,000.

It’s not easy to convey how appalling the rain was that day, but a clue may be had from one of Nelson Piquet’s many tyre

stops. So dire were the Pirelli wets on his Brabham that when he came in – laps behind – for the final time, he got out of the car and disappeared, returning eventually in clean, dry, overalls. Well, there was no hurry, was there?

In those days, of course, we had no safety car, no facility for continuing a race ‘under yellow’ until the weather improved, and Senna frequently signalled to officials that they should call a halt to it. They didn’t, though, even when Rosberg crashed at the last corner, his car bouncing off the guardrail into the middle of the track. Keke – thumb broken when the steering-wheel flicked back – ran to safety, but there were horrifying moments as unsighted drivers swerved around the Williams.

Next Prost went off – and on the pit straight: “In the spray it was impossible to see where the deep puddles were – I was doing maybe 300km/h, and once you start aquaplaning at that speed, you’re finished.”

After 67 of the scheduled 69 laps, the two-hour mark was passed and out went the chequered flag, Senna immediately flinging off his belts, wildly waving both arms, half out of the >>



**USA '79**  
 Villeneuve had a jaw-dropping 11s advantage in wet practice at Watkins Glen

**MONACO '83**

Rosberg opted to start on slicks on a damp track, and left the rest looking second rate



car in his joy. “The big danger,” he said, “was that conditions changed all the time. Maybe people think I made no mistakes, but actually I’ve no idea how many times I went off! One time I had all four wheels on the grass, totally out of control, and everyone said, ‘Fantastic car control!’ It was just luck.”

Eight years later, in similar conditions, Senna would win for McLaren at Donington Park, moving up from fifth to first in the course of the opening lap, and putting in what many considered his greatest drive. Ayrton snorted at that: “No way – I had *traction control* ! OK, I didn’t make any big mistakes, but the car was so much easier to drive – compared with Estoril, it was nothing, really...”

Over 40-odd years I have seen many a world championship settled at the final race, the most bizarre being Las Vegas in 1981, when easy poleman Carlos Reutemann inexplicably faded to nothing in the race, leaving the title to an exhausted Piquet, while the most unsatisfactory was Abu Dhabi in 2010, when Fernando Alonso and Mark Webber were trapped for most of the way behind Vitaly Petrov, allowing Sebastian Vettel to take

an unexpected first title. Unquestionably the most *dramatic* championship decider, though, was Adelaide '86.

Going to Australia, the heavy favourite was Mansell, for although Piquet and Prost were still in contention, third place would do it for Nigel, whatever happened to his rivals.

Prost’s slight chance remained thanks to a stupendous drive in Mexico two weeks earlier. “Even in normal circumstances,” said Ron Dennis, “Alain had a lot less power than the Williams-Hondas, but this time he was down a cylinder for half the race, and didn’t dare to make a second tyre stop, for fear of stalling. So he had to make two sets last, whereas Mansell needed three, and Piquet four. Alain finished second, ahead of both of them...”

If over the season Prost’s McLaren-TAG had indeed been outpowered, he remained in contention because his racecraft was without equal, and he made fewer mistakes than anyone else. In this first era of turbocharged engines, his other surpassing skill was juggling speed and fuel: each car was restricted to 195 litres, and if you got it absolutely right, you ran out after taking the flag. Alain hated the rule as much as anyone,

**EUROPE '93**

Senna at Donington now part of F1 legend, but the pooh-poohed 'greatest drive' claims

LAT



## PORTUGAL '85

Senna took his first win in terrible conditions, after signals to call a halt went unheeded

“Senna flung off his belts, waving both arms, half out of the car in his joy”



but whatever it took to win, ‘The Professor’ would adapt.

Given his power deficit, though, Prost was never going to be a contender in qualifying, and he concentrated, as always, on a perfect set-up for race day. The fight for pole position was between the two Williams-Hondas, Mansell edging Piquet, with Senna’s Lotus third, and Prost fourth.

For all that, Rosberg, Prost’s team-mate, insisted that Alain was going to win the title: “He’s the greatest driver I’ve ever seen – for me it would be a joke for anyone else to be world champion, and I’m going to do everything possible to help him.” This was Keke’s last grand prix, and he wanted to remember it well.

The opening lap was sensational, with Mansell leading initially before being passed by Senna and Piquet. Nelson then outbraked Ayrton, so in the space of two miles the race had its third leader! The man really on the move, though, was Rosberg, who had qualified seventh, but was up to third by the end of the first lap, and into the lead by lap seven. Prost, after starting in typically conservative style, moved past Senna and Mansell, into third place.

“I always like to see these guys’ characters come through in their driving,” said Patrick Head. “With Prost, we’d be way ahead of him at first, and think, ‘Where’s Alain?’ Then you’d see that he was sixth, then fourth, and you’d think, ‘Oooh, Jesus...’ That was him, wasn’t it? That inexorable quality.”

By lap 23, with Rosberg leading easily, Prost passed Piquet for second place, after which Nelson spun back to fourth. At McLaren all was looking good, for if it came to it, Keke would undoubtedly let Alain through, but Mansell continued to run third, where he needed to be, and on lap 32 his title hopes

vaulted further when Prost’s right front tyre punctured.

Tyre changes were far from an automatic feature of races back then, so Alain, slowly making his way to the pits, seemed to be out of the championship. After a 17-second stop, he rejoined, now fourth, and immediately set a series of record laps: “At that point, all I could do was push as hard as possible – even second place was no use to me...”

In the pits Goodyear technicians examined Prost’s discarded tyres, and found that the wear rate was less than expected: all being well, they concluded, no-one would need to make a stop.

Head again: “Because we had quite a big power advantage, we were also able to run more downforce than anyone else, and I never doubted that was why we encountered tyre problems.”

At this stage, though, Williams had no cause for concern. For close to 30 laps there was stalemate, Rosberg still leading from Piquet, Mansell, and a charging Prost. Then, on lap 63, with 19 to the flag, Keke abruptly pulled off, believing his engine had run its bearings. In fact, what he had heard was a delaminating tyre flapping against bodywork: his right-rear Goodyear was in tatters.

As Rosberg retired, so Prost passed Mansell for second place, but still Nigel had the four points he needed – indeed at that point he could have stopped for tyres, and still won the title, but a Goodyear engineer assured Williams that he should have no problem.

Only a lap later Mansell, flat-out down the Dequetteville Straight, had his left-rear tyre disintegrate. From around 190mph, he fought the bucking Williams to a halt, and parked in the escape road, world championship gone.

“At no time did we think we were taking any sort of gamble,” >>

said Head. “Goodyear gave us no reason to consider changing tyres, and anyway it wasn’t a wear problem – the bits that were recovered indicated that the carcass had failed, by fatigue.”

Now it was simply a matter of winner take all – Piquet against Prost, three seconds apart, each needing the nine points for victory to take them past Mansell’s total. Then Nelson headed into the pitlane...

“After Nigel’s tyre had failed, we were between a rock and a hard place with Nelson,” said Head. “If we’d left him out, and he’d made it, we’d have been heroes, but if he’d had an accident, and hurt himself, we’d have looked idiots. There was no choice: we called him in.”

Piquet stopped at the end of lap 65, and was still in second place when he went back out. Now it was his turn to apply the pressure, but he made little impression on Prost until the last four laps, when Alain drastically cut his pace: “From the halfway point, my fuel read-out had been telling me I was five litres the wrong side, and wouldn’t finish unless I backed off – but of course I couldn’t do that, because I was so far behind after my puncture, so I just had to hope that, for once, the computer was wrong.”

For once, it was. Although Piquet set another record on the final lap, Prost’s engine stayed alive, and he crossed the line four seconds to the good, at once pulling up in front of the stands, climbing out and literally jumping for joy.

Jackie Stewart summed up the day: “You don’t often see a grand prix won by a slower car, do you? But this guy’s won the world championship in one...” For sheer unending drama, Adelaide ’86 remains without equal in my experience.

So many other races, though, have had their moments. I remember that boiling day at Brands Hatch in 1976, when

## “For sheer unending drama, Adelaide ’86 is without equal”

fears of a riot in the crowd kept James Hunt in the race, and he went on to beat championship rival Lauda, only to be subsequently disqualified. And I think of Silverstone in ’87, of Mansell’s instinctive pass of Piquet, selling him a dummy into Stowe; of Estoril in ’88, when Senna chopped across McLaren team-mate Prost, almost putting him into the pitwall in a move that profoundly shocked us at the time, but nowadays wouldn’t raise much of a ripple.

Very clear in my mind, too, is the championship decider at Suzuka in 1989, when Prost and Senna tangled at the chicane, and the rerun at the same circuit a year later, when Ayrton took aim at Alain at the first corner, and at 150mph pitched him off the road in the most reprehensible move I ever saw at a race track: behind them were 23 other cars, and the wing of Prost’s Ferrari – sheared off in the impact – could have come down anywhere.

Suzuka has always been strong meat, and more than any other circuit has given us drama down the years, as in 1994, when – in conditions so awful that the race was stopped, then restarted – Damon Hill produced the drive of his life to beat Michael Schumacher, only then to be cynically taken out by his rival at the title decider in Adelaide.

Five years after that we went to Suzuka in some trepidation, only too aware that any failure by Mika Hakkinen or McLaren would make Eddie Irvine world champion. As it was, driver and team were faultless, and Mika took his second title.

Hakkinen was the only driver Schumacher feared through most of his career, and they had a particularly intense duel at Spa the following year, Mika resisting Michael’s intimidatory tactics before pulling off a pass into Les Combes that ranks with any the sport has known.



There are so many memories of Schumacher, but perhaps the most unforgettable for me is Barcelona in 1996, his first year with Ferrari, when – in a car nowhere near the best – Michael simply, stunningly, humbled his rivals in torrential conditions.

I remember, too, a couple of extraordinarily intense races at Imola, in 2005 and ’06, fought out between Schumacher and Alonso, the man to whom his torch would be passed. Fernando won one, Michael the other: on both occasions the rest were nowhere.

And what of Lewis Hamilton, who has won more than half the races in the four years of this hybrid era? It might surprise you, but looking back on Lewis’s career to date, the victories most memorable to me were scored not in a Mercedes, but during his McLaren years. First, Silverstone in 2008, when he produced a wet-weather drive to rival anything by Senna or Schumacher, and second the inaugural race at Austin, in ’12, when he relentlessly chased down Vettel’s faster Red Bull, ultimately pressuring Sebastian into the mistake that decided the race.

I don’t have space enough to go into detail on these, and so many other of my 547 grands prix, so maybe they will be the basis of a similar story at a later date. For now, let me conclude with the best *pure race* I ever saw, which was at Monaco in 1969 – and not the grand prix, but the Formula 3 race run the day before. From the start a couple of youthful Swedes, Ronnie Peterson and Reine Wisell, cleared off on their own, swapping places constantly for the entire 24 laps, and ultimately lapping *three seconds* faster than the pole time! Not for a lap – not for a corner – did the action let up.

In the end it was Peterson by a nose, and years later he told me he remembered it as the most exciting race of his career. If Ronnie thought that, it’ll do for me, too. 🍷



**JAPAN '94**  
Damon Hill beat Schumacher in the drive of his life, then came Adelaide...



**SPAIN '96**  
Schuey was on a whole other level in the wet to take his first Ferrari victory



**JAPAN '99**  
Hakkinen was faultless in the finale on his way to second championship



**IMOLA '05**  
Alonso saw off Schumacher in super-intense battle

LAT IMAGES



**BRITAIN '08**  
Hamilton's brilliant wet-weather drive was Senna-esque

FERRARO/LAT



# How much F1 teams really spend

Our annual study of Formula 1 budgets looks at the ups and downs of Liberty Media's first year in charge

By Dieter Rencken, Special Contributor

**T**he 2017 season started amid great enthusiasm about Formula 1's commercial future. Liberty Media had completed its purchase of F1's commercial rights, placing an enterprise value of \$8 billion (£6.15bn) on an activity with annual revenues of around \$1.8bn (£1.39bn). Of that, 10 teams got to share – albeit inequitably – approximately half.

Their collective slices – crucially, calculated on earnings – totalled around \$900m (£690m), disbursed in 10 monthly instalments during 2017 by the operating company, Formula One Management.

That is where the bullishness stopped. For the first time in almost a decade, F1's earnings are down on a per-race basis after Liberty Media, listed as FWONK on the NASDAQ exchange, recruited a slew of highly paid executives and took plush new

offices in the City. In addition, it invested in the quality of 'the show', and commissioned expensive research and marketing tools such as F1's new logo.

First-through-third-quarter earnings were down, in turn resulting in a drop in revenues paid to teams of 12.5% in the third quarter alone (£210m versus a previous £240m). This trend is expected to continue into 2018 and possibly beyond. Teams are banking on a two-year lean spell before Liberty's investments start to bear fruit.

Yes, Liberty has offered bridging finance to teams to tide them over, but such sums ultimately need to be repaid in the long run. Only one team, believed to be Force India, is said to have availed itself of the offer.

Although Liberty reported an 8% growth in spectator numbers, these statistics are based upon promoter figures, which are known to fluctuate widely, and have no scientific basis. F1's acid test will be the release of Liberty's 2017

'eyeball' report – purified TV audience rating by territory – early next year. It will be the first such report published in the Liberty era, and will shine a light on the way ahead.

This report is crucial to team wellbeing, for it provides the basis for sponsorship pitches. Here, F1 urgently needs to reverse an alarming trend of departing sponsors, both at FOM and team levels. True, the arrival of BWT at Force India buoyed spirits, but the deal remains a bright pink spot among the exits of blue-chips Santander and Hugo Boss, worryingly to football and Formula E respectively.

The fact is that TV figures and, by extension, teams' abilities to attract meaningful sponsorship, are plunging (30% over five years), while F1's calendar doggedly hiccups at the 20/21-race mark despite sales talk of 25 fixtures. In addition, there is increasing pushback from promoters over the hosting-fees-versus-income equation, with Sepang and Silverstone both giving notice of exit.

That the Manor team, which staggered along under various owners after entering F1 in 2010 on the back of constantly broken promises to institute cost caps, eventually went bust is indicative of the commercial malaise F1 finds itself in. Its inequitable split of multi-billion-dollar revenues generated by playing to global audiences at 20 venues and 400m TV viewers sent a team with a budget of £80m to the wall.

On one hand, the effects of Brexit continue to hit F1 as much as they hit the real world. On the other, both teams and FOM benefited enormously, particularly in terms of dollar-derived income despite euro-invoiced expenditure for items such as engine and tyres increasing markedly.

It's not all doom and gloom. Renault's efforts to re-establish itself in F1 bore fruit with a fine sixth in the constructors' championship, with the French company attracting BP as fuel/oil/lubricant partner – albeit as replacement for departing Total – while Honda, which had every reason to exit after another acrimonious year with McLaren, has chosen to remain in F1 in partnership with Red Bull junior squad Toro Rosso.

F1 continues to enjoy a robust following around the globe, one fundamentally unaffected by the 'booting upstairs' of Bernie Ecclestone as chairman emeritus and departure of some of his henchmen. Where doom and gloom had been predicted in some quarters after the F1 tsar's de facto exit, the teams and legions of fans were gripped by a wave of enthusiasm.

After a first season under Liberty, F1 has every reason to be cautiously optimistic, with expectations of progressive

commercial growth from the end of 2020, coupled with anticipated revisions to its sporting, technical and revenue-distribution structures, further cause for confidence.

## Methodology

With seven of the 10 teams based in Britain, mandatory Companies House filings facilitate financial analysis of UK operations. In addition, although Haas's F1 headquarters are situated in North Carolina and the cars manufactured by Dallara in Italy, the race operation is based in Banbury.

Such accounts are at least nine months in arrears, so this information has been supplemented by discussions, analysis and educated estimates. Various sources were consulted and cross-referenced, including filings, known variables, informed assumptions and inside information. The same methodology was applied for non-UK-domiciled operations.

As development costs for the major technical changes introduced for the current season were primarily incurred during 2016, there was a jump in budget and headcount levels of approximately 5% over '15. According to most sources, these levels have now generally stabilised, with only modest increases being reported in some instances.

The Autosport 'Bang-for-Buck' (B4B) index, in which team budgets – excluding engine divisions – are divided by the respective championship advances made by teams over the season, was revised for last year's edition and this methodology is carried over to ensure consistency (see page 27).

FOM payments were calculated on the basis of a breakdown provided by an insider, and are based on F1's revenues for the year, disbursed to a scale paid out on the inequitable scale (see below) first revealed by Autosport.











New for 2017 is the inclusion of '16 budget and headcount levels per team for comparison purposes. In closing, it is important to note that our analysis focuses on '17 team budgets, and not '16 financial filings. As a result, there may exist considerable differences between the two sets of numbers.

## Notes

- 1) Team budgets exclude engine divisions where applicable, with the assumption made that the FIA's guideline charge of £18m for an annual two-car supply is applied internally.
- 2) Currencies converted from Euros (Ferrari/Toro Rosso), Swiss Francs (Sauber) and US Dollars (FOM, plus team sponsor contracts) to Sterling for ease of comparison. Rates: £1 = €1.20/SFr1.30/\$1.30

## PROJECTED 2017 FORMULA 1 PAYMENTS TO TEAMS (\$M)

Disbursed over 10 instalments during 2017, in order of payout

|   |             | COL 1      | COL 2      | TOTAL      | LST       | CCB        | OTHER     | TOTAL      | 2016 +/-           | 2016 CONST POSITION |   |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|---|
|  | Ferrari     | 36         | 41(13%)    | 77         | 68        | 35         | -         | 180        | -9                 | 3                   | Figures rounded off for simplicity<br><br>COL 1 = Payments are based on a team's classification over two of the past three years<br><br>COL 2 = Payments are based solely on a team's 2016 classification<br><br>LST = Long-standing team<br><br>CCB = Constructors' championship bonus |
|  | Mercedes    | 36         | 61(19%)    | 97         | -         | 39         | 35        | 171        | -                  | 1                   |   |
|  | Red Bull    | 36         | 52(16%)    | 88         | -         | 39         | 35        | 162        | +12                | 2                   |   |
|  | McLaren     | 36         | 31(9%)     | 67         | -         | 30         | -         | 97         | +18                | 6                   |   |
|  | Williams    | 36         | 33(10%)    | 69         | -         | -          | 10        | 79         | -9                 | 5                   |   |
|  | Force India | 36         | 36(11%)    | 72         | -         | -          | -         | 72         | +7                 | 4                   |   |
|  | Toro Rosso  | 36         | 23(7%)     | 59         | -         | -          | -         | 59         | +3                 | 7                   |   |
|  | Renault     | 36         | 16(5%)     | 52         | -         | -          | -         | 52         | -19                | 9                   |   |
|  | Sauber      | 36         | 13(4%)     | 49         | -         | -          | -         | 49         | -10                | 10                  |   |
|  | Haas        | -          | 19(6%)     | 19         | -         | -          | -         | 19         | -                  | 8                   |   |
| <b>Total</b>  |             | <b>324</b> | <b>325</b> | <b>649</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>143</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>940</b> | <b>965 (-3.5%)</b> |                     |   |

## MERCEDES GRAND PRIX

BRACKLEY, BRITAIN | GERMAN CONTROL

**2017 BUDGET** £290m (excluding engines) **2016 BUDGET** £265m



**2017 INCOME** £290m

- £30m Daimler
- £125m sponsors
- £135m FOM (including £57m bonus)



**EMPLOYEES**

860

(excluding engines, 450 estimated)  
2016 850



**PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS**

break even

**B4B** £32.2m (advance of nine places)

Daimler-Benz's F1 activities are split into two: Mercedes Grand Prix (race operations), and High Performance Powertrains, which operate autonomously. The former is held 60/30/10 by Daimler, motorsport director Toto Wolff and non-executive chairman Niki Lauda. Intriguingly, although HPP reports through Wolff, he is not listed as director, whereas Lauda is.

Headcount increased during 2016 as the team ramped up for the new regulations, with staffing levels remaining virtually unchanged through '17. FOM revenues remained stable, as did financial support from parent Daimler, which again amounted to around 10% of turnover. Although no significant new deals were announced, the increased turnover suggests escalated income per sponsor.

The February extensions of the contracts of Wolff and Lauda to the end of 2020, coinciding with the expiry of F1's current agreements, further reinforces the team's commercial and managerial stability.



**MOTORSPORT DIRECTOR TOTO WOLFF**

"I don't want to say the precise number, but the marketing contribution from Daimler is around 10% of revenue. That's a fraction of the exposure [F1] generates. It makes us profitable. The revenue growth is encouraging, and we've seen it in all [streams]."

## SCUDERIA FERRARI

MARANELLO, ITALY

**2017 BUDGET** £350m (including engines; estimated £305m without)

**2016 BUDGET** £330m



**2017 INCOME** £310m

- £170m licensing/sponsors (including Ferrari)
- £140m FOM (including £80m bonus)



**EMPLOYEES**

960  
estimated

(excluding engine operation,  
estimated 440) **2016** 900 estimated



**PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS**

break even

(after Group contributions)

**B4B** £43.8m (advance of eight places)

Ferrari is unique in producing its F1 car within one complex. It shares facilities, R&D and manufacturing costs with its road-car operation, which supports Gestione Sportiva in lieu of advertising. This complicates things, as revenues/profits for the F1 operation are not available. The October 2015 New York Stock Exchange listing provides further excuses for refusing to provide numbers for 'fear' of insider trading.

On the revenue front, the team benefits from the largest share of FOM's revenues. It rakes in almost a quarter of the team pot. Sponsors such as Shell, Santander and UPS complement the £75m provided by Philip Morris in exchange for nominating the red hue, and exploiting the team for promotional purposes. But Santander has departed, likely to be replaced by a Philip Morris smokeless-tobacco brand.

In 2017, the team put up a valiant struggle but finished second despite having the largest headcount and overall budget. This performance was reflected in its RACE share price, which shot from a shade under \$60 to \$110 in 12 months despite a modest increase in road-car sales. A severe blot is Ferrari's threat to exit F1 should the commercial playing field be levelled.



**TEAM PRINCIPAL CHRISTIAN HORNER**

"Budgets are under enormous pressure as the price of getting performance keeps coming [up] because everyone is searching for incremental gains."

**PRESIDENT SERGIO MARCHIONNE**

“The [commercial] dialogue has started and will continue to evolve. We have time until 2020 to find a solution, one which is good for the sport, but we also have to be clear on things we can't back down on.”



SUTTON

LAT IMAGES



HOME/LAT

## RED BULL RACING

MILTON KEYNES, BRITAIN | AUSTRIAN-OWNED

**2017 BUDGET** £215m **2016 BUDGET** £215m



**2017 INCOME** £220m

- £35m (Red Bull) ● £60m sponsors
- £125m FOM (including £56.6m bonus)



**EMPLOYEES**

740

(adjusted for outside projects)  
2016 740



**PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS**

profit of £5m

**B4B** £30.7m (advance of seven places)

Red Bull's UK-based operation draws on two interlinked companies: Red Bull Technology, which provides componentry and services to Red Bull Racing, the race-team entity. RBT also supplies gearbox/hydraulics/other permitted technologies to Toro Rosso, and delivers services to other group companies, so Red Bull's racing budget has been adjusted to £215m.

Despite being an engine customer – Renault power units badged TAG Heuer – Red Bull continues to hold its own against manufacturer operations, mainly on account of tight commercial controls that focus F1's third-largest budget on crucial areas: chassis design and racing operations.

During 2017, the team, which mostly earns in dollars (FOM and sponsors) or euros (sponsors, including Red Bull), gained from Brexit. The team acquired Mobil support, in place of Total, with a revenue boost, but failed to secure a title sponsor to replace Infiniti, which departed (to Renault) at the end of '15. But Aston Martin upgrades its current 'innovation' partnership to a title role from '18.

Due to second place in 2016's classification, FOM revenues grew by around £12m, further reducing the parent company's burden by approximately £10m, yet the team expects to show a modest profit. For the rest, it was a 'straight-line' season, with overall metrics remaining broadly at '16 levels – yet RBR won three grands prix.

## FORMULA 1/TEAM BUDGETS

### FORCE INDIA

SILVERSTONE, BRITAIN | INDIAN-OWNED

**2017 BUDGET** £97m **2016 BUDGET** £90m



**2017 INCOME** £97m

- £35m sponsors
- £7m other (including shareholder/driver-linked income)
- £55m FOM



**EMPLOYEES**

405

2016 380



**PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS**

break even

**B4B** £16.2m (advance of six places)

Buoyed by finishing fourth in the 2016 classification, and the additional FOM revenues generated by the performance, Force India received a further boost by inking a £14m deal with 'pink' water-treatment company BWT. Headcount increased by 25, mainly engineers, with the deal further enabling shareholders to scale down their contributions, and the debtors' backlog to be cleared.

BWT, a number of secondary sponsors including driver Sergio Perez's Mexican backers, Hype and Diageo – the latter associated with patron Vijay Mallya's business interests – make up the commercial portfolio. The effects of Brexit enabled Force India to break even despite being 'disenfranchised' by FOM. Still, FOM income amounted to more than 50% of the budget, indicating how challenging F1's sponsorship market remains.

#### CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OTMAR SZAFNAUER

"Delivering fourth place for the second consecutive year is a huge achievement. The backing of new partners, including BWT, contributed towards our success and allowed us to maintain a high development rate throughout the season. We continue to invest in the right people, with continuity in our senior roles, drivers and engine partner."

### WILLIAMS GRAND PRIX ENGINEERING

WANTAGE, BRITAIN | FRANKFURT STOCK EXCHANGE-LISTED

**2017 BUDGET** £120m **2016 BUDGET** £105m



**2017 INCOME** £120m

- £60m sponsors and driver-linked income
- £60m FOM (including £7.5m bonus)



**EMPLOYEES**

575

2016 530



**PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS**

break even

**B4B** £24m (advance of five places)

Commercially, 2017 proved much the same as previous years for Williams F1 (a subsidiary of the eponymous group), with income and budgets remaining constant. New for '17 is a deal with driver Lance Stroll, whose family acquired space, cars and kit, in turn sold to Canadian partners. A total of £10m was derived from 'selling' Valtteri Bottas to Mercedes, albeit marginally offset by payment to his successor Felipe Massa.

Title sponsor Martini, plus Rexona and Randstad, continued their partnerships and contributed around half of non-FOM income. Stroll and R&D credits provided the balance to give a budget boost of £15m over 2016, when Williams plc delivered a modest profit.

Clearly, 2017 on-track performance was disappointing, although an upturn is expected after a restructure, with the experienced Paddy Lowe brought in as chief technical officer and shareholder. Williams's future seems positive given that the increased funding will impact primarily on the 2018 car.

Note: as a listed company, Williams stresses that for legal reasons any information provided is indicative, and does not constitute forward projections.



#### MANAGING DIRECTOR CYRIL ABITEBOUL

"2017 was a year of growth; we invested a lot and worked hard both on and off-track and made significant progress since last year. This is demonstrated by the three-place jump we made in the constructors' championship."

### RENAULT F1

ENSTONE, BRITAIN | FRENCH-OWNED

**2017 BUDGET** £150m **2016 BUDGET** £130m



**2017 INCOME** £150m

- £80m (Renault)
- £30m (sponsors, including Infiniti)
- £40m FOM



**EMPLOYEES**

620

(excluding engine operations, estimated 450) 2016 520



**2017 PROJECTED PROFIT/LOSS**

break even

**B4B** £37.5m (advance of four places)



**CEO MIKE O'DRISCOLL**

“The wider Formula 1’s financial environment remains extremely tough for independent teams, a situation that can only be properly addressed through fairer revenue distribution and cost controls. Despite the environment we have made good progress. We have continued to make good progress commercially, and across the organisation as a whole.”

COMTES/LAT

Having acquired ailing Lotus (formerly Benetton/Renault) for 2016, Renault set about re-establishing an operation that returned £60m losses in '15. Facility improvements and headcount increases continued through '17, with the staff level reaching a plateau at 600+ due to looming cost caps. The engine facility operates from Renault Sport in Viry-Chatillon, and is not included in this analysis.

Funding is derived from three sources: Renault main company, which funds motorsport to the tune of £150m per annum across all categories, half of which is earmarked for F1; FOM income; and commercial/driver funding. But Renault injected an additional £10m as FOM revenues decreased by 20% year on year, while BP replaced Total on a like-for-like basis.

Improved 2017 results will deliver an additional £10m for next season, while the improved '18 driver line-up and upwards performance trajectory could see the team finish in the top five in '18, providing further commercial benefits. The signing of Carlos Sainz opens the Spanish market.

**TORO ROSSO**

FAENZA, ITALY | AUSTRIAN-OWNED

**2017 BUDGET** £110m **2016 BUDGET** £100m



**2017 INCOME** £110m

● £50m Red Bull ● £15m other ● £45m FOM



**EMPLOYEES**

400

2016 350



**PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS**

break even

(including £50m underwrite by Red Bull)

**B4B** £36.7m (advance of three places)

Toro Rosso is a finishing school for Red Bull’s cadre of development drivers, and during the latter part of 2017 returned to its roots by running rookies Pierre Gasly and Brendon Hartley after a period of retaining drivers for numerous seasons.

The team has continuously expanded its Faenza base and recruited accordingly for both its main operation and the Bicester windtunnel in the UK. Headcount increased 14% over 2016, with budgets rising 10%. This is covered by Red Bull, as the sponsor portfolio (consisting primarily of Russian anti-virus brand Acronis and watch company Casio) and FOM revenues (41% of budget) remained largely static.

For 2018, the team partners Honda and should receive an appropriate revenue boost from the Japanese company, which previously pumped £60m annually into McLaren. But until F1’s costs are reduced, Toro Rosso, like all independents, faces an unequal struggle.



**TEAM PRINCIPAL FRANZ TOST**

“Costs have to be reduced. It cannot be that [manufacturer] teams spend 400m a year, while at the same time every penny counts when selling street cars to consumers. Furthermore, manufacturers will not accept these budgets forever. This is intolerable. We spend far too much money in Formula 1.”

SUTTON

HAAS

KANNAPOLIS, USA/BANBURY, BRITAIN | US-OWNED

2017 BUDGET £100m 2016 BUDGET £100m



2017 INCOME £100m

● £75m Haas ● £10m sponsors ● £15m FOM



EMPLOYEES

225

2016 210



PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS

break even

(including Haas underwrite)

B4B £50m (advance of two places)

Having finished in the top 10 in its first season last year, Haas qualified for FOM Column 2 money, providing an income of £15m. This relieved the pressure on machine-tool magnate Gene Haas, who uses F1 as a marketing platform for his eponymous products.

From 2018 Haas qualifies for Column 1 revenues after finishing in the top 10 twice in three years (FOM policy), providing a revenue boost. This year, that was worth \$36m (£28m) to teams, but it will be lower thanks to the reduced revenues.

The team's 2017 budget remained stable, although efficiency improvements were made as the squad gained experience. It still operates to a convoluted model of a base in the US (where tooling/jigs/models are produced), cars designed and developed by Dallara in Italy using Ferrari's windtunnel, and race team operations in Banbury. Efficiency gains surely beckon.

Despite racing under the American flag, sponsorship acquisition has been slow. This suggests the market is not ready for a US team.

TEAM PRINCIPAL GUNTHER STEINER

"In our second season we streamlined the operation and improved efficiency, enabling us to increase headcount modestly within the same budget level. From 2018 we qualify for the full spectrum of FOM monies, which should enable us to improve our on-track and commercial performances even further."



THE LAT

LAT IMAGES

McLAREN RACING

WOKING, BRITAIN

2017 BUDGET £175m 2016 BUDGET £185m



2017 INCOME £165m

● £90m sponsors (including £60m from Honda)  
● £75m FOM (including £25m bonus)



EMPLOYEES

690

(including McLaren Marketing F1 complement, 80)

2016 730



PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS

loss of £10m

B4B £175m (advance of one place)

GROUP COO JONATHAN NEALE

"Our Formula 1[division] has not delivered the financial results we planned for, and that is why we're restructuring our Formula 1 business and coming away from our relationship with Honda. It means short-term pain, but it's the only way we'll be able to rebuild our commercial fortunes."



SAUBER

HINWIL, SWITZERLAND

2017 BUDGET £105m 2016 BUDGET £95m



2017 INCOME £105m

● £30m drivers/sponsors ● £25m third-party ● £12m shareholders  
● £38m FOM



EMPLOYEES

360

2016 320



PROJECTED 2017 PROFIT/LOSS

break even

B4B £105m (advance of 0 places)

The light McLaren saw at the end of the tunnel after an encouraging second half of 2016 turned out to be a filthy goods train careering towards it. After pre-season testing it was clear the relationship with Honda was doomed, shifting focus to damage limitation.

Sixth place in 2016 increased revenues from FOM by £8m, but sponsorship revenues dropped by £20m, resulting in an operating loss of around £12m despite reductions in headcount. Having lost Mobil as partner, the team turned to BP as official supplier, with a bright point being the arrival of Logitech backing. A title sponsor remains elusive.

Following the departure of former chairman/CEO Ron Dennis, Zak Brown and COO Jonathan Neale report to an executive committee headed by Saudi entrepreneur Mansour Ojje and Sheikh Mohammed Al Khalifa of Bahrain.

Losing Honda creates a £60m hole, plus previous commercial erosion needs to be halted – big asks. “We’re the only team owned by two countries, so if anyone can carry us through, they can...” said an insider. True, but for how much longer will they be patient?



This was a year of both upheaval and consolidation for Sauber, which in June parted company with long-standing team principal Monisha Kaltenborn having the previous year been acquired by Swiss investment group Longbow Finance. Experienced motorsport manager Frederic Vasseur was installed as CEO, and under the Frenchman’s leadership team morale has improved.

That the squad ramped up its efforts is evident from its headcount, which increased 12.5% year on year. It did not request advances on FOM revenues, as had been the case previously.

A 2018 branding deal with Alfa Romeo in return for current-specification Ferrari powertrains is further proof of Sauber’s upward trajectory. Improved commercial performance is sure to follow, although for now Sauber languishes at the bottom of the constructors’ table, but ahead of McLaren on B4B.

#### A TEAM SPOKESPERSON

“We do not comment on our financial situation.”

## CONCLUSION

While in January the teams were buoyed by Liberty’s takeover, by December there were long faces because of the prospect of reduced revenues, with teams also concerned that in its quest to find new fans, Liberty risked eroding F1’s traditional fanbase.

Up and down the grid, the overriding comments were of treading water until the end of 2020, when F1 has the opportunity of starting with relatively clean slates on its sporting/commercial fronts. F1 remains stymied by contracts imposed by its previous ownership, the CVC Capital Partners venture fund, and until these wash through F1 is essentially standing still.

Last year this feature concluded: “The biggest challenge facing Liberty remains the task of levelling F1’s commercial playing field, for teams with £85m budgets are scrapping in the same league as teams with four times that spend. Crucially, half the advantage is provided by bilateral contracts. Scrap those and 90% of F1’s commercial challenges are cured in one swoop.” That still holds true.

For every sponsor the sport gained in 2017 it seemed to have lost at least another, and that is alarming, particularly given that a team was lost and overall revenues are on the slide. Domination by a single team, namely Mercedes – albeit with a worthy challenge mounted this year by Ferrari – is also bad for business, and this impacts all the way down the grid due to the ‘switch-off’ factor.

Yet, in the final analysis, some teams reported growth – albeit modest – and F1 has momentum on its side, which should see it through to 2021. There is every reason to believe that Liberty is a more committed and judicious manager of F1’s commercial affairs than CVC ever was. That is the brightest commercial development of ’17.

## BANG-FOR-BUCK (B4B)

In calculating a team’s bang-for-buck index, the simplest formula is to divide its budget by the number of points scored in any given season, which provides a cost-per-point-scored factor. But, as the points structure (understandably) rewards wins and podium places, this measure benefits frontrunners.

An alternative is to divide points scored by headcount to provide a team efficiency index. But this fails to take into account outsourcing, in turn flattering teams such as Force India or Haas, which outsource where possible. Equally, Williams and Renault, who manufacture in-house, are penalised. Combining purchase ledgers and payrolls would deliver fair results, but such information is not readily available.

Thus the fairest metric is to measure championship classification advances made by teams over a season, expressing the positions gained as a function of their budgets. This index assumes all teams start from an equal position (10th where there are 10 teams, as in 2017), with the leader progressing nine places, and the bottom team making zero progress. Force India, for example, moved up six places to finish fourth.

### BANG-FOR-BUCK INDEX

| POS | TEAM        | BUDGET(£) | ADVANCE | COST/ POSITION(£) | 2016B4B POSITION |
|-----|-------------|-----------|---------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1   | Force India | 97m       | 6       | 16.2m             | 1                |
| 2   | Williams    | 120m      | 5       | 24m               | 2                |
| 3   | Red Bull    | 215m      | 7       | 30.7m             | 3                |
| 4   | Mercedes    | 290m      | 9       | 32.2m             | 5                |
| 5   | Toro Rosso  | 110m      | 3       | 36.7m             | 4                |
| 6   | Renault     | 150m      | 4       | 37.5m             | 9                |
| 7   | Ferrari     | 350m      | 8       | 43.8m             | 8                |
| 8   | Haas        | 100m      | 2       | 50m               | 6                |
| 9   | McLaren     | 175m      | 1       | 175m              | 7                |
| 10  | Sauber      | 105m      | -       | -                 | 10               |

As expected, for the second successive year Force India is F1’s most cost-effective team, well clear of Williams, its natural foe. Intriguingly, both teams have similar budget levels and use Mercedes power.

Their performance differentials are down to drivers (both deployed experienced/rookie pairings), management and operations, plus technical-resource deployment. Saliiently, Williams relies on an in-house model, including manufacture of its own transmissions, whereas F1’s B4B champion procures complete powertrains, and outsources components and services where possible. There must be a lesson in that.

# Leclerc leaves his mark

Charles Leclerc dominated the first year of the renamed Formula 2 series in 2017, taking Prema Racing to its second consecutive drivers' title

By Alex Kalinauckas, Assistant Editor

[@Nauckas](#)

**I**t's been an astonishing year for Charles Leclerc. The Monegasque sensation followed up his GP3 title success of 2016 with a runaway win in the Formula 2 championship, which had rebranded from GP2 ahead of the campaign.

His year featured seven race wins, eight pole positions, two high-profile disqualifications, tests for Ferrari in its SF70H car, grand prix FP1 running with Sauber, speculation that he would replace Kimi Raikkonen at Ferrari, Autosport and FIA award wins, and, finally, confirmation that he would race for Sauber as a Formula 1 rookie in 2018.

Leclerc hit the ground running with two wins from the first three races of the 2017 F2 season and the expectation and excitement around his year only increased from there. And, after sealing the title with three races to spare, he is able to reflect on his year alongside Prema team boss Rene Rosin.

"Last year I experienced how it feels to win a championship in cars, but we finished a bit on a low because we won the championship while being in the wall [at the 2016 GP3 season finale, where he clashed with Santino Ferrucci and retired from the first race], so it was not the same as this year, where we celebrated our title with a victory. That felt absolutely amazing."

Pressure naturally comes into any aspiring racing driver's career, given the risks, sacrifice and effort it can take to reach the top, and it's important not to let momentum slide. But given the fragile nature of F2's Pirelli rubber and the unpredictable racing in the series, it would surely not have been a problem

had Leclerc taken two years to win the category, as Stoffel Vandoorne did in 2014-15. The pressure was arguably higher on Prema as it attempted to defend the drivers' and teams' titles it had secured with Pierre Gasly and Antonio Giovinazzi in '16 with two rookies – Leclerc and his fellow Ferrari junior Antonio Fuoco.

"We worked really hard together since the first test," says Rosin. "We were joking with them – 'maybe I made the wrong choice on drivers!' Maybe I made a brave choice of line-up in the end, but I was fully convinced by them, and I'm more than happy now looking at all we have achieved."

That hard work they had put in during pre-season testing meant Leclerc knew he would struggle with tyre management in the sweltering heat of the first round in Bahrain. This proved to be the case as he fell from pole to third in the feature race – won majestically by Russian Time's Artem Markelov – but took the sprint-race win by abandoning any tyre worries via a pitstop and making full use of the fresh rubber.

At the next round at Barcelona, after picking up pole with a last-gasp lap, Leclerc won the feature race, despite a lack of radio communications.

"We didn't really know about the tyre management [after Bahrain]," explains Leclerc, "and I didn't know what to expect for the other races during the year, as I knew that tyre management was a big thing in F2. So then coming to Barcelona, doing the pole in a normal qualifying [the Bahrain session was red flagged late on] and winning the race because we were quicker than the others – that really showed us the potential we had and opened our eyes that we had >>>





the potential to win the championship.”

Having confirmed he was in the title hunt, Leclerc went about the business of winning it. His victory in Spain was followed by triumphs in Baku (where a penalty for failing to slow for yellow flags – he felt he did – cost him a double win), Austria and Britain. His Jerez victory from pole sealed his title and he capped off the season with one final win in Abu Dhabi. “It couldn’t have ended in a better way,” he says.

Leclerc’s strength in qualifying was obvious – he ended up sharing the GP2/F2 pole record alongside Vandorne and Gasly on eight – as was his overtaking prowess (witness his Playstation-esque

rise from last to fourth in the Hungary feature race). He was also able to remain calm among chaos, as at Silverstone when he carried on to his fifth win of the season, despite oil-leak-induced smoke pouring from his engine and causing his team mild panic. And the 20-year-old’s work on the tyre-management skills needed to succeed in F2 was impressive.

“I would say, more than anything, how quickly I understood the tyres and the tyre management,” he says when asked to pinpoint the key reason for his success. “You don’t win a race if you don’t know how to manage the tyres in F2, and we saw that in the first race in Bahrain. I just wasn’t good enough at that, so I finished

third. And I was a bit lucky to finish third because we were on the limit with the tyres, so I think it was *the* thing that made us do a big step for this year.”

There were low points for Leclerc, particularly on track in Monaco, where he retired with a suspension problem after losing the lead during a safety-car period. “I would say that a downside was Monaco,” reckons Rosin. “At his home race he was incredible in free practice, qualifying, [and then in the feature race] there was a safety car where we decided to stay out. It was totally our fault.”

Leclerc also had high-profile problems at the Hungaroring and Spa, being stripped of what had been a record-

**The Baku (below) weekend was tough off-track for Leclerc following the death of his father just days earlier**



ROUND BY ROUND

**Bahrain**

**R1** Markelov  
**R2** Leclerc

Markelov artfully overturns a 10-second deficit to beat Nato and Leclerc to the feature-race win with a well judged tyre-management effort. In race two, Leclerc and Prema make their own bold strategy call – to stop in the sprint event. The Monegasque makes it work, though, gaining 13 places in just nine laps to win ahead of Ghiotto and Rowland.

**Barcelona**

**R1** Leclerc  
**R2** Matsushita

Leclerc defies a radio problem on his way to his first of five feature-race wins and shows he has made tyre-management progress since round one, with Ghiotto second ahead of Rowland. Latifi looks set to win race two until he spots his wing mirror is missing and goes off late on, handing Matsushita the win and Rowland second.

**Monte Carlo**

**R1** Rowland  
**R2** de Vries

Rowland claims his first second-tier category win in the feature race, which ends in heartbreak for home hero Leclerc, who tops qualifying and leads early on before the safety car’s timing drops him down the order and a suspension problem puts him out. De Vries beats Rapax team-mate Cecotto to the race-two win by seizing control at Turn 1.

**Baku**

**R1** Leclerc  
**R2** Nato

Leclerc puts in a brilliant performance in Baku. He wins the feature – interrupted by two safety cars – from pole ahead of de Vries and Latifi, with proceedings stopped early when Gelael crashes and the ensuing carnage blocks the track. Leclerc wins race two on the road but loses victory to Nato when a penalty for failing to slow for yellows is applied.

**Red Bull Ring**

**R1** Leclerc  
**R2** Markelov

Leclerc prevails over Latifi in a nailbiting contra-strategy affair, as Prema and DAMS take different approaches to tyre choice. The fragile super-softs leave Leclerc vulnerable at the end but he just holds on against rapid soft-shod Latifi. In race two, Markelov wins from pole, ahead of Albon and Rowland, with Leclerc out after contact with team-mate Fuoco.

breaking run of consecutive pole positions when a non-compliant brass shim was discovered in his diffuser in Hungary. “We all know that was not for performance and he reacted pretty well,” says Rosin. At Spa he lost one of his most impressive wins – with a 26s margin of victory – when his car’s plank was found to have worn too heavily. Other than in Hungary, Leclerc only failed to top qualifying at Monza and in Abu Dhabi after failing to nail his best lap in Italy and going the wrong way on set-up at Yas Marina, where a focus on the first sector left him vulnerable to the tyres going off later in the lap. Azerbaijan was where Leclerc picked



up his best points haul of the year – 45 with pole, race-one victory, that race’s fastest lap and second in the sprint. But considering the tragic events of the previous few days, with the death of his father Herve, it was a remarkable performance. “He managed incredibly well,” reflects Rosin. “That was a moment where we said, ‘Yes, this is the guy to win the championship.’”

Leclerc ended the season with a 72-point margin of victory over Markelov, but, after explaining that he primarily focuses on himself rather than competitors, he picks DAMS driver Oliver Rowland as the rival who “was fighting me more than the others.”

Rowland, a second-year F2 racer who finished ninth in the 2016 GP2 standings with MP Motorsport, was magnanimous in defeat and offered his thoughts on the first rookie champion in the category since Nico Hulkenberg in ’09.

“He’s been strong,” says Rowland. “It’s difficult to come in being a rookie, and he had a rookie team-mate as well, so he had to learn everything for himself. It means that he has the ability to do that and that’s what makes him strong. He’s of a very high level, and deserves to be in F1.”

Leclerc will have that chance in 2018 when he steps up to the highest level with the Sauber squad, where he completed four FP1 appearances over

**Leclerc flourished in the family-like atmosphere at Prema Racing, as evidenced by the title celebrations at Jerez (above)**

the back end of the season. He had experience of such runs, thanks to his Haas practice outings in ’16, where he struggled to adapt back to his GP3 machinery on the same weekend. Leclerc was therefore careful to ask that if Ferrari could arrange for any more F1 weekend running it would take place at races where F2 was not on the support bill.

“Last year [I took] references in F1, but then you try to take it back to GP3 and it doesn’t work at all,” he says. “That was something I wanted to avoid this year and so this year I struggled a lot less on that.”

Over the summer, some observers suggested Ferrari should replace Kimi Raikkonen with Leclerc. But the 2007 world champion was re-signed for ’18 and Sauber’s deal to use up-to-date Ferrari power units meant speculation increased that Leclerc or Giovinazzi (or both) would head to Hinwil.

Such talk could have been a distraction, but it did not knock Leclerc off his path to the F2 title. “It’s more an honour than anything else,” he says. “I take it like that – it’s amazing to see that people are saying that about you.”

Rosin was proud to give Leclerc, who reckoned his team felt “like a family”, “a bit of the Prema philosophy” of winning and losing as a team: “He is on my top list of drivers – now is the moment to send him on to the higher floor of >>

## Silverstone

**R1** Leclerc  
**R2** Latifi

Leclerc survives a pre-start brake fire and a smoky oil leak to claim the feature race, while Nato keeps Rowland at bay for second. In race two, Latifi takes a fine win from pole, while Rowland, who makes a lightning start, clashes with King and Markelov, and tries to back up the pack at a late-race restart, earning a penalty that drops him to 17th.

## Hungaroring

**R1** Rowland  
**R2** Matsushita

Rowland wins the feature race from first on the grid, which he inherits after Leclerc is stripped of pole following qualifying. He builds a gap to Markelov that is erased by the safety car, and then defends just on the right side of the rules when the Russian attacks late on. Matsushita wins race two, with Leclerc fourth in both races after a series of sensational passes.

## Spa

**R1** Markelov  
**R2** Sette Camara

Leclerc simply disappears in the feature, putting in a peerless display to win by 26.6s. But an excessively worn plank – with Rowland in a similar situation in second – means Markelov inherits the victory. Sette Camara shoots off from third and goes on to win race two ahead of de Vries, while Leclerc and Rowland climb to fifth and eighth.

## Monza

**R1** Fuoco  
**R2** Ghiotto

Fuoco is declared the winner of the feature race after on-the-road victor Ghiotto is demoted for cutting the first turn on the final lap, where de Vries and Leclerc clash. Ghiotto makes amends in race two, while Leclerc and Rowland – out of race-one contention when his wheel falls off post-pitstop – fight their way up but fall short of the points.

## Jerez

**R1** Leclerc  
**R2** Markelov

Leclerc seals his title with the feature race win from pole, after sacrificing his sprint-race tyres to make certain of topping qualifying. A late safety car and Prema communication problems nearly give Rowland a chance to steal the win. Markelov produces another fine tyre-management display to win race two after leader Palou fades.

## Yas Marina

**R1** Markelov  
**R2** Leclerc

Rowland defeats Markelov on the road with possibly his best GP2/F2 performance but loses out post-race when his car is found to have a worn skid-block. Leclerc obeys a team order to give Fuoco third place, but then takes second when the Italian is also disqualified. In the finale, Leclerc charges from seventh to win, passing Albon in a last-lap battle.

**DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

| POS | DRIVER                  | TEAM                     | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15  | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21  | 22 | PTS        |
|-----|-------------------------|--------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|------------|
| 1   | Charles Leclerc (MC)    | Prema Racing             | 3  | 1  | 1  | 4  | R  | R  | 1  | 2  | 1  | R  | 1  | 5  | 4  | 4  | DSQ | 5  | 17 | 9  | 1  | 7  | 2   | 1  | <b>282</b> |
| 2   | Artem Markelov (RUS)    | Russian Time             | 1  | 8  | 8  | 9  | 2  | 5  | 4  | 5  | 8  | 1  | 4  | 3  | 17 | 9  | 1   | R  | 9  | 15 | 5  | 1  | 1   | 6  | <b>210</b> |
| 3   | Oliver Rowland (GB)     | DAMS                     | 5  | 3  | 3  | 2  | 1  | 9  | 7  | R  | 4  | 3  | 3  | 10 | 1  | 2  | DSQ | 8  | R  | 11 | 2  | 3  | DSQ | 7  | <b>191</b> |
| 4   | Luca Ghiotto (I)        | Russian Time             | 7  | 2  | 2  | 7  | 5  | 4  | 16 | 7  | 14 | 4  | 6  | 2  | 6  | 8  | 2   | 3  | 4  | 1  | 7  | 4  | 3   | 5  | <b>185</b> |
| 5   | Nicholas Latifi (CDN)   | DAMS                     | 11 | 4  | 6  | 3  | R  | 13 | 3  | 3  | 2  | 8  | 8  | 1  | 2  | 6  | NS  | 9  | 3  | 16 | 4  | 2  | 5   | 3  | <b>178</b> |
| 6   | Nobuharu Matsushita (J) | ART Grand Prix           | 8  | 14 | 4  | 1  | 3  | 7  | 12 | 6  | 6  | 14 | 10 | 8  | 5  | 1  | 16  | R  | 2  | 7  | 18 | 11 | 6   | 4  | <b>131</b> |
| 7   | Nyck de Vries (NL)      | Rapax/Racing Engineering | 10 | 6  | 10 | R  | 7  | 1  | 2  | R  | 13 | 16 | NS | 7  | 3  | 3  | 5   | 2  | 18 | 12 | 13 | 6  | 4   | 9  | <b>114</b> |
| 8   | Antonio Fuoco (I)       | Prema Racing             | 9  | 10 | 13 | R  | 11 | 10 | R  | 12 | 3  | 5  | 16 | 13 | R  | 17 | 3   | 7  | 1  | 3  | 3  | 5  | DSQ | 11 | <b>98</b>  |
| 9   | Norman Nato (F)         | Arden International      | 2  | R  | 16 | 13 | R  | R  | 5  | 1  | R  | 7  | 2  | 6  | 7  | 5  | 8   | 4  | 13 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 13  | 18 | <b>91</b>  |
| 10  | Alexander Albon (T)     | ART Grand Prix           | 6  | 7  | 5  | 8  | 4  | 6  | -  | -  | 5  | 2  | 18 | 11 | 8  | 7  | 12  | 18 | 14 | 8  | 12 | 9  | 7   | 2  | <b>86</b>  |

11 Jordan King (MP Motorsport) 62; 12 Sergio Sette Camara (MP Motorsport) 47; 13 Gustav Malja (Racing Engineering) 44; 14 Sergio Canamasas (Rapax) 21; 15 Sean Gelael (Arden International) 17; 16 Johnny Cecotto Jr (Rapax) 16; 17 Louis Deletraz (Racing Engineering/Rapax) 16; 18 Roberto Merhi (Campos Racing/Rapax) 16; 19 Ralph Boschung (Campos Racing) 11; 20 Sergey Sirotkin (ART Grand Prix) 9; 21 Alex Palou (Campos Racing) 5; 22 Santino Ferrucci (Trident) 4; 23 Nabil Jeffri (Trident) 2; 24 Robert Visoiu (Campos Racing) 1; 25 Lando Norris (Campos Racing) 0; 26 Callum Iltott (Trident) 0; 27 Stefano Coletti (Campos Racing) 0; 28 Rene Binder (Rapax) 0; 29 Raffaele Marciello (Trident) 0.



Markelov was runner-up, and helped the Russian Time machines to the teams' title

S. BLOXHAM/LAT

**AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS**



**1 CHARLES LECLERC**  
Leclerc was *the* story in 2017. He took five feature-race wins, losing another to a disqualification in Belgium, and possibly two more at Monaco and Monza. But his qualifying was even more impressive – eight poles equalled the category record in just one year, with his Hungarian qualifying DSQ preventing him taking the record for most consecutive. A misjudged move on Nato in Monaco race two was his only major mistake in wheel-to-wheel racing, while his clash with Albon in Abu Dhabi was a little unfortunate.



**2 OLIVER ROWLAND**  
If things had worked out differently for Rowland, then he'd have finished as the F2 runner-up. A lack of early-season qualifying pace (it was Silverstone before he qualified in the top two) meant he was often playing catch-up in races, where he was usually a close threat to Leclerc and Prema when given the chance to compete. The final standings don't reflect it – DSQs and reliability problems cost him dearly – but he was the second-best driver in F2 in 2017 and his win in Hungary and on-the-road victory in Abu Dhabi were sublime.



**3 ARTEM MARKELOV**  
Markelov gave Leclerc and the rest an early lesson in tyre management with a fine feature race win in Bahrain. That has always been one of his strengths across his four seasons in GP2/F2, but his consistency helped him significantly improve his best championship finishing position. His win total is inflated by Leclerc and Rowland being disqualified in Belgium and Abu Dhabi, but he put himself in the best place to benefit. He wished he had cut out more mistakes, but '17 was still a big improvement.



**4 NICHOLAS LATIFI**  
Latifi impressed DAMS with his dedication this season, and his hard work was rewarded with a big improvement in his race performances, which he called "a night-and-day difference". He lost a first category win at Barcelona after an unfortunate off due to a missing mirror, but he made amends in the Silverstone sprint race, where he dominated from pole. Although he missed a target of third place in the standings, he did lose points due to mechanical dramas – including a DNS with a blown engine after qualifying second at Spa.



**5 LUCA GHIOTTO**  
Ghiotto's consistency in the 2017 season was impressive as he only failed to finish in the points on two occasions (in the Azerbaijan and Austrian feature races). A mid-season dip meant he fell out of title contention, but he was resurgent in the final third of the year. Monza was his standout weekend. He charged from 11th to win a chaotic wet feature race on the road, but was demoted to fourth for cutting the first chicane on the final lap. A determined drive from fifth the next day won him the sprint event.

motorsport, and let's enjoy seeing him racing in the bigger formula."

Despite spending much of the season second in the points to Leclerc, Rowland ended up third behind Markelov. The trio were a step above the rest of the field, and only Fuoco's delayed win at Monza prevented them claiming a sweep of the feature-race victories.

After getting to grips with his early-season qualifying issues, Rowland and DAMS were a regular threat to Leclerc. The Briton won in Monaco and at the Hungaroring (not exactly easy venues) and lost a third feature-race win in Abu Dhabi due to a skid block being below the required thickness. He also lost points for the same reason as Leclerc at Spa, had a gearbox problem while leading the second Baku race, and a wheel fell off while he was in contention at Monza.

Markelov was consistent throughout the year and took five victories after inheriting feature wins in Belgium and Abu Dhabi. He used his tyre-management skills and experience well, and made a big improvement on 10th place in the 2016 GP2 standings. His regular scoring – and that of his fourth-placed team-mate, Luca Ghiotto – helped Russian Time win the teams' title ahead of Prema.



A new halo-shod, turbocharged V6-era F2 arrives in 2018 and, with it, a chance for the established order to be shaken up.

While Russian Time – missing off the entry list released in November – may not be there, Prema will. The team has signed Nyck de Vries (impressively quick and a race winner in his rookie year with the Rapax and Racing Engineering squads in '17) and Sean Gelael (15th this year with Arden International). Carlin returns to the second tier with Lando Norris, and George Russell and Jack Aitken

Rowland pushed Leclerc hard over the year, although at Spa (above) the Prema driver was unbeatable on the road in the feature race

are expected to step up from GP3 with ART Grand Prix.

"I cannot guarantee that we will be there fighting to win every time," says Rosin. "What I can guarantee is to give all of our expertise, all of our effort and all of our technical knowledge."

Although Prema will have an experienced line-up in 2018, now that Leclerc has redefined what rookies can achieve in the Pirelli era of GP2/F2, the pressure is on the new arrivals who come to claim his crown. ✎



## 6 NYCK DEVRIES

De Vries was rapid in qualifying – earning top-four grid spots three times in the opening four races for Rapax, and two further front rows for Racing Engineering at Monza and Yas Marina. A mid-year team switch is usually guaranteed to be disruptive, but de Vries went from taking a double podium for his first squad in Hungary to the sprint-race rostrum one round later with his second. His Monaco win capped his year, he was the second-best rookie, and should be a title contender with Prema in 2018.



## 7 ALEXANDER ALBON

Albon began 2017 with a string of fast qualifying performances and solid points finishes, with his second place on the feature-race grid at Monaco a particular standout. But he was forced to miss the Baku races when he broke his collarbone in a mountain-biking accident. With that in mind, his third place in qualifying in Austria was mighty, but thereafter his season tailed off as he struggled with an unpredictable car. He was rapid in Abu Dhabi at the season finale and would have been a fine sprint-race winner.



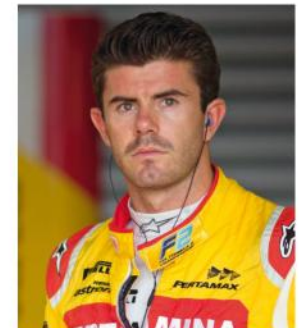
## 8 NOBUHARU MATSUSHITA

The Honda protege was the only driver outside of the championship top three to win more than once in 2017, but his triumphs at Barcelona and the Hungaroring came in reversed-grid affairs. He produced a fine lap to top Monza qualifying, but ultimately went nowhere in the race. ART Grand Prix struggled to get its cars where it wanted to through the year, and (Monza aside) Matsushita highlighted qualifying struggles as a particular reason why he could not hit his minimum aim of third place in the standings.



## 9 ANTONIO FUOCO

Fuoco's poor season, compared to team-mate Leclerc, arguably cost Prema a second consecutive teams' title – a zero-points streak from Bahrain race two to Austria race one was striking. Fuoco blamed penalties and small mistakes for his troubles – "everything went in the wrong direction, it was difficult to come back" – and qualifying speed was an occasional problem. But he did improve, especially in the final third of the season. Ghiotto's demotion and others colliding may have promoted him, but his Monza feature win was a highlight.



## 10 NORMAN NATO

Nato started strongly with second place in the Bahrain feature, but his season didn't kick on from there, and he didn't return to the points until Baku. But that weekend featured another strong performance as he spent much of the sprint race in the lead. Leclerc won on the road but Nato was perfectly placed to retake the win when the Prema driver's penalty was applied. Silverstone was also a strong event for the Frenchman, but he did not return to the podium after his second place in the feature race there.



# Russell's work of ART

ART Grand Prix is all-conquering in GP3, but in 2017 it achieved its first 1-2-3-4 in the championship, which was won by Mercedes junior George Russell

By Alex Kalinauckas, Assistant Editor

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## RUSSELL: THE VICTOR WITH THE SPOILS

GEORGE RUSSELL VINDICATED his switch from the Formula 3 European Championship with his first international-level title, which he took by 79 points and with four wins.

He had to make up ground after a low-key start to the year at Barcelona, where a pair of poor starts, caused by him being unfamiliar with the GP3 car's hand-operated clutch, led to his finishing fourth and fifth. But Russell studied hard and put things right from Austria, where he won from pole – a feat he repeated at Silverstone and Spa – and he also took the single-race honours at Monza.

“I set myself the goal that I could put it on pole every single race from [Austria] until the end of the season,” he said, after sealing the title ahead of Jack Aitken and Nirei Fukuzumi with a round to spare. “It was almost there – I put it on pole three times [out of four between then and Jerez]. Throughout the season, I felt I had the team around me to be able to do that and win the races we won.”

All three of ART Grand Prix's

title protagonists suffered reliability problems throughout the year. Russell's came at the Hungaroring – “the lowlight”, as he put it – where a sensor problem stopped him starting race two from second on the grid.

But the Mercedes junior – who followed his celebrations in Jerez with two Formula 1 FP1 appearances for Force India in Brazil and Abu Dhabi – maximised his opportunities over the year. He used DRS effectively to claw back places in Spain and climb to fourth in the second Silverstone race, and charged brilliantly to follow up his Spa race-one win with second place in the reversed-grid event.

Russell was also not afraid to get punchy on-track. He copped a warning for weaving as he brilliantly battled Aitken and the fourth ART driver, Anthoine Hubert, in the sole Monza race – all three deserve praise for that fight – and was decisive at virtual-safety-car restarts all year long. He put a pair of forceful moves on Aitken at Jerez, his points advantage meaning he had less to lose if they collided.



Russell was combative on his way to title

## ROUND BY ROUND

### Barcelona

**R1** Fukuzumi  
**R2** Maini

Fukuzumi beats polesitter Aitken off the line and comfortably takes his first GP3 win ahead of Pulcini when his team-mate retires with a sensor problem. Russell takes fourth and fifth after start problems on his debut weekend, with Maini winning the second race ahead of Boccolacci after the pair clash wheels at Turn 2. Lorandi picks up a pair of third places.

### Red Bull Ring

**R1** Russell  
**R2** Hyman

Russell's title charge takes off as he claims his first GP3 pole and win in race one ahead of Aitken. Hubert triggers a crash with Arden's Pulcini and Schothorst on lap one, which costs him third place to Fukuzumi after a penalty. Hyman wins a dull race two that is enlivened by Boccolacci crashing into Lorandi and afterwards rolling three times on the last lap.

## AITKEN CLOSE YET QUITE FAR

JACK AITKEN STAKED HIS claim by topping qualifying at the Barcelona opener ahead of Nirei Fukuzumi. He was beaten by his team-mate off the line the next day, but an engine-sensor problem shut down his car just as he was mounting a fightback. Finishing 12th in race two meant he was always playing catch-up in the standings, although Russell's Hungary problems levelled things out.

The Renault Academy driver took well deserved podiums in Austria and Britain, but had struggled to fifth in qualifying at Silverstone, where things didn't look right compared to his team-mates.

"I needed to adapt [to the car] a little bit and the team had to come to me a little bit as well for the driving style," he explained. "[Silverstone] was around the time when we were trying to adapt to each other and was the worst moment for that."

In Hungary, Aitken put in his strongest qualifying and race-one combo of the year, claiming the maximum 31 points after taking pole, putting in the fastest lap and beating

Fukuzumi by 4.4 seconds. But at Spa, after being in the thick of the fight for the win with Russell and Fukuzumi, he lost ground to the eventual champion when he moved over on Dorian Bocciacci at the end of the Kemmel straight and tumbled down the order.

Russell's win at Monza meant Aitken faced a 43-point gap approaching Jerez and, with few races remaining, he could not afford to crash when his rival made his moves, which left him unimpressed but not angry.

"We've had a couple of mistakes on my side and mechanical issues and a bit of bad luck in other races," he reflected after the title was lost. "It's not the season I wanted, but I learned a lot and I'm going to come back a stronger driver next year."

"Balance issues" and "problem after problem" left him down in 15th in Abu Dhabi qualifying, and flying debris bent his left-front trackrod in race one there. But, with Fukuzumi non-scoring over the weekend, Aitken held on in the fight for second overall. >>



Aitken took pole and won in Hungary

MAJGER/LAT



Aitken battled back from early setbacks

GRIFFITHS/LAT

### Silverstone

**R1** Russell

**R2** Alesi

Russell has to battle Hubert hard for the win after losing out from pole on lap one. But he gets back in front of his fast-starting team-mate to take the victory. Alesi claims his first GP3 win from a net pole in race two, while Aitken – fourth in race one – catapults up the order early on and finishes second, as Russell rises to fourth.

### Hungaroring

**R1** Aitken

**R2** Alesi

Aitken delivers his best performance of the year with pole and his first event win, after Russell fails to start due to the same sensor problem that stopped Aitken at Barcelona. In race one, Fukuzumi and Hubert take second and third, while Alesi leads a Trident 1-2-3 in race two as the ART drivers (except Hubert) hit trouble in the pack.

### Spa

**R1** Russell

**R2** Alesi

Russell produces "an almost perfect weekend" as he tops qualifying, race one and charges through the pack in race two. Aitken and Fukuzumi follow him home in the first event, which is another thrilling intra-team scrap. Alesi holds on to win race two as Russell falls just short, while Aitken misjudges a pass on Bocciacci and drops out of contention.

### Monza

**R1** Russell

**R2** cancelled

A Saturday washout at Monza means GP3's grid is set by practice times, handing Fukuzumi a first category pole. The weather delays mean the first race is delayed and the second cancelled, but Russell, Aitken and Hubert engage in a thrilling fight for the win – finishing in that order – after a sensor and gearbox problem stops Fukuzumi starting.

### Jerez

**R1** Fukuzumi

**R2** Lorandi

Fukuzumi leads from lights to flag to record his first win since Barcelona. Russell muscled his way past Aitken for second with a move on lap one. Lorandi takes his first GP3 triumph from reversed-grid pole as Russell puts another forceful move on Aitken and takes the position he needs to seal the title when Kari and Ticktum clash late on.

### Yas Marina

**R1** Kari

**R2** Bocciacci

Kari stops ART from sealing a race-one sweep in 2017 by stealing ahead of polesitter Russell and Pulcini at Turn 1. As they squabble for much of the race (Pulcini later drops out with a puncture after Russell gets by), Kari holds on to give Arden its first win of the year. Bocciacci passes team-mate Tveter and takes a maiden win in race two.

## BEST OF THE REST

**Anthoine Hubert** finished fourth, in the end just 11 points behind Fukuzumi despite not picking up a win. He kept his standings haul ticking over throughout the season and only missed on points in two races – the Spa and Abu Dhabi feature races, where he retired with a blocked radiator and finished 11th. He caught the eye with some feisty drives at Silverstone and Monza, but lost a podium in Austria due to some uncharacteristically clumsy driving that caused a crash at Turn 3.

**Giuliano Alesi** had a breakthrough year with three wins, with his Trident team-mate **Dorian Boccia** shining in qualifying and winning the season finale. **Alessio Lorandi** started with a fine double podium at Barcelona and joined the maiden-winners' list at Jerez.

**Ryan Tveter** brought home a solid haul of points and podiums for Trident, which earned him eighth in the standings, while **Arjun Maini** won at Barcelona and showed his speed across the year. **Niko Kari**'s form was inconsistent, but he was involved in many memorable scraps and drove well to take his first GP3 win at Abu Dhabi.

One of stars of the end of the season was **Dan Ticktum**, who transformed what became DAMS's final GP3 season with his speed at Jerez and Yas Marina, where he defied a time penalty to make the race-two podium. The Macau Grand Prix winner, who followed Fukuzumi, Russell and Aitken closely to fourth at Jerez, offered his thoughts on why ART is so strong in GP3.

"When you watch a car that is very balanced, you would say it looks slow, but actually it's not, it's fast," he explained. "They just look all very under control, the car looks very balanced everywhere. Whereas with a few other cars, you can see them moving around a bit more. For each track they have it pretty sorted where they need to be."



Fukuzumi lost title lead but was always fast

LAT IMAGES

MAUGER/LAT

## THIRD BEST FOR FUKUZUMI

NIREI FUKUZUMI'S YEAR GOT OFF to the best of starts when he won race one at Barcelona, and the 25 points he took away from the Red Bull Ring kept him in the championship lead after a quarter of the season had passed.

Missing pole in Austria knocked his confidence, but reliability issues at Silverstone and Monza (where he was due to start from pole) cost him valuable points, as did lap one clashes in the pack in race-two at the Hungaroring and in Abu Dhabi. "I think I did something wrong in my life," was his reflection on the mechanical problems.

"I feel very bad for him because two times we had a mechanical issue in race one for him – this means we had two complete weekends that [were] destroyed not on his fault," said ART boss Sebastien Philippe. "I think he did the step we were expecting from him from last year to this year, and he's showed great pace."

Indeed, Fukuzumi's results were a step up from 2016, when he finished

seventh in the standings. He returned with ART in '17 and demonstrated an ability to show a blistering turn of speed, so much so that, when Russell was pressed on which of his team-mates pushed him the most it was the Honda-backed driver he chose.

"From the very first test we did he was extremely fast," Russell said. "He seemed to be able to throw a lap out there out of the blue, which is extremely competitive. Knowing what he has in his locker and knowing what he can produce at any point, probably [had me thinking], 'Right, I always need to perform because this guy can pull a lap out.'"

The trip to Jerez produced Fukuzumi's greatest points haul of the year as he grabbed pole with a stunning lap for his first track-earned top grid spot and then converted it into his second win of the season, which made him "mega-happy".

"Generally, I think [this year has been] not so bad a season for me," he said. "I always tried my best because life is one time."

## DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

| POS | DRIVER              | TEAM                | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | PTS |
|-----|---------------------|---------------------|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1   | George Russell (GB) | ART Grand Prix      | 4  | 5  | 1  | 6  | 1 | 4  | NS | 11 | 1  | 2  | 1  | -  | 2  | 4  | 2  | 4  | 220 |
| 2   | Jack Aitken (GB)    | ART Grand Prix      | R  | 12 | 2  | 5  | 4 | 2  | 1  | R  | 2  | 18 | 2  | -  | 3  | 6  | 14 | 8  | 141 |
| 3   | Nirei Fukuzumi (J)  | ART Grand Prix      | 1  | 6  | 3  | 3  | R | 16 | 2  | R  | 3  | 4  | NS | -  | 1  | 5  | 15 | 14 | 134 |
| 4   | Anthoine Hubert (F) | ART Grand Prix      | 5  | 4  | 4  | 7  | 2 | 8  | 3  | 5  | R  | 7  | 3  | -  | 5  | 3  | 11 | 5  | 123 |
| 5   | Giuliano Alesi (F)  | Trident             | 17 | 11 | 6  | 2  | 7 | 1  | 6  | 1  | 7  | 1  | 6  | -  | 9  | 7  | R  | 9  | 99  |
| 6   | Dorian Boccia (F)   | Trident             | 6  | 2  | 9  | 17 | 8 | NS | 5  | 4  | 5  | 17 | 14 | -  | 7  | 2  | 7  | 1  | 93  |
| 7   | Alessio Lorandi (I) | Jenzer Motorsport   | 3  | 3  | 7  | 8  | 3 | 6  | 4  | R  | 12 | 14 | R  | -  | 8  | 1  | 5  | 17 | 92  |
| 8   | Ryan Tveter (USA)   | Trident             | 12 | 18 | 5  | 4  | R | 13 | 8  | 2  | 6  | 3  | 5  | -  | 12 | 14 | 8  | 2  | 78  |
| 9   | Arjun Maini (IND)   | Jenzer Motorsport   | 7  | 1  | 10 | 16 | 6 | 5  | R  | 8  | 4  | 6  | 16 | -  | 17 | 12 | 3  | 6  | 72  |
| 10  | Niko Kari (FIN)     | Arden International | 15 | 14 | R  | 18 | 5 | 3  | 9  | 6  | 9  | 9  | 15 | -  | 6  | 19 | 1  | 13 | 63  |

11 Dan Ticktum (DAMS) 36; 12 Kevin Jorg (Trident) 28; 13 Raoul Hyman (Campos Racing) 27; 14 Leonardo Pulcini (Arden International) 20; 15 Julien Falchero (Campos Racing) 16; 16 Marcos Siebert (Campos Racing) 13; 17 Steijn Schothorst (Arden International) 8; 18 Tatiana Calderon (DAMS) 7; 19 Santino Ferrucci (DAMS) 3; 20 Bruno Baptista (DAMS) 3; 21 Juan Manuel Correa (Jenzer Motorsport) 0; 22 Matthieu Vaxiviere (DAMS) 0.

## AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



MAUGER/LAT

**1 GEORGE RUSSELL**

Russell made a low-key start to the year at Barcelona, losing places off the line before he adapted to GP3's hand-operated clutch. His season really sparked into life in Austria, with pole and the race-one win there, and he repeated that feat at Silverstone and at Spa, and won the only race of the disrupted weekend at Monza. Russell's late-season points advantage meant he could afford to get aggressive at Jerez, and two forceful moves gained the places he needed to seal the title with a round to spare.



SBLOXHAM/LAT

**2 JACK AITKEN**

Aitken just shades Nirei Fukuzumi for second place due to his performances in the more-crucial race one events across 2017, as, taking DNFs for the pair out of the equation, Aitken comes out on top. He was always playing catch-up to Russell after a DNF in round one (although Russell had his own mechanical woe later on), but lost ground in Austria and Britain just as his rival was building momentum. A flawless performance in Hungary was his stand-out moment as he took pole, race-one honours and a fastest lap.



MAUGER/LAT

**3 NIREI FUKUZUMI**

In his second year with ART, Fukuzumi had an early advantage over his team-mates. He made a fine start with a race-one victory at Barcelona, but had to wait until Jerez before he won again. The popular racer was frustrated not to take a pole earlier, but was finally rewarded for his determination after a scintillating lap at Jerez (his Monza pole came after a qualifying washout). It should be noted that Fukuzumi suffered the worst of ART's reliability problems in 2017, which cost him points at Silverstone and Monza.



MAUGER/LAT

**4 DORIAN BOCCOLACCI**

Bocolacci earns this position over team-mate Giuliano Alesi, who finished as the highest non-ART driver in the standings. Alesi also has three wins to Bocolacci's one, but Bocolacci's qualifying stats – a commanding 8-0 victory over Alesi – and race-one results made the difference. The rookie had early problems with tyre management – and had a dramatic crash in Austria – but he improved, winning in Abu Dhabi. His pure speed was impressive, while gearbox/hydraulic problems prevented him starting the Silverstone sprint race from pole.



MAUGER/LAT

**5 GIULIANO ALESI**

Alesi is second in the 2017 GP3 win list, thanks to his three triumphs, but all of them came in reversed-grid events, which counts against him in consideration for this list. But he still had to convert those favourable grid spots (although only at Silverstone did he head a race-two grid) into the wins and weather the DRS-assisted storms from the pack behind. He needs to improve his speed in qualifying, with a pair of sixth places his best this year, but this was nevertheless a big improvement on '16.



GRIFFITHS/LAT

**6 ANTOINE HUBERT**

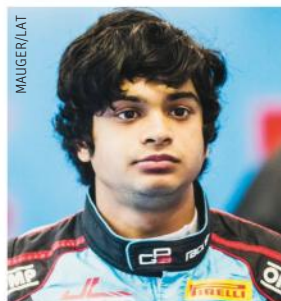
Hubert may have been the only ART driver not to win a race in 2017, but he does finish as runner-up in the fastest-laps stakes, with three to Russell's five. He reckoned his inexperience cost him compared to his team-mates, but he did enough to give his team a 1-2-3-4 sweep in the standings. Second in race one at Silverstone, where he also clinched his only front-row start of '17, may have been his best overall result, but his battling with Russell and Aitken for the win at Monza really stood out.



MAUGER/LAT

**7 NIKO KARI**

Kari said he struggled with set-up problems throughout 2017 and, after a string of low-key results, Red Bull made the decision to drop him from its junior ranks at the end of the year. But the Arden-run Finn had a breakthrough end to the season, after sorting out his set-up issues in Abu Dhabi, where his victory denied ART a sweep of the race-one wins. He was feisty throughout the season in terms of wheel-to-wheel racing, but did pick up penalties at Jerez and Yas Marina as a result.



MAUGER/LAT

**8 ARJUN MAINI**

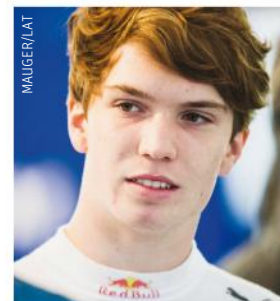
Haas Formula 1 junior driver Maini showed flashes of speed for Jenzer Motorsport across 2017 – with his third place in qualifying at Spa particularly eye-catching – but his results were inconsistent. His win in the second race at Barcelona was commanding, once he got into the lead and rebuffed Bocolacci's advances. After disappointing events at Monza and Jerez, he returned to the podium in Abu Dhabi (helped by Pulcini's puncture), where he also turned in good speed in a Formula 2 car during the post-season tests.



MAUGER/LAT

**9 ALESSIO LORANDI**

Lorandi was unfortunate not to finish every race of the season, as a puncture put him out in race two at the Hungaroring and he was rear-ended by Pulcini in a crash during the only race at Monza. He didn't kick on as he might have hoped after taking a pair of podiums at the Barcelona opener, but he did finish with the joint-fourth highest number of podium appearances (shared with Alesi and Hubert), and clinched a maiden category win by leading from start to finish in race two at Jerez.



MAUGER/LAT

**10 DAN TICKTUM**

Ticktum had a brilliant end to 2017 – not only did he win in Macau and take the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award, but he starred in his cameos for DAMS. Monza was low-key (not helped by the washout that restricted his running on Saturday), but he was immediately right on the pace at Jerez, both qualifying and finishing in fourth in race one. He lost a potential podium in race two in a clash with Kari but, after flying in Abu Dhabi qualifying, he beat a time penalty to take third in the season finale.

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**BA** Ben Anderson  
**GA** Gary Anderson  
**DD'A** Dom D'Angelillo  
**LB** Lawrence Barretto  
**MB** Matt Beer  
**JB** Jack Benyon  
**JBL** Jake Boxall-Legge

**CB** Charles Bradley  
**KC** Karun Chandhok  
**FC** Fatema Chowdhury  
**SC** Stuart Codling  
**AC** Adam Cooper  
**JC** Jack Cozens  
**TE** Tom Errington  
**DE** David Evans

**PF** Paul Fearnley  
**GF** Glenn Freeman  
**MG** Mark Glendenning  
**DG** David Gruz  
**JH** Jamie Howlett  
**MJ** Matt James  
**HJ** Haydn Jeavons  
**AK** Alex Kalinauckas

**SK** Samarth Kanak  
**MK** Matt Kew  
**VK** Valentin Khorounzhiy  
**JK** Jamie Klein  
**RL** Robert Ladbrook  
**PL** Paul Lawrence  
**SL** Stephen Lickorish  
**SMA** Stefan Mackley

**DM** David Malsher  
**BM** Bruce Martin  
**SM** Scott Mitchell  
**TN** Tiff Needell  
**JNE** James Newbold  
**JNO** Jonathan Noble  
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 Gary Anderson's verdict on the F1 driver market (Jan 19)  
 Ecclestone out, Brawn joins F1 top table (Jan 26)  
 Has Manor's last chance gone? (Feb 2)  
 Kubica on his Le Mans adventure (Feb 9)  
 Rowland targets GP2 title (Feb 16)  
 FIA's 1% stake in F1 explained (Feb 23)  
 Hamilton and Mercedes on form (Mar 2)  
 Non-championship F1 races (Mar 9)  
 GP2 becomes F2 (Mar 16)  
 The big questions before Melbourne (Mar 23)  
 Sauber defends Wehrlein's GP absence (Mar 30)  
 Why F1 tech bosses welcome Brawn (Apr 6)  
 Law change boosts closed-road events (Apr 13)  
 Button to replace Alonso at Monaco (Apr 20)  
 How realistic is Renault's F1 vision? (Apr 27)  
 Indy winner's advice for Alonso (May 4)  
 Alonso's first Indy 500 test (May 11)  
 Alonso kicks off Indy practice (May 18)  
 Dixon tops Indy field as Bourdais shunts (May 25)  
 Dixon survives horror shunt (June 1)  
 Le Mans test (June 8)  
 Meeke dropped for Rally Poland (June 15)  
 New WEC plans announced for 2020 (June 22)

Sauber's week of chaos (June 29)  
 F3 could face breakaway series (July 6)  
 British GP activates break clause (July 13)  
 F1 shield debated after Vettel test (July 20)  
 Cosworth closes on F1 comeback (July 27)  
 Motorsport in crisis (Aug 3)  
 What next for Kubica? (Aug 10)  
 Button's challenges in Super GT (Aug 17)  
 Honda doubts after Toro Rosso talks fail (Aug 24)  
 Button plans full-time race return (Aug 31)  
 New F2 car crucial for F1 graduation (Sept 7)  
 Sainz on the verge of Renault switch (Sept 14)  
 Toro Rosso-Honda deal confirmed (Sept 21)  
 Is new one-make F3 really a bad idea? (Sept 28)  
 Penske joins early as IMSA booms (Oct 5)  
 Williams race hots up as Kubica tests (Oct 12)  
 Hartley's Toro Rosso shot (Oct 19)  
 Verstappen and Alonso sign new contracts (Oct 26)  
 Why Alonso is really doing Daytona (Nov 2)  
 Ferrari threatens to quit F1 over engines (Nov 9)  
 Alonso's Le Mans 24 Hours bid (Nov 16)  
 Toyota close to return as Alonso tests (Nov 23)  
 Pirelli aims to spice up F1 (Nov 30)  
 Sauber secures Alfa Romeo deal (Dec 7)  
 Why WTCR had to go low-cost with TCR merger (Dec 14-21)

## Reports – miscellaneous

Race Of Champions (Jan 26-**CB**)  
 Daytona 24 Hours (Feb 2-**GW**)  
 Bathurst 12 Hour (Feb 9-**AVL**)  
 Goodwood Members' Meeting (Feb 23-**MP**)  
 Daytona 500 (Mar 2-**DM**)  
 Nurburgring 24 Hours (June 1-**JNE**)  
 Goodwood Festival of Speed (Mar 9)  
 Silverstone Classic (Aug 3-**MP**)  
 Goodwood Revival (Sept 14-**MP/KT**)  
 Bathurst 1000 (Oct 12-**AVL**)  
 Macau Grand Prix (Nov 23-**MS**)  
 FIA GT World Cup (Nov 23-**JC**)

## Special features

Daytona 24 Hours preview (Jan 26-**GW**)  
 50 years of rallycross (Feb 2-**HR**)  
 Is Stirling Moss motorsport's greatest all-rounder? (Feb 9-**KT/ES**)  
 Motorsport's versatile greats (Feb 9-**KT**)  
 Vic Elford, unsung talent (Feb 9-**DE**)  
 The modern all-rounders (Feb 9-**MS**)  
 Why Super GT is so tough (Feb 9-**ES**)  
 Rene Rast – Audi's sleeper hit (Feb 9-**GW**)  
 The rehabilitation of Dan Ticktum (Feb 9-**MS**)

Why Norris won a McLaren F1 test (Feb 9-**KT**)  
 When Andretti stunned NASCAR (Feb 16-**MG**)  
 Daytona 500 preview (Feb 23-**JU/LS**)  
 Danny Watts: anatomy of a bombshell (Mar 2-**MB**)  
 Dan Gurney's incredible year (Mar 9-**KT**)  
 Supercars star: Shane van Gisbergen (Mar 9-**AVL**)  
 Goodwood Members' Meeting preview (Mar 16-**KT**)  
 John Surtees's top F1 drives (Mar 23-**KT**)  
 Alonso's Indy dream (Apr 20-**ES**)  
 Modern IndyCar's Mansell moment (Apr 20-**GF**)  
 Marcel Albers: a talent taken too soon (Apr 20-**MS**)  
 Sam Bird: British underdog (Apr 27-**SM**)  
 Nelson Piquet and sons talk motorsport (May 18-**SC**)  
 When Senna almost went to IndyCar (May 18-**BM**)  
 Can Alonso really win the Indy 500? (May 25-**ES**)  
 When McLaren nearly entered Indycars (May 25-**GW**)  
 Nelson Piquet: bouncing back when Indy bites (May 25-**GW**)  
 Secrets of the street racers (May 25-**KT**)  
 Is Monaco the greatest street race in the world? (May 25-**ES/MJ**)  
 World's weirdest street tracks (May 25-**GW**)  
 The greatest Monaco duel that time forgot (May 25-**PF**)  
 How close was Alonso to winning the Indy 500? (June 1-**ES**)  
 Farewell to Lydden Hill (June 1-**DE**)  
 Senna's 99T: the last great Lotus (June 22-**AC**)  
 Why Audi is in world Rallycross (June 22-**JH**)  
 Goodwood Festival of Speed preview (June 29-**SK/JH**)  
 Rowland's final chance to reach F1? (July 13-**AK**)  
 Super Formula: racing's best-kept secret (July 20-**MS**)  
 DFV: what made it special (July 27-**NR**)  
 DFV: test insight (July 27-**GA**)  
 DFV: memories (July 27)  
 DFV: results (July 27)  
 DFV: Le Mans win (July 27-**GW**)  
 DFV: national motorsport (July 27-**MP**)  
 Silverstone Classic preview (July 27-**KT**)  
 Secrets of the rainmasters (Aug 17-**KT**)  
 The greatest wet-weather drive (Aug 17-**KT**)  
 The electric future of rallycross (Aug 31-**HR**)  
 Goodwood Revival preview (Sept 7)  
 The great forgotten Le Mans car (Sept 14-**KT**)  
 Fisichella's life in sportscars (Sept 28-**GW**)  
 TCR's ever expanding empire (Sept 28-**JC**)  
 Autosport Williams Engineering Award (Oct 12-**AK/LB**)  
 Macau Grand Prix preview

(Nov 16-**MS**)  
 Christmas gift guide pt1 (Nov 30)  
 Top 50 drivers (Dec 14-21)  
 Pictures of the year (Dec 14-21)  
 Fastest laps of 2017 (Dec 14-21-**MS**)  
 Race Centre season round-up (Dec 14-21)  
 Christmas gift guide pt2 (Dec 14-21)  
 Christmas quiz (Dec 14-21)  
 Top 10 cars never to win (Dec 14-21-**KT**)  
 When racing cars meet their demise (Dec 14-21-**GW**)  
 Sebastien Loeb interview (Dec 14-21-**DE**)

## Supplements

Engineering (Jan 12)  
 Performance (Feb 23)  
 Performance (May 25)  
 Le Mans preview (June 8)  
 Formula Ford at 50 (July 6)  
 Performance (Aug 24)  
 Engineering (Oct 19)  
 Rally GB (Oct 26)  
 Performance (Nov 16)

## Top 5

F1 comebacks (Jan 12)  
 F1 constructors we'd like to see return (Feb 9)  
 Barcelona lap times (Mar 9)  
 Team Surtees F1 graduates to win a GP (Mar 25)  
 Formula 2 champions (Apr 20)  
 Indy 500 rookies (May 25)  
 Airfield circuits (June 22)  
 F1 cameos (July 13)  
 Ugly F1 aero devices (Aug 10)  
 Jacques Villeneuve F1 races (Sept 7)  
 Raikkonen radio rants (Oct 5)  
 Red Bull Junior recoveries (Oct 19)  
 Worst temporary chicanes (Nov 16)

## WEC

**Gary Watkins**  
 2016 season review (Jan 5)  
 Lotterer's big decision (Apr 6)  
 2017 season preview (Apr 13)  
 1. Silverstone (Apr 20)  
 2. Spa (May 11)  
 3. Le Mans (June 22)  
 4. Nurburgring (July 20)  
 5. Mexico City (Sept 7)  
 6. Austin (Sept 21)  
 Gerard Neveu Q&A (Oct 12-**MS**)  
 7. Fuji (Oct 19)  
 8. Shanghai (Nov 9)  
 9. Bahrain (Nov 23)

## WRC

**David Evans**  
 Hayden Paddon's big break (Jan 14)  
 Season preview (Jan 19)  
 1. Monte Carlo (Jan 26)  
 2. Sweden (Feb 16)  
 Toyota's miraculous turnaround (Feb 23)  
 3. Mexico (Mar 16)  
 4. Corsica (Apr 3)  
 5. Argentina (May 4)  
 6. Portugal (May 25)  
 7. Italy (June 15)  
 8. Poland (July 6)  
 9. Finland (Aug 3)  
 10. Germany (Aug 24)  
 11. Spain (Oct 12)  
 12. GB (Nov 2)  
 13. Australia (Nov 23)  
 Season review (Dec 14-21)

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## Three in a row for Kessel Ferrari squad

**GULF 12 HOURS**  
**YAS MARINA (UAE)**  
**DECEMBER 16**

KESSEL RACING WON THE Gulf 12 Hours for the third year in succession after a dominant victory by Davide Rigon, Miguel Molina and Michal Broniszewski in their Ferrari 488 GT3.

The Kessel Ferrari started from pole position at the Yas Marina circuit and came out on top in a Ferrari one-two ahead of the Rinaldi Racing crew of Norbert Siedler, Marco Seefried and Rinat Salikhov, who finished less than a minute behind the leaders after



the second six-hour half of the event. The two crews fought for the win – along with the Oman Racing Team's TF Sport-run Aston Martin of Ahmad Al Harthy, Tom Jackson and Euan McKay – before the Rinaldi Ferrari lost time with a puncture. A gearbox

problem dropped the Aston out of contention.

The result means Rigon now has four victories in the event. "We found good balance in the car when the sun went down and the temperature dropped, so we were really competitive," he said.

"I had a nice battle with the Rinaldi Ferrari in part two and performing the overtake for the lead made me very happy."

The Ultimate Team Ligier JSP3 of brothers Matthieu and Jean-Baptiste Lahaye, together with Francois Heriau, finished third overall and was top LMP3 runner.

"The challenge today was to be as competitive as the GT car in front with their Pro drivers," said Heriau. "It was very difficult to follow them and to try to catch them in every stint, but we gave everything."

### RESULTS

**1 Michal Broniszewski/Davide Rigon/Miguel Molina (Ferrari 488 GT3)** 302 laps; 2 Rinat Salikhov/Marco Seefried/Norbert Siedler (Ferrari) +55.737s; 3 Matthieu Lahaye/Jean-Baptiste Lahaye/Francois Heriau (Ligier JSP3); 4 Johnny Mowlem/Bonamy Grimes/Tony Wells (Ligier); 5 Guy Cosmo/Patrick Byrne/Michael Benham/Salih Yoluc (Ligier); 6 Josh Burdon/Neric Wei/Ricky Capo/Franck Gauvin (Ligier).

## Ardusso crowned as Canapino wins

**SUPERTC2000**  
**ALTA GRACIA (RA)**  
**DECEMBER 17**  
**ROUND 12/12**

IT WAS AGUSTIN CANAPINO who visited the winner's circle with his Chevrolet Cruze, but title honours went the way of the race's runner-up, Renault team leader Facundo Ardusso.

Ardusso had set the fastest

qualifying time and, with no grid handicaps in place for the season finale, he started from pole with 2016 champion Canapino alongside.

At the start, the pair fought for the lead at Turn 1, with Canapino – having less to lose as he was already out of the title hunt – coming out on top on the approach to the second corner. Ardusso's only title rival, Mariano Werner, was bogged down in sixth place.

Canapino managed to create a small gap to Ardusso, who seemed more than content to stay in second. In a race not characterised by much drama, they finished in that order, with Ardusso taking the title. Werner managed to get his Peugeot into fourth place by the finish and dropped to third in the points.

Leonel Pernia lost third when one of his front tyres deflated, which meant Esteban Guerrieri inherited the final podium spot.

**TONY WATSON**

### RESULTS

**1 Agustin Canapino (Chevrolet Cruze)** 33 laps in 52m12.055s; 2 Facundo Ardusso (Renault Fluence) +1.636s; 3 Esteban Guerrieri (Citroen C4); 4 Mariano Werner (Peugeot 408); 5 Matias Munoz Marchesi (Peugeot); 6 Facundo Conta (Chevy).  
**Points** **1 Ardusso 226**; 2 Canapino 191; 3 Werner 180; 4 Matias Rossi 152; 5 Damian Fineschi 142.5; 6 Leonel Pernia 139.



## IN BRIEF

### MRF CHALLENGE

Felipe Drugovich became the first driver to top all sessions in an MRF Challenge weekend after he was fastest in practice and qualifying and won all four races at Yas Marina. He won from pole in races one and four, stormed up the order in the reversed-grid second event, and beat 2017 GP3 regular Julien Falchero in race three.

### ANDROS TROPHY

Victory in Andorra propelled Jean-Baptiste Dubourg above Benjamin Riviere to the top of the points table. Dubourg and his Renault Captur were dominant on day one, dropping only one point when he was beaten in the Super Pole shootout by Nathanael Berthon (Audi). Berthon beat Franck Lagorce's BMW to second. Second-day honours went to Mazda 3 racer Evens Stievenart, who headed Dubourg and Berthon. Rallycross star Andreas Bakkerud made an excellent debut in fourth.

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Haigh and Adam will share this Aston Martin

BRITISHGT

## New team for Adam's third title bid as WEC drivers could race at TF Sport

JONATHAN ADAM WILL ATTEMPT to become the first driver to win the British GT Championship with three different teams, when he returns next year as part of a new Aston Martin effort from Optimum Motorsport.

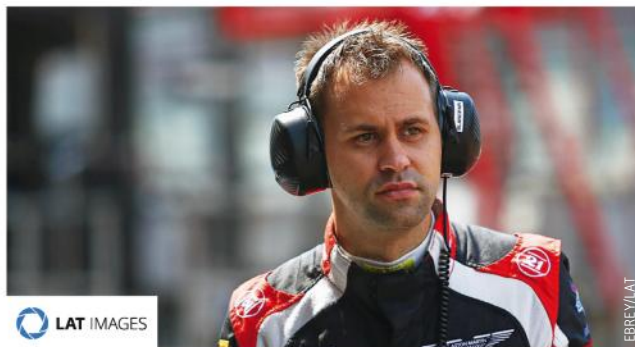
Optimum will field a single Vantage GT3 in 2018, and has signed factory racer Adam to share it alongside European GT regular Flick Haigh.

Adam's previous team, TF Sport, has yet to confirm its two pro drivers to share with Derek Johnston and Mark Farmer for next year. Jon Barnes could return, and a selection of AMR's other World Endurance drivers could also race.

Adam's new deal will be the first time Optimum has competed in British GT3 since it ran an Audi R8 LMS for a part-campaign in 2016.

The team has been a regular in the GT4 category, running the BMW-backed Ginetta – and latterly McLaren – of Graham Johnson and Mike Robinson.

GTE Le Mans winner Adam is already



the only driver to take the GT3 crown with two different teams – Beechdean AMR in 2015 and TF Sport in 2016.

Adam said: "Next year is going to be really exciting. I've had two great years working with TF and Derek [Johnston, team-mate] but as a factory driver you often switch surroundings, so I'm used to adapting to new scenery.

"I always wanted to stay in British GT because, with the World Endurance

Adam is lining up for a title attack with third different team

Championship having fewer dates next year [owing to the contest being spread over a 13-month 'superseason'] it's an ideal second programme. I have to go for the title again as making my mark on a series in any way is always special."

This year is likely to be the last for the current Vantage GT3, since a replacement model mirroring the new GTE car is planned for 2019.

Optimum boss Shaun Goff, whose team will also benefit from engineering and technical support from AMR parent firm Prodrive, said: "Flick felt the time was right to tackle British GT, which is an incredibly tight series.

"When Jonny was made available to us we had to grab that chance with both hands.

"This will be his seventh year with the Vantage so there are very few drivers out there with his level of insight and understanding of the car. He'll work to bring Flick on too, and I think we're in for a great year."

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Ex-Frank Gardner Escort will be part of celebrations

LAT IMAGES

HSCC

# Escorts and Chevrons to be honoured

THE FORD ESCORT AND CHEVRON B8 WILL both be celebrated at special events for their 50th anniversaries next year.

The Historic Sports Car Club will run two special one-model races for the Escort at Brands Hatch on September 23. Held on the Indy circuit, the event will be open to a wide range of race-prepared Escorts and it is hoped that one or two period special saloon examples will be on the grid.

One of the best-known race Escorts will be present; Henry Mann from Alan Mann Racing will take XOO 349F, the ex-Frank Gardner Mk1 Twin Cam 1968 British Touring Car title winner. Although not able to race, the iconic red-and-gold car will run demonstration laps.

HSCC CEO Grahame White said: "We thought

it was appropriate to mark 50 years of a car that has had such an impact on the sport. We also hope to attract some former Ford Escort racers to join in the celebrations."

On September 22, the day before Brands, the car will be the focal point of Rallyday at Castle Combe. The Escort made its competition debut in a rallycross meeting at Croft in February 1968, and its rally debut came a month later on the Sanremo Rally. In Mk1 and Mk2 forms, the Escort became one of the most successful and enduring competition cars of all time; hundreds remain in use in rallying and racing.

The Chevron B8's 50th anniversary will be feted in a celebration race at the Oulton Park Gold Cup, also organised by the HSCC.

The club is aiming for a grid of more than 20 cars for the event on August Bank Holiday Monday, and has already sparked major interest from car owners across Europe. The B8 has been a mainstay of the HSCC's Guards Trophy for many years and has been competitive in historic racing.

One car expected at the event is a 'new' B8, which will be built less than 10 miles from the original Chevron factory just outside Bolton to mark the anniversary, using the same jigs and body moulds, and using some of the same staff that built the original cars.

Over 40 B8s were constructed during 1968 as GT or Group 4 cars, many with two-litre BMW engines, although some used Ford-based FVA or FVC engines.

TCR UK

## Kent is first to choose Hyundai for TCR UK

FIESTA CHAMPIONSHIP race winner Lewis Kent will graduate to the new TCR UK series next year and has become the first British driver to opt for the Hyundai i30.

Kent sampled Hyundai and Honda machinery at the series' taster day before opting for the South Korean car, which he will collect from Hyundai Motorsport's German base in January. He is yet to decide on a team but may run with his family's squad.

"It's a special bit of

kit," said Kent. "It's a lot different to what I'm used to driving - it's so direct. Through the corners you can feel everything, it's brilliant."

In his first season of senior racing 18-year-old Kent scored two wins on his way to second in Class C of the BRSCC Fiesta Championship, but has more modest expectations for 2018.

"It's going to be challenging and we're hoping for at least a top-10 finish in some of the races," he said.



CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOONS

## Spencer plans Bikesports move

CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOONS CHAMPION Joe Spencer will compete in the 750 Motor Club's Bikesports Championship in a newly acquired Spire GT3 in 2018.

Spencer headed Class C in every race he finished in 2017 in an impressive campaign in the northern-based series. He now plans to defend his Sports/Saloons title in the new Spire, while dovetailing commitments with Bikesports.

"Danny Bird bought one [a Spire] halfway through the year, and we didn't know they were eligible [for the CNC series]," said Spencer, who has driven a Stuart Taylor Locosaki this year. "We've always wanted a Radical-type car. Still being eligible for the CNC is a big plus for us."

"In Bikesports, I like the competitiveness. The way the classes are structured keeps costs down."



Tregurtha and Middleton won British GT4

EBREY/LAT

EUROPEAN GT4

## British GT4 champs head to Europe

BRITISH GT4 CHAMPIONS WILL Tregurtha and Stuart Middleton will move into the GT4 European Series after picking up factory support from Ginetta.

They will reunite with Charlie Kemp's HHC Motorsport team to campaign a G55 GT4 in the pan-European contest.

Off the back of their stellar maiden British GT campaign, becoming the youngest pairing to lift the GT4 title, both drivers have been signed to Ginetta's Young Driver Programme.

Kemp said: "It's brilliant to have both guys back for 2018 and to be helping them make the next step. European GT4 may not be the most conventional option, but the category is enjoying a real boom at the moment and the European series sits at the top of the GT4 market."

"There's no doubt it'll be a challenge. The tracks will be new, as will the teams and other cars, but that's not much different to their situation this year."

## IN BRIEF



JONES

### TRAYNOR CONFIRMED AS MR2 CHAMPION

Shaun Traynor has been confirmed as the 750 Motor Club's Toyota MR2 champion after a ruling by the National Court. Traynor had collected the most points, before his rival Lewis Ward successfully protested that Traynor had the incorrect amount of camber on his car in the season finale. But Traynor's (above) appeal to the National Court has now been successful.

### CALDWELL'S SUCCESS IN ABU DHABI

British Formula 4 racer Olli Caldwell claimed his maiden single-seater triumph last week when he won the third race of the UAE F4 season opener at Yas Marina. The 15-year old sits fourth in the points.

### MSA RETURNS RECORD REBATE TO CLUBS

The Motor Sports Association has confirmed that a record insurance rebate will be returned to clubs this year. A total of £472,000 has been returned through the MSA's work to obtain the best possible insurance arrangements. Chairman Alan Gow said the move was part of a "commitment in looking after our clubs".

### DROPPED SCORES FOR CLIOS... AGAIN

The Renault UK Clio Cup has reintroduced dropped scores for next season – just a year after deciding to remove the system. Drivers will be able to drop one of their scores in the final points tally, but this cannot be one of the races in the Brands Hatch season finale weekend. Points will also be awarded down to 15th place instead of 20th. The Masters Cup has been axed for 2018.

### CLIO JUNIOR ANNOUNCES CALENDAR

An expanded six-event Renault UK Clio Cup Junior calendar has been unveiled for next season. The inaugural campaign this year was held over just four weekends after the series (below) was initially postponed. The 2018 calendar features trips to Silverstone, Rockingham, Donington Park, Snetterton, Croft and Brands Hatch; the season begins in March and ends in November, but includes a three-month break between April and July for the exam season.



HAWKINS

**750 MOTOR CLUB**

## Pembrey joins 750MC calendar

THE 750 MOTOR CLUB WILL visit Pembrey for the first time since 2013 next year, as the venue replaces Anglesey.

The circuit has gone through major work in the past two years, increasing the number of layouts it can use for race meetings.

"It's important to offer our members the opportunity to try different circuits," said 750MC competitions boss Giles Groombridge. "We've not been to Pembrey since 2013. Lots of drivers haven't raced there. They've made changes to the circuit, so hopefully the racing will be more interesting."

He added that owing to the club's prominent national status, the 750MC is obliged to visit multiple venues.

"As one of the major clubs it's important to try and support all the venues around the UK," he said. "Unfortunately we can't go everywhere every year. "I'm sure we'll be back at Anglesey in 2019 and we've had some very successful meetings there in recent years. It was just time for a change."



Competitors wanted championship status for Club Enduro

CLUB ENDURO

## Club Enduro to be a championship

THE POPULAR CLUB ENDURO SERIES HAS obtained championship status for the 2018 season, with the 750 Motor Club formula expanding to six events.

The five-round series in 2017 built on a strong start after its debut in '16. It had a season-high 42 entries at Silverstone in August this year and adds Rockingham and

Oulton Park to its calendar for next season.

Club competitions manager Giles Groombridge said: "We were getting suggestions from drivers throughout the year [to make it a championship]. We did a poll to see what everyone wanted at the end of the season. The numbers were good enough to warrant championship status."

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# Club racing's changed but its appeal lives on

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

[@autosport](#)

OVER THE 40 YEARS THAT I HAVE BEEN REPORTING events for Autosport, the national-racing scene has been through wholesale metamorphoses. The British Touring Car Championship-centred TOCA package changed its landscape dramatically in the early 1990s, replete with the manufacturer-backed sideshows (from Ford, Renault and Vauxhall), which would filter down the food chain, reshaping the clubbie arena.

Grassroots club racing built steadily through the 1950s and '60s, becoming increasingly vibrant with myriad classes over the subsequent couple of decades.

The days of enterprising village garagistes tweaking Minis, Ford Anglias and more with bigger carburettors and 'hotter' cams – for circuit racing, sprints and hillclimbs, autocross and rallies, as well as the daily trip to work – brought excitement for many weekend warriors.

The 1970s and '80s were a heyday of greater creativity as men in lock-ups were inspired to create many of the most remarkable hybrid beasts ever to have pounded around British tracks.

Developing earlier trends of shoehorning V8 engines into more compact European shells, then increasingly using obsolete (read 'cheap') proprietary suspension components, Hewland transaxles and bespoke chassis, saw lap times shorten dramatically. Super Saloons and Special GT 'silhouette' machinery certainly thrilled crowds who flocked to see the likes of Gerry Marshall and Jeff Wilson entertain.

While those memories linger brightly for those who loved the wackiest tin-top racers of all time, the fact

remains that today's superbly engineered performance production saloons, available to the masses with stiffer shells (fortified by comprehensive rollcages that make the flimsy hoops of the 1960s look primitive at best), ever-higher power outputs and optimised suspension geometry, can match and sometimes thrash their heroic lap times.

Many of these cars now populate club racing's grassroots, giving racers more bang for their bucks and a considerably safer racing environment without the necessity to spend endless hours in garages or workshops.

Single-seater opportunities have declined, with the professional marketplace locked into single-marque categories outside Formula 1. This has left a huge void in the stock of chassis to be handed down to fulfil the aspirations of privateers wanting to race open-wheelers with slicks and wings affordably without aiming for Historic FF2000 – still a bargain, as is Classic FF1600 on treads.

If MSVR's technology-laden Club F3 is a bridge too far pricewise, those stalwarts at the Monoposto Racing Club – founded back in 1958 – have options for everybody, while Formula 1000 offers high speed in a more specialised form.

The cost of club racing has risen since I competed regularly through the 1980s, but so has the standard of the circuits, reflected in greater hire costs for event organisers. If you do your research carefully rather than jumping straight in, and are content to support a popular local series to cut down on (increasingly onerous) travel logistics – or think outside the box with Clubmans in various flavours – it is still possible to get on track and have fun. 🏁



## NEW LOOK RGB 1000 LAUNCHED

A new name, rationalised single-class structure and a Sporting Cup sub-division to encourage newcomers are in the 750 Motor Club's recipe to reinvigorate its Road Going Bike-engined championship from 2018. "RGB Sports 1000 reflects what it has become – full-on racing for 1000cc sports

prototypes with power outputs in excess of 300bhp/tonne, rather than what it was," says 750MC competitions secretary Giles Groombridge of the changes. Frontrunning cars run sub-BTCC lap times on Brands Hatch's Indy circuit, yet running costs are reasonably low. Second-hand machines are available from £8000 with typical control-tyre costs from £500 per 14-race season. Open to MSA National B licence holders, RGB Sports 1000 will be contested over feature and sprint races of 23 and 13 minutes plus a lap respectively. Front-engined cars will run to a lower weight. A revised scoring system includes overtaking bonuses. Awards will recognise novices, over-fifties and technical innovation. An invitation class for regs-compliant bike-engined Sevens is offered.



## LANGRIDGE STEPS UP TO MARCH 803

Classic Formula 3's Tony Brise Trophy 1600cc champion Adrian Langridge will graduate from the 1971-73 class to the later two-litre division in 2018. Langridge has traded his Dastle Mk10 with Matt Wrigley for the March 803 in which Mark Bailey won the 1989 CF3 crown, then ran for William Hewland in '90.

# “I don’t think anyone has raced a single-seater after a crash like mine”

His 2017 story captured the hearts and minds of people inside and outside the sport, but now Billy Monger is focused on returning with his next racing project

By Stephen Lickorish, Special Contributor

[@sdlickorish](#)

**I**nspirational. That’s a word that has been used a lot to describe Billy Monger this year – and rightly so. But it’s an adjective that Monger himself struggles to understand. “Everyone keeps saying that word to me, that I’m an inspiration, but it’s difficult to get my head around,” he reflects. “Going from a 17-year-old kid just doing normal things and going racing at weekends, in a space of less than a year so much has changed.”

Monger is, of course, referring to the horrific crash at Donington Park this April that changed his life forever. There was nothing particularly out of the ordinary for the third British Formula 4 race of the Donington weekend – apart from the sight of Jamie Caroline at the rear of the field, perhaps. There was certainly no suggestion that the worst single-seater crash in Britain for many years was about to occur.

It was lap four. Monger was towards the back of the pack but was only just behind the gaggle of five cars in front. Coming through the fast left-hander at Schwantz Curve, the pack came across the stationary car of Patrik Pasma on the racing line. The cars in front of Monger all jinked out of the way at the last moment, but Monger was completely unsighted and ploughed into the rear of Pasma. There was nothing he could have done to avoid the Finn.

“I was awake after the crash for about 45 minutes and was seeing all the doctors,” recalls Monger. “Pretty much straight away I knew the crash was bad, but the first few minutes I felt OK because the adrenalin kicked in.”

While Pasma was taken to hospital for precautionary checks (he was later released without any serious injuries), it took medics nearly two hours to extract Monger from his car. He was airlifted to hospital, where doctors had no choice but to amputate both of his legs – one above and one below the knee.

“Because I was in the car and awake, I knew that it was bad so I knew there was damage done but I didn’t know I was going to lose both my legs – that was a shock,” admits Monger.

For Monger’s JHR Developments team boss Steve Hunter, it was a nightmare scenario. “Sheer devastation” is how Hunter recalls that time. Monger was in his third season with JHR after progressing with the team out of Ginetta Juniors and into F4. He was a regular frontrunner in the Ginetta category, then came agonisingly close to his maiden single-seater win at Rockingham in 2016 before a technical issue on the final lap cost him dear.

Hunter had taken Monger “under my wing” in those seasons and was good friends with him. “It questions your conviction in motorsport,” Hunter says of his thoughts after the crash.

But Monger recovered remarkably quickly and his attention immediately turned to making a race return. “My team was there and I was just asking them, ‘Do you think it’s doable?’” says Monger. “They were all supportive.”

Hunter, who stayed at Monger’s side in hospital, along with his family and number-one mechanic, was in no doubt that he wanted to return. “There was certainly no question of that [him returning to racing],” says Hunter. “I never saw a negative at any point, which amazes me that someone can be so resilient in that situation. The way he looked at it was straightforward – ‘Can I get back >>





in a race car? Yes, so let's carry on doing what we were doing.'

"I've just been amazed that somebody can be as positive with what must be an exceptionally traumatic situation to be in. I don't think anyone else would have reacted in that way. I know it's a bit of a cliché that he's an inspiration, but he genuinely is."

It was at this point that Monger began to realise just how much his story had touched the nation – not just the motorsport community. The crash was headline TV news and a JustGiving page set up by Hunter and former JHR racer and British Touring Car star Tom Ingram raised over £750,000 to help support Monger's recovery in just a matter of days. There was an outpouring of emotion, from F1 champion Lewis Hamilton to young fans donating their pocket money to help.

"The support was a bit overwhelming – it was awesome," says Monger. "I didn't imagine I would get that kind of support."

That support was evident at the next F4 round at Thruxton. While Monger had only just been released from hospital and couldn't be there himself, a walk of the Hampshire track was attended by thousands and raised over £7000. And to cap it off, Monger's close friend Caroline made British F4 history by winning all three races and dedicated his triumphs to Monger.

Monger was then able to attend the following round at Oulton Park. "The first thing he wanted to do at Oulton was the data with Manuel [Sulaiman, JHR's other British F4 driver]!" says Hunter. "And it was the same with Harry [Dyson] when he joined [the F4 team later in the year]."

But already Monger was preparing for his racing comeback, and his first task was to regain his race licence. His first run back in a car came at Brands Hatch in July in Fun Cup machinery with the Team BRIT squad – the team that helps

injured servicemen, and now civilians as well, to race.

"Eleven weeks after the crash was my first time in the Fun Cup car and that really helped," says Monger. "It was a big step forward for me as: one, that I could get my licence back; and two, that I was competitive really early on that first day. It was good for me to see and show I hadn't lost my passion."

At Le Mans this year, Monger was announced as the first driver as part of quadruple amputee Frederic Sausset's academy for disabled drivers that plans to work towards a 24 Hours outing. But the thought of returning to single-seaters was still in his mind.

"The plan initially was we thought we should maybe make the transition [into tin-tops] like Alex Zanardi did [the Italian moved away from single-seaters into touring cars after losing both of his legs in a 2001 Indycar crash at the Lausitzring]."

Monger explains. "That was our initial thought, but I asked the question, 'Has anyone raced a single-seater before like me?' I don't think anyone has raced a single-seater after a crash like mine."

But there was a major barrier to Monger achieving this – and it wasn't just whether he was physically able to race a single-seater. The FIA had a rule in place stating that disabled drivers could not compete in single-seater categories. Upon hearing this, Monger decided to fight to get it changed.

"If I could change this one rule then maybe it was possible [to make a single-seater comeback]," he says. And with the support of the Motor Sports Association, he was able to do just that.

"I got the confirmation earlier this month and that was really good to get that sorted quite early on as well," says Monger. "Changing any rule of any form of sport takes time so we were hoping that it would be ready for the start of next year. It was a real boost. I'm hoping to have my first test in January

**“It was awesome... I didn't imagine I would get that kind of support”**



and, after that, see how it goes. I've got a series in mind and I'm working with a team."

So far, Monger has completed extensive runs in a simulator to prepare for his comeback, and he aims to get out in the car before committing to a series just to make sure he would be competitive. And if that racing return means he heads back to the scene of the accident at Donington Park, he doesn't view that as a problem.

"I don't see Donington Park as being my enemy," Monger states. "The track had nothing to do with it, it was just unfortunate that it was on that track. It could've happened anywhere, on any corner."

The fact that Monger has even got to this point is a real testament to his character and determination. "He certainly is a character that lifts people around him and not only himself," says Hunter. "My thoughts of what we would do as a team certainly changed as Billy improved."

One shining example of that determination came at Brands Hatch earlier this year when Monger completed a walk of the pitlane – using prosthetic limbs – for charity. Learning to walk again is just one of the challenges he has faced since his accident. "I'm still learning – it's a long process with what happened to me," says Monger. "I'm learning something new every day."

He reflects, unsurprisingly, that 2017 has been a "strange" year. "It's difficult to sum up a year like this," he says. "The first round and a half was good and it was looking promising for at least a top three in the championship – it might've been higher but you never know. But then it all got spun on its head and it was all about recovery."

"In April I was just a 17-year-old trying to make a career out of motorsport. I feel I haven't really done much, but people have a view of me as an inspiration and it's really nice to have their support. I've had a lot of messages from people saying I've inspired their kids – being able to have an impact on someone else's life is pretty weird."

That is typical of Monger's modesty. He may think he hasn't done much since his crash, but others certainly don't feel the



same way. He has picked up a number of prestigious gongs in recent weeks, including the President's Award at the FIA's Prize Giving Ceremony and being nominated for the Laureus World Sports Best Sporting Moment Award. Hunter says it's right that Monger is getting recognised: "The accolades he's getting at present couldn't be given to anyone more deserving."

Monger is quick to acknowledge that his accident has opened up new opportunities for him and massively raised his profile. But he is well aware that attention has some downsides too.

"The negative of it would be it adds pressure as everyone knows who you are," he explains. "But I view it as good pressure because everyone wants me to do well. At the end of the day, they're more concerned that I'm enjoying what I do."

There will be no shortage of fans wishing him well for 2018. The way he has become a household name – and not just for the crash itself, but for the way this down-to-earth and incredibly likeable guy has responded to it – has made sure of that.

And Hunter is certain that his protege can still have a successful racing career. "His way of being is rubbing off on people around him all the time," he says. "He is destined for some great things." ❄️

# WHAT'S ON

## Fantasy calendar: the circuits we'd include

WE THOUGHT THE LULL between Christmas and the New Year would be the perfect time to fantasise about what circuits we'd love to add to the calendar of any chosen motorsport series. From the Indy 500 rejoining the Formula 1 world championship, to monster machines on smaller tracks, our writers have their say...

**Road America**  
Formula 1  
Ask leading IndyCar drivers about the best, most exciting and challenging tracks and Road America will be near the top of the list. It's picturesque, fast and has a great history littered with memorable races. Unrealistic, yes, but it would be great having it on the grand prix calendar.  
**TOM ERRINGTON**

**Nordschleife**  
Formula 1  
I'd like to see F1 cars racing at Macau, but I recognise that the world's greatest street circuit is actually too tight, so let's be practical. Watching a Radical SR8 lap 'The Green Hell' in record time is mesmerising, so imagine what the fastest F1 cars ever would be able to do.  
**BEN ANDERSON**

**Indy 500**  
Formula 1  
Some of Fernando Alonso's fellow F1 drivers ignorantly claimed that his performance in the 2017 Indianapolis 500 proved that the race can't be tough. Let's see how they'd get on if it counted for world-championship points again, as it did from 1950-60.  
**GLENN FREEMAN**

**Monaco**  
IndyCar  
The anomalous Indianapolis 500s of 1950-60 in the records is of permanent annoyance to anyone involved in F1 statistics. So the Monaco GP should be made a points-paying IndyCar round, scheduled in a way no driver can compete. Pointless and irritating, you might say? Exactly.  
**EDD STRAW**

**Crystal Palace**  
Formula E  
This would revive circuit racing that has been dormant too long at the captivating and inimitable venue, and restore the London ePrix. We'd see single-seaters whizz between the trees, walls and flowerbeds just like in old times. It might actually just be doable too.  
**GRAHAM KEILLOH**



LEPAGE/LAT

**Norising**  
World Endurance  
There's no reason why every event must incorporate all four classes, so why not a GTE-only round at the Norising in the spirit of the events of the 1980s? Perhaps with a few extra factory cars and the odd privateer, this would make sense for a class that needs to raise its profile.  
**GARY WATKINS**

**Charlotte dirt track**  
World Rallycross  
Although World Rallycross is racing at Austin in 2018, perhaps a better venue for its foray into the US would be the dirt track at Charlotte. Already used for Global Rallycross in 2013-14, it's an ideal, purpose-built venue, and it's right in the USA's motorsport heartland.  
**DOMINIK WILDE**



SUTTON

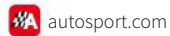


FIWORLDALLYCROSS.COM

**Lydden**  
Global Rallycross  
I don't care that Silverstone has stronger means and a better argument than Lydden for hosting Britain's round of World Rallycross: Lydden is the epicentre of rallycross. GRC should swoop and fix that awful US cliché of claiming to be 'international', when it isn't, in the process.  
**SCOTT MITCHELL**

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**HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK**

**▶ IMSA'S WINTER WARMERS**

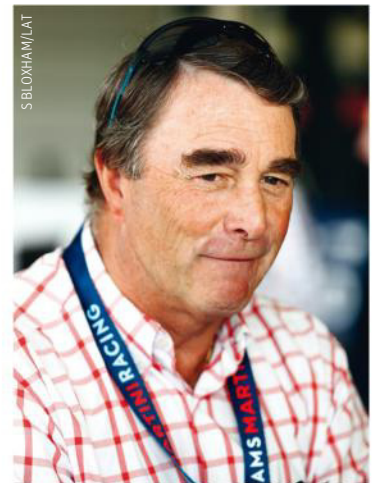
**Search for IMSA GTP Watkins Glen 1992 – Camel Continental – June 28, 1992**

Nostalgia freaks looking to escape the post-Christmas/pre-New Year slump need look no further than IMSA's YouTube channel. At the time of going to press, seven US sportscar classics from 1989, '91, '92 and '93 were available.



F1 stats works look away – imagine an Indy 500 with grand prix stars racing each year...

**NEXT  
WEEK**



**▶ MANSELL**

The 1992 champ on today's F1



**Mondello Park**

**BTCC**

The Irish venue lost its place on the calendar to Rockingham in 2007. It has a lot to offer, with long straights, tricky sections and sweeping bends. With other domestic series heading abroad, why not reintroduce Mondello Park to the BTCC?

LUKE BARRY

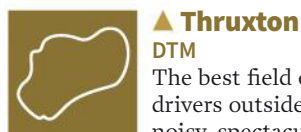


**Hockenheim**

**Formula 2**

The venue's omission from the 2018 calendar is curious given F1's imminent return and the stunning GP2 races hosted there previously. The circuit helps showcase racecraft and offers plenty of overtaking opportunities, which an optimistic F2 field is unlikely to refuse.

KYRAN GIBBONS



**▲ Thruxton**

**DTM**

The best field of drivers outside F1; noisy, spectacular tin-tops; and a circuit where corner speeds are so high that the tyres would be rapidly shot. It would be the most spectacular thing you've seen. All supported by ultra-fast, slipstreaming action from the Euro F3 championship.

MARCUS SIMMONS



**▲ Le Mans**

**Formula 1**

It would be great to see what the latest generation of faster F1 cars could do around the Circuit de la Sarthe. The Mulsanne Straight should mean some overtaking and a decent race too, much more appropriate than the Bugatti layout used for the 1967 French Grand Prix.

KEVIN TURNER



**Vila Real**

**Legends cars**

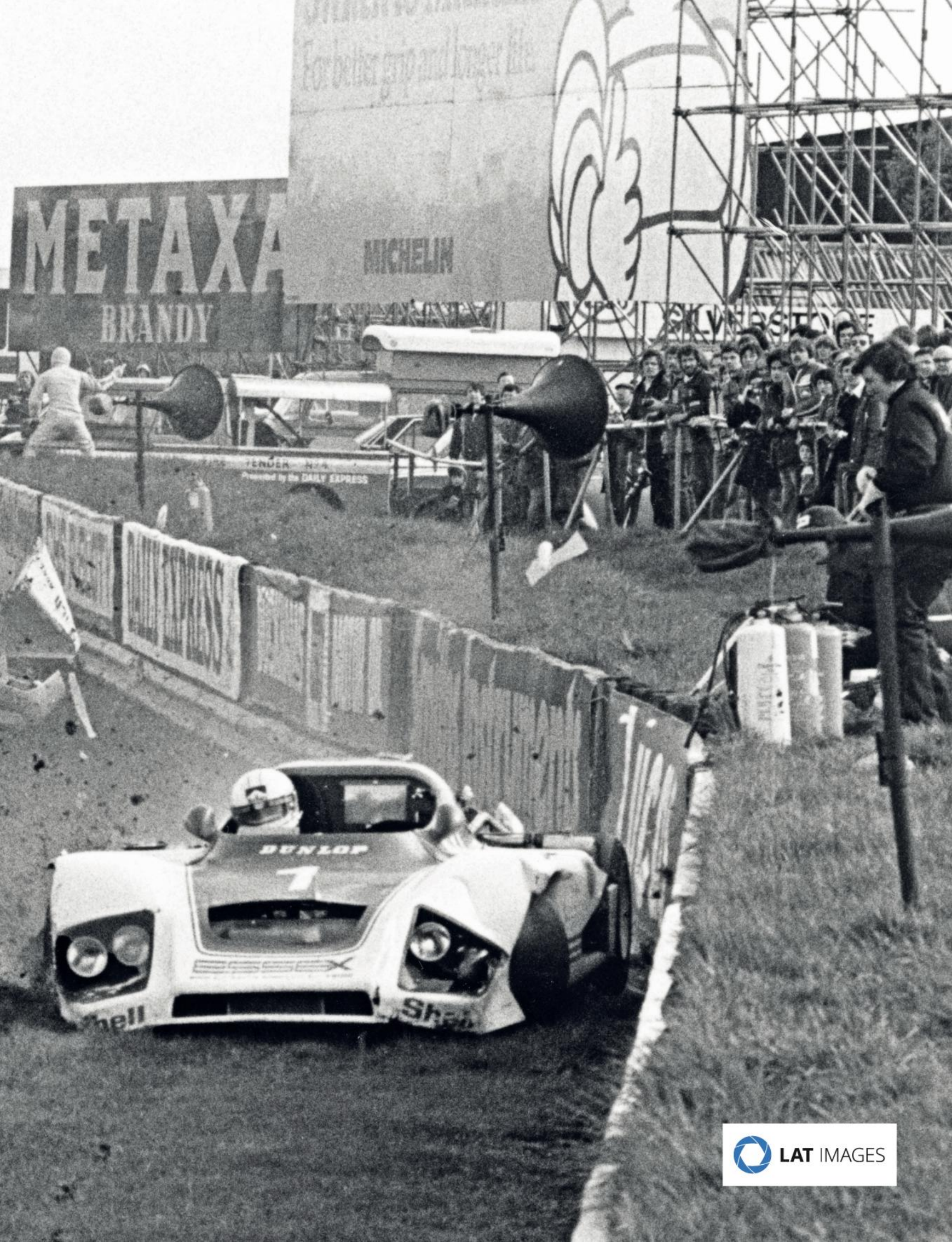
I brought back a photo of a Fiat Punto from one of the support events lurching pendulously out of a chicane on two wheels from the Portuguese WTCC round a couple of years ago. What would happen if you unleashed a proper bunch of door-banging nutters on this track?

STUART CODLING

## FROM THE ARCHIVE

Jochen Mass's Silverstone 6 Hours comes to a dramatic end at Woodcote. Mass had qualified his Porsche 936 (shared with Brian Redman) on pole for round four of the 1979 World Championship for Makes, and set fastest lap before crashing out. The race was won by the Porsche 935 of John Fitzpatrick, Hans Heyer and Bob Wollek.





**METAXA**  
BRANDY

MICHELIN

Presented by the DAILY EXPRESS

# TOP FIVE

**AUTOSPORT.COM  
STORIES OF 2017  
(NON-F1)**

In our Formula 1 season review earlier this month we presented the year's 10 most popular stories from the category, which dominates our online figures. So, limited to one story from each series, here are the most-read articles from the rest of motorsport. See you in 2018.

HONE/LAT



LAT IMAGES

## 1 MASSA SORRY AFTER KART RACE ENDS IN A BRAWL

Ex-Formula 1 driver Felipe Massa apologising for one of his team-mates brawling with a rival karter at the 500 Milhas de Kart event shot straight to the top of this list despite only going up one day before we compiled it! The story was accompanied by a video of the incident between Rodrigo Dantas and Tuka Rocha, which no doubt added to the clicks it gained as readers and viewers saw Dantas repeatedly punch Rocha's helmet.



KINRADE/LAT

## 2 EDWARDS REVEALS REASONS FOR RETIREMENT

The second-most-read story on this list was published over 11 months before it was usurped by the karting brawl. Back in January, former NASCAR star Carl Edwards made the shock announcement that he was retiring from racing. This story summed up the "pretty straightforward" reasons he had for stepping away. "I am truly personally satisfied with my career," he said. "I feel accomplished."

## 3 HAYDEN IN SERIOUS CONDITION AFTER CRASH

The next two articles in our top five covered very serious but major stories of the 2017 season. This entry is the first news that 2006 MotoGP world champion Nicky Hayden had suffered serious injuries in a road accident while cycling in Italy. The American racer, who won three grand prix races during his premier-class career between 2003 and '15, died five days later as a result of his injuries.



JEP/LAT

## 4 MONGER LOSES LOWER LEGS AFTER F4 CRASH

This story covered the news that British Formula 4 racer Billy Monger had lost both of his lower legs after a horrific crash at Donington Park in April. The 17-year-old collided with Patrik Pasma at high speed when completely unsuspected, and it took nearly two hours before he was extracted and airlifted to hospital. The extent of his injuries was revealed three days later.



GOLD AND GOOSE/LAT

## 5 WATCH ALONSO IN INDY 500 PRACTICE LIVE

Double F1 world champion Fernando Alonso's appearance at the 2017 Indianapolis 500 attracted a lot of attention throughout the month of May. Indeed this story, which contained a live link to three and a half hours of practice running on the Monday before the race, was viewed over 41,000 times. By way of comparison, the online race report of Takuma Sato's victory was viewed by 11,449.



LEPAGE/LAT

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