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dream of being in'

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Hamilton's response is emphatic as he closes on more F1 records

For those who thought the tyre troubles Mercedes experienced at Silverstone hinted at a serious chink in the pacesetter's armour, Lewis Hamilton's performance in the Spanish Grand Prix last weekend was a pretty emphatic response.

Even Mercedes wasn't confident it would be able to make the most of its incredible W11 in the heat of Barcelona, but Hamilton was in the zone, or "daze" as he initially described it.

Max Verstappen was again brilliant for Red Bull, taking advantage of a poor start for Valtteri Bottas to split the Black Arrows. The 22-year-old has been truly outstanding this season and somehow has a six-point advantage over Bottas in the drivers' standings. But Hamilton is too good not to make use of a car advantage and, with a 37-point lead and 88 F1 wins, it seems increasingly likely that Michael Schumacher's most impressive records will be broken.

Last weekend was a good one for British drivers. As well as Hamilton's fourth win of the campaign, 2011 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Oliver Rowland scored his first Formula E victory in Berlin (see page 34), and Mike Conway was part of the winning Toyota line-up as the World Endurance Championship finally got back under way at Spa (p40). Jake Hughes also took his maiden Formula 3 win of the season at Barcelona (p50).

This weekend's big event will be the 104th running of the Indianapolis 500, albeit with no fans. Fernando Alonso will start down in 26th and has a lot of work to do, but at least he's in the race this year. And, as David Malsher-Lopez shows in our preview supplement, there are plenty of potential frontrunners starting further back than expected. The race is unlikely to be dull...



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Editor

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NEXT WEEK
27 AUGUST

We speak to F1 rising star
George Russell and
report on the 104th
Indy 500



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Charles Coates/Motorsport Images

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FREE INSIDE

INDY 500 PREVIEW



Fernando Alonso's 2020 chances, a team guide and interview with Felix Rosenqvist feature in our supplement.



The previous Andretti Indy 500 pole came in 1987. The last Andretti win was in 1969!

ANDRETTI PIPS DIXON FOR INDY

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Marco Andretti, the man cursed with the fan-enforced burden of upholding the honour of US racing's royal family, has achieved something memorable and satisfying for the first time since he won at Iowa Speedway in 2011. He will lead the 33-car field to the green flag for this Sunday's 104th running of the Indianapolis 500.

Taking pole at Indy is something his father Michael never achieved – as well as famously never winning the race. And in fact even his Andretti Autosport team, while being a six-time winner of the event, has started from the pole just once.

The third-generation driver finished the opening day of practice in second and the second day in third, so the car appeared strong in race trim. Then, when the BorgWarner turbos were turned up from 1.3- to 1.5-bar boost on Fast Friday, Andretti caught the right draft at the right moment to lap the iconic 2.5-mile Speedway at 233.491mph, the fastest lap turned at IMS since 1996, the year Arie Luyendyk set the current qualifying record. Of course, in real terms that meant a whole lot of not much because the qualifying runs the next day would see only one car on the track at a time, and would require a four-lap run, the aim being to keep the second, third and fourth laps as close to the maximum-grip opener as possible.

An abridged version of Indianapolis Motor Speedway's infamous Andretti Curse appeared to descend upon Marco in that evening's draw to decide qualifying running order. Those hitting the track first would have the cooler, more favourable track conditions, and car #98 was drawn in 28th of the 33 cars.

Remarkably though, despite high track temperatures, Andretti defeated some very strong performances by

three of his team-mates – Ryan Hunter-Reay, Alexander Rossi and James Hinchcliffe – to head a 1-2-3-4 for the Honda-powered Andretti Autosport team, with Scott Dixon's Chip Ganassi Racing car fifth. This should again have worked against him, because the Fast Nine shootout on Sunday is run in reverse qualifying order – ninth fastest runs first, eighth fastest goes second – so again Andretti would have the warmer weather.

Yet on that day, strange things happened. The 2017 Indy 500 winner Takuma Sato's Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing entry set four laps that varied just 0.4mph from fastest to slowest; rookie Alex Palou set the fastest single lap of the session but would see his opportunity for pole ebb away as his Dale Coyne Racing

“MY GRANDFATHER GAVE ME ADVICE: ‘LET THEM BEAT YOU, DON'T DIAL YOURSELF OUT’”

with Team Goh entry's weightjacker malfunctioned; and Hinchcliffe, Rossi and Hunter-Reay couldn't keep their tyres under them for the duration of their four laps. Consequently they will all be starting behind another rookie, Ed Carpenter Racing's Rinus VeeKay in the sole Chevrolet-powered car to reach the Fast Nine.

And so it all came down to Dixon versus Andretti. Dixon hadn't won a pole (as opposed to being given it due to a quali rainout) for any IndyCar race since 2017, and on that occasion it had come at the Speedway. This time, he again shot to the top of the times to set a four-lap average of 231.051mph.

Andretti's opening lap was a fraction quicker than Dixon's, but his second and third laps a hair slower, and

Q&A

MARCO ANDRETTI
INDY 500 POLESITTER

Did you know how close it was going to be for pole, and that you had to do

something special on lap four?

Looking at my speed I just knew it was going to be so close that the wind of the gods was going to decide it, whichever of us got the lucky gust. I can't believe how close it was – but actually, I also can't believe that 0.017mph is only the third closest margin at Indy. Isn't that crazy? I was sure it was gonna be the closest.

The laps you turned on Saturday in the heat of the day to get through to the Fast Nine were just as impressive. Is that a good sign?

Yeah, that's what I hope and I'm pretty positive. It was quite a different set-up compared with my team-mates, and I hope it bodes well for the race because then I don't need to worry too much about what the weather gives us. I think when I ran on the Saturday the track temp was 125F and last I saw that's around about what the race is gonna be. But it seems like maybe this car is just good whatever the conditions. Last Sunday [in practice] I went out with this last big-ticket item adjustment we wanted to try and I was only 24th. We came back in, the guys did an awesome job to switch it back to how it was, and I went back to what we had and then boom, P1 again. That's when you know you've got a really solid platform.

If you win, will you be bummed that finally you've ended 51 years of the Andretti curse and the fans – a lot of whom have been rooting for your family that whole time – aren't going to be there?

I know what you're saying and it is a sad and weird situation... but I tell you, I'm not going to be the one complaining on Sunday afternoon if I've won the Indy 500! Anyway, there's plenty of time to celebrate with people once fans can come back to all the races and come back to Indy again next year. I think of Roger [Penske] and how thankful all of us should be that he's in charge at a time like this. I mean, he is taking some big financial hits.

Left to right: Sato, Dixon and Andretti fill the front row

500 POLE POSITION

LEVITT

it looked to be all over. Yet through shallowing the arc of the turns as he felt the grip going away, Andretti lost just 0.24mph over the final lap, whereas Dixon had shed 0.6. Pole was Andretti's by 0.017mph!

Asked how close he had been to following the set-ups of his team-mates – the set-ups that had leaked speed so badly – Andretti said he had heeded the counsel of his legendary grandfather Mario, who earned three poles at the Speedway, in 1966, 1967 and 1987.

"I always find I do better just focusing on what my car needs and we kept it really close to home," said Marco, who now has six IndyCar poles to his name. "My grandfather gave me good advice: 'Let them beat you, don't dial yourself out. You already know what you have, do it again. Let them try to dial themselves out chasing, right?' Good advice."

Aside from Honda's advantage over Chevrolet at 1.5-bar boost levels, and the speed of Fernando Alonso's Arrow McLaren SP car on the first day of practice (fifth fastest) and his shunt on the second day (see feature on p4 of our Indy 500 supplement), the prime talking point was that, even in the context of underperforming Chevy units, Team Penske looked lost in qualifying trim. Josef Newgarden cranked up the wing and drag and delivered 13th fastest time, whereas Will Power went the opposite way, trimmed out, and discovered the tyre fall-off was far too great.

In race trim, all four Penske drivers said their cars are good, but they have much work to do on Sunday to reach the front of the pack at the circuit their boss now owns. So if they need lessons in how to uphold the honour of an iconic name, they can always call Indy's latest polesitter.

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Istanbul Park and Jerez set for makeshift F1 calendar

FORMULA 1

The Turkish Grand Prix is set to be revived later this year as Formula 1 prepares to publish its final 2020 calendar. Istanbul Park last welcomed F1 back in 2011, but talks have accelerated in recent weeks to pave the way for the circuit to return to the heavily revised 2020 schedule.

Jerez is also poised to host an F1 grand prix for the first time since the controversial 1997 season finale, for a GP that would bolster the calendar to 17 races. The Andalusian circuit recently hosted the opening two races of the MotoGP season, and was used as recently as 2015 by F1 as part of its pre-season testing schedule.

F1 had been keeping dates in November open for possible races in Asia but, with the prospect of an inaugural Vietnamese Grand Prix becoming increasingly unlikely, it moved to talk to some more traditional venues about filling the slots.

Jerez is set to take a mid-November date, before the Turkish Grand Prix takes place towards the end of the month. These races would then be followed by back-to-back events in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi to close the season, which will finish in mid-December.

Istanbul Park (above) does not regularly host any major racing series, but the track is understood to be in good condition, with only some minor work required on the grandstands should the race be opened up to fans.

The prospect of returning to Turkey was welcomed by F1 drivers, who relished the opportunity to take the track's famed Turn 8 in the fastest cars the sport has ever known.

"It would be mega," said Romain Grosjean, who raced there in GP2. "I think it would be bloody awesome. It's such a cool track. I really enjoy going there and racing. Turn 8 is a good one for the neck, so I think it would be very fast."

The return of Istanbul Park and Jerez follows F1's approach of sticking to more Eurocentric events to fill out the 2020 calendar after the COVID-19 pandemic forced more than half of the scheduled events to be cancelled. Other classic tracks such as Imola and the Nurburgring have also been revived to boost the schedule, while Mugello and the Algarve Circuit have been added to the 2020 bill too.

Some teams had been planning to take their 2018-spec cars to some of the incoming circuits in a bid to gain some data ahead of the race, only for the FIA to put a ban in place.

"We would have taken the 2018 car to some of the tracks," Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff confirmed. "I think we're all looking at saving costs with the prize fund being considerably down, and in that respect, if nobody gains an advantage by not going testing, it's the right thing to do."

The final F1 calendar for 2020 is expected to be published next week.

LUKE SMITH

Engine 'party mode' banned

FORMULA 1

The high-power engine modes used in qualifying are set to be banned from next week's Belgian Grand Prix at Spa following a ruling by the FIA.

Some Formula 1 engine suppliers have a so-called 'party mode' setting that allows the drivers to enter a peak performance window for qualifying hot laps, giving them additional power. But teams will now be forced to run in the same mode through both qualifying and the race after receiving a letter from FIA secretary general for sport Peter Bayer last week.

Bayer informed teams that adjusting the engine modes could be seen as a breach of the rule that requires the car to be driven "alone and unaided".

The move has been interpreted as a bid to rein in the advantage of the Mercedes-powered cars, given the strength of its power unit in the highest setting. But Mercedes' world championship leader Lewis Hamilton doubted it would have the desired effect. "It's obviously to slow us down but I don't think it's going to get the result that they want, so that's totally fine if they do," said Hamilton (below). "It's not a surprise to us — they're always trying to slow us down."

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said the team would simply run a higher setting for both qualifying and the race, potentially increasing its advantage. "Five laps of quali mode not being done gives us 25 laps of more performance in the race," said Wolff. "That is something we believe will give us more performance."

"You must take into effect even if it may hurt us more in qualifying — which I'm not sure — and it's a couple of tenths, then it will hurt all the others in the same way."

LUKE SMITH





FORMULA E Ex-Manor and Sauber Formula 1 driver and 2015 DTM champion Pascal Wehrlein's widely expected move to Porsche for the 2021 Formula E season was made official just after the close of the 2019-20 campaign last week in Berlin. Wehrlein, who had split from Mahindra before the Berlin races, joins Andre Lotterer in the line-up and replaces Neel Jani, who will move elsewhere in Porsche's motorsport programme. **Photograph by Porsche**

McLaren and Williams back down on appeal

FORMULA 1

Williams and McLaren have both dropped their protests against the FIA's ruling on the Racing Point brake-duct case.

Racing Point (right, above) was hit with a 15-point constructors' championship penalty and a €400,000 fine after it was judged to have copied the design of Mercedes' rear brake ducts for its 2020 car.

Four teams – Ferrari, Renault, Williams and McLaren – all planned to appeal the ruling in pursuit of a harsher penalty, believing it unfair that the team could keep running the brake ducts for the remainder of the season. But both Williams and McLaren have now pulled out of the case after fears over the future of independent designs were allayed by the FIA in the wake of the Racing Point ruling.

FIA head of single-seaters Nikolas Tombazis confirmed at Silverstone that plans were in place to outlaw copycat designs, and FIA secretary general for sport Peter Bayer expanded on this last week. Bayer told teams the updated rules would “expressly prevent teams from using

photography or other reverse engineering techniques to copy large parts of other teams' cars” from 2021.

“The most important thing for us was a clear commitment and agreement from FIA and F1 that they want to prohibit extensive copying in the future,” said McLaren team principal Andreas Seidl (right, below). “We got this agreement with the announcement of Nikolas at Silverstone, and with further information we received on Tuesday. Now it's important for us again to spend our energy on our own team.”

Both Ferrari and Renault will continue with their appeals, as will Racing Point in a bid to get its penalty overturned, which means it's likely that the case will go to the FIA's International Court of Appeal.

Questions over Mercedes' links to Racing Point were met with a strong rebuttal from Toto Wolff, who vowed to respond to any serious allegations made against the team. It followed hints from Red Bull boss Christian Horner and Ferrari's Mattia Binotto that Mercedes may have questions to answer over its involvement in the case.

LUKE SMITH



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Ferrari eyes top-class return with Le Mans Hypercar

WEC

Ferrari still has its eyes on a return to the top class of the World Endurance Championship, and it could do it with a road-based Le Mans Hypercar.

The Italian manufacturer has been a participant in the rulemaking process to replace the LMP1 division since early 2018, and then suggested back in February that it could build a car for the new LMP2-based LMDh category announced the previous month. There was, however, one caveat: it had to be able to build its own chassis.

The rulemakers – the FIA, WEC promoter the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, and IMSA

in North America – didn't acquiesce to Ferrari's request. They didn't divert from the principle that an LMDh car has to be built around a P2 chassis when they released the first draft of the new rules in May. But that hasn't drawn a line under Ferrari's interest in a return to the top flight of sportscar racing for the first time since customer teams raced its 333SP prototype and the F40LM/GTE GT car (above) at the Le Mans 24 Hours in the 1990s.

Ferrari GT racing boss Antonello Coletta revealed at the Spa WEC round last weekend that "all the doors are still open".

"The interest in the top class is still there and we are scanning all the opportunities, LMDh and LMH," he explained. "The most

important question is whether we can have a link with a road car. Having our own chassis is a must, and we will see in the future if it is possible to have a new supercar."

Asked if Ferrari was looking at sets of LMH rules, those for road-based machinery and lookalike prototypes, Coletta replied in the affirmative.

Coletta stressed that the coronavirus pandemic had put a hold on the decision-making process. "After COVID we stopped everything because we had other priorities," he explained, "but I hope to restart discussions after the Le Mans 24 Hours [in September]."

GARY WATKINS

WEC slims down to six races for 2021 schedule

WEC

The World Endurance Championship is set to shrink from eight races to six next year. That's the plan, though the series says it cannot reveal when and where the races will be, save for a return of the Le Mans 24 Hours to its traditional mid-June slot.

The FIA and WEC promoter the Automobile Club de l'Ouest confirmed on the resumption of the 2019-20 series at Spa last

weekend that there will be a slimmed-down schedule in 2021. The move, they stressed, is an inevitable consequence of the fallout of the COVID-19 crisis.

"We are trying to adapt the calendar to the economic and world situation," said WEC boss Gerard Neveu. "It was clear and logical that we have to reduce the number of races from our discussions with the manufacturers and the teams."

Six races, including Le Mans, is the minimum

number laid down in the series rules. FIA statutes also dictate that world championships visit three continents.

Neveu insisted that this remains the intent for the WEC next year and that there is a desire to kick off the series at Sebring in March. But he stated that it is impossible at the moment to make any firm decisions because of restrictions on international travel.

GARY WATKINS



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

IN THE HEADLINES

MERC OK FOR CONCORDE

Mercedes Formula 1 boss Toto Wolff says his team is now ready to “move forward” in signing the new Concorde Agreement, under which the series’ commercial terms are set. Wolff, who said Mercedes had not been “treated in the way we should have been”, has had further talks with Chase Carey, the chief of F1 owner Liberty Media. “I’ve had some very constructive discussions with Chase, and most of the clarifications that we wanted to achieve have been discussed,” he said.

GELAEEL BREAKS HIS BACK

Formula 2 veteran Sean Gelael was forced to miss last Sunday’s sprint race at Barcelona after fracturing his back in a reported 45G impact with a kerb in Saturday’s feature race. The Indonesian was unable to get out of his DAMS car unaided, and was taken to hospital. Gelael wrote on Instagram: “I’m all OK, I have a D4 mid-spine fracture. We will wait and see what the future will bring.”

PULCINI’S CARLIN CALL-UP

FIA Formula 3 race winner Leonardo Pulcini made a surprise return to the series for last weekend’s round at Barcelona with Carlin. Pulcini, who has been racing a Lamborghini in the Italian GT Championship this year, filled the seat occupied by Ben Barnicoat for the two Silverstone rounds after Enaam Ahmed split with the squad following the opening three events. He scored a best result of 16th across the two races.

BELL TO REPLACE JONES

Leading NASCAR Cup team Joe Gibbs Racing is dropping Erik Jones from its Toyota line-up at the end of this season. Jones will be replaced by JGR protege Christopher Bell. The 25-year-old from Oklahoma, the 2017 Truck champion, has won 16 Xfinity Series races for the team, and has spent his rookie Cup campaign this year with Leavine Family Racing.



Electric key for rallycross future

WORLD RALLYCROSS

World Rallycross Championship promoter Paul Bellamy believes that the series will move back into the forefront of manufacturer involvement when it adopts electric rules in 2022.

Speaking to Autosport in the latest of our series of #thinkingforward podcasts, where motorsport industry leaders discuss the future, Bellamy said that while the flagship WRX contest will go electric in 2022, there will always be a place for the internal combustion engine in the sport.

“It’s no secret that they [the manufacturers] walked away from the world championship over 12 months ago,” said Bellamy. “And that was fine because their whole marketing strategy was to get behind new technologies, whether that be hybrid or electric, and we weren’t ready to turn electric at that time.

“As we go forward, the way I see it, I think internal combustion engine racing still has a place in motorsports, but probably for privateers and the romantics amongst us and the fans out there. The future for manufacturer involvement will be the new technology, and from a rallycross perspective we believe that’s going to be electric. And the plan with the FIA is for the world championship to be electric in 2022. That’s when I think we’ll start seeing manufacturing

involvement come back.”

Bellamy added that he is confident that diehard rallycross fans will accept the new technology once they see it in action.

“We’re very fortunate,” he said. “Across a rallycross weekend we have 80 races because we’ve got a number of support categories. The vision will be that the world championship does go electric in 2022. But the support categories, whether it’s Euro, Supercar, Super 1600s, will stay internal combustion engine because there are privateers out there, there are cars out there that still need to go racing somewhere.

“I’m certain that the traditional rallycross fans, unless there’s a noise to it or a roar, they’re not going to want to know. Human nature is, ‘I don’t like it, but I’m going to tune in, just to prove I don’t like it’. And then I think when they understand or when they see the technology behind it, and the fact that these cars with just the pure torque are going to be faster and there will still be contact, then they’ll start watching it, and then cross over.”



Listen to Paul Bellamy in conversation with James Allen on the Autosport #thinkingforward podcast. [autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast)

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Dovizioso walking out on Ducati

MOTOGP

Andrea Dovizioso will leave Ducati at the end of the 2020 MotoGP season after eight seasons with the team.

Talks between Ducati and Dovizioso stalled in recent months over money, with the Italian manufacturer wanting to put an end to big-money contracts as it feels the pinch from the financial crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the Friday of last weekend's Austrian Grand Prix, Ducati said it would take its decision for 2021 on Dovizioso after this weekend's Styrian GP. But on Saturday, Dovizioso's manager Simone Battistella informed Ducati of his rider's intentions not to renew his deal beyond 2020.

Battistella said no offer was ever tabled by Ducati and insists money was never an issue. Dovizioso refused to go into detail at the Red Bull Ring. "The only thing I can say is that it was better to take the decision now and be focused on the racing instead of waiting for more races," he said.

Dovizioso's options outside of Ducati are limited to Aprilia, which is awaiting the final verdict on Andrea Iannone's appeal to have his 18-month doping ban overturned. This has been delayed to 15 October on the request of the World Anti-Doping Agency.



Dovizioso, who has won 14 races for Ducati and finished runner-up in the past three MotoGP seasons, admitted: "I want to race, but in this moment I don't have any Plan B. But that decision... this situation was different than to wait for the Plan B."

The decision drew many reactions from the racing world, with Ducati's 2007 world champion Casey Stoner tweeting that the marque "couldn't afford to lose a rider like Dovizioso". Cal Crutchlow, who rode for Ducati in 2014, said Ducati was losing "a

great rider... but that doesn't mean that rider can't be replaced".

Valentino Rossi said he was "surprised" by the decision, and feels it opens the rider market up. Ducati is yet to make any firm plans, but Francesco Bagnaia, Johann Zarco and its ex-rider Jorge Lorenzo have all been linked. On Lorenzo, Ducati said "his name has been on the table and may still be".

LEWIS DUNCAN

P15 OPINION

Positive COVID test forces Spa withdrawals

WEC

Coronavirus infections forced the withdrawal of one driver and a team from last Saturday's Spa round of the 2019-20 World Endurance Championship. Jackie Chan DC Racing LMP2 driver Gabriel Aubry and the Algarve Pro squad, for which he drove in the previous weekend's European Le Mans Series event, were forced to pull out of the race after positive tests for the virus.

Aubry submitted himself for a test in Paris between the two Spa events after a friend with whom he had been in contact was diagnosed with



COVID-19. He only received the result after his arrival back in Belgium.

The Frenchman self-isolated to await results of a confirmatory test in Belgium, while the Algarve P2 squad

also went into quarantine in their hotel. The second test for Aubry came back positive, as did those for three members of the Anglo-Portuguese squad.

Aubry withdrew from the

Jota-run Chan/DC line-up and was replaced by ELMS regular Ryan Cullen in the team's ORECA-Gibson 07 (left) alongside Will Stevens and Ho-Pin Tung. Three members of the Jota squad who had come into contact with Aubry but didn't test positive also took no further part in the event.

A WEC statement explained that the procedures followed were "in accordance with the instructions given by relevant public health authorities and the WEC and Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps' COVID-19 medical delegate".

GARY WATKINS



TCR SCANDINAVIA

Huff begins Swedish title attack

TCR SCANDINAVIA

Former World Touring Car champion and all-round tin-top nomad Rob Huff has begun another title challenge – except this time it's in Scandinavia.

The 40-year-old Brit, who won the 2012 WTCC title with Chevrolet, was left high and dry in the World Touring Car Cup when Volkswagen pulled its official support of the series at the end of 2019. But over the winter he secured a deal to continue at the wheel of the marque's Golf GTI, this time with the ambitious Swedish Lestrup Racing Team in TCR Scandinavia.

The coronavirus-delayed series finally kicked off at Karlskoga last weekend. Only a time penalty applied after the opening race denied Huff a triple podium and,

although he failed to win a race, he sits just four points off the championship lead.

Huff (above) qualified alongside polewinning Lestrup team-mate Oliver Soderstrom for the opening race, but dropped to fifth at the start due to a clutch problem. He fought back to second behind Soderstrom on the road, but a five-second penalty for contact with the Audi of Tobias Brink dropped him to fourth.

Brink led the second race all the way, but a penalty applied to Brink for jumping the start meant the race was really between veteran Robert Dahlgren (Cupra) and Huff. Dahlgren clung on to secure victory.

Huff then fought through to third in the reversed-grid finale, which was won by the VW of Andreas Ahlberg.

In Germany, reigning World Touring Car champion Norbert Michelisz warmed up for the impending start of his factory Hyundai campaign for 2020 with victory in a guest outing at the Nurburgring.

The Hungarian took the wheel of a Team Engstler Hyundai i30 N TCR and took a dominant win (left) in the opening TCR Germany race of the weekend. He then drove from fifth on the reversed grid in race two to finish second behind the similar Hyundai of Hari Proczyk.



ADAC MOTORSPORT

IN THE HEADLINES

BAMBER IN THE BARRIERS

Former Le Mans 24 Hours winner Earl Bamber had a rough NASCAR debut in last weekend's Xfinity Series race on the Daytona 'roval'. The Kiwi, who was driving a Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet, struck a kerb with enough force to almost roll, and it pitched him into the barriers.

EDGAR WINS AGAIN IN F4

British Red Bull Junior Jonny Edgar continues to lead the German F4 Championship following another win with Van Amersfoort Racing at the Nurburgring last weekend. Edgar dominated the second race, and played a starring role in the opener by charging from eighth on the grid to second within two laps. That race was won by Prema Powerteam's Ferrari protege Gabriele Mini, who missed the opening event due to a clashing Italian round. Edgar was fifth in the reversed-grid finale.

BENNANI IN TCR EUROPE

Race-winning World Touring Car veteran Mehdi Bennani has switched to the TCR Europe series for this season. The Moroccan will race a Comtoy Racing Audi.

YELEY'S XBOX TIE-UP

Autosport parent company Motorsport Network teamed up with Xbox to support the Rick Ware Racing Ford of JJ Yeley (below) in last weekend's NASCAR Cup round at Daytona. The tie-up was in celebration of the fact that *NASCAR Heat 5* was free to play for all Xbox Live Gold members over the weekend.



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Does Raikkonen deserve to stay?

The Alfa Romeo veteran's contract runs out at the end of this season, so if he wishes to remain in F1 it's a good thing that his form appears to have turned a corner

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

It's easy to see when a driver in Formula 1's leading teams is succeeding or failing. The unofficial 'Class A' squads can climb onto the podium, while the crowded midfield runners have the prizes of Q3 spots and regular points.

But at the back of the grid it's easy to get lost in the grind to escape Q1, which in any case will leave little trace down the years. Nevertheless, for the drivers at Haas, Williams and Alfa Romeo this year, that's the best indication of a standout performance. So far this season, George Russell has managed it four times, followed by the Haas drivers on two each.

Last weekend, Kimi Raikkonen became the first Alfa driver to escape the opening segment of qualifying in 2020, and eventually lined up 14th ahead of Renault's Esteban Ocon. He backed up this fine achievement with 14th in the race, heading the order of the self-contained group those three squads represent. But points are what it's all about, and so far only Kevin Magnussen and Antonio Giovinazzi have scored them from the bottom three teams. When the race is long and largely uneventful, as last weekend's Spanish Grand Prix was, the battle becomes about finding a way to head what is effectively 'Class C'.

That's quite a long way from Raikkonen's glory years, when he took breathtaking wins and lost championships to unreliability at McLaren, when he *did* take the title at Ferrari, when he stunned

“Future stars, as well as drivers already in their prime, are waiting in the wings”

the bigger teams at Lotus, and when he tried but failed to recapture the magic back at Maranello, nevertheless taking 25 further podiums and one more win in red.

He signed for what was then called Sauber at the end of 2018, after Ferrari had finally called time on his uninspiring second stint. The Sauber/Alfa move made sense – Raikkonen loved racing in F1 and the team wanted someone experienced to aid its push forwards.

Last year he scored 43 points in a classic up-and-down midfield campaign, but the start of the current season has been tough. Alfa (like Haas) is suddenly hamstrung by the Ferrari engine deficit, while Williams enjoys – until the next race at least – the boost from the Mercedes power unit in qualifying. “Obviously, we are too slow,” Raikkonen says of Alfa's start to 2020.

So far this season Raikkonen has had more pain than gain.

He's losing the qualifying head to head with Giovinazzi 2-4 and, although he's ahead 4-1 in the races they have both finished, Raikkonen's DNF came in the season opener, where Giovinazzi finished ninth and was ahead even before the right-front wheel flew off Raikkonen's car. Things got better at the second Red Bull Ring event, where he came home just outside the points in a much calmer overall race, and he was the lead Alfa home despite getting a silly penalty for overshooting his grid box. But the British GP was a nightmare. He had a lap-one off and was running last even before he went wide at Copse and damaged his front wing.

But since then, Raikkonen has climbed back up. He turned in a fine drive on the difficult one-stopper in the second Silverstone race, and his weekend performance at Barcelona was exceptional. He made things tough for himself with a messy opening lap to let Magnussen past, but he overcame the Haas on a two-stop strategy to get back to where he needed to be – heading Class C.

Compared to his team-mate, who was the only Class C driver on a similar strategy, Raikkonen was 0.366 seconds quicker per lap in the opening stint, which Giovinazzi reversed in the second by going 0.316s faster on average, but Raikkonen's previously used mediums were a factor here. In the final stint on new softs, the 2007 world champion edged it – 0.085s quicker per lap. The end result was that he ultimately beat Magnussen home and Giovinazzi didn't.

Now is a good time for Raikkonen to be hitting fine form. Although the campaign is only six races old, the year is long past its halfway point and his contract expires at the end of the season.

There are already threats to his seat. If the Racing Point/Aston Martin driver wrangling means Sebastian Vettel replaces Sergio Perez, that means a younger, equally capable driver (at this stage in Raikkonen's career at least) with massive backing is available. Perez is an attractive candidate for any team. Plus, Alfa team boss Frederic Vasseur has a long history with Nico Hulkenberg.

The other Alfa seat is set by Ferrari, which must choose whether to extend Giovinazzi's F1 career or promote one of whichever F2 junior it so desires from Callum Ilott, Robert Shwartzman and Mick Schumacher. All three are in Formula 2 title contention.

If Raikkonen can keep up his run of form and turn in starring performances such as he did at Barcelona, then he will either give Alfa a simple choice of extending his career, or a tough one if there is an outsider in contention. If he reverts to the results from the opening four races, there's an argument to be made that he doesn't deserve his place on the grid for a 19th season, with future stars, as well as drivers already in their prime, waiting in the wings. But Raikkonen is known for not wasting time on tasks he doesn't enjoy, so he must decide if that is what F1 has become. ❄

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Ducati needs to look forwards

Signing a big name to be a safe pair of hands is no way to win championships in MotoGP. Upcoming talent should be the only option for the Italian squad

LEWIS DUNCAN

The name on everyone's lips since Andrea Dovizioso's Ducati departure for 2021 was announced has unsurprisingly been Jorge Lorenzo, who retired from MotoGP last year after a disappointing spell at Honda. Ducati said last month at Jerez that three-time MotoGP champion Lorenzo had "proposed" himself. Sporting director Paolo Ciabatti stoked the fires further, saying: "There is no pre-agreement with Lorenzo. His name has been on the table and may still be."

Naturally, given Lorenzo's ties to Ducati general manager Gigi Dall'Igna and his proven track record, the Italian marque would want to consider bringing him back home. But it must resist this temptation. Lorenzo won three grands prix for Ducati in 2018 after a fuel-tank ergonomic modification was provided for him, allowing him to ride the bike more naturally. But a largely average three podiums in 2017, and none before his maiden Ducati success the following season, wasn't enough to keep his place.

History argues that this was probably a mistake and Lorenzo could have challenged Marc Marquez closer than Dovizioso did last year, with the Italian 151 points adrift in the runner-up spot after just two victories. Lorenzo's last win was two years ago, ancient history in motorsport. He then went to Honda and was broken by the bike – physically and mentally. The 47-time MotoGP winner couldn't adapt himself to the RC213V and retired at the end of the

“Let's face it, the fairly small price tag Bagnaia comes with makes him less of a risk”

year without registering a single top-10 finish.

Now, the RC213V appears to be a nasty bike that was seemingly born with a hatred of motorcycle racers. Very few have tamed it. But Marquez has been able to win six world titles on it, while Dani Pedrosa and Cal Crutchlow have won races on it. It can easily be argued that a champion should still be able to extract the maximum from a bad bike, as Marquez has done.

Ducatis now very much have Lorenzo's fingerprints on them, their slightly more corner-friendly nature a direct result of his inputs from a decade of riding Yamahas. But that's not to say that the glove still fits. Lorenzo has done little running on the Yamaha since returning to the manufacturer in a testing role, and is unlikely to start a MotoGP race, with wildcards banned for 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. So Ducati doesn't have much

recent knowledge to justify signing him.

What has become abundantly clear over the past year is that Ducati needs a fresh approach. Whoever made the real decision about Dovizioso is a mystery. He made the first move, he claimed on Saturday, in a bid to clear his mind amid what has so far been a tough title campaign. But tensions have existed for some time between Ducati and Dovizioso, and it's not beyond the realms of possibility that the team's mind was already made up to part ways, and that its star rider simply didn't want to go through the motions.

Nevertheless, Ducati is losing a solid campaigner. Dovizioso has won 14 races for the marque since 2016, and has done much to transform its fortunes and credibility in his eight years there. But since 2017, the title Ducati so desires has slipped further away. After missing out by 37 points and taking it to the wire in 2017, Dovizioso was 76 adrift in 2018 and 151 back last year.

There's no doubt that Lorenzo would become a safe pair of hands in the way Dovizioso has been. But that doesn't win championships in MotoGP's ultra-competitive era. Yamaha, Suzuki and KTM have all banked on youth for their 2021 factory line-ups – two of which, in Fabio Quartararo and Brad Binder, are already winners in 2020. This is why the only rider Ducati should be considering to replace Dovizioso is Pramac's Francesco Bagnaia.

The 2018 Moto2 champion's rookie season last year was disappointing, but this was partly down to him being led astray by a strong run in pre-season testing. On the latest-spec Ducati machinery, Bagnaia stepped up to the plate in the Andalusian GP at Jerez, while Ducati factory duo Dovizioso and Danilo Petrucci struggled to get their heads around the rear tyre.

After putting his GP20 onto the front row, Bagnaia was heading for second before his engine broke. For 13 of the 19 laps he lapped quicker than eventual second-place man Maverick Vinales. A knee fracture at Brno came at an unfortunate moment for Bagnaia, but team-mate Jack Miller's podium last weekend in Austria suggests the 23-year-old Italian would likely have been in the mix.

Dovizioso has theorised that Bagnaia has had less trouble with Michelin's 2020-construction tyre owing to his lack of experience on the Ducati. Assuming the tyre stays roughly the same for next year, and with the bike not making any major steps forward, that could well benefit Ducati.

Ducati clearly saw Bagnaia as being a rider with a long future at the marque – after all, it signed him up in January 2018 before he'd even won a race in Moto2. So far he's made the steps forward that Ducati wanted to see from him this season. And, let's face it, he also comes with a fairly small price tag, which makes him less of a risk. So why promote anyone else? ❄

➔ P54 MOTOGP REPORT



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YOUR SAY

*If I were in charge at McLaren, I might be thinking ‘not again?’
If I were at Red Bull, I might be quietly amused*

STEVE SINGLETON

The imbalance of power

So, after an obscure accommodation is reached with Ferrari to, shall we say, rein in their power unit ambitions, all Ferrari-powered teams subsequently drop down the Formula 1 grid.

Now, out of the blue, engine qualifying modes are on notice, where Mercedes and their customers seem to have an advantage. Does anyone remember a move against such modes in 2019?

If I were Mercedes, I might not be rushing to sign the Concorde agreement, with such random variables in the landscape.

If I were in charge at McLaren, I might be thinking ‘not again’.

If I were at Red Bull, I might be quietly amused.

But of course I am none of the above. I am just a fan and I know nothing...

Steve Singleton
Yorkshire

One rule for them...

In Formula E the introduction of an attack mode (right) was lauded as a great innovation and is now seen to be key part of the racing action: in Formula 1 such modes are to be banned. Might the FIA offer an explanation for this contradiction?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone
Elland, West Yorks

Schumacher Jr is over-hyped

I can't believe that Mick Schumacher didn't get a penalty for taking out Robert Shwartzman in the Formula 2 sprint race at Silverstone in a move that would not have gone unpunished for anyone else.

In my mind there seems to be a campaign to get him into F1 at any cost because of his name, so letting him get away with this type of driving moves him closer to a superlicence. This ‘chip off the old block’ mentality



is also rife among commentators who keep on over-praising him (Alex Jacques and Johnny Herbert in particular) when he appears somewhat average and lacking in racecraft.

Peter Allen
By email

Make F1 team masks available to all

Would it not be a fine gesture and in the public interest if the F1 teams offered ‘their’ face masks for sale to the general public at cost price post free?


I live in hope.

Peter Dring
Codnor, Derbyshire


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Points advantage
Hamilton now has
over Verstappen



THE 'SHOCK' THAT GAVE MERCEDES ITS EDGE BACK IN SPAIN

Stung by Verstappen's win last time out, even F1's top team could be forgiven for being taken aback at the style of Lewis Hamilton's counterstrike

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES





SUTTON

ewis Hamilton and Mercedes didn't take it for granted that they would win the 2020 Spanish Grand Prix – and certainly not in the manner in which they ultimately did.

One week on from Max Verstappen's stunning victory for Red Bull in the 70th Anniversary GP, the reigning champion squad had arrived at the Barcelona track eager to make up for its defeat and looking to put the lessons it had learned as a result into practice. Indeed, the team hadn't taken a day off – according to team boss Toto Wolff – as they sought to understand the manner of their first defeat of the season “in the office”, despite the punishing 2020 schedule meaning the Spanish race was the end of a second triple-header, with a third looming.

It was always going to be a somewhat different story this time, but Mercedes was nevertheless unnerved by Verstappen's pace in Friday practice. The long-run data-gathering that takes place in FP2 can never give a full prediction of what will happen in the race, but Verstappen's 0.291-seconds-per-lap advantage over Hamilton on the medium C2 Pirelli tyre made Mercedes believe he was a real threat once again. Wolff went as far as saying he was the favourite for victory.

In a similar way to the previous event, the start of the race unfolded pretty perfectly for Verstappen. Valtteri Bottas seemed to react well to

the lights going out from second on the grid, but felt “Lewis had a tiny bit better reaction”. Then, as he later explained, a small amount of wheelspin in the second phase of the getaway cost him dearly.

Verstappen was able to get alongside the Mercedes and pick up the critical tow from Hamilton's car on the long run to the first corner, which cost Bottas what he had thought ahead of the race would be his best chance to challenge his team-mate for the win. And it got worse from there, as Racing Point's Lance Stroll launched so well from fifth that he immediately passed his team-mate Sergio Perez, and was then able to get such a strong tow from Verstappen and Bottas that he dived down the inside of the right-handed first corner. Bottas knew he was “sandwiched”, with Verstappen sweeping into second and Stroll – thinking “I'm not sitting here in fourth, I'll get past a Mercedes for a few laps” – muscling his way by on the inside to take third.

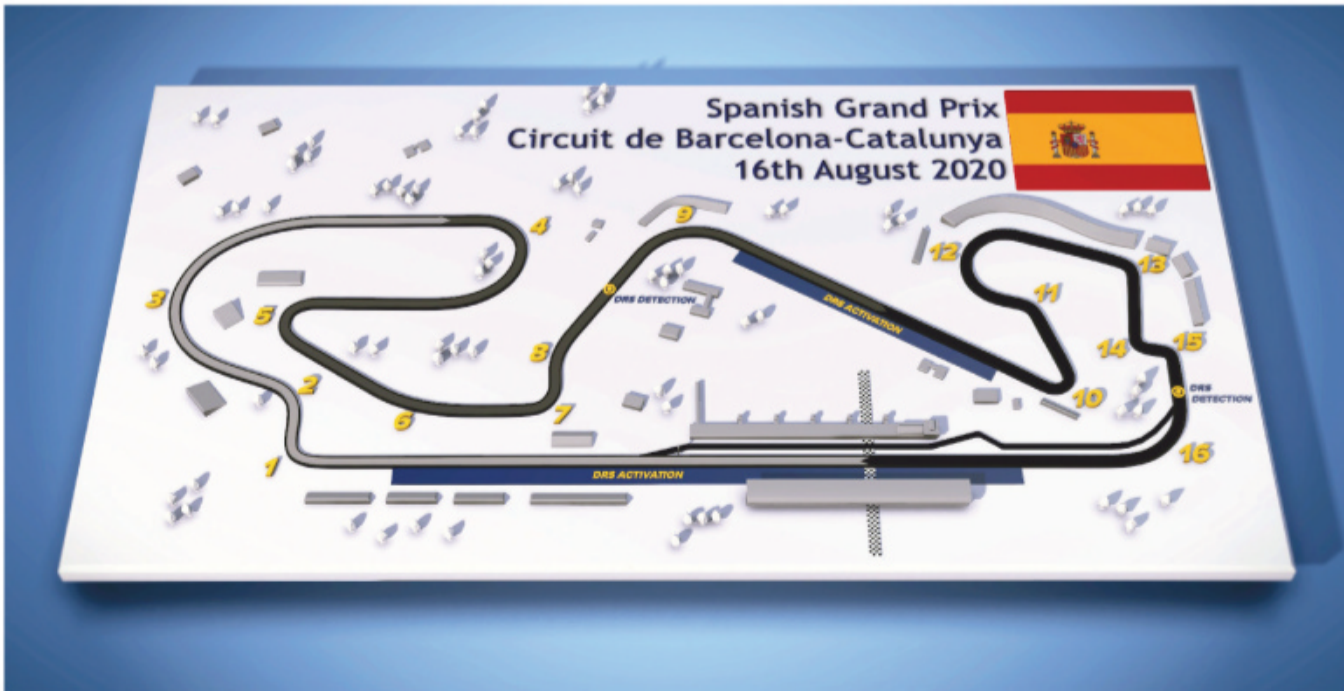
Verstappen chased after Hamilton, who had made a serene getaway from pole and had a 1.492s lead at the end of the first tour. From here, the gap between the leaders initially remained reasonably steady, with Verstappen telling his team that Hamilton was circulating “super-slow”. But the leader was doing so with good reason, which all came back to the tyre punishment Mercedes had endured the week before.

“Obviously we had a good start,” Hamilton said later, “but, balancing the gap between Max and me, [was just about] trying to gauge where they were, because we didn't know how far they could go and >>



Hamilton rockets ahead while Bottas loses out to Verstappen and Stroll at the start

BARCELONA TRACK LAYOUT





Verstappen was unable to keep pace with Hamilton once he turned up the wick

how much wear they would have compared to us – in the last race it was much better.”

And so the two leaders toured around at a fairly sedate pace in the 1m24s, while Bottas took until lap five of 66 to get back past Stroll and into third, using DRS to shoot by on the main straight. Then, on lap 10, Hamilton turned the screw.

The world champion’s 1m23.618s was the start of a series of fastest laps, and Verstappen couldn’t match him. Over the next 10 laps, Hamilton was able to stay in the lower half of the 1m23s (other than a 1m22.767s on lap 13 and a slip to 1m23.505s on lap 19), while Verstappen couldn’t, fading to the 1m24s by the time of his first stop on lap 21. That meant the gap between them by then had grown to more than seven seconds, and at the same time it was giving Mercedes more strategy options, as the team was not seeing a high rate of wear on the soft tyres that all the top 10 starters were running when the lights went out.

“We didn’t know how the tyres would behave and how long we needed to go,” explained Wolff. “So there wasn’t really any push lap at the beginning, and we were able to extend the first stint on the soft.”

This surprised Hamilton, who said the tyre behaviour in the opening stint was “a real shock”.

“We were not expecting tyre performance to be as it was today,” he added. “On my side, I had planned to manage the tyres as I did, but sometimes you go with that plan and it doesn’t work out. Sometimes you have more deg[radation] than you thought, but I had much better deg today than I had through FP1 and FP2 and I think that’s what ultimately made the difference.”

In fact, Hamilton’s opening stint went so well that he sailed past his target lap for his first stop, which Pirelli had suggested could have been as early as lap 16 on the soft-medium-medium strategy Hamilton and Verstappen both employed. He and Mercedes even briefly considered trying a one-stop strategy. As it was, the team called him in two laps after Verstappen.

“I mean, the guys don’t know – I think I know,” Hamilton cryptically replied when asked how he had been able to extend his opening stint. “It was just in the management and the strategy that I chose in terms of when and where to push. How I was able to implement that was not necessarily what the team initially thought was what we needed to do. But it was the execution that was just on point.”

The second stint was remarkably similar to the opening phase. The gap between Hamilton and Verstappen when the Mercedes rejoined



It took Bottas until lap five to get back past Stroll’s Racing Point



“WHEN LEWIS STARTED TO PICK UP THE PACE I COULDN'T REALLY FOLLOW SO I KNEW THAT WAS IT FOR TODAY”

after its first stop was 4.272s, which was largely down to a slow left-rear wheel change that meant Hamilton was stationary for 4.3s, while Red Bull had serviced Verstappen in 1.9s. This had critically got Verstappen back out *just* ahead of the Racing Point pair that were already a pitstop adrift of the three leaders, who would go on to lap everyone up to and including fourth-placed Stroll by the finish.

The gap remained stable between laps 24 and 30, actually coming down to a low of 3.488s, before, again, Hamilton was able to pick up his pace, easing to a 1m23.007s on the 31st tour. Verstappen, again, could not live with the pace, especially when Hamilton then moved into the 1m22s for a run of 16 laps (which included two in the 1m21s). Given that in Friday practice Verstappen had had the edge on the medium rubber the two leaders had taken at their opening pitstops, this was the moment when the race really appeared to be lost for Red Bull.

But Verstappen had recognised that his chances of challenging Hamilton for the win were over way before then. “Towards the middle of that first stint when Lewis started to pick up the pace I couldn't really follow so I knew that was it for today,” he explained. “[I thought] ‘I'm just going to manage my race from now on and try to make the best of it.’”

Hamilton brought his advantage to bear as he opened up his lead across the second stint, with Verstappen's attention turning back towards the recovering Bottas, which meant he pitted on lap 41, leaving Hamilton to his relentless 1m22s. Apart from the first pitstop, everything was going right for the leader. “Even when I was catching traffic I was gaining time rather than losing time, which is never the case,” said Hamilton.

The Briton had enough in hand that he didn't need to worry about covering Verstappen's second stop, and he remained out for another nine laps before coming in for his own second and final stop. Here there had been a moment of apparent confusion, as Mercedes had wanted Hamilton to come in and take the softs for his final stint, such was that tyre's performance in the opening part of the race. But he overruled the team, which meant he came in on lap 50 to get the medium tyres he wanted. >>

QUALIFYING



If the final flying laps in Q3 for the Spanish Grand Prix go down as the last hurrah for Mercedes' “party” qualifying engine mode – as Lewis Hamilton coined it ahead of the 2018 Formula 1 season – then they were an anti-climax.

When discussing the implications of the FIA's expected move to clamp down on powerful qualifying engine modes from the Belgian GP, Williams driver George Russell – who experiences the potent step in power the Mercedes engine can produce for the grid-setting session – said he'd be “disappointed” to lose “such an exciting part of the weekend”.

Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas had used the extra power to roar clear in qualifying, with the world champion ahead by 0.059 seconds after their first Q3 laps. But on the final runs, nothing changed. Both Mercedes, as well as Max Verstappen and Lance Stroll, failed to find another step.

“I don't think conditions really changed – at least it felt like they didn't really improve for the second run,” Bottas said afterwards, with both Mercedes drivers at a loss to explain the situation. Bottas actually thought he was up on his final run before his dash display adjusted and confirmed his gap to Hamilton remained, and he had been quickest of all in the second sector before fading through the final turns.

“The first lap felt OK, but a little bit – in some areas – within the limit, so I knew that there were some areas that I could improve on,” Hamilton said after clinching his 92nd F1 pole and 150th front-row start. “And then on the next run the tyres just didn't feel the same and the grip wasn't the same for me. So it was just overall a really poor second lap.”

Verstappen held on to what he called his “subscription” on third place. But his lack of improvement left him perilously close to the returning Sergio Perez, who was just 0.190s off Verstappen's time on his final run at the end of Q3.

“WE COULD HAVE ACHIEVED EVEN MORE, BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY MORE SETS OF SOFT TYRES”

Arguably the star of qualifying was another world champion: Kimi Raikkonen. His 1m17.797s in Q1 was enough to lift an Alfa Romeo out of the opening segment for the first time this season – a trick Russell has recently made his own but didn't this time, despite Williams head of vehicle performance Dave Robson saying the team “got most of what the car had to offer” as it took 18th and 19th.

Raikkonen, who eventually beat Esteban Ocon's much faster Renault to 14th on the grid in Q2, said: “We could have achieved even more, but we didn't have any more sets of soft tyres so we had to use the mediums.”



Hamilton overruled his team and got the mediums he wanted at the second stop



Verstappen's relentless pace kept Bottas at a safe distance



A class apart: top three finishers lapped the rest of the field

“It was the logical choice to go on the soft for the last remaining 15 or 20-odd laps; nothing really indicated that that tyre wouldn’t perform,” said Wolff. “So that was not a mistake from the team. On the contrary, the soft is the quickest tyre.

“But the call that he made is impressive, because he was adamant to get onto the medium. What I’m really happy about is the open conversation that we have between the driver and the team.”

From there, the only real danger Hamilton faced was a piece of debris from Romain Grosjean’s Haas, which had flicked off as he bounced over the Turn 2 runoff speed bumps following his late clash at Turn 1 with Antonio Giovinazzi (something the stewards later deemed a racing incident as “Giovinazzi had substantially completed the overtake on the inside at Turn 1 and had the right to the line”).

“It was right by where my right-front tyre would normally go,” said Hamilton. “It was a big flap. And luckily, in a split second, I managed to put it underneath the car, my wheels either side.”

Given the suspicions that debris had played a part in his near-race-losing puncture at Silverstone only two weeks previously, which Pirelli has since dismissed as a factor in that incident, it looked like another perilous moment for Hamilton.

But inside the cockpit he was largely unconcerned, and indeed was able to run clear to the flag to take his fourth win of the 2020 season by 24.177s. After Bottas had been quickest in FP1, Hamilton had topped every subsequent session and led every lap of the race on the way to taking his 88th career victory.

Beyond the facts of the performance, what was really notable about Hamilton’s latest remarkable victory was his reaction to his own magnificence.

“In the chase for perfection and being in that zone, you could be very close but still be slightly out and not be quite in your perfect rhythm,” he reflected in the post-race press conference. “But for whatever reason, today, I don’t know, I can’t quite pinpoint why, but today I felt like I was in the most... it was like a clear zone, the clarity that I had today while I was driving was... I’m sure I’ve had it before

but not always... I don’t even know how to really get into that zone.

“It’s hard to say what helps you get into that space and of course I will evaluate this weekend and the feeling today, but honestly I felt fantastic in the car. It was physically challenging, but in terms of not making any mistakes, delivering lap upon lap upon lap, I was in a perfect zone and that’s the zone that I dream of being in.”

That helped explained the “daze” Hamilton had spoken of once he climbed from his car in parc ferme, and why he was unaware he was on the final tour as he thought only of his team-mate’s late quest to get the fastest lap.

He had found the almost mythical ‘form’ that elite sportspeople speak of in the almost reverential terms Hamilton used. Where everything is on such a high plain, things feel, look and react differently – for the better. The grinding chore becomes serene – and that’s what Hamilton was last Sunday. Nothing (bar a bit of Haas bodywork) and nobody could touch him.

His description of his feelings inevitably drew comparisons with his hero Ayrton Senna’s qualifying performance at the 1988 Monaco GP, but Hamilton downplayed such comparisons.

“It’s not an out-of-body experience,” he said. “The zone that I was able to get into and stay in for a long, long, long time was... I’ve just got to evaluate how I got there, because it was evident in the gap that I added, it was evident in how I managed the tyres. I’m always talking about perfect races. That was one of them.”

Verstappen’s second stop had come when he was just 1.61s in front of Bottas, who immediately upped his pace on his 18-lap-old medium tyres. This resulted in a 1m21.857s and a gain of 1.477s on his previous lap, followed by two laps in the 1m22s, but from there he was not able to close further as Verstappen’s fresh mediums brought him into the 1m22s and eventually the 1m21s.

Mercedes therefore left Bottas out until lap 48, when he came in for the second time and went back onto the soft tyre. Given the medium was the best race tyre and the soft had surprised Mercedes with its performance, this seemed perplexing, as Bottas now had a 7.124s



gap to close, but he felt “if I went for the mediums, there would be no chance unless he made a mistake or something, because there was just not enough time delta. But in the end the soft wasn’t quite good enough. You can’t really push that tyre, it just overheats. I think the main opportunity I had personally would have been just before Max stopped. There were a couple of points that I was pretty close, but we didn’t take those.”

By lap 63 it was clear that the gap between the pair wasn’t going to come down enough and Mercedes turned its attention to the fastest lap. Both Hamilton and Bottas gave it everything they had, with Bottas coming out on top by 0.072s. But then Mercedes pitted him again with

“IT’S HARD TO SAY WHAT HELPS YOU GET INTO THAT SPACE, BUT HONESTLY I FELT FANTASTIC IN THE CAR”



What a difference a week makes:
Hamilton’s and Verstappen’s
fortunes reversed in Spain

two laps to go and he returned to the mediums, blasting to a 1m18.183s fastest lap, 1.567s quicker than his previous best, on the final tour.

After the high of defeating F1’s crushingly dominant squad a week earlier, Verstappen’s second place – 20.575s clear of Bottas at the flag – naturally felt like a disappointment. His pace in practice had only intensified expectations and, where the previous week his radio messages had been light yet determined, his chatter had been strained and frustrated from midway through the first stint, when he’d realised defeat was coming this time around.

But to beat a Mercedes W11 in essentially a straight fight from the start of the second stint – where Bottas’s deficit considering the tyre life he’d had to expend getting back past Stroll was erased – this was a good result for Verstappen and Red Bull.

“That was the absolute maximum we could have achieved today, Max has got everything he can out of the car,” Red Bull team boss Christian Horner told Sky Sports F1 before he dashed off to catch his flight home. “To split the Mercedes who had a quicker car than us, yeah, we couldn’t have got more than that.”

By losing out to Verstappen, Bottas saw his points deficit to second place in the standings climb by two to six in favour of the Dutchman. But it’s the 43-point gap to Hamilton that concerns him even more.

“It’s way too big,” he said after explaining Verstappen’s relentless pace meant he was “not really surprised not to be able to get close”.

He concluded: “I can see again the championship drifting away.” And with Hamilton in such perfect form there’s only one place it’s heading right now. 🏆

NEXT F1 REPORT

BELGIAN GRAND PRIX 3 SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Can Lewis Hamilton add to his tally of three Belgian GP wins, and can Bottas turn the tide on Verstappen in the points table?

Big score for Racing Point despite Perez penalty

Sergio Perez branded his five-second penalty for allegedly ignoring blue flags as Lewis Hamilton came to lap him “unfair”, but nonetheless he helped Racing Point to its best result of the year on his return as the team left Barcelona with 22 points.

Racing Point decided to split its strategies, putting Lance Stroll on a two-stopper and Perez on one stop, and the Mexican was able to execute his strategy to near-perfection. He started from fourth on soft-compound tyres and moved onto mediums, and spent the race’s second half in fourth before his penalty.

From fifth on the grid, Stroll made a strong start to steal past his team-mate and Valtteri Bottas into the first two corners, rising to third. Bottas’s start from the front had been sluggish compared to the cars around him, allowing Max Verstappen and Stroll to go past, but the Canadian couldn’t hold off the faster Mercedes of Bottas, who took third on lap five.

Stroll’s second stint, on the medium tyres, only lasted 15 laps before he took another set of used softs, and he kept the life in them to clear a one-stopping Sebastian Vettel for fifth with 10 laps remaining.

Perez’s penalty handed Stroll an opportunity to move up a place, if he could carve into Perez’s advantage, and he duly did so. He was classified 2.74 seconds ahead of his team-mate.



SUTTON

BIG NUMBER

14

Kimi Raikkonen’s start position was his best since the 2019 Brazilian Grand Prix where he took eighth in Q3, his most recent appearance in the final part of qualifying.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY
motorsport
IMAGES

COATES

Vettel scores canny seventh amid radio ire

Sebastian Vettel picked up his second-best result of the 2020 season so far, with seventh in the Spanish Grand Prix, but the race featured further awkwardness between the four-time world champion and his soon-to-be-former Ferrari team.

Vettel was running unexpectedly well in fifth when the team confirmed he had to make his soft tyres last 37 laps to the finish on a one-stop strategy, which left him apparently frustrated, although the team and driver played this down in the aftermath.

“I said, ‘Well, you could have asked that three laps before because I asked a couple of times, what’s the target, how long do we want to go, so I could look after my tyres,’” explained Vettel, who ‘only’ did 36 laps on the softs thanks to being lapped. “I said we’d try to make it. The last five laps were really, really difficult. Obviously it helped that we got lapped to be honest – not always the case, but today it was.”

The one-stopper helped Vettel recover from another poor qualifying, after he was knocked out in Q2 for the second race in a row. Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto, who said the radio strategy confusion was because “we prefer to talk openly, others don’t, perhaps so as not to reveal their intentions”, said Vettel’s result was down to his own performance and not the troublesome SF1000.



COATES

“I don’t think it is a strength of the car,” Binotto said. “If it’s any strength, it’s a strength of the drivers first, managing all the tyres, and the engineering group managing all the data.”

Charles Leclerc looked on course to repeat his strong one-stopping performance from the preceding 70th Anniversary GP, as he eked out his first stint on the softs to lap 29 from ninth on the grid. But after a fine battle with McLaren’s Lando Norris, Leclerc suddenly spun at the final chicane. An electrical problem had cut his power and turned him around as the stopped engine effectively acted as an anchor, and he had to tour slowly to the pits with his seat belts loose when it unexpectedly refired.

Albon qualifies better but goes backwards

Alex Albon finished eighth for Red Bull after starting sixth, a result of several factors combining to make his job harder.

Initially he couldn't keep his soft tyres alive, which he said meant he had no problem with Red Bull bringing him in well before everyone else on lap 17. But this put him out in traffic on the unfavoured hard tyre, as he only had one set of new mediums available, and he was forced to battle from there.

He lost out to Carlos Sainz Jr twice, the second time when Albon attacked as the McLaren rejoined from its second stop, and the Red Bull driver was irked at Sainz's firm Turn 4 defence. Albon stopped again on lap 39, taking on new medium-compound rubber, but didn't have the pace to overhaul the one-stopping Sebastian Vettel.

"I didn't have any tyres on each stint," said Albon. "I don't know what it is, but it's the opposite of Silverstone."



Sainz maximises result for McLaren

McLaren had played down expectations ahead of the Spanish GP, but Carlos Sainz Jr enjoyed a good run at his home circuit to claim sixth place thanks to a well-executed soft-soft-medium tyre strategy.

Sainz qualified seventh and was able to maintain that in the early stages. He moved into sixth when Alex Albon made an early stop for the hard tyre and, after he returned to the circuit behind the Red Bull following his own stop for another set of softs, Sainz used the greater grip available to pass Albon on lap 29.

Sainz cleared Renault's Esteban Ocon a lap later, but didn't have enough in reserve to keep the recently pitted Sergio Perez behind and had to concede the position. Sainz pitted to collect his medium tyres at the end of lap 41, and was able to keep Albon at bay with some inch-perfect defending around Turns 3 and 4.

This proved vital when Sebastian Vettel came into view, and Sainz powered past on the start/finish straight to cement sixth place.

Team-mate Lando Norris lost places to Pierre Gasly and Charles Leclerc at the start, and subsequently got bogged down in the midfield and could only collect 10th place and a solitary point for his efforts.

Q & A

GUNTHER STEINER HAAS TEAM PRINCIPAL

Romain Grosjean called the race one of the worst of his career. How can you explain that after his strong practice pace?

We know we haven't got the best car. And having the best car one day and the worst car the other day, I think we need to take it a little bit with a pinch of salt, you know.



We need to look at why we lost so much performance from Friday to Sunday – the lap times on Friday, they were genuine. And today we could only lap two

seconds slower than Friday. So that is very strange. We need to go through the aero data and see if we can find something.

Are there any positives you can take?

I would say today we executed, especially with Kevin [Magnussen], as good as we could. We tried a different strategy and the strategy worked, even if there was no result. But you need to do something.

The execution was fine, it's just like we haven't got the pace at the moment. The car hasn't got the pace, so this is what we are faced with. But otherwise, the whole weekend, everything was done pretty well. We [started] the weekend by changing the engine [on Grosjean's car] on Friday night and then having to break the curfew. We just need to keep our heads down and keep on working.

Do you believe the situation can improve?

What you can look at are things like the change in the engine regulations for the next race, hopefully. That maybe makes some difference or should level everything out a little bit. And the rest, we just try always to get the best out of the car with the set-up. That's the only thing we can do at the moment. I'm very, very conscious of that.



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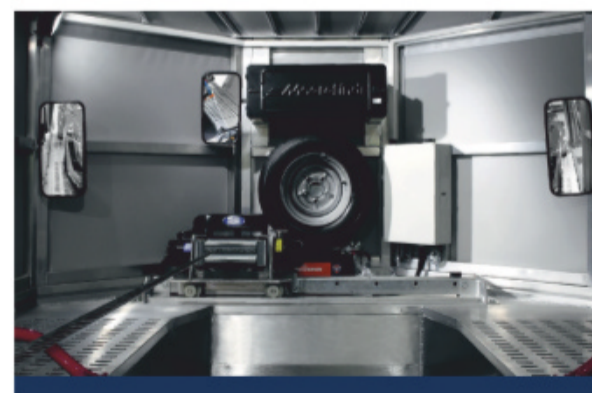
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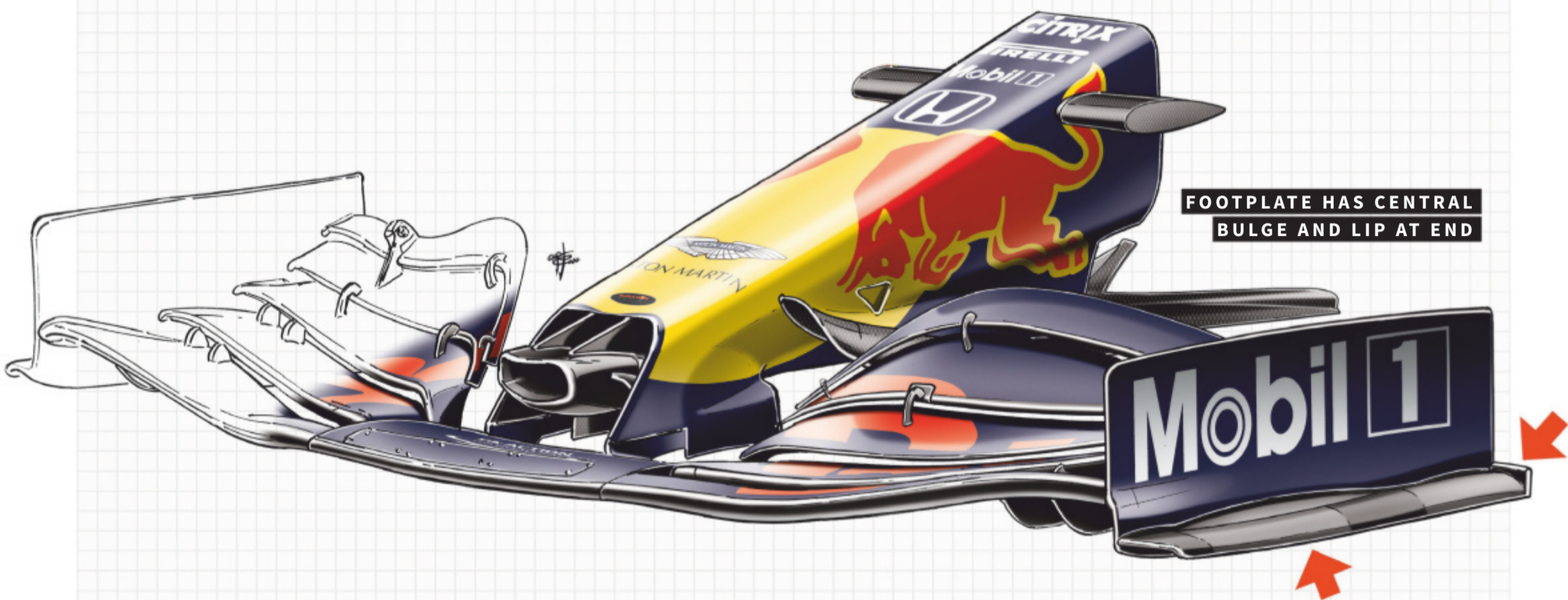
Extensive variety of options to build the perfect solution to meet all requirements.





DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



FOOTPLATE HAS CENTRAL BULGE AND LIP AT END

FRONT-WING TWEAKS HELP TAME THE RED BULL

In a bid to close the Grand Canyon-sized chasm to Mercedes, Red Bull has spent the past few weekends throwing amendments at its RB16. Since the British Grand Prix (round four), the team has had a new front wing, making changes to the shape of the footplate and endplate in order to redefine how the airflow is shed from the front end.

In the first triple-header, Red Bull's wing used a conventionally round footplate with a tapered-off top edge of the endplate, but the design has received a few tweaks in the meantime. Now, the footplate is flatter and

bulges out towards the centre to build the airflow rotation underneath more gradually. The rear of the footplate also features a small lip at the end to help trip the airflow outwards around the front tyre.

The endplate is also straighter along the top, presumably in response to the changes further down. It seems the drivers are becoming more accustomed to the RB16, which was tricky to handle at the dawn of the season, and it appears that these tweaks are contributing to that.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

HOW TO KEEP A RED BULL COOL

Red Bull has also been experimenting with cooling around the halo mounting points on either side of the headrest. In testing, a mounting point was trialled with two additional ducts to boost the mass flow rate of cool air entering the car. There's also an outlet in the dip between the mounting point and the rollhoop, aft of a tiny fin in between. This seems to be a solution to cool the car and also send airflow into the pocket behind the halo to trim any turbulence produced by it.

The air scoop, which takes a marginally different form to the one seen in testing, is removable, and was used at the Hungaroring and at the first Silverstone round to counteract the soaring temperatures typically experienced at the height of summer. But it was omitted from the package at the second Silverstone race and the Spanish GP, despite the high temperatures, suggesting that

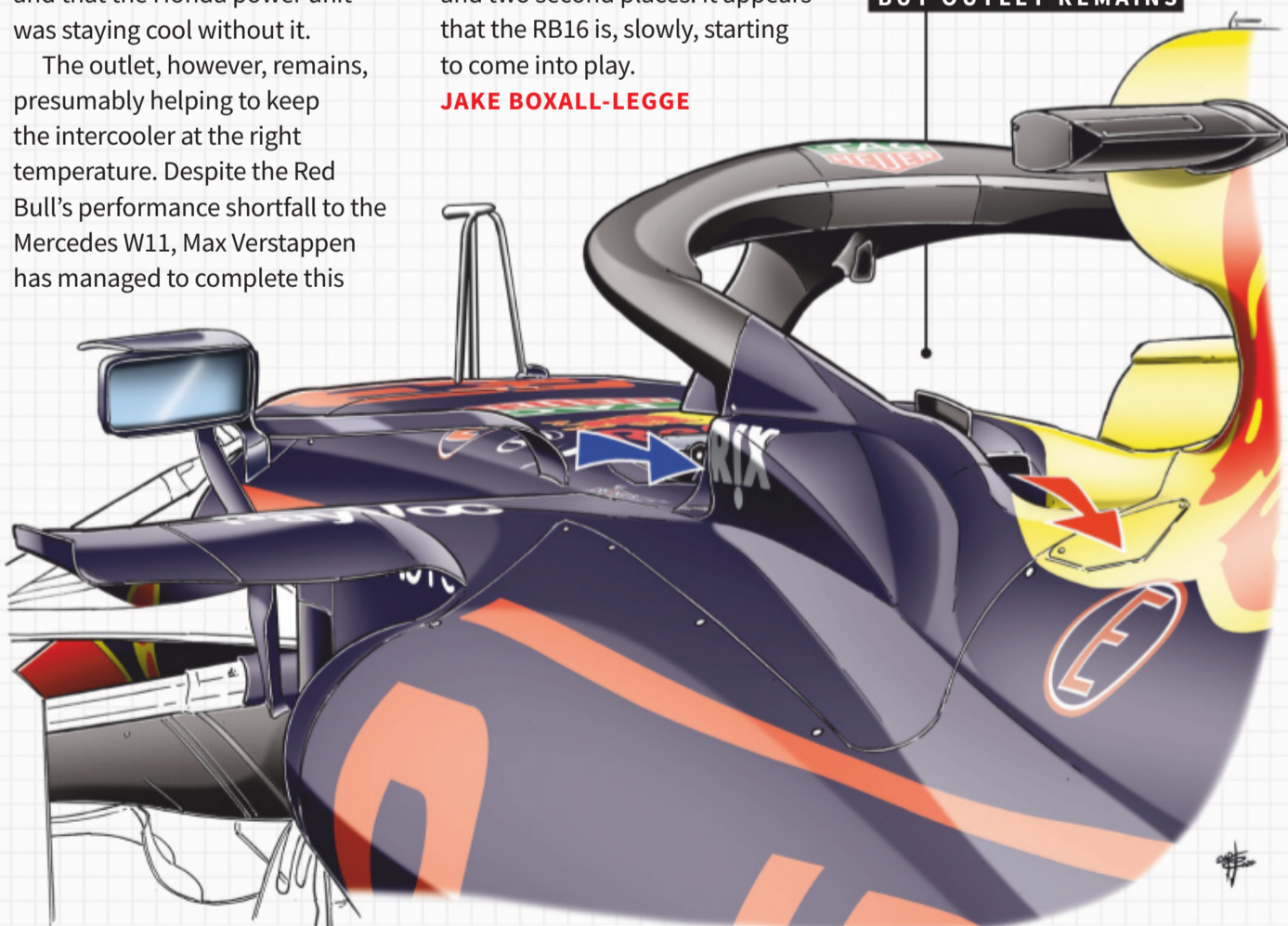
it was surplus to requirements and that the Honda power unit was staying cool without it.

The outlet, however, remains, presumably helping to keep the intercooler at the right temperature. Despite the Red Bull's performance shortfall to the Mercedes W11, Max Verstappen has managed to complete this

second triple-header with a win and two second places. It appears that the RB16 is, slowly, starting to come into play.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

SCOOP WAS DROPPED BUT OUTLET REMAINS



20 Giovinazzi #99 1m18.697s	18 Russell #63 1m18.099s	16 Magnussen #20 1m17.908s	14 Raikkonen #7 1m17.386s	12 Kvyat #26 1m17.192s
19 Latifi #6 1m18.532s	17 Grosjean #8 1m18.089s	15 Ocon #31 1m17.567s	13 Ricciardo #3 1m17.198s	11 Vettel #5 1m17.168s

FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m16.785s
2	Hamilton	1m16.824s
3	Verstappen	1m17.724s
4	Leclerc	1m17.970s
5	Vettel	1m17.981s
6	Grosjean	1m18.291s
7	Perez	1m18.471s
8	Albon	1m18.606s
9	Magnussen	1m18.620s
10	Stroll	1m18.643s
11	Sainz	1m18.733s
12	Ocon	1m18.736s
13	Norris	1m18.744s
14	Gasly	1m18.888s
15	Giovinazzi	1m18.917s
16	Raikkonen	1m18.981s
17	Kvyat	1m19.145s
18	Ricciardo	1m19.230s
19	Latifi	1m20.334s
20	Nissany	1m20.664s

WEATHER Sunny, air 28-31C track 36-45C

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m16.883s
2	Bottas	1m17.170s
3	Verstappen	1m17.704s
4	Ricciardo	1m17.868s
5	Grosjean	1m18.133s
6	Leclerc	1m18.147s
7	Sainz	1m18.214s
8	Perez	1m18.293s
9	Ocon	1m18.303s
10	Gasly	1m18.312s
11	Stroll	1m18.357s
12	Vettel	1m18.404s
13	Albon	1m18.491s
14	Norris	1m18.506s
15	Kvyat	1m18.642s
16	Magnussen	1m18.761s
17	Raikkonen	1m18.900s
18	Giovinazzi	1m18.964s
19	Latifi	1m19.155s
20	Russell	1m19.391s

WEATHER Sunny, air 30-31C track 46-50C

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m17.222s
2	Bottas	1m17.373s
3	Verstappen	1m17.737s
4	Sainz	1m18.046s
5	Perez	1m18.096s
6	Leclerc	1m18.193s
7	Gasly	1m18.211s
8	Stroll	1m18.309s
9	Albon	1m18.371s
10	Ricciardo	1m18.384s
11	Ocon	1m18.602s
12	Vettel	1m18.707s
13	Grosjean	1m18.710s
14	Raikkonen	1m18.721s
15	Norris	1m18.803s
16	Kvyat	1m18.852s
17	Magnussen	1m18.940s
18	Giovinazzi	1m19.175s
19	Russell	1m19.297s
20	Latifi	1m19.764s

WEATHER Sunny, air 29C track 43C

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Hamilton	132	1	1
2 Verstappen	95	1	2
3 Bottas	89	1	1
4 Leclerc	45	2	4
5 Stroll	40	4	3
6 Albon	40	4	5
7 Norris	39	3	4
8 Perez	32	5	4
9 Sainz	23	5	3
10 Ricciardo	20	4	5
11 Vettel	16	6	5
12 Ocon	16	6	5
13 Gasly	14	7	7
14 Hulkenberg	6	7	3
15 Giovinazzi	2	9	17
16 Kvyat	2	10	12
17 Magnussen	1	10	15
18 Raikkonen	0	11	14
19 Latifi	0	11	15
20 Russell	0	12	12
21 Grosjean	0	13	14

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Mercedes	221
2 Red Bull	135
3 Racing Point	63
4 McLaren	62
5 Ferrari	61
6 Renault	36
7 AlphaTauri	16
8 Alfa Romeo	2
9 Haas	1
10 Williams	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	4	2	Bottas
Vettel	2	4	Leclerc
Albon	0	6	Verstappen
Norris	4	2	Sainz
Ricciardo	5	1	Ocon
Gasly	6	0	Kvyat
Perez	2	2	Stroll
Stroll	1	1	Hulkenberg
Raikkonen	2	4	Giovinazzi
Grosjean	2	4	Magnussen
Latifi	0	6	Russell

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

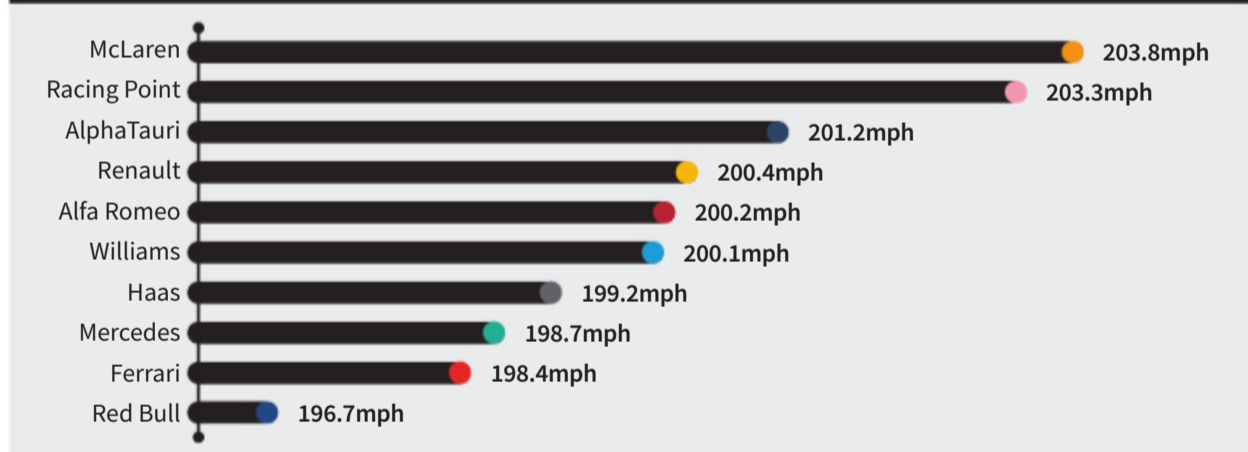
WINS

Hamilton	4	Hamilton	2
Bottas	1	Bottas	1
Verstappen	1	Norris	1
		Sainz	1

POLE POSITIONS

Hamilton	4	Verstappen	1
Bottas	2		

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m16.872s
2	Perez	1m17.117s
3	Verstappen	1m17.213s
4	Bottas	1m17.243s
5	Leclerc	1m17.256s
6	Stroll	1m17.316s
7	Gasly	1m17.356s
8	Albon	1m17.419s
9	Sainz	1m17.438s
10	Vettel	1m17.573s
11	Norris	1m17.577s
12	Ricciardo	1m17.667s
13	Kvyat	1m17.676s
14	Ocon	1m17.765s
15	Raikkonen	1m17.797s
16	Magnussen	1m17.908s
17	Grosjean	1m18.089s
18	Russell	1m18.099s
19	Latifi	1m18.532s
20	Giovinazzi	1m18.697s

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m16.013s
2	Bottas	1m16.152s
3	Verstappen	1m16.518s
4	Stroll	1m16.666s
5	Gasly	1m16.800s
6	Sainz	1m16.876s
7	Perez	1m16.936s
8	Leclerc	1m16.953s
9	Albon	1m17.163s
10	Norris	1m17.166s
11	Vettel	1m17.168s
12	Kvyat	1m17.192s
13	Ricciardo	1m17.198s
14	Raikkonen	1m17.386s
15	Ocon	1m17.567s

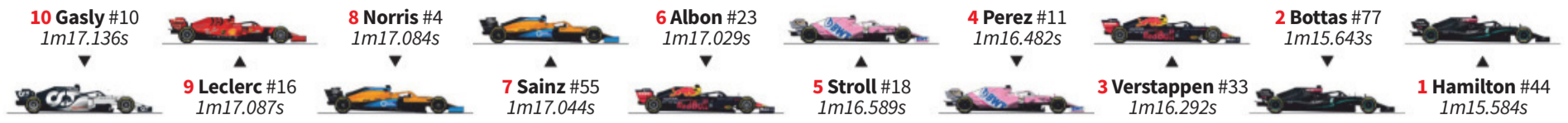
QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m15.584s
2	Bottas	1m15.643s
3	Verstappen	1m16.292s
4	Perez	1m16.482s
5	Stroll	1m16.589s
6	Albon	1m17.029s
7	Sainz	1m17.044s
8	Norris	1m17.084s
9	Leclerc	1m17.087s
10	Gasly	1m17.136s

WEATHER Sunny, air 29-32C track 46-50C



STARTING GRID



RACE RESULTS ROUND 6 (66 LAPS – 190.83 MILES)						FASTEST LAPS				
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES	POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	1h31m45.279s	66	Su, Mn, Mn	1	Bottas	1m18.183s	-	66
2	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	+24.177s		Su, Mn, Mn	2	Hamilton	1m19.822s	+1.639s	63
3	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	+44.752s		Su, Mn, Su, Mn	3	Grosjean	1m20.409s	+2.226s	64
4	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Racing Point-Mercedes	-1 lap		Su, Mn, Su	4	Verstappen	1m21.477s	+3.294s	53
5	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Racing Point-Mercedes	-1 lap		Su, Mn	5	Sainz	1m21.771s	+3.588s	59
6	Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap		Su, Su, Mn	6	Giovinazzi	1m21.801s	+3.618s	47
7	Sebastian Vettel (DEU)	Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Su	7	Raikkonen	1m21.888s	+3.705s	47
8	Alexander Albon (THA)	Red Bull-Honda	-1 lap		Su, Hn, Mn	8	Stroll	1m22.024s	+3.841s	56
9	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Honda	-1 lap		Su, Mn, Mn	9	Latifi	1m22.030s	+3.847s	60
10	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap		Su, Su, Mn	10	Ocon	1m22.174s	+3.991s	65
11	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	Renault	-1 lap		Mn, Sn	11	Albon	1m22.194s	+4.011s	41
12	Daniil Kvyat (RUS)	AlphaTauri-Honda	-1 lap		Sn, Mn, Mn	12	Kvyat	1m22.336s	+4.153s	47
13	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Renault	-1 lap		Mn, Sn	13	Norris	1m22.392s	+4.209s	56
14	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Mu, Sn	14	Ricciardo	1m22.464s	+4.281s	51
15	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap		Su, Mu	15	Russell	1m22.503s	+4.320s	37
16	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Mn, Sn	16	Perez	1m22.515s	+4.332s	58
17	George Russell (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		Sn, Mn, Mn	17	Gasly	1m22.543s	+4.360s	44
18	Nicholas Latifi (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps		Mn, Mn, Sn	18	Vettel	1m22.707s	+4.524s	48
19	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Haas-Ferrari	-2 laps		Mu, Su, Sn	19	Magnussen	1m23.474s	+5.291s	64
R	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	38 laps-electrical		Su, Mn	20	Leclerc	1m23.968s	+5.785s	35

WEATHER Sunny, air 28-30C track 42-50°C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 124.79mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 133.19mph

TYRES

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

RACE BRIEFING

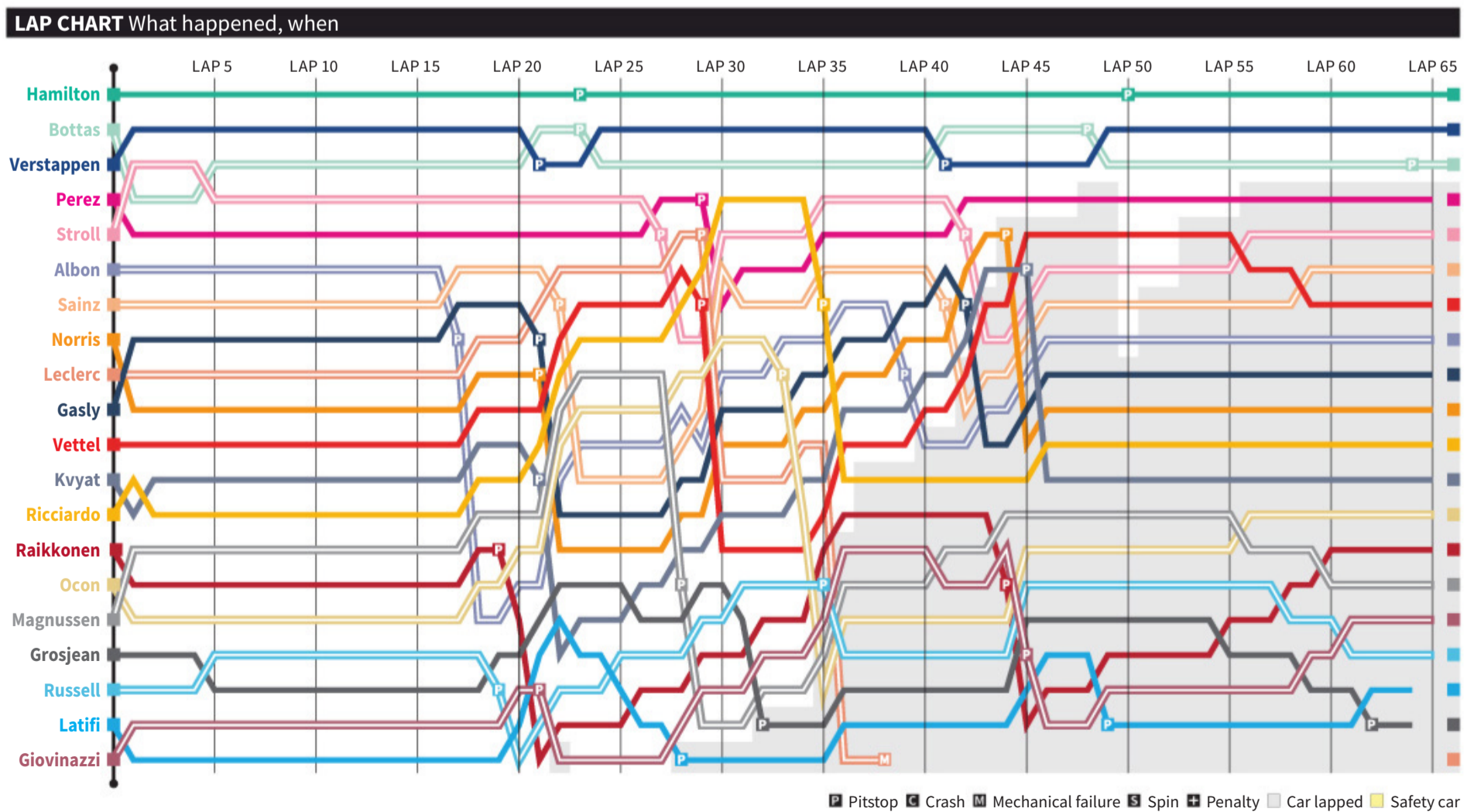
FP1
ROY NISSANY replaced RUSSELL at Williams

RACE PENALTIES
PEREZ and **KVYAT**
Five-second penalty and one licence point each for ignoring blue flags

STAT

150

Hamilton has started from the front row in 150 of his 256 F1 starts and is the first driver to reach the milestone

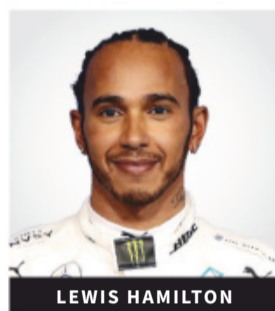


RAIKKONEN RANKS ALONGSIDE HAMILTON AND VERSTAPPEN

We're not surprised to see the star names of Formula 1 collecting a full tally of points, so a reminder of a veteran's magic is all the more welcome

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

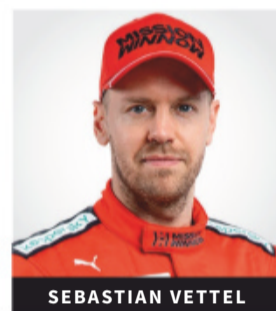
10 When a driver says a GP win ranks among the best of another 87, it'd be hard to find fault in their performance. Hamilton may have felt he left time hanging at the end of Q3, but Bottas and Verstappen not improving suggests he hadn't. The race was simply magnificent.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

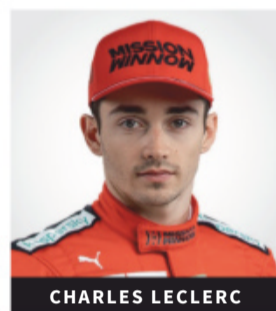
6 Gets credit for pushing Hamilton close in qualifying. But the race was a disappointment as his poor getaway meant his one realistic chance to seize the lead was gone. He was then muscled down to fourth by two slower cars, only one of which he was able to better.

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

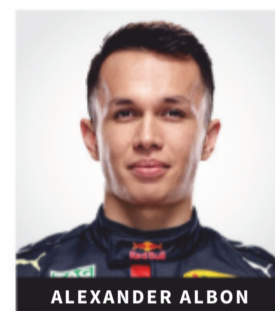
7 Loses a mark for his Q2 elimination. But he drove brilliantly in the race to make a one-stopper work, turning his 11th-place grid spot into seventh at the finish. It took until the race's final quarter before Ferrari told him the soft tyres he made last 37 laps had to make it to the finish...



CHARLES LECLERC

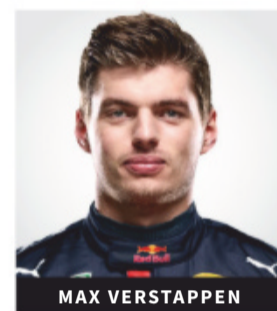
8 Didn't do a lot wrong. His low-key result in qualifying was about where the SF1000 merited being, given the closeness of the midfield. Reckoned his one-stopper was working, and he had a shot at sixth place before an electrical problem cut his engine and he spun.

RED BULL



ALEXANDER ALBON

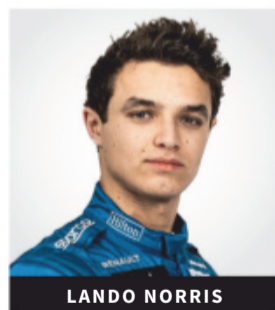
6 Again drove well in the race, despite being told to pit on lap 17, which put him in traffic. Combined with a balance issue, that meant he "ate the tyres", according to Christian Horner. But, again, his qualifying let him down and he was beaten by three slower packages at the finish.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

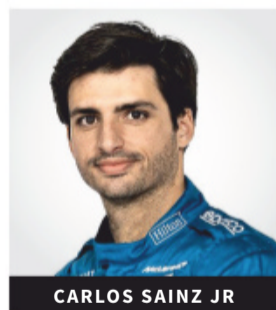
10 May not have won as he did at Silverstone, but there was nothing wrong with how Verstappen drove at Barcelona. Where before he'd been able to exploit a sudden weakness, this time there was nothing but solid excellence from Mercedes. And so beating one of its cars in the race earns a 10.

MCLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

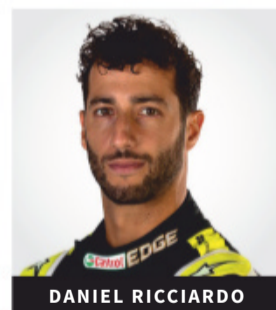
6 From eighth on the grid, was immediately set back by a poor start. Was trapped in traffic from there, showing well in battle against Leclerc, but was too far back at the end when he felt his car "came alive". Loses a mark for being beaten by Gasly's slower AlphaTauri.



CARLOS SAINZ JR

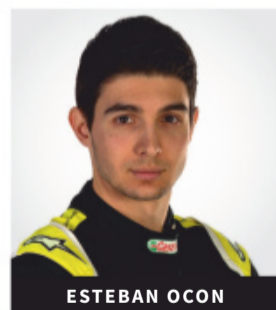
9 Delivered what would be expected of him - being brilliant in both qualifying and the race. His race was mainly with Albon, won with a fine overtake into Turn 1 and then a firm defence after his second stop. Decisively passed Vettel for sixth late on.

RENAULT



DANIEL RICCIARDO

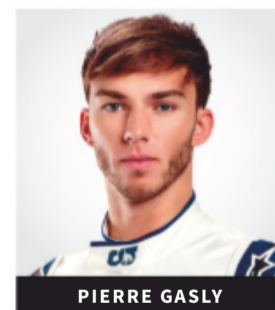
7 Had no complaints about missing Q3 as he felt the opposition simply gained where Renault did not, but loses a mark for being outqualified by Kvyat. Took two places in the race to make a one-stopper pay off, but time lost before his stop meant he could not stay with Vettel.



ESTEBAN OCON

5 Was typically brave with his race moves, but this wasn't a good weekend performance. Probably more to blame for FP3 crash behind Magnussen, and was then beaten by Raikkonen's much slower Alfa Romeo in Q2. Was nowhere against Renault's real rivals in the race.

ALPHATAURI



PIERRE GASLY

9 Another great drive from Gasly. He starred in qualifying to make Q3 for the fourth time this season but, had he been able to reproduce his Q2 lap in the final segment, he would have started sixth. Drove brilliantly in the race and was just 0.589s behind Albon at the finish.



DANIIL KVIYAT

7 Only really maintained his starting position thanks to Leclerc's DNF. He closed back in on Ricciardo's one-stopping Renault at the end, but just had too much to do on his two-stop strategy, especially while being lapped, as he copped a penalty for ignoring blue flags.



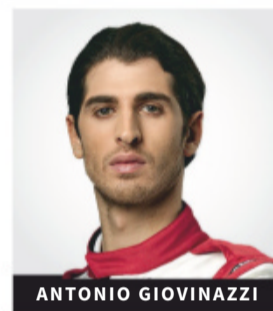
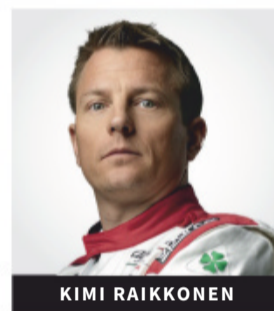
RACING POINT



7 Earns this score by the definition of our rules because he got the most out of the Racing Point in qualifying and came home fourth on the road. But loses a mark compared to Stroll because he picked up a penalty for ignoring blue flags for two thirds of a lap as Hamilton was behind.

8 Fourth is the maximum a Racing Point can hope for if circumstances don't strike down one of F1's leading trio, and Stroll drove well to earn that. He'd also pushed Perez hard in qualifying and starred at the start. Was solid on a two-stopper and overcame Vettel late on.

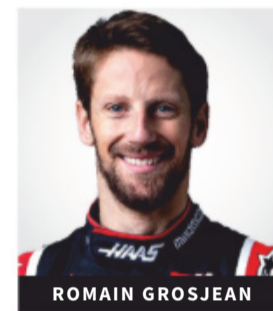
ALFA ROMEO



10 Was the pick of the lower midfield battlers, with a sublime qualifying performance taking an Alfa Romeo out of Q1 for the first time in 2020. Never likely to keep Ocon behind and maximised his race result in 14th, livid about Grosjean's defence as he came by on new softs late on.

6 Can't score higher given his team-mate showed what the C39 was capable of. Qualified last while Raikkonen started 14th, meaning he had a lot of work to do. Climbed well and showed good pace late on to beat Russell, but it wasn't enough to overcome Magnussen's one-stopper.

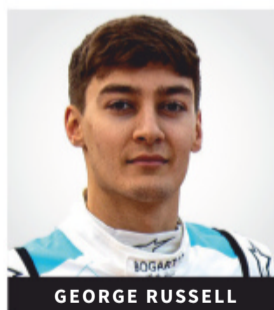
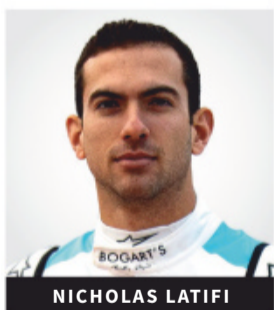
HAAS



4 It was inevitable that he'd fall from two top-six spots on Friday, but the sessions that really counted weren't good. His defence against Raikkonen on the pitstraight was beyond firm, he clashed with Giovinazzi and picked up damage running wide at Turn 1, then half-spun.

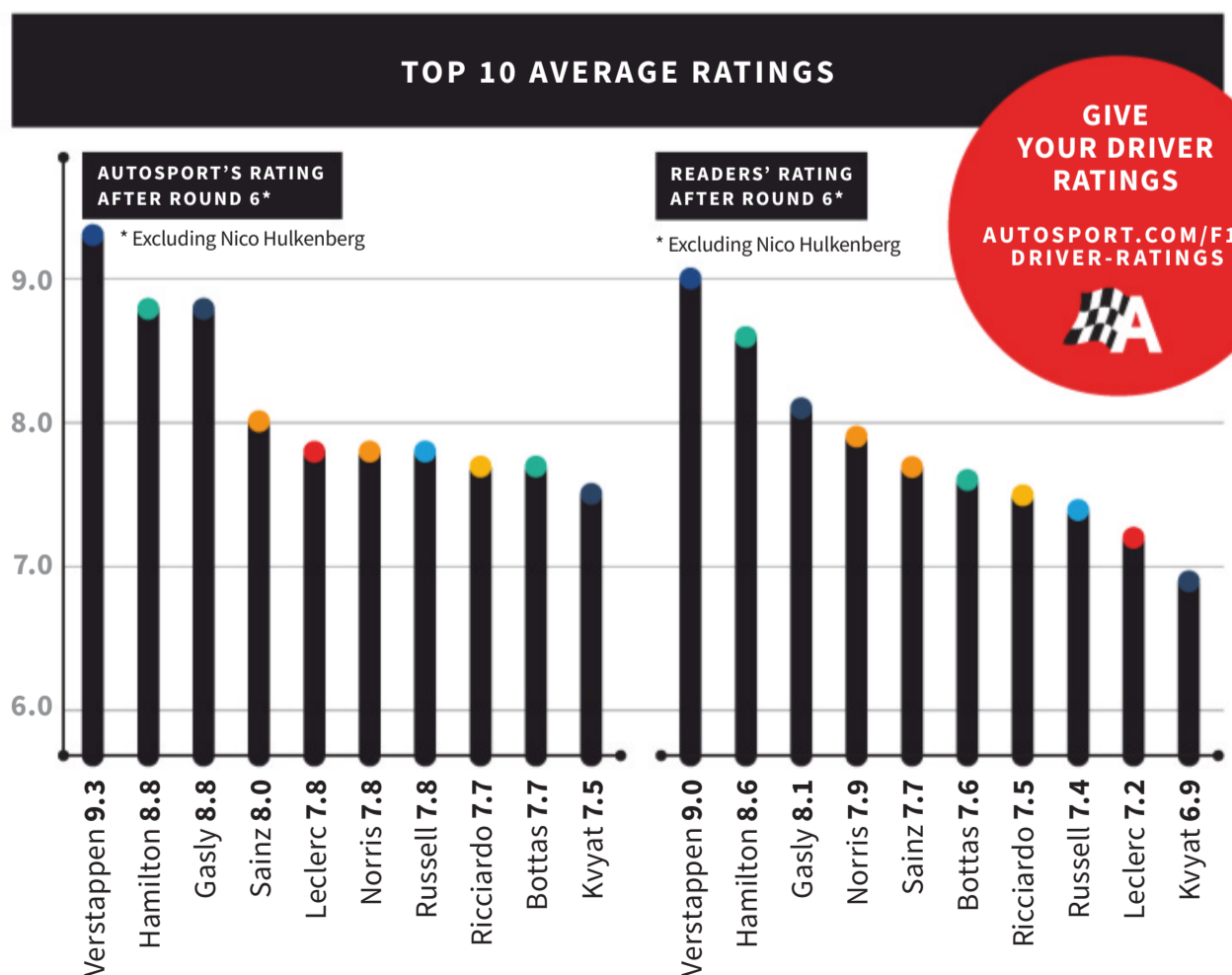
7 The stewards found he had not brake-tested Ocon in their FP3 incident as he was slowed by ERS harvesting, so this doesn't affect his score. Did well to overturn Grosjean's practice pace to be the lead Haas driver in qualifying, and was also decent on the one-stop strategy.

WILLIAMS



5 Latifi's score is down one extra mark relative to Russell's because he was just far enough behind to go an extra lap down. He made a good getaway but paid the price for being too timid at the first corner. He toiled near the back as a lack of confidence in the first stint undid his race.

7 For once he could not haul the Williams out of Q1. Nevertheless produced a battling drive as Williams split its approach to the two-stop strategy it felt it had no choice but to go for as the Haas cars ahead tried the one-stopper. Felt the race was "better than expected".





Nissan and Mercedes join the party just in time

As the champions dropped the ball in Berlin, two major manufacturers were out to prove that DS Techeetah won't always have it all its own way

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

The final two races of the Formula E season were more than just a couple of post-credit scenes serving to extend the film's running time. Antonio Felix da Costa had already, and rather comfortably, wrapped up the championship. His DS Techeetah squad had been crowned successive teams' title winners. It wasn't down to the wire as many had expected or hoped; it wasn't all to play for.

But one last double-header on the extended Tempelhof Airport circuit to conclude a gruelling nine-day Berlin finale did act as a

soft preview for the 2020-21 campaign. Mercedes and Nissan e.dams offered a glimmer that if anyone can take the fight to the black-and-gold cars and make them sweat next year, then those two operations head into the off-season in the best place to do so.

A maiden series victory apiece for Oliver Rowland and Stoffel Vandoorne, who led a Merc 1-2 on home soil, might just provide enough momentum for both to quell the DS Techeetah dominance and bring the oft-heralded "unpredictability" back to FE.

Five of the six races in the German capital were won by the



polesitter in fashions best described as “controlled”, “consummate” or “dominant”. Rowland was no exception, having benefited from a qualifying farce, which meant the four active series champions had to be granted permission by the FIA to enter the penultimate race of the season after being thrown by the 130-metre-longer circuit used for the final brace of E-Prixes.

The group one contenders usually opt to do away with a preparation lap in qualifying, instead heading on track for one do-or-die flier. And so Sebastien Buemi, Jean-Eric Vergne, Lucas di Grassi and da Costa departed their pit garages with 100 seconds of the six-minute session remaining.

But when BMW’s Maximilian Guenther reserved his right to circulate slowly in a bid to find track space behind Jaguar rival Mitch Evans on his out-lap, the four title winners were immediately stymied as they tripped over one another at a relative snail’s pace.

Audi star di Grassi and da Costa came to blows exiting the Turn 15 hairpin as they dived for track position, but even the needless contact proved ineffective as all four champions crossed the line after the chequered flag had been waved. And all four failed to set a lap time.

Audi team principal Allan McNish claimed the DS Techeetahs

had been “playing around” to hold up di Grassi, but all three drivers were informed over radio as they approached the final sector that they had been released too late. In a championship of fine margins where pole position is won by hundredths rather than tenths of a second, FE’s star names missed their chance by a mile.

That permitted Nissan man Rowland to pip Envision Virgin Audi driver Robin Frijns to pole by just 0.049s as shock contenders Neel Jani (Porsche), double DTM champion Rene Rast (Audi) and last-minute stand-in Tom Blomqvist (replacing World Endurance Championship fixture-tied James Calado at Jaguar for the final two races) all made their first appearance in the top-six superpole shootout.

For Rowland it was a third Formula E pole, adding to his Sanya and Paris efforts from last season, after reverting to his old one-lap approach to great effect. After a hefty qualifying shunt in Santiago back in January, the Briton admitted his confidence had taken a knock as heavy as his car. Since then he’d shelved the win-or-bust mentality in a bid to lower the repair bills and chase more consistent points finishes.

But wind on seven months and he was back hustling the Nissan e.dams in the manner to which we’d become accustomed. >>



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Come the race, he teamed the consistency with speed and kept it clean to lead home by 1.9s over Frijns in a lights-to-flag affair.

Although Frijns considered an outside overtake on Rowland at Turn 1, he ducked back into formation. As the Dutchman activated both of his 35kW attack-mode boosts first, it meant Rowland never dropped from the top spot for the duration. No question there was some small windfall from the fact that the 'big guns' were starting from the back, but it barely took the shine off Rowland's success as it came during a season for which Nissan e.dams had prepared by abandoning one of its core philosophies.

The team didn't pioneer the twin-motor powertrain configuration – such a set-up had been shelved by the Virgin team following the 2015-16 campaign after difficulties for drivers Sam Bird and Vergne in mastering its rear-bias weight penalty. Last season, Nissan e.dams brought the design back into play and it finally came good during the final four races as Sebastien Buemi scored two poles, a win in New York and a further three podiums. That was enough to propel the





2015-16 champion from a lowly 13th in the standings to finish runner-up to Vergne.

In an effort to control costs in the championship, however, the dual-motor tune was banned over the off-season, forcing Nissan e.dams not only to start from scratch, but also to head in a completely different design direction. As Nissan powertrain project manager Vincent Gaillardot explained: “Obviously, we all agreed to move to these rules for the stability of the championship. We had to refocus on a different set-up to be competitive, so we have had to work extremely hard to be ready at the beginning of the season.”

Ahead of the FE paddock reconvening in Berlin after its 158-day coronavirus interlude, Audi in particular had been at pains to stress the software gains it had found. But, in truth, it soon transpired that it was Nissan that had evidently been the busiest of the 12 teams to take the biggest stride forward.

Buemi added: “Last year, just to get the twin motor to work, we used all our resources in trying to work on the software – nothing on the energy management or stuff like this. When we started the season, we were way back compared to the other guys and we’ve caught up massively in this five-month gap we’ve had since Marrakech [when Buemi ranked fourth and Rowland ninth].”

Buemi put the improvements to work too, as he progressed from 22nd to 10th at the flag to lead home the rest of his red-faced group-one colleagues. But Buemi was a touch lucky to finish the race following a bizarre retirement for da Costa, who had been chasing in 11th place with one lap to go.

An extremely abrasive concrete surface at the airport site was originally employed to slow large civilian aircraft, making the 900kg mass of an FE car of no moment’s bother. It did, however, chew the all-weather Michelin tyres to shreds. So much so that a chunk of rubber flicked off da Costa’s car and hit the external reset switch.

“I just had a full system shutdown,” he explained. “The whole thing just completely blacked out. I lost the rear brakes so I was >>

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Mercedes can add FE to the list of series in which it's bagged a 1-2

FERRARO

actually pretty lucky. I missed the corner completely because I couldn't stop the car and I missed Buemi by nothing."

Given that Nissan e.dams and the by-now exhausted mechanics had been spared the task of rebuilding a car, Buemi looked pretty close to being a shoo-in for the spoils in the finale when he lined up second.

With Guenther, da Costa, Andre Lotterer, Vergne, Evans and Rowland all at the foot of the field after the aggressive track evolution eviscerated their chances of qualifying well, Buemi only had to take care of Vandoorne. On paper, no mean feat, but the Mercedes Silver Arrow 01 machine has frequently turned out stellar one-lap pace only for that to go awry in the races. If Buemi could match Rowland's efforts from the previous day, he could tie down a distant second place in the standings.

That never came to pass, though. Vandoorne not only maintained his speed for the uninterrupted 36-lap duration, but also carved out a useable energy cushion over his pursuer. So much so that once attack modes were served, Buemi was left prey to the second Mercedes of Nyck de Vries.

The reigning FIA Formula 2 champion has been a close match for his team-mate this season, but repeat technical failures and procedural errors – headlined by an overcooled battery that cost a maiden podium in Santiago – have done their best to disguise that. With no such ailments occurring this time, de Vries relegated

Buemi four laps from home as Vandoorne scored his first win since the 2016 Super Formula finale at Suzuka by 1.3s.

A Mercedes 1-2 has been commonplace in motorsport over the past six years – see the DTM prior to the marque's exit and, oh yes, F1. But it wasn't meant to happen so soon into an FE programme, even if the HWA Racelab warm-up act of last season had laid the foundations.

On the one hand, the Brixworth-based High Performance Powertrains division is responsible for hybrid F1 and all-electric FE set-ups alike. With that kind of track record, Mercedes was never going to exactly bring up the rear. And in the final race of the season, the DS Techeetahs were forced into a recovery mission once more. Nevertheless, it was still a mighty impressive showing against the re-energised Nissan e.dams threat.

"We always knew that [FE] was going to be a very complex series to get into," said Mercedes team principal Ian James. "We saw right from the beginning we had some strong results and then just fell away and really struggled in no man's land for quite a number of races. To bring it back at the final race has been fantastic."

Bar various driver-market antics – Venturi Racing announced Felipe Massa's exit before he'd even finished his cool-down lap, and Porsche finally confirmed the poorly kept secret that Pascal Wehrlein would replace Jani for next season the following day – the FE racing action is on ice until a return to Chile on 16 January. Given the superiority of DS Techeetah and da Costa from Marrakech onwards, it's premature to think that Nissan e.dams or Mercedes will be ready from the off to dethrone team or driver. But there are at least the makings of a closer fight.

And that's not just for the good of fans and the media. Even da Costa wants to feel the heat in a title battle that will go down to the final laps of the season. "Obviously, it feels good for the first time to win [the title]," he said. "It puts me in a much easier position. But we were talking about how much better it must feel to win it in the last race with, like, a one-point advantage.

"But the stress you're going to go through to make it happen and all that, I mean that feeling must be amazing. So at least now I can say that I've won it and next year it will be down to the line with my colleagues and I know it'll be fun."

Mercedes and Nissan e.dams have the invitation to the party, and it would be mighty good of them to attend. ❦



News of Massa's Venturi (and likely FE) exit came while he was still in the car

SBLOXHAM

JAGUAR I-PACE ETROPHY



Evans triumphant...

Caca Bueno had some making up to do. The polesitter for the penultimate ever round of the Jaguar I-Pace eTrophy at the Tempelhof Airport missed the attack mode gate after ploughing way too hot into the Turn 7 activation zone. That handed the lead to Simon Evans, battling in a two-horse race for the championship with Sergio Jimenez, Bueno's Team Brazil stablemate who was running in third.

In an effort to make amends for gifting Evans the advantage, Bueno turned his attention away from challenging for the win to dropping behind his team-mate in an effort to limit the points loss. That allowed Kiwi driver Evans to win dominantly and close the gap to Jimenez down to three points ahead of one last bout.

Bueno qualified on pole for the finale ahead of Evans, with Jimenez lining up in third. Despite Bueno backing Evans up to give his compatriot the best possible chance to pounce, Jimenez was at a loss trying to extract pace from his machine. The top three started as they finished, meaning Jimenez couldn't defend his crown as Evans – also with four wins, but having never finished off the podium all year – wrapped up the title.

"[Bueno] did exactly what I thought he was going to do," Evans said. "He just tried backing me up so I was trying to play it cool and make it look like I had no pace. On the last lap he was braking 100 metres before he needed to."

And as the newly crowned champion was busy pointing the finger at Bueno, Jimenez was left to blame his tools. "It's not my fault, the car doesn't go," he complained. "I did everything I can. Since race six [in Berlin] my car didn't have a good feeling. We lost a little bit on the straight."



...Jimenez ailing

RESULTS ROUND 7/7, TEMPELHOF (DEU), 12-13 AUGUST (36 LAPS – 55.633 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Nissan e.dams/Nissan IM02	47m28.880s
2	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Virgin Racing/Audi e-tron FE06	+1.903s
3	Rene Rast (DEU)	Audi Sport Abt/Audi e-tron FE06	+7.490s
4	Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche/Porsche 99X Electric	+7.863s
5	Alex Lynn (GBR)	Mahindra Racing/Mahindra M6Electro	+11.441s
6	Neel Jani (CHE)	Porsche/Porsche 99X Electric	+12.922s
7	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar/Jaguar I-TYPE 4	+14.106s
8	Edoardo Mortara (ITA)	Venturi/Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	+17.134s
9	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	Mercedes/Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	+18.949s
10	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Nissan e.dams/Nissan IM02	+19.731s
11	Alexander Sims (GBR)	BMW/BMW iFE.20	+23.331s
12	Tom Blomqvist (GBR)	Jaguar/Jaguar I-TYPE 4	+24.807s
13	Felipe Massa (BRA)	Venturi/Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	+27.775s
14	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Mercedes/Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	+28.723s
15	Sergio Sette Camara (BRA)	Dragon Racing/Penske EV-4	+31.132s
16	Jerome d'Ambrosio (BEL)	Mahindra Racing/Mahindra M6Electro	+31.524s
17	Nico Muller (CHE)	Dragon Racing/Penske EV-4	+34.140s
18	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Techeetah/DSE-Tense FE20	+34.986s
19	Oliver Turvey (GBR)	NIO/NIO FE-005	+44.377s
20	Sam Bird (GBR)	Virgin Racing/Audi e-tron FE06	+46.591s
21	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi Sport Abt/Audi e-tron FE06	+1m15.119s
R	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	DS Techeetah/DSE-Tense FE20	35 laps-system shutdown
R	Daniel Abt (DEU)	NIO/NIO FE-005	33 laps-motor
NC	Maximilian Guenther (DEU)	BMW/BMW iFE.20	4 laps-puncture

Winner's average speed 70.300mph.

Fastest lap di Grassi 1m17.232s, 72.033mph.

SUPER POLE 1 **Rowland** 1m15.955s; 2 **Frijns** 1m16.004s; 3 **Jani** 1m16.052s; 4 **Rast** 1m16.127s; 5 **Lynn** 1m16.192s; 6 **Blomqvist** 1m16.529s.

QUALIFYING **Rast** 1m15.993s; **Lynn** 1m16.158s; **Frijns** 1m16.187s; **Rowland** 1m16.191s; **Blomqvist** 1m16.226s; **Jani** 1m16.234s; 7 **Lotterer** 1m16.241s; 8 **Massa** 1m16.251s; 9 **Sette Camara** 1m16.292s; 10 **Mortara** 1m16.296s; 11 **Muller** 1m16.327s; 12 **Turvey** 1m16.328s; 13 **Evans** 1m16.395s; 14 **Sims** 1m16.449s; 15 **Bird** 1m16.524s; 16 **Guenther** 1m16.394s*; 17 **d'Ambrosio** 1m16.539s; 18 **Vandoorne** 1m16.646s; 19 **de Vries** 1m16.755s; 20 **Abt** 1m16.868s; 21 **da Costa** no time; 22 **Buemi** no time; 23 **di Grassi** no time; 24 **Vergne** no time.

RACE 2 (36 LAPS – 55.633 MILES)

1 **Vandoorne** 47m22.107s; 2 **de Vries** +1.340s; 3 **Buemi** +2.841s; 4 **Rast** +3.580s; 5 **Bird** +8.710s; 6 **di Grassi** +11.593s; 7 **Vergne** +12.895s; 8 **Lynn** +14.719s; 9 **da Costa** +15.304s; 10 **Mortara** +16.154s; 11 **Evans** +16.348s; 12 **Guenther** +17.798s; 13 **Sims** +22.229s; 14 **Lotterer** +23.893s; 15 **Jani** +24.888s; 16 **Massa** +25.577s; 17 **Blomqvist** +25.992s; 18 **d'Ambrosio** +30.485s; 19 **Sette Camara** +31.453s; 20 **Abt** +38.071s; 21 **Turvey** +39.694s; 22 **Muller** +1m11.178s; R **Frijns** 33 laps-puncture; R **Rowland** 25 laps-crash.

Winner's average speed 70.467mph.

Fastest lap Muller 1m17.469s, 71.812mph.

RACE 2 SUPER POLE 1 **Vandoorne** 1m15.468s; 2 **Buemi** 1m15.527s; 3 **Rast** 1m15.720s; 4 **de Vries** 1m15.738s; 5 **Frijns** 1m15.867s; 6 **Mortara** 1m16.055s.

RACE 2 QUALIFYING **Buemi** 1m15.660s; **Rast** 1m15.688s; **Vandoorne** 1m15.717s; **de Vries** 1m15.729s; **Frijns** 1m15.793s; **Mortara** 1m15.848s; 7 **Lynn** 1m15.851s; 8 **Jani** 1m15.861s; 9 **Sette Camara** 1m15.904s; 10 **di Grassi** 1m15.915s; 11 **Massa** 1m15.937s; 12 **Blomqvist** 1m15.958s; 13 **Turvey** 1m15.958s; 14 **Bird** 1m16.002s; 15 **Sims** 1m16.028s; 16 **d'Ambrosio** 1m16.057s; 17 **Abt** 1m16.109s; 18 **Guenther** 1m16.134s; 19 **da Costa** 1m16.176s; 20 **Lotterer** 1m16.317s; 21 **Vergne** 1m16.393s; 22 **Muller** 1m16.409s; 23 **Evans** 1m16.449s; 24 **Rowland** 1m16.993s. *grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 **da Costa** 158; 2 **Vandoorne** 87; 3 **Vergne** 86; 4 **Buemi** 84; 5 **Rowland** 83; 6 **di Grassi** 77; 7 **Evans** 71; 8 **Lotterer** 71; 9 **Guenther** 69; 10 **Bird** 63.



Vandoorne celebrates first FE triumph in the last race of the season

How the slowest Toyota got the victory it deserved

Given the handicap it had, the TSO50 of points leaders Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Jose Maria Lopez wasn't expected to win, but it did. Here's why...

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP 

Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Jose Maria Lopez reckoned they didn't have much chance of finally breaking their Spa hoodoo ahead of the resumption of the World Endurance Championship in Belgium. And with good reason, given the three and a half seconds of success handicaps their Toyota TSO50 HYBRID was running. But it was they who came out on top in a race largely held in wet conditions to extend their championship lead.

The solo Rebellion, carrying a 1.58s penalty, was the clear favourite even before it claimed pole position, and if the Swiss entrant somehow contrived not to win the Spa 6 Hours, then surely it was going to be the second Toyota that picked up the pieces. That was the obvious conclusion to reach given that Sebastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Brendon Hartley were running a 3.08s handicap to the eventual winners' 3.52s.

The logic was turned on its head over the course of a race affected by rain for the first two thirds or so of its duration. Conway, Kobayashi and Lopez led the way for the majority of the six hours, with the second Toyota ending up a slightly unrepresentative 34s back at the chequered flag. The Rebellion-Gibson R-13 shared by Bruno Senna, Gustavo Menezes and Norman Nato was, quite simply, never in the game as it trailed home a lap in arrears in a lonely third position.

There were any number of factors why Conway and co beat the odds to atone for the Spa near-misses of the past. The correct tyre strategy as the track dried in the first hour after a monumental downpour shortly before the start played a part, as did a technical glitch that cost the sister car 35s or so over the race.

But it would be wrong to say that the #7 Toyota lucked into this one. They had been closer to their team-mates through practice than the half-second margin laid out in the success handicap table, even if Conway and Kobayashi did end up a long way shy of Nakajima and Hartley in qualifying.

The race winners were nearly seven tenths back in third place on the aggregate times. "We lost the balance for some reason: the car was too nervous," said Conway. But in practice they'd been right with their in-house rivals – just hundredths down in FP2 and actually ahead in FP1 and FP3.

What's more, the electrical glitch that cost Buemi and Hartley so much time also affected the winning machine. It was just that they were able to get on top of it much quicker.

Conway reckoned the first pitstop built the foundations of their victory. Both Toyotas had blitzed past the struggling Rebellion when a race that began under the safety car went green at the end of lap four. Four laps later, Buemi was 12s up the road, though that was more than halved when his #8 TSO50 was hit by the electronic issue for the first time.

The track was drying as the first pit window approached, and Conway was calling for slicks. That's what he got, one lap after Buemi had stopped and stayed on the Michelin wets on which he'd started the race. Toyota had opted to split its strategy at this point, explained Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon.

"The track was drying, but it was a bit too early to go to slicks as a safe call – it was a possible call, but a risky one," he said. "As our main competitor [Rebellion] had already stopped and gone for wet tyres, it was a logical call to have one car covering that and the other one stopping a bit later and going for the more aggressive choice." >>





FERRARI TORTOISE BEATS PORSCHE HARE IN GTE AM



The AF Corse Ferrari (above) shared by works driver Nicklas Nielsen, Emmanuel Collard and Francois Perrodo claimed a second class win of the season to extend their GTE Am points lead. They didn't look like contenders for much of the race, but ended up prevailing by just under three seconds.

AF Corse owed its victory to a clean race and the right strategic calls, most significantly having bronze driver Perrodo in the 488 GTE Evo at the right time.

"We're not sure how we won it," said Nielsen, who completed a triple stint at the end to cement the victory. "We didn't have the fastest car, but the team did a fantastic job on strategy. We weren't the favourites before the race, but we took the maximum out of everything."

The best of the Dempsey-Proton Porsche 911 RSRs took a close second in the hands of Matt Campbell, Riccardo Pera and Christian Ried (below). The class pole winner had an up and down race, Ried leading initially before the car dropped down into the midfield with Pera prior to Campbell climbing aboard.

The TF Sport Aston squad claimed third with Jonny Adam, Charlie Eastwood and Salih Yoluc, 50s further back, after struggling in the rain. The Project 1 Porsche in which Egidio Perfetti had twice led early on ended up fourth after Laurents Horr struggled when the conditions were at their worst.



It undoubtedly worked for Conway. The safety car was deployed three laps after he'd taken slicks, giving the track a chance to dry some more when he might have been losing time.

When the green flag came out, Buemi was straight into the pits, handing Conway a 45s lead that had increased to more than 50s by the time they both pitted for wets and new drivers when the rain returned late in hour two.

As the track got wetter, Kobayashi extended the lead over Hartley to over a minute. That disappeared to next to nothing when the race director felt compelled to send out the safety car as the intensity of the rain increased.

The two cars stopped together as the race went green and exited the pitlane together at reduced speed. Kobayashi quickly got going, but Hartley wasn't up to full speed until he was halfway along the Kimm straight. The frustrated Kiwi, who was seen thumping the steering wheel thanks to the onboard camera, was suddenly more than 40s in arrears.

Toyota knew what the problem was, just not what was causing it. "It was the engine going into a protection mode, causing a lack of engine torque when accelerating from very low speed," explained Vasselon. "There is a procedure to get away from it, but we still have to analyse what triggered it."

A fourth and final safety car just before the end of the penultimate hour closed up the two Toyotas again. The gap between Lopez and Nakajima was three seconds when the race resumed. The #8 Toyota was the quicker car on what was now a fully dry track, but was still just a second or so behind when the cars pitted with just over 40 minutes to go and the



positions were frozen by the team.

Buemi, who'd taken over the second-placed car, trailed 10 or so seconds behind Conway before ducking into the pits for a splash-and-dash of fuel just two laps before the finish. That extended the final margin of victory.

The #8 Toyota had been quicker than the winning car for much of the final two hours, just not by enough for the drivers to drag it back into contention.

"The #8 was only slightly faster than #7," agreed Vasselon. "The crew of #7 has done a good job in terms of the set-up to compensate for their handicap. It was super-tight, but they deserved to win."

Rebellion probably deserved what it got, too. The car was just dog slow in the wet. The R-13 has always struggled in the rain, but here they were all at sea, and were at a loss to explain why the car had been as much as seven seconds off the pace.

"Tricky conditions have been difficult for us in the past, and it has been difficult today," said Nato, who haemorrhaged time at the start, falling behind the ByKolles



Rebellion leads from pole, but the car struggled horribly in the wet

ENSO CLM-Gibson P1/01 and the LMP2 frontrunners. “More difficult than expected today, to be honest. We just didn’t make the tyres work.”

What must be worrying for Rebellion and the ORECA team running the car is that the R-13 was running in high-downforce configuration at Spa, whereas the Toyotas were giving a debut to the low-downforce, Le Mans-spec version of the new high-nose aerodynamics introduced on the TS050 at the start of the season.

Rebellion wasn’t even the top LMP1 privateer for much of the first half of the race. The ByKolles squad, making its seasonal WEC debut in preparation for Le Mans, had what team head of operations Boris Bermes described as its “best ever performance”.

Tom Dillmann, who shared the car with fellow team regular Oliver Webb and LMP1 debutant Bruno Spengler, got past Nato on the second lap after the green flag and left him for dead. The car, which was running a new low-downforce package, was still ahead of its only privateer rival when it lost time late in the third hour when one of the FIA sensors on the car needed attention.

A fuel pick-up issue had stopped the car from rising any higher than fifth when the exhaust broke in the final hour. The car was brought into its garage, before Spengler returned for a handful of slow laps on the way to 27th position.

The shame for ByKolles was that there was no one at Spa to witness its heroics, this being a race held behind closed doors. The same went for Conway, Kobayashi and Lopez, who were robbed of victory in Belgium in 2019. ❄️

UNITED AUTOSPORTS IN CONTROL OF LMP2



United crew knew they had the edge at Spa

United Autosports made it three wins from the past three starts in its maiden season in the World Endurance Championship. Filipe Albuquerque, Paul di Resta and Phil Hanson led for the majority of the way and, even when they weren’t in front aboard their ORECA-Gibson 07, they were clear favourites for victory.

There was a dramatic battle with the TDS-run Racing Team Nederland ORECA (below) that Giedo van der Garde propelled from the back of the prototype grid into the lead in just over 40 laps. Job van Uiterter maintained the lead for 30 laps in the middle of the race but, said team boss Richard Dean, “you’ve got to know who you are racing”. And that wasn’t RTN, given that bronze-rated Frits van Eerd was never going to keep the car in contention.

Hanson had a brief tussle with Thomas Laurent in the Signatech car as he saved fuel in the penultimate hour.

Di Resta rejoined just ahead of the Frenchman, who was on tyres that were already up to temperature and braved it around the outside through Eau Rouge to take what was effectively the race lead. A lap later, di Resta put the United car back ahead. Five laps after that, Laurent was in the tyres at the fast right-hander before Blanchimont.

Di Resta had already taken the lead from van Eerd when Laurent, running just a couple of seconds behind, dived inside

a GTE Am car while the RTN ORECA went around the outside. An unsighted van Eerd came across and tagged Laurent, sending him heavily into the barriers.

It was a racing incident on which the stewards took no action, though Laurent subsequently apologised, describing it as an “unforgivable mistake”. The retirement for the car Laurent shared with Andre Negrao and Pierre Ragues brought to an end an unbroken run of WEC finishes for Signatech stretching back to the Nurburgring in 2015. It also removed United’s last rival from the equation, though even Signatech reckoned it wouldn’t have won.

“Keeping the bigger picture in mind was key,” said Hanson. “I probably played it a bit too safe, but it was vital to stay out of trouble. It was a case of having one of those clean races, knowing we had the performance in the car and could dial it back a bit.”

Nicolas Lapierre propelled the Cool Racing ORECA into a distant second at the finish. The Frenchman was a lap down in the car shared with Alexandre Coigny and Antonin Borga. Van Eerd did enough in his one hour and 15 minutes in the car to give RTN its third podium of the season.

The top three were all on Michelin tyres. Best of the Goodyear runners was the Jota Sport ORECA driven by Anthony Davidson, Antonio Felix da Costa and Roberto Gonzalez in fourth. The team looked to be in a strong position after it got silver driver Gonzalez through his driving time at the start of the race, but a tactical call to give Davidson intermediates backfired when the rain intensified.

The Jota-run Jackie Chan DC Racing entry, in which Ryan Cullen replaced Gabriel Aubry who failed a COVID-19 test (see Pit & Paddock), ended up a distant sixth after encountering brake problems.



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Estre and Christensen
finally took first win
of their title defence



REIGNING CHAMPIONS EDGE TIGHT GTE PRO BATTLE

Porsche came out on top in GTE Pro at the end of a topsy-turvy race in which all three manufacturers were in the ascendant at some point. Kevin Estre and Michael Christensen eventually prevailed in their factory 911 RSR in a close battle with the two Aston Martins, coming home five seconds to the good.

This was a race that could have been won by Aston or Ferrari, but a victory for Porsche was probably the correct result. Estre and Christensen struggled in the rain, but were the quickest combination in the dry. That, combined with a timely stop to swap from wets to slicks, was enough to give the reigning class champions a first victory of the current campaign.

The winning Porsche started from pole, having initially been relegated to the back of the grid after Estre was adjudged to have exceeded track limits at La Source. A review of the video evidence resulted in him getting his time back.

Estre and Christensen were dominant in

qualifying, both setting times quicker than anyone else to end up on the pole by an unprecedented four tenths. Any thoughts that they were going to run away with this race disappeared when the safety car pulled in after three laps. Estre lost the lead on the second lap after the race went green, and had nothing for the flying AF Corse Ferrari of Alessandro Pier Guidi.

The Ferrari 488 GTE Evo, which had struggled in qualifying, was clearly the superior package in the wet, but Estre admitted that Porsche hadn't made the right call on which spec of wet tyre to run or at what pressures. "There was a lot of standing water and aquaplaning when we did the reconnaissance lap, but the track dried so quickly," he said.

Estre made an early call to go to slicks, which worked in his favour when the second safety car period ended. He was able to zip past Pier Guidi as soon as the race went green and build up a lead of 10 or so seconds. The Porsche was then a more competitive proposition when the rain returned,

the Manthey-run factory squad having learned from its earlier mistakes.

Aston's form in the rain was the other way around. It was strong at the start, but struggled second time around. The British marque was still very much in the hunt with both its cars over the final portion of the race, despite two punctures for the Vantage shared by Nicki Thiim and Marco Sorensen.

Maxime Martin led in the Vantage he shared with Alex Lynn after staying out of the pits during the final safety car. Estre now found himself in an Aston sandwich, with Sorensen right on his tail. Martin needed to stop and was struggling with a front brake issue, while the other two needed to save fuel to reach the finish.

Estre made it into the lead with 20 minutes left on the clock, while Sorensen fell away. With four minutes to go, Martin ducked into the pits and was able to get out in time to take third.

Aston wasn't too disappointed with second and third after such a turbulent race in which there were no fewer than 14 changes of lead. "So much happened in that race and the Porsche was quicker in the dry, so you can't complain when you get second with a car that had two punctures," said Aston Martin Racing head of performance Gus Beteli.

There was disappointment in the Ferrari camp, however, after it ended up fourth with Pier Guidi and James Calado, and sixth with Davide Rigon and Miguel Molina. It reckoned it had nothing for Porsche and Aston after the latest round of automatic Balance of Performance changes.

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Aston was happy with 2-3,
Ferrari less so with 4-6

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RESULTS WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 6/8, SPA (BEL), 15 AUGUST (143 LAPS – 622.339 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	Mike Conway (GBR) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	LMP1	6h00m02.534s
2	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Kazuki Nakajima (JPN) Brendon Hartley (NZL)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	LMP1	+34.170s
3	Norman Nato (FRA) Bruno Senna (BRA) Gustavo Menezes (USA)	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13	LMP1	-1 lap
4	Filipe Albuquerque (PRT) Phil Hanson (GBR) Paul di Resta (GBR)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-3 laps
5	Alexandre Coigny (CHE) Nicolas Lapierre (FRA) Antonin Borga (CHE)	Cool Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-4 laps
6	Giedo van der Garde (NLD) Frits van Eerd (NLD) Job van Uitert (NLD)	Racing Team Nederland (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-4 laps
7	Roberto Gonzalez (MEX) Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT) Anthony Davidson (GBR)	Jota Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-4 laps
8	Roberto Lacorte (ITA) Andrea Belicchi (ITA) Giorgio Sernagiotto (ITA)	Cetilar Racing (AF Corse)	Dallara-Gibson P217	LMP2	-6 laps
9	Kevin Estre (FRA) Michael Christensen (DNK)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Pro	-8 laps
10	Marco Sorensen (DNK) Nicki Thiim (DNK)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Pro	-8 laps
11	Maxime Martin (BEL) Alex Lynn (GBR)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Pro	-8 laps
12	Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) James Calado (GBR)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Pro	-8 laps
13	Richard Lietz (AUT) Gianmaria Bruni (ITA)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Pro	-8 laps
14	Davide Rigon (ITA) Miguel Molina (ESP)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Pro	-8 laps
15	Francois Perrodo (FRA) Emmanuel Collard (FRA) Nicklas Nielsen (DNK)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-9 laps
16	Christian Ried (DEU) Riccardo Pera (ITA) Matt Campbell (AUS)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-9 laps
17	Salih Yoluc (TUR) Charlie Eastwood (GBR) Jonny Adam (GBR)	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-9 laps
18	Egidio Perfetti (NOR) Laurents Horr (DEU) Matteo Cairolì (ITA)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-10 laps
19	Gianluca Giraudi (ITA) Ricardo Sanchez (MEX) Lucas Legeret (CHE)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-10 laps
20	Ben Keating (USA) Felipe Fraga (BRA) Jeroen Bleekemolen (NLD)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-10 laps
21	Thomas Flohr (CHE) Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Giancarlo Fisichella (ITA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-10 laps
22	Bonamy Grimes (GBR) Johnny Mowlem (GBR) Charlie Hollings (GBR)	Red River Sport (AF Corse)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	GTE Am	-11 laps
23	Will Stevens (GBR) Ho-Pin Tung (NLD) Ryan Cullen (IRL)	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-11 laps
24	Mark Patterson (USA) Kenta Yamashita (JPN) Anders Fjordbach (DNK)	High Class Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-11 laps
25	Paul Dalla Lana (CAN) Augusto Farfus (BRA) Ross Gunn (GBR)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-12 laps
26	Michael Wainwright (GBR) Andrew Watson (GBR) Ben Barker (GBR)	Gulf Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-13 laps
27	Tom Dillmann (FRA) Bruno Spengler (CAN) Oliver Webb (GBR)	ByKolles Racing Team	ENSO CLM-Nissan P1/01	LMP1	-17 laps
28	Nobuya Yamanaka (JPN) Nick Foster (AUS) Roberto Merhi (ESP)	Eurasia Motorsport	Ligier-Gibson JSP217	LMP2	-21 laps
29	Andre Negrao (BRA) Thomas Laurent (FRA) Pierre Ragues (FRA)	Signatech Alpine Elf	ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-37 laps

Winners average speed 103.711mph. In each car, first-named driver started race.

Fastest lap Menezes 2m02.154s, 128.258mph. **LMP2** da Costa 2m05.601s, 124.738mph. **GTE Pro** Estre 2m16.099s, 115.116mph. **GTE Am** Farfus 2m17.287s, 114.120mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Menezes/Nato 1m59.577s; 2 Nakajima/Hartley 2m00.417s; 3 Conway/Kobayashi 2m01.070s; 4 Dillmann/Webb 2m01.907s; 5 di Resta/Hanson 2m02.148s; 6 Davidson/Gonzalez 2m03.697s; 7 Lapierre/Borga 2m03.956s; 8 Stevens/Cullen 2m04.198s; 9 Laurent/Ragues 2m04.235s; 10 Yamashita/Fjordbach 2m04.710s; 11 Sernagiotto/Belicchi 2m05.547s; 12 Estre/Christensen 2m14.207s; 13 Martin/Lynn 2m14.635s; 14 Thiim/Sorensen 2m14.643s; 15 Lietz/Bruni 2m14.923s; 16 Rigon/Molina 2m15.356s; 17 Pier Guidi/Calado 2m15.383s; 18 Campbell/Ried 2m16.519s; 19 Cairolì/Perfetti 2m16.649s; 20 Fraga/Keating 2m17.145s; 21 Farfus/Dalla Lana 2m17.563s; 22 Nielsen/Perrodo 2m17.593s; 23 Eastwood/Yoluc 2m17.658s; 24 Fisichella/Flohr 2m18.314s; 25 Sanchez/Giraudi 2m18.841s; 26 Mowlem/Grimes 2m18.945s; 27 Barker/Wainwright 2m18.947s; 28 Merhi/Yamanaka 2m18.997s; 29 van der Garde/van Uitert no time.

Fastest in each class:

LMP1 Menezes 1m59.342s;
LMP2 di Resta 2m01.888s;
GTE Pro Estre 2m14.191s;
GTE Am Campbell 2m15.300s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP1 drivers

1 Lopez/Kobayashi/Conway 137 (right);
2 Hartley/Nakajima/Buemi 125;
3 Senna/Menezes/Nato 109;
4 Albuquerque/Hanson 54;
5 di Resta 46; 6 Tung/Stevens 46.

LMP1 manufacturers

1 Toyota Gazoo Racing 151;
2 Rebellion Racing 109; 3 Team LNT 29.

LMP2 drivers

1 Albuquerque/Hanson 120;
2 di Resta 105; 3 Tung/Stevens 98;
4 van Eerd/van der Garde 91.

GTE drivers

1 Sorensen/Thiim 127; 2 Estre/Christensen 108; 3 Pier Guidi/Calado 95;
4 Lynn/Martin 92; 5 Bruni/Lietz 79;
6 Rigon/Molina 63.



GTE manufacturers

1 Aston Martin 219; 2 Porsche 190;
3 Ferrari 166.

GTE Am drivers

1 Collard/Perrodo/Nielsen 110;
2 Eastwood/Adam/Yoluc 98;
3 Keating/Bleekemolen 81.5;
4 Dalla Lana/Gunn 80.5.

NEXT EVENT

LE MANS PREVIEW
17 SEPT ISSUE

Look out for our traditional Le Mans supplement – just in September, not June!



Matsushita the unexpected winner of frantic feature bout

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FIA FORMULA 2
BARCELONA (ESP)
15-16 AUGUST
ROUND 6

Ferrari junior Callum Ilott was heading towards what appeared to be a second successive dominant FIA Formula 2 Championship feature race win for Virtuosi Racing before two late safety-car periods turned the contest on its head. This enabled Nobuharu Matsushita, who had started from 18th on the Barcelona grid, to claim victory in a dramatic race.

Ilott, who had picked up his third pole in four events, slipped to second at the start as title rival Robert Shwartzman got past on the long run down to Turn 1 on the opening lap. Seven laps later, Ilott breezed past Ferrari stablemate Shwartzman at the same corner to assume the lead for a couple of laps before making his mandatory pitstop.

Mick Schumacher was on the alternative strategy of starting on hard tyres, and had bolted from fifth to third at the start. The Prema Racing driver therefore moved in front as the other leading contenders pitted, and survived a brief off-track excursion on the exit of Turn 8 to stay in podium contention. Victory seemed inevitable for Ilott, who carved his way past those drivers who were yet to pit, including Matsushita.

Schumacher made his stop with 12 laps remaining, and Ilott reclaimed the lead when he dispatched the yet-to-stop Nikita

Mazepin at Turn 1 on the next lap.

Shwartzman, meanwhile, was struggling to respond to Ilott's pace. The Prema man couldn't overtake the long-running MP Motorsport car of Matsushita, and lost a net second position when Felipe Drugovich sent his MP machine down the inside at Turn 5.

The pivotal moment came when Giuliano Alesi spun after contact with Sean Gelael and his car ended up stuck at the exit of Turn 10, bringing out the safety car.

Matsushita used the neutralised period to make his mandatory stop, while Ilott, Shwartzman and Drugovich were among those to pit for a second time. Carlin rolled the dice and left Yuki Tsunoda out on track

in the lead with 22-lap-old hard tyres.

Ilott attempted to use his fresher rubber to pass Tsunoda at the restart, but found Matsushita driving around his outside at Turn 4. The duo ran side by side all the way to Turn 7, where Ilott was forced off track and was left vulnerable to the chasing pack. Shwartzman capitalised by passing both Ilott and Mazepin to move back up to third. With six laps to go, Matsushita used his tyre advantage to ease past Red Bull and Honda protege Tsunoda at Turn 1 and take the lead, and Shwartzman followed him through with a move around the outside of Turn 3.

The final safety car period was triggered when Roy Nissany – fresh from making



Shwartzman leads Ilott and quick-launching Schumacher on lap one



Tsunoda would slip from the lead to fourth on ruined rubber



Drugovich controlled sprint race to secure double success for MP

RESULTS ROUND 6, BARCELONA (ESP), 15-16 AUGUST, RACE 1 (35 LAPS - 101.159 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Nobuharu Matsushita (JPN)	MP Motorsport	1h02m14.783s
2	Robert Shwartzman (RUS)	Prema Racing	+1.599s
3	Guanyu Zhou (CHN)	Virtuosi Racing	+6.166s
4	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	Carlin	+7.796s
5	Callum Ilott (GBR)	Virtuosi Racing	+7.954s
6	Mick Schumacher (DEU)	Prema Racing	+8.471s
7	Felipe Drugovich (BRA)	MP Motorsport	+8.831s
8	Luca Ghiotto (ITA)	Hitech GP	+8.992s
9	Dan Ticktum (GBR)	DAMS	+9.438s
10	Louis Deletraz (CHE)	Charouz Racing System	+9.494s
11	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	ART Grand Prix	+9.658s
12	Artem Markelov (RUS)	HWA Racelab	+10.552s
13	Nikita Mazepin (RUS)	Hitech GP	+10.661s
14	Pedro Piquet (BRA)	Charouz Racing System	+14.389s
15	Marino Sato (JPN)	Trident	+15.157s
16	Guilherme Samaia (BRA)	Campos Racing	+15.327s
17	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Carlin	+18.437s
18	Jack Aitken (GBR)	Campos Racing	-1 lap
19	Sean Gelael (IDN)	DAMS	-1 lap
R	Roy Nissany (ISR)	Trident	30 laps-crash
R	Giuliano Alesi (FRA)	HWA Racelab	23 laps-spin
R	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	ART Grand Prix	0 laps-spin



Callum Ilott took pole

QUALIFYING

- 1 Ilott 1m28.381s;**
2 Shwartzman 1m28.564s;
3 Zhou 1m28.601s;
4 Drugovich 1m28.767s;
5 Schumacher 1m28.889s;
6 Tsunoda 1m28.903s;
7 Aitken 1m28.979s;
8 Ticktum 1m28.986s;
9 Mazepin 1m29.033s;
10 Deletraz 1m29.199s;
11 Markelov 1m29.297s;
12 Daruvala 1m29.308s;
13 Gelael 1m29.316s;
14 Lundgaard 1m29.333s;
15 Nissany 1m29.469s;
16 Sato 1m29.493s;
17 Piquet 1m29.524s;
18 Matsushita 1m29.641s;
19 Armstrong 1m29.686s;
20 Ghiotto 1m29.690s;
21 Alesi 1m29.748s;
22 Samaia 1m30.093s.

Winner's average speed 97.507mph **Fastest lap** Matsushita 1m32.902s, 112.085mph

RACE 2 (26 LAPS - 75.126 MILES)

GRID FOR RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1, with top eight finishers reversed.

- 1 Drugovich 41m55.669s;** **2 Ghiotto +9.536s;** **3 Schumacher +10.956s;** **4 Tsunoda +14.924s;** **5 Matsushita +19.921s;**
6 Mazepin +23.231s; **7 Piquet +24.528s;** **8 Ilott +29.718s;** **9 Deletraz +31.973s;** **10 Ticktum +32.155s;** **11 Lundgaard +34.196s;**
12 Nissany +34.822s; **13 Shwartzman +41.254s;** **14 Zhou +41.996s;** **15 Armstrong +43.413s;** **16 Markelov +45.618s;**
17 Daruvala +46.219s; **18 Aitken +48.431s;** **19 Alesi +54.736s;** **20 Samaia +1m09.082s;** **21 Sato +1m14.667s;**
NS Gelael injured. Winner's average speed 107.508mph. **Fastest lap** Alesi 1m33.413s, 111.472mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Ilott 121;** **2 Shwartzman 103;** **3 Lundgaard 87;** **4 Tsunoda 82;** **5 Schumacher 79;** **6 Zhou 76;**
7 Mazepin 75; **8 Drugovich 67;** **9 Deletraz 65;** **10 Ticktum 63.**

his Formula 1 first-practice debut with Williams the previous day— crashed heavily into the barriers at Turn 3, setting up a frenetic final-lap shootout. Matsushita and Shwartzman scampered away out front, while chaos ensued behind. Points leader Ilott tried to pass Tsunoda on the inside of Turn 5, but instead was overtaken on the outside by Mazepin. The Russian passed Tsunoda for the final podium place at Turn 10, and Tsunoda inadvertently blocked Ilott on corner exit, allowing Renault junior Guanyu Zhou to pass them both to further Ilott's frustration. Zhou then picked up third place after the race when Mazepin was penalised for rejoining the track on the wrong side of the cone at Turn 2 following an incident earlier in the race.

Matsushita suffered from no such drama as he registered MP's first feature race win since joining F1's second tier in 2013. Team-mate Drugovich was left fuming in eighth, believing MP left it too late to pit him under the first of the late safety cars. But he was able to turn that frustration into a dominant sprint race victory, beating F2 veteran Luca Ghiotto by 9.536s. Schumacher completed the podium.

ART Grand Prix's Christian Lundgaard, who came into the weekend as Ilott's closest challenger, failed to score a point all weekend. The Renault junior was eighth on Sunday, but lost that via a penalty for an illegal last-lap overtake on Ilott.

JOSH SUTTILL



Shwartzman (left) and Matsushita eschew the elbow bump in parc ferme



Polesitter Sargeant couldn't shake Hughes, the HWA driver passing around the outside

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Hughes ends his four-year wait

FIA FORMULA 3
BARCELONA (ESP)
15-16 AUGUST
ROUND 6

Jake Hughes started his very first race on the Formula 1 support bill – in the GP3 Series – from pole position in May 2016 at Barcelona. Since then he'd won four reversed-grid races in three and a half seasons on the F1 undercard, but a victory in the main Saturday event had always eluded him. That was put right last weekend, when he beat Logan Sargeant to honours in the FIA Formula 3 Championship.

Series leader Sargeant edged 26-year-old Hughes on Friday to take his third successive pole. The Prema Racing driver has comfortably the best qualifying record this season, but has often struggled to transfer that supremacy into the races. But he'd picked up his first FIA F3 victory the previous time out at Silverstone, and held the lead on the long run to Turn 1 on the opening lap in Spain.

The safety car was required on that first

lap to recover the stricken machine of Bent Viscaal, and Sargeant was unable to shake off the chasing Hughes at the restart. Three laps later Hughes set the fastest lap and swooped around the outside of Sargeant at Turn 1 to take the lead.

Hughes had to survive a second safety-car period before taking victory for HWA Racelab. Prema's reigning Formula Regional European champion Frederik Vesti, who'd started a lowly 14th, had stopped on track to precipitate the caution, and it was bad news at the restart for Sargeant's other Prema team-mate and main title rival: Oscar Piastri slid wide at the final corner, and dropped from fourth to sixth place behind the battling Clement Novalak (showing much-improved form with Carlin) and David Beckmann (Trident).

Things weren't ideal for Sargeant either. Red Bull junior Liam Lawson believed that engine issues had cost him a shot at his maiden FIA F3 pole. He started his Hitech GP car from third, and wrestled second from Sargeant around the outside of Turn 1 in a similar fashion to Hughes's earlier pass. But



Hughes celebrates feature race success

the Kiwi could do nothing to stop Hughes.

Matteo Nannini – nephew of 1989 Japanese Grand Prix winner Alessandro – picked up his first F3 point in 10th place, putting his Jenzer Motorsport car on reversed-grid pole for the Sunday race.

That was dominated by Renault junior Piastri, who stormed from fifth to first on the opening lap. He was in third place by Turn 1 and capitalised on minor contact between Nannini and Alex Peroni to pass the Italian around the outside of Turn 3 and dive down the inside of fellow Australian Peroni one corner later.

Piastri controlled the race thereafter, while Peroni earned his best series finish in second. The 17-year-old Nannini, in only his second year in car racing, came home in third. Hughes struggled to match his supreme Saturday pace and finished where he'd started in 10th, one spot behind Beckmann, who is the only driver to have scored points in every race this term.

Piastri's first triumph since he won the season-opening race at the Red Bull Ring leaves the championship fight exactly the same as it was heading into the weekend, with Sargeant – who was fifth on Sunday behind Richard Verschoor – leading Piastri by a single point.

JOSH SUTTILL



Piastri scored a composed win in the sprint race

Daytona crowns Elliott king of road courses

NASCAR CUP
DAYTONA (USA)
16 AUGUST
ROUND 23/36

In a normal year, the NASCAR Cup series will race at Daytona twice – both times on the oval. Of course, 2020 is far from normal, and so after some creative thinking the championship officials decided to give the Cup a first: a race on the Daytona road course.

Bar an additional chicane, it was the same configuration as is used in the 24 Hours. A full 65 laps around left and right turns was the challenge, and one gleefully accepted by Chase Elliott.

Prior to the race, the Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet Camaro driver had won three of the past seven road-course events – the previous two on the spin – and he lined up seventh last Sunday. Elliott won stage one and, including green-flag fuel stops, had built a 10-second lead by lap 60 before Kyle



Elliott keeps Hamlin at bay on the stand-in Daytona road course

MILLER
motorsport
 IMAGES

Busch spun out on the oval in his patched-up Toyota Camry.

Elliott's lead was wiped out, allowing Denny Hamlin three laps to attempt to pass. The Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota man would fail to do that by just 0.202s, handing Elliott his second win of the season, following on from his Charlotte victory in May.

Martin Truex Jr, who like Elliott had won three of the previous seven road-course races, recovered to third late on

by passing Jimmie Johnson after being put to the back of the pack for speeding on the pit-road exit.

Behind Johnson, Chris Buescher was the lead Ford Mustang finisher in fifth, while Kaz Grala took seventh for Richard Childress Racing. The 21-year-old Grala had been called up for a surprise Cup debut to deputise for Austin Dillon, who had tested positive for COVID-19.

JAKE NICHOL

Ten-tenths ten Voorde thanks to Fassbender startline shunt

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
BARCELONA (ESP)
16 AUGUST
ROUND 6/8

Larry ten Voorde earned his second win of the Porsche Supercup season at Barcelona, despite losing out from pole into Turn 1 to the fast-starting Jaxon Evans. But at a circuit where, as the Formula 1 grand prix emphatically showed, passing opportunities come at a premium, he was dealt a fortunate hand by a multi-car startline collision.

Eighth-starting Jean-Baptiste



Silverstone winner ten Voorde was back on top

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Simmenauer stalled on the grid, which forced Lucas Groeneveld on the row behind to swerve across the track. He then collected and fired Jesse van Kuijk up in the air and onto the grass, but both would continue.

But as the cars split to avoid Simmenauer's stricken car, guest driver and twice Oscar-nominated actor Michael Fassbender was left with nowhere to go and ploughed into the stationary 911. That forced Roland Berville, taking to the grid in 25th and last, to jam on the brakes and spin to avoid adding to the debris strewn across the circuit. Fassbender would soon pull up and retire with a puncture.

Once the mess had been cleaned up, a standing start was issued with Evans now on pole. But in a reversal of fortunes, he was beaten off the line by ten Voorde. From there, the Team GP Elite driver sailed to a 0.5s victory and into the championship lead over Evans's Lechner Racing team-mate Dylan Pereira, who finished third.

WEEKEND WINNERS

FIA FORMULA 3
BARCELONA (ESP)
Race 1 Jake Hughes
 HWA Racelab
Race 2 Oscar Piastri
 Prema Racing

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
BARCELONA (ESP)
 Larry ten Voorde
 Team GP Elite

NASCAR CUP
DAYTONA (USA)
 Chase Elliott
 Hendrick Motorsports
 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 1LE

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
DAYTONA (USA)
 Austin Cindric
 Team Penske
 Ford Mustang

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
DAYTONA (USA)
 Sheldon Creed
 GMS Racing
 Chevrolet Silverado

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STATS

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Rast pipped Muller by 0.089 seconds to win the second race



WEEKEND WINNERS

DTM

LAUSITZRING (DEU)

Race 1 Nico Muller
Abt Sportsline (Audi RS5 DTM)

Race 2 Rene Rast
Team Rosberg (Audi RS5 DTM)

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

HIDDEN VALLEY (AUS)

Race 1 Anton de Pasquale
Erebus Motorsport (Holden)

Race 2 Scott McLaughlin
DJR Team Penske (Ford)

Race 3 Jamie Whincup
Triple Eight (Holden)

RALLY LIEPAJA (LVA), ERC

Oliver Solberg/Aaron Johnston
(Volkswagen Polo GTI R5)



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Muller and Rast on top again

DTM
LAUSITZRING (DEU)
15-16 AUGUST
ROUND 2/9

If the season opener at Spa wasn't convincing enough, then the second round at Lausitzring last weekend validated the view that Nico Muller and Rene Rast are currently the drivers to beat in the DTM. The Audi duo shared the spoils, convincingly outperforming the rest of the field.

The second encounter on Sunday was particularly noteworthy as Rast defeated Muller in a straight duel. The two drivers crossed the line virtually side by side in a photo finish, with Rast hanging on to beat his Audi stablemate by the tiny margin of 0.089 seconds. Marco Wittmann's third-placed BMW finished nearly 10s down in third, showing just how quick Rast and Muller were for a second round in a row.

While Muller was on the pace all weekend – he dominated the Saturday race from start

to finish before his narrow defeat on Sunday – it wasn't straightforward for Rast.

Fresh off a hectic run of six Formula E races in nine days, Rast was summoned to the stewards on his arrival at the Lausitzring on Friday. Onboard footage from the Spa round revealed that the Team Rosberg driver had used push-to-pass twice during the second race in Belgium while leading, which is prohibited in the DTM.

After speaking to Rast, the stewards concluded that he was guilty of the offence and handed him a 10s penalty, stripping him of victory, and by extension bolstering Abt Sportsline man Muller's points advantage.

To add to that disappointment, Rast struggled in the first race in Germany last weekend, finishing 20.7s behind winner Muller in seventh. According to Rast, he hadn't had such a difficult day in his past three years in the DTM.

But come Sunday he was back at his very best, qualifying third quickest and making an early move on poleman Robin Frijns to

take the lead of the race. Frijns (Abt Audi) then undercut Rast during the pitstop cycle, but the 33-year-old was able to breeze past him only a few laps later, laying the foundation for his 'new' first victory of the season after the loss of his Spa success.

While Rast and Muller were definitely stars of the show, BMW's comeback after a mediocre showing at Spa allayed fears that Audi could crush the competition in its final year in the DTM. While none of the six factory M4s was a threat for the race win, both Sheldon van der Linde and Wittmann scored a podium each on merit after overhauling several Audi drivers.

There was also a marked turnaround in the performance of customer Audi team WRT, and this was displayed no better than by Ferdinand Habsburg. The former R-Motorsport Aston Martin driver put in a mighty performance in race one to finish sixth, before qualifying on the second row on Sunday. Even Harrison Newey, who started the season with a single day of testing, was able to bag a point on Saturday after a penalty for Mike Rockenfeller.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said about Robert Kubica, the ART BMW driver languishing in 13th in both races.

RACHIT THUKRAL



Winners Muller (left) and Rast were joined by BMW's Wittmann on race-two podium

Whincup snatches Triple Crown from Coulthard

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
HIDDEN VALLEY (AUS)
15-16 AUGUST
ROUND 5/13

The Darwin Triple Crown came down to a controversial clash in the pits, which helped Jamie Whincup become only the second-ever winner of the prize.

Traditionally reserved for a weekend clean sweep, and only won for the first time in its 14-year history by Scott McLaughlin in 2019, the rules of the Triple Crown were tweaked for 2020 to better suit the new tyre regulations. With repeat winning expected to be all but impossible, Supercars elected to dip a toe back into the 'round winner' pool, and hand the Triple Crown to the best points scorer across the three races.

Banking on decent tyre degradation, the majority of the field went conservative on the Saturday and stuck to the hard-compound Dunlops. Anton de Pasquale was one of the few who didn't, and the Erebus Holden man was rewarded with a maiden Supercars race win ahead of fellow soft-tyre dice-rollers James Courtney and Scott Pye.

Fabian Coulthard was the best of the hard-tyre drivers in sixth, which instantly put him in contention for the Triple Crown, particularly as the three other drivers from the 'big two' teams were hit with penalties. Shane van Gisbergen's Triple Eight Holden finished 11th after serving a drivethrough for spinning Nick Percat, his team-mate Whincup was 17th thanks to a



15-second penalty for an unsafe release, and Coulthard's DJR Team Penske Ford stablemate McLaughlin was 20th after a 15s penalty for a restart infringement.

As it turned out, the soft-tyre degradation was nowhere near as bad as expected. That kept de Pasquale in the Triple Crown game longer than expected on Sunday, although the Erebus driver couldn't match the usual suspects once the whole field was on the softs.

Coulthard could have put the prize beyond doubt in the first of two Sunday races, after beating McLaughlin off the line and leading the short first stint. But a demon in-lap from McLaughlin helped him emerge just in front of Coulthard, who then slid wide at Turn 1 trying to find a way by. The mistake didn't just hand McLaughlin the race win, but left Coulthard third behind Whincup.

Fourth or better in the finale would still have been enough for Coulthard

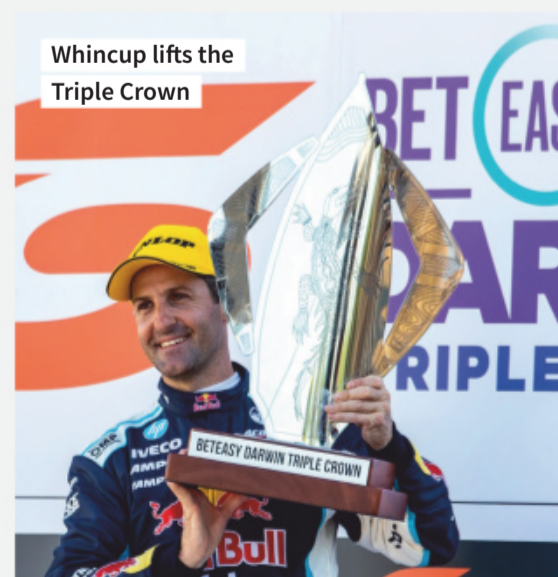
to take out the Triple Crown. Fifth would have been fine too, as long as Whincup didn't win.

And that's what made the pair's pitstop so controversial. In a mad race to undercut early leader McLaughlin, Whincup exited his bay just as Coulthard tried to enter the one right in front. Coulthard had to brake to avoid a nasty crash, which cost him a shot at jumping Chaz Mostert for fourth. Whincup jumped McLaughlin, won the race to tie on weekend points with Coulthard, and was then declared the Triple Crown winner on a countback.

Penske asked stewards to investigate an unsafe release, but Whincup was swiftly cleared on the grounds that Coulthard wasn't wholly in the fast lane.

McLaughlin was third for the weekend and still holds a healthy 101-point championship lead over Whincup.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



Dovi to exit Ducati stage left but not before Hollywood win



ALL PICS: GOLD AND GOOSE
 motorsport
 IMAGES

MOTOGP RED BULL RING (AUT) 16 AUGUST ROUND 4/14

As though leaping from the pages of the countless scripts wannabe film-makers have sent to Hollywood, Andrea Dovizioso gave Ducati its 50th MotoGP victory 24 hours after he announced his decision to quit the team at the end of the year.

Like many great epics, the Austrian Grand Prix – carrying on 2020's chaotic theme – was split into two parts. The first, running for eight full laps, had Pol Espargaro as the main protagonist on his KTM in front of the spectres of the Austrian manufacturer's absent home crowd.

Pramac's Jack Miller – currently the

only Ducati rider locked down for 2021 – grabbed the holeshot but couldn't do much to shake the chasing Dovizioso and Espargaro. The latter found his way into the lead on lap six and moved to unleash the ominous pace he'd displayed on Saturday afternoon in FP4.

Dovizioso charged into second at the end of lap eight to begin hunting down the KTM. But the action was halted after a sickening crash.

Franco Morbidelli clipped Johann Zarco's Avintia Ducati on the run through the fast Turn 2 kink. Both were sent into the gravel at frightening speed, while Morbidelli's Petronas SRT Yamaha flew towards the factory Yamaha pair of Maverick Vinales and Valentino Rossi.

As Zarco's Ducati vaulted the fence (and

narrowly avoided Vinales' head) on the exit of Turn 3, disaster was averted by mere inches as the SRT bike flashed between the two factory Yamahas. Morbidelli escaped mostly unscathed, his assessment of Zarco cutting, branding him a "half-killer". The incident was not penalised.

The halt proved detrimental to a furious Espargaro's victory hopes. He was forced to switch to a fresh soft rear tyre, having run out of mediums, and the "weak" compound meant he dropped out of the hunt, with his race ending on lap nine after a collision with Tech3 KTM's Miguel Oliveira at Turn 4.

Miller had once again assumed the lead at the restart, gambling on a switch to a soft front slick. Utilising his early grip advantage, he shot off like a rider trying to prove to Ducati it wouldn't be losing its true team leader next year. He was over a second clear by lap five, but the soft front began to cry enough and Dovizioso – aptly carrying "undaunted" on the back of his leathers – moved in for the kill.

He eased past on the run to Turn 1 on lap 10 and controlled the pace for the next five tours before dipping back into the 1m24s to get to the chequered flag 1.4s clear. It marked Dovizioso's first win since his epic Austria tussle with Marc Marquez last year.

Miller was as stubborn as possible in his defence of second, but a mistake at the penultimate corner gave Joan Mir runner-up spot for his first MotoGP podium.

Not known for being a powerful bike, the Suzuki in the hands of Alex Rins had stood



Yamaha duo rode their luck as Morbidelli's bike missed by inches in terrifying shunt

'Race one' leader Espargaro later crashed with Oliveira



Another pole preceded yet more bike issues for Vinales

a good chance of winning before he crashed out when he briefly took the lead from Dovizioso at Turn 6 on lap 11.

Brno winner Brad Binder anticipated a better Sunday after qualifying down in 17th. Having worked his way into the top 10 before the red flag, the KTM rookie has now put himself into title contention with a fine fourth.

"Very scared" after his near-miss, Rossi rallied brilliantly to be top Yamaha in fifth on another weird day for Maverick Vinales and Fabio Quartararo. An unexpected brake issue sent Quartararo off track and to the back of the field during the first race. He battled the issue again at the restart.

Eighth keeps him in the lead of the championship, but only by 11 points. Vinales, after romping to pole, encountered the usual Yamaha inconsistencies early in the race – his restart not helped by a clutch issue dropping him to last on lap one. He was 10th at the flag, admitting afterwards that his motivation had taken a knock after another tough race. The only positive he could find was the return of his strong pace in the later stages.

No one really knows what motivated Dovizioso to make the decision he did, but he wanted the uncertainty of his Ducati future off his mind to focus on the job in hand. Now he's a grand prix winner again and back in the title fight.

Ducati's muted celebrations suggest the reality of the situation is hitting home.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 4/14, RED BULL RING, 16 AUGUST (20 LAPS – 53.662 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Andrea Dovizioso (ITA)	Ducati	28m20.853s
2	Joan Mir (ESP)	Suzuki	+1.377s
3	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+1.549s
4	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+5.526s
5	Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Yamaha	+5.837s
6	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+6.403s
7	Danilo Petrucci (ITA)	Ducati	+12.498s
8	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Petronas Yamaha	+12.534s
9	Iker Lecuona (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+14.117s
10	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Yamaha	+15.276s
11	Alex Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+17.772s
12	Michele Pirro (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+23.271s
13	Bradley Smith (GBR)	Aprilia	+24.868s
14	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Honda	+24.943s
15	Cal Crutchlow (GBR)	LCR Honda	+27.435s
16	Tito Rabat (ESP)	Avintia Ducati	+28.502s
17	Stefan Bradl (DEU)	Honda	+28.609s
R	Alex Rins (ESP)	Suzuki	10 laps-accident
R	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	KTM	8 laps-accident
R	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Tech3 KTM	8 laps-accident
R	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha	0 laps-accident
R	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Avintia Ducati	0 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 113.579mph. **Fastest lap** Rins 1m24.007s, 114.979mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Vinales 1m23.450s; 2 Miller 1m23.518s; 3 Quartararo 1m23.537s; 4 Dovizioso 1m23.606s; 5 P Espargaro 1m23.612s; 6 Mir 1m23.673s; 7 Morbidelli 1m23.719s; 8 Rins 1m23.731s; 9 Zarco 1m23.828s; 10 Nakagami 1m23.872s; 11 Oliveira 1m23.939s; 12 Rossi 1m23.995s.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Zarco 1m23.865s; 2 Rossi 1m23.891s; 3 Petrucci 1m23.915s; 4 A Espargaro 1m24.151s; 5 Crutchlow 1m24.228s; 6 Lecuona 1m24.405s; 7 Binder 1m24.485s; 8 Marquez 1m24.490s; 9 Bradl 1m24.662s; 10 Smith 1m24.831s; 11 Rabat 1m25.287s; 12 Pirro 1m25.431s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Quartararo 67; 2 Dovizioso 56; 3 Vinales 48; 4 Binder 41; 5 Rossi 38; 6 Nakagami 37; 7 Miller 36; 8 Morbidelli 31; 8 Mir 31; 10 Zarco 28; 11 Petrucci 20; 12 Rins 19; 13 P Espargaro 19; 14 Oliveira 18; 15 Marquez 15; 16 A Espargaro 11; 17 Francesco Bagnaia 9; 18 Smith 8; 19 Lecuona 7; 20 Rabat 7; 21 Crutchlow 7; 22 Pirro 4; 23 Bradl 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Yamaha 81; 2 Ducati 67; 3 KTM 57; 4 Suzuki 44; 5 Honda 37; 6 Aprilia 16.

Dovizioso scored first win since Austrian round last season



WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2

RED BULL RING (AUT)

Jorge Martin (below)
Ajo Motorsport
(Kalex)

MOTO 3

RED BULL RING (AUT)

Albert Arenas
Aspar Team
(KTM)



NEXT REPORT

STYRIAN GRAND PRIX 27 AUGUST ISSUE

With the weight of uncertainty lifted off Dovizioso's shoulders, can the outgoing Ducati rider be victorious again back at the Red Bull Ring?

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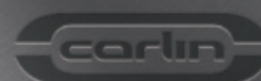


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UNCERTAINTY FOR WELSH RACING AS EVENT IS AXED



CORONAVIRUS

The British Racing and Sports Car Club's meeting at Anglesey this weekend has been cancelled amid a lack of clarity surrounding when motorsport can restart in Wales following the coronavirus hiatus.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the devolved Welsh government has taken a more cautious approach than the English authorities – and this also stretches to sporting events, where it remains the case that 30-person bubbles must be used.

The BRSCC tried to reduce the number of drivers at its event by moving its popular Mazda MX-5 categories to a British Automobile Racing Club meeting at Donington Park this weekend, which had some spare track time, while the combined National and Northern

Formula Ford grid will now compete at a Silverstone BARC fixture in October. But, even without those competitors, the BRSCC was still struggling to make the bubble system work and decided to cancel the meeting on Wednesday last week.

“About two weeks ago, we were nervous and Paul McErlean [race operations and general manager] put together a plan to greatly reduce what would've been a very busy meeting,” explained BRSCC chairman Peter Daly. “We held out hope and were being given an indication things might change. But we had to make that decision because we couldn't leave our customers a week to cancel any arrangements they had made.

“It's a tough blow to our customers and a tough blow for us. I can't say we regret not doing that sooner. For eight weeks, we had been actively trying to get answers.

Teams dispute GT Silver weight penalties

BRITISH GT

Leading British GT team bosses have clashed over the different levels of ballast carried by GT3 Silver Cup cars, as the four Silver McLaren 720S cars ran more weight than their class rivals at last weekend's Donington Park round.

Unlike the GT4 class, which uses a consistent weight across all its Silver cars (25kg at Donington) and a pitstop penalty, championship organiser SRO gives each GT3 pairing a different weight to balance them against the Pro-Am runners.

At the Oulton Park opener, the pair of 2 Seas Motorsport McLarens

and the Jenson Team Rocket by RJN example carried 40kg, while the Optimum McLaren, RAM's Silver Mercedes and Barwell's Silver Lamborghini all carried 30kg. But all four McLarens ran 50kg extra at Donington, while the Mercedes – which took second overall in race one – and Silver Cup points-leading Lambo stayed at 30kg.

Barwell boss Mark Lemmer said Rob Collard, an FIA category Bronze running as a derogated Silver, and RAM driver Sam De Haan, 24, fit a sub-category of “Pro-Am Silvers” and therefore shouldn't run the same weight as aspiring career drivers, but 2 Seas team manager

Mark Chittenden told Autosport that all should run the same weight.

“I don't agree that Silvers should be treated differently because of their ability,” he said. “I've got two inexperienced GT3 guys [Angus Fender and Dean Macdonald] who have been judged on their GT4 performances last year and they're now being penalised because other Silvers are not as good as them. I don't think that is fair.”

RJN boss Bob Neville added: “Once you've balanced the cars and once you've got the Pro-Am and the Silver balance agreed, then really all Silvers should be the same.”

JAMES NEWBOLD

Mazdas were originally due to be part of the Anglesey meeting this weekend



JONES



JONES

I've got great sympathy with all of the drivers and teams but, unfortunately, our hands are tied."

Welsh circuit bosses are frustrated at the situation, believing a one-size-fits-all approach has been taken when race circuits are very different venues to rugby stadiums, for example.

"I'm bitterly disappointed we've been unable to secure a sensible arrangement with the Welsh government to allow us to operate race meetings," said Anglesey's Andrew Crighton. "It's something that a lot of people can't readily get their minds around that the Welsh government and English government are working on different trajectories. MotorSport Vision and other English circuits have managed to get going so it's frustrating for us to be watching that happening and not be able to follow suit – and it must be incredibly confusing for competitors.

"We've been lobbying the Welsh government for a long time now but we can't afford to operate in a way that would

contravene Welsh law and we wouldn't want the BRSCC to work in a way that would do that."

Pembrey circuit manager Phil Davies believes progress is being made in the talks with local authorities and the Welsh government and is optimistic that the BARC meeting at his venue on 12-13 September will go ahead.

"We're working hard with government and officials and they understand that the regulations in place aren't necessarily right for what we do," he said. "We're not going to leave it there.

"If the local authority can licence it and say it's as safe as anything can be [racing may resume]. We're positive that we're making progress."

Governing body Motorsport UK says it is continuing to work with the Welsh government and other authorities in a bid to allow events to be held in the country.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



There are mixed views on differing weights for GT3s

JEP motorsport IMAGES

Extra F3 lap a 'human error'

BRDC BRITISH F3

A "human error" led to an extra lap being run in the first BRDC British F3 race at Donington Park last weekend.

The scheduled 12-lap, or 20-minute, contest lasted an extra lap after timekeepers made the mistake and 13 laps was published on a grid sheet.

Giles Butterfield, MotorSport Vision group operations manager, explained that the official final instructions given to teams before the event stated 12 laps was always the scheduled distance.

"Unfortunately there was a mistake on the grid sheet for race one, which said 13 laps at the top, not 12 laps," he said. "Had there been a change to the race distance there would have been a bulletin sent to all the team managers

that the race distance had changed.

"Unfortunately, nobody in our organisation spotted the timekeepers' mistake and none of the team managers pointed out the discrepancy either.

"It's not good enough and we're pretty disappointed by it but human errors do happen sometimes. This inadvertently caused the race to be flagged one lap too late, though I am confident the procedure followed to arrive at the result was correct."

Under Motorsport UK regulations, the final classification was brought back to 12 laps, which changed the order as points leader Kaylen Frederick crashed on the extra lap. He was reinstated to eighth in the final results and extended his lead.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Race debuts for RS200 Special Saloon and Modsports Turner

SPECIAL SALOONS/MODSPORTS

A brand new spaceframe Ford RS200 Special Saloon made its debut at Snetterton last Saturday and came close to winning its first race in the hands of Wayne Crabtree.

Commissioned by Dave Abrahams, the car was built by Ray Addis, who also constructed the Peugeot 309 Thundersaloon that races alongside it in the Special Saloons and Modsports series. The RS200 is based around Pikes Peak body panels and is powered by a 575bhp twin-turbo Subaru engine mated to a six-speed sequential gearbox more commonly found in a Radical

SR8, with Lola Sports 2000 suspension.

“The reason I picked that engine was because I wanted to get everything as low as possible,” said Abrahams. “I’d like to have got a six-cylinder in there but we just didn’t have the room. I wanted to keep everything forward of the rear-axle centre line.”

In dry conditions, the car was hampered by slick tyres designed to run on LMP2 machinery, which proved around three seconds slower than the used Michelin Porsche Carrera Cup rubber it had tested on. But Crabtree led the majority of the wet first race before being pipped by series dominator Andy Southcott’s MG Midget.



Watton raced in Modsports Turner

“I’ve only really driven saloon cars, and nothing with a [mid-mounted] engine, so I’m just trying to get to grips with the aero,” said Crabtree. “You’re thinking to yourself, ‘I probably could go quicker’, but the problem is there’s no spares for this car at present.”

Jack Fairman Cup winner Steve Watton also gave a Modsports Turner its race debut. The 1961 Gurney Special has been in Modsports-specification since the early 1970s and was hillclimbed. Watton acquired the car over the winter and converted it to circuit specification.

“Three times I’ve started to build Modsports cars and for some reason or other they’ve never materialised,” said Watton, a Turner specialist. “I think it’s the oldest car in the series. It’s a real old-school, historic Modsports car.”

Watton revelled in the wet conditions of the first race, climbing to sixth overall (second in class), before slipping to 13th in race two.

MARK PAULSON

Tomlin escapes blaze with burns to face

HISTORIC TOURING

David Tomlin sustained facial burns when the cockpit of his RS500-spec Ford Sierra Cosworth filled with flames during the Historic Touring Car Challenge race at Thruxton last Saturday.

Tomlin was running a close second to Ric Wood’s Nissan Skyline GT-R when vapour from the Sierra’s boot-mounted fuel cell ignited.

Marshals quickly freed him and he was taken to Salisbury Hospital, from where he was released on Monday evening when the swelling had subsided sufficiently.

“My face is burnt within the circle of the [fire resistant] balaclava – it’s red raw,” said Tomlin, who was wearing an open-face helmet. He was to be assessed for possible skin grafts to his nose at a specialist burns unit



JONES

in Birmingham on Tuesday.

It was the second fire that Tomlin had suffered in five weeks. Last year’s Magny-Cours F2 winner extinguished his Motul Rondel M1 at Brands Hatch during the Historic Sports Car Club’s event last month.

He plans to return to racing as soon as possible, with full-face helmet and eyehole balaclava. The Motul is ready to run and his preparation team – which did not build the Sierra – is investigating the fire’s cause.

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Mansell and Dons take victories at Spa in new Revolution cars

SPORTS PROTOTYPE CUP

Scott Mansell and Morten Dons took a victory apiece on the international debut of the Revolution A-One one-make prototype at Spa last weekend.

Dons won the first of the two one-hour Sports Prototype Cup races run in support of the World Endurance Championship event. The Dane led home a Mike Smith Racing 1-2 ahead of Alex Kapadia on Friday after taking the lead from his team-mate on lap five.

Mansell bounced back from technical issues in race one aboard his Excelr8 Revolution to claim a clear victory in wet conditions on Saturday. He came through from 10th on the grid to take victory by 59s from Kapadia, who finished less than a second up on team-mate Dons at the end

of a race red-flagged with 10 minutes to go as the rain intensified.

Nigel Greensall emerged from the pit window with a 20s lead in his self-run car, but was adjudged to have undercut the minimum pitstop time. The resulting stop/go penalty dropped him to fourth.

Ten Revolutions joined the grid of what was originally a non-points Britcar event. A spate of withdrawals, when the 14-day quarantine was announced for travellers from Belgium arriving in the UK, left only three Britcar entries and the races being billed as a Sports Prototype Cup event.

The best finish by a Britcar runner was third place for the DTB Motorsport Aston Martin V12 Vantage GT3 shared by Graham Davidson and Graeme Mundy in the opening race.

GARY WATKINS

Brands welcomes the best of Italy

FESTIVAL ITALIA

The Festival Italia at Brands Hatch last Sunday suffered from COVID-19 restrictions and lacked the Italian-themed off-circuit attractions, which normally draw a big crowd.

Despite this, eight races and displays including exotic road cars were enough to produce a healthy attendance.

Rain transformed the second of the Ferrari Club feature events, which had

only six entries. Dominant in a dry first race, James Little's 458 was beaten by a length on a wet track by Vance Kearney's 430.

The first Ferrari Formula Classic race progressed from dry to wet and the second from damp back to dry, but Tim Mogridge (F355) was the master of both conditions and completed the double.

Alfa Romeo wins went to George Osborne's Alfa 75 and Scott Austin's 155, the second race affected by a still damp

surface topped up with dropped fluids.

Allcomers races were billed as Italy versus the rest of the world, but lacked any Italian involvement. Graham Charman's Caterham Superlight fended off the Ginetta G40 Silhouette cars of Ray Harris (from the back of the grid) and Mike Thurley in race one, but Charman and Thurley both missed race two, allowing Harris to lap the rest.

BRIAN PHILLIPS

IN THE HEADLINES

REFUND ON CANCELLED RACES

The Classic Sports Car Club will offer a 50% entry-fee refund for the drivers who qualified but did not race at the club's meeting at Snetterton last weekend, due to a deluge of rain. The heavy rainfall meant Open Series, Magnificent Sevens, New Millennium and Slicks Series competitors did not get the chance to race with the meeting abandoned.

PITLANE INCIDENT REVIEWED

There was an unfortunate collision in the pits at Silverstone last weekend when Radical Challenge driver Jerome de Sadeleer hit a fellow racer's father. Organising club MotorSport Vision Racing said: "The incident was investigated on the day, and MSVR would take this opportunity to remind everyone the pitlane and paddocks are working areas and the utmost caution should be exercised at all times."

DUTCH KART TRIP IN DOUBT

The Superkart paddock has been thrown into disarray with the recent announcement by the British government that travellers from the Netherlands will have to quarantine for 14 days when returning to the UK. The popular Gamma Race Weekend at Assen is due to take place towards the end of September, and last year attracted a large entry from the UK. "We have a small family business so I can't afford to take two weeks off and quarantine," said Liam Morley, who was third overall last year.

HERO EVENTS TO RESUME

The Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation's season will resume this weekend with a Novice Trial event in Oswestry. Designed for beginners, the event will feature classroom and on-the-road guidance in areas such as navigation and classic car rally procedures, before a competitive mini-rally takes place on Sunday. A 25-strong entry has been attracted and the oldest car is the 1928 Ford Model A Phaeton of Oscar and Nicholas Phillips.



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Recreation of Le Mans class-winning Bristol to hit the track

HISTORICS

A famous class-winning Le Mans design will return to action at the Bentley Drivers Club's Silverstone meeting this weekend.

A recreation of one of the Bristol 450 coupes that finished 1-2-3 in the two-litre class in the 1954 24 Hours will be driven in the Fifties Sports Car Racing Club event by Andrew Mitchell.

The original 450 coupes first appeared at Le Mans in 1953. Both entries retired, but one car took a class-winning fifth at the Reims 12 Hours. Three 450s with revised bodywork contested the 1954 Le Mans and finished seventh, eighth and ninth overall as Bristol dominated the two-litre category. They then finished 2-3-4 in class at Reims.

Open versions of the car duplicated the 1954 Le Mans result in the 1955 edition. All but one was then scrapped, leaving no surviving coupes.

Now Mitchell Motors has built a recreation of the Jack Fairman/Tommy



Mitchell will race the Bristol 450 coupe in FISCAR at Silverstone

Wisdom coupe that finished eighth at Le Mans in 1954, after being commissioned by French Bristol Owners' Club member Olivier Bore.

"They were wonderful cars," said Mitchell. "The originals were based on ERA G-type chassis, but that would've made it expensive and virtually impossible. So we took a Bristol chassis and based our car on that – it's more of a Bristol than the originals!"

The later chassis originally had a 2.2-litre version of the firm's famous straight-six engine, but the 450 recreation has a period-correct two-litre version. A handful of original parts – including a cylinder head, steering wheel, and rev counter – have been

used, while Mitchell Motors fashioned the distinctive bodywork from photographs.

Mitchell has already driven the car on road and track: "It won't be the fastest car in the world. The handling is superb. She's a little bit heavy, but she's aerodynamic and has done 115mph. We decided to do a few races because it was built for the track when new."

Mitchell is also hoping to drive the car at the Castle Combe Autumn Classic in October and the Le Mans Classic next year, as well as selected Woodcote Trophy events.

FISCAR organisers are expecting 26 cars for the Silverstone race.

KEVIN TURNER

Popular 7 Race Series gets championship status

MSVR

The MotorSport Vision Racing-administered 7 Race Series has achieved championship status for this season.

The popular category, which attracted 57 cars for its two races at Silverstone last weekend, has run as a series over the past few years but has now become a points-scoring championship.

It has been the brainchild of long-time Caterham racer and preparer Andy McMillan,



The championship attracted a bumper entry at Silverstone

who said of the change of status: "We made it a championship as that's what the drivers wanted, but we can always change

it back as we listen to them."

Before the end of the year, visits are planned to Mondello Park, Le Mans, the Algarve circuit and

Estoril – and McMillan says Valencia and Jerez are targets for next season.

"I buy the track time and we go to good quality circuits, it's so popular that we have eight reserves for Le Mans," he added.

Ex-Formula Renault racer, and now rally driver, David Henderson was among the Silverstone entry and said: "It's so friendly and inviting and it was enough to get me back in the car after eight months."

PETER SCHERER



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Champions in waiting?

There may have only been two weekends of British GT action held so far, but the 2016 GT4 champion already knows who he's tipping for the title

GRAHAM JOHNSON

Spoiler alert: Phil Keen and Adam Balon will win the 2020 British GT3 Championship. How can I be so sure? Because the duo has *everything* in its favour.

The only British GT3 driver pairing to continue into 2020 from last year, Keen and Balon have bonded. All of the other drivers are still trying to suss out their team-mate, but Keen and Balon got all of those first-date-like awkward moments out of the way last year. Everyone else is still asking themselves, 'Do I trust my team-mate? Is he quick? Do I even like him?!' Keen and Balon are at the passing-wind-in-front-of-one-another and peeing-with-the-door-open stage of their relationship, while suppressed stomach farts are the order of the day for all other driver combos.

But a bromance isn't Balon and Keen's only ace card. Keen has a possible disruptive force within the same garage in the shape of Sandy Mitchell. Mitchell will be eyeing Keen's still relatively fresh Lambo factory driver contract – indeed Mitchell outqualified his more experienced team-mate last weekend at Donington Park, despite carrying extra ballast in his Huracan due to being part of a Silver pairing with Rob Collard. If you want to see Keen raise his already high game, pit him against a much younger, rapid pedaller in the same car in the same team. Besides, Keen now has the right ingredient to win the title: Balon

“You’ll get a nice pot, a hangover, and a tale for the grandkids when they come along”

as his team-mate. And Adam has his own hare to chase too.

Of Innocent fruit smoothie founding fame and with a Samson-like hair mane that's the envy of every Am on the grid, Balon's extra motivation comes in the shape of the aforementioned 51-year-old Collard. 'I beat a 15-time British Touring Car race winner', has a nice ring about it, so you can bet that Balon has pinned a target on the back of Collard's race suit.

I've raced Adam and, when his head is in gear, he is genuinely rapid. The championship is his to lose, but relax Adam: winning the title means everything, but it also means nothing. Take the crown and I can say with experience that the phone won't ring the next day. You'll get a nice pot, a hangover, and a tale for the grandkids when they come along, but otherwise life won't change either way. A chilled driver is a quick driver. Locking

those tense forearms and turning the wheel in robotic-style costs tenths. Motorsport is about the 10% bit of talent that lies within our arms and legs, and the 90% of mental strength that lives between our ears.

More ace cards for Keen and Balon come in the shape of Barwell and the Lamborghini. The two go together like daddy and daughter. Few team owners go into bat harder for their drivers in a sticky situation than Mark Lemmer and Chris Needell, and few team owners know how to better apply the rulebook to their advantage.

But it's not going to be easy for Phil and Adam because I think it's highly likely that we'll see a different race winner at every round for the rest of the season. There have been four different winners from four races thus far and that trend will continue because SRO, the series organiser, has got the recipe sorted for 2020. Teams and drivers may not like the ad-hoc Balance of Performance tweaks Stephane Ratel's organisation frequently makes, but they are missing the point: they are in the entertainment business. Like it or not, applying speed-controlling measures to the cars is creating a great racing spectacle. But in terms of winning the GT3 title, it's going to be all about consistency, not race wins. Step forward Keen, Balon and Barwell.

Meanwhile in my stomping ground of GT4, the picture is less clear cut. The race at Donington last weekend was a very polite affair, with almost revolving-door-like action taking place in the battle for second in the first race, in particular. 'No, after you, I insist' was seemingly the catchphrase of that race as they swapped positions time and time again while letting the impressive Jamie Caroline disappear up the road in his obviously sorted Aston Martin. A word to the wise: if you want to win, the only time to get stuck into a race in the first stint is when you are leading!

While watching multiple changes for second, third, fourth and fifth places was fun to watch, with every position change comes another loss of time. As on-track battle rages, the driver waiting to complete the second stint of the race helplessly watches any chance of a win drift away. The first stint of a BGT race is all about avoiding losing time, not enjoying a sprint race. The GT4 grid may be small in 2020, but at least the spectacle is good if this year's drivers don't quickly learn how to be successful in endurance racing.

Twist my arm and I'll call it: the yellow TF Aston Martin will win British GT4 in 2020. And yes, I am aware that there are two yellow TF Aston Martin GT4s... ❄️

➔ P74 BRITISH GT REPORT



New winners flourish in GT3 amid wet conditions

**DONINGTON PARK
BRITISH GT
15-16 AUGUST**

Two new winners claimed GT3 spoils on a gloomy day at Donington Park, as British GT introduced a new format of a two-hour race followed by a one-hour sprint.

Michael Igoe and new co-driver Andrea Caldarelli took the 37.5 points on offer in the first race in WPI Motorsport's Lamborghini, while 2018 GT4 Pro-Am champions Scott Malvern and Nick Jones took their maiden outright triumph with their Team Parker Racing Bentley in a race two decided by tyre strategy.

WPI hadn't appeared to be a factor in

the first half of the opener – the grid set by aggregate qualifying times – as an entertaining three-way lead battle played out between poleman Michael O'Brien in the Rocket Team RJN McLaren, Rob Collard's Barwell Lamborghini and the RAM Mercedes of Sam de Haan.

After 24 laps of dogged pursuit, Collard took the lead when O'Brien ran wide at Coppice. De Haan followed through two laps later and O'Brien – whose first wet laps in the 720S had been in the warm-up – steadily dropped back to the extent that de Haan's team-mate Patrick Kujala was able to negate a 10s success pitstop penalty to emerge ahead of James Baldwin, in for O'Brien, after the stops.

Barwell kept Collard out until lap 45 in the hope that the track would be dry enough for a switch to slick tyres but, with 41 minutes to go, the team bailed on that strategy and plugged in Sandy Mitchell. The young Scot, who served a 15s success penalty in the pits, emerged 4.4s behind Kujala with eight-laps-fresher tyres, but the pressures were too high and that meant he was quickly swallowed up by factory Lamborghini Caldarelli and dropped to fifth.

Igoe and Caldarelli had only qualified ninth, but gained two places immediately when neither 2 Seas McLaren made it to the grid – a small fire in the warm-up meant one of them joined the race late, and a mechanical fault was discovered on the

KIBBLE AND O'BRIEN WIN BEFORE McLAREN TYRE GAMBLE PAYS OFF

TF Sport showed that it remains the team to beat in British GT's GT4 class with a comprehensive 1-2 in race one, but a McLaren tyre gamble paid dividends in race two.

The TF Aston Martin Vantage GT4 of Patrick Kibble and Connor O'Brien was outshone by the sister car driven by Jamie Caroline and Dan Vaughan in the opening race, but the latter pairing's 15s success pitstop penalty carried over from the previous race meant their team-mates took an uncontested win.

From fourth on the grid, Caroline quickly picked his way through to lead in the slippery conditions, and even pressured GT3 tailender

Stewart Proctor as Patrik Matthiesen's polesitting HHC McLaren bottled up the pack behind, led by Kibble. After finally passing the Dane at Melbourne Hairpin on lap nine, Kibble promptly ran wide at the very next corner and dropped back behind the McLaren and James Kell's Toyota. It was another five laps before he had cleared them, by which time Caroline had around 18s in hand.

But Caroline's Aston had a damaged rear diffuser from being rear-ended by Ian Loggie's GT3 Mercedes at the Old Hairpin, and the team was unable to replace it in the pits. Combined with the success penalty, that meant Vaughan

rejoined behind O'Brien. They held station to the finish, with Kell and Sam Smelt taking the Speedworks Toyota Supra's first podium in third.

As in the GT3 class, race two was decided by tyre choice, as Gus Bowers (HHC McLaren) and Euan Hankey (Balfe McLaren) pitted for slicks on their way to the dummy grid. Both had to start from the pitlane, as the rest of the field took the start on wets, but it was soon apparent that slicks were the way to go as first Hankey, then Bowers powered through.

TF gambled on the much-threatened rain arriving during the pitstop phase and stayed out a lap longer than its GT4 rivals, but it was

Stand-in Caldarelli took race one win with Igoe



other, Jordan Witt arriving at the end of the pitlane 10s after it closed.

At the start, an opportunist Igoe passed Lewis Proctor when the Optimum McLaren botched a move on Ian Loggie (RAM Mercedes) at the Fogarty Esses, then he took Loggie and fellow Lambo man Adam Balon (Barwell) in quick succession. After Caldarelli took over on lap 36, the Italian made swift work first of Baldwin, then Mitchell, and set about catching the leading Mercedes of Kujala. There was an air of inevitability about the chase and, sure enough, he powered around the outside at Redgate into a lead he would never lose with six laps remaining.

“In these conditions it’s always tricky to do an overtake,” said Caldarelli. “I knew that it was Patrick in the car and I know that he is a tough guy, so when I was two or three seconds away I was looking at where I was stronger and I knew that I had to try in the first corner. I’m happy and proud that we brought the first win to the team.”

A “pissed off” Kujala admitted defeat was “hard to swallow”, but still scored maximum points in the Silver classification. Behind, Loggie and Yelmer Buurman completed the podium in third, although RAM boss Dan Shufflebottom admitted they could have been in the lead battle without problems getting the fuel hose attached in the pits.

Balon and Phil Keen finished fourth, Keen setting the fastest lap on the final tour in a

Malvern and Jones came out on top in a drying race two



futile attempt to grab a podium place.

The race two grid was set by Pro times, with Joe Osborne (Balfe McLaren) and Malvern – both on slicks on a damp but drying track – sharing the front row. At the start, Malvern dived around the outside at Redgate as Osborne dropped briefly to fifth behind the fast-starting wet-shod trio of Jack Mitchell, Sandy Mitchell and Buurman. Malvern too was swallowed up on the following lap, but by lap six the Bentley and McLaren were in front and pulling away as fellow slick runners Keen and Caldarelli struggled to get heat into their tyres.

Osborne tracked Malvern to the stops, where GT3 rookie Stewart Proctor – Lewis’s dad – and Jones respectively took over. As Proctor fell back into the clutches of Balon, Jones kept it on the island amid worsening conditions to take a memorable win.

“We rolled the dice and everything came in for us,” said Jones, who had finished 11th in race one. “More than often it doesn’t work, but it did for us today.”

Balon had been coming under pressure from Igoe until the race one winner spun at the Esses, and he cleared Proctor Sr to take second and hold on to beat leading Silver combatants Witt (after taking over from Jack Mitchell) and Proctor Jr. That consistent scoring from Keen and Balon has therefore given them the points lead.

JAMES NEWBOLD

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT3

Race 1 (69 laps) 1 Michael Igoe/Andrea Caldarelli (Lamborghini Huracan Evo); 2 Sam de Haan/Patrick Kujala (Mercedes-AMG) +6.349s; 3 Ian Loggie/Yelmer Buurman (Mercedes); 4 Adam Balon/Phil Keen (Lamborghini); 5 Rob Collard/Sandy Mitchell (Lamborghini); 6 Richard Neary/Sam Neary (Mercedes). **Fastest lap** Keen 1m38.289s (91.10mph). **Pole** Michael O’Brien/James Baldwin (McLaren 720S GT3). **Starters** 13.

Race 2 (37 laps) 1 Scott Malvern/Nick Jones (Bentley Continental); 2 Keen/Balon +13.297s; 3 Jack Mitchell/Jordan Witt (McLaren 720S); 4 Ollie Wilkinson/Lewis Proctor (McLaren); 5 Joe Osborne/Stewart Proctor (McLaren); 6 S Mitchell/Collard.

FL Malvern 1m31.084s (98.30mph).

P Osborne. **S** 13.

Points 1 Keen/Balon 67; 2 Kujala/de Haan 56; 3 S Mitchell/Collard 53; 4 Igoe 45.5; 5 Caldarelli 43.5; 6 Wilkinson/L Proctor 43.

GT4

Race 1 (65 laps) 1 Patrick Kibble/Connor O’Brien (Aston Martin Vantage); 2 Jamie Caroline/Dan Vaughan (Aston Martin) +11.062s; 3 James Kell/Sam Smelt (Toyota GR Supra GT4); 4 Matt Cowley/Jordan Albert (Ford Mustang); 5 Chris Wesemael/Gus Bowers (McLaren 570S); 6 Patrik Matthiesen/Jordan Collard (McLaren). **FL** Albert 1m46.051s. (84.43mph). **P** Matthiesen/Collard. **S** 8.

Race 2 (35 laps) 1 Bowers/Wesemael; 2 Euan Hankey/Mia Flewitt (McLaren) -1 lap; 3 Collard/Matthiesen; 4 Smelt/Kell; 5 Vaughan/Caroline; 6 Albert/Cowley.

FL Hankey 1m39.091s (90.36mph).

P Collard. **S** 8.

Points 1 Vaughan/Caroline 70; 2 O’Brien/Kibble 68.5; 3 Collard/Matthiesen 60; 4 Bowers/Wesemael 60; 5 Hankey/Flewitt 58; 6 Smelt/Kell 46.5.

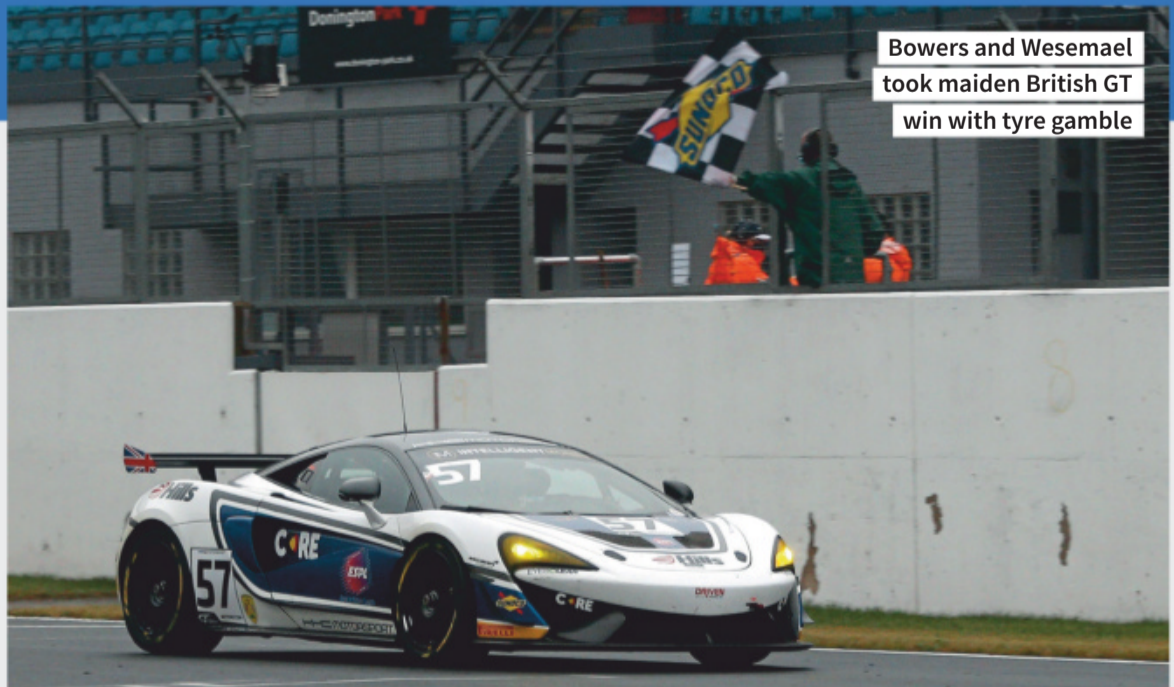
already far too late to reverse the earlier time loss.

Hankey stayed out as long as possible before handing over to Mia Flewitt, who had 30s in hand over Bowers’s team-mate, reigning RGB Sports 1000 champion Chris Wesemael, upon rejoining. But birthday boy Wesemael was charging and carved 5s per lap out of Flewitt as conditions worsened before making the winning pass with six minutes to go at the Melbourne Hairpin.

“We thought if there was any chance we could go for slicks we would, because we were starting last,” the 25-year-old said. “It’s incredible, the best present ever!”

JAMES NEWBOLD

Bowers and Wesemael took maiden British GT win with tyre gamble



Frederick flies to another win in British F3

**DONINGTON PARK
BRSCC
15-16 AUGUST**

Kaylen Frederick extended his points lead in the BRDC British F3 Championship with an assertive performance at Donington Park in mixed conditions, while Brit Louis Foster secured his maiden win in the series.

With two victories to his name from the opening round at Oulton Park, Frederick carried on his impressive form by taking pole for the opening contest at Donington, and for half the opening lap it looked like being another masterclass from the Carlin-run American. But, exiting the Fogarty Esses, he ran wide across the grass and dropped behind fellow front-row starter Foster (Double R Racing) and Hitech GP duo Reece Ushijima and Kush Maini.

On the following lap, Nico Varrone found more than just grass on the exit of the Esses and the safety car was called to retrieve the stricken Chris Dittmann Racing entry.

While the front trio maintained station at the restart, championship leader Frederick began to lose positions due to a failing actuator, which meant changing up and down gears was becoming more difficult and unpredictable. He fell to sixth when he ran wide at the Melbourne Hairpin, dropped to seventh on the following tour due to the same error, and by the penultimate lap he was eighth.

On the final lap, Frederick was sent into the barriers at Coppice as he suffered a throttle blip when downshifting. Crucially,



Carlin driver Frederick took two podiums across the weekend, and extended his points lead

however, the race had run for a lap longer than scheduled (see News), meaning the final result was taken from the lap before. Not only did it mean he kept 13 valuable points for an eighth-place finish, but he would start 11th instead of 18th for the full reversed-grid-second race.

Up front, Foster took his maiden win in the series ahead of Ushijima and Maini.

While Saturday's action had been in the dry, rain tyres were needed on Sunday. Douglas Motorsport driver Ulysse de Pauw led from pole in the reversed-grid race, while Carter Williams and then Oliver Clarke held second before Frederick carved his way through into the spot by lap seven.

The gap to de Pauw stood at 8.9s with five laps remaining, and Frederick whittled the margin down to just over two seconds by the flag as the Belgian took his first

series win and Hillspeed driver Clarke claimed third for his maiden F3 podium.

Frederick's performance in the wet was an ominous sign for race three, where he would start third, behind Maini and Foster. After getting the jump on Foster off the line in drier but still damp conditions, Frederick showed why he is the driver to beat this year with a superb pass around the outside of Maini at Goddards on lap four.

As Frederick cantered to his third win of the season, there was a sensational scrap for second led by Maini, Josh Skelton, Kiern Jewiss and Foster.

For several laps each attacked and defended while sliding around trying to find grip, never more than inches apart in one of the best multi-car British F3 battles since the series was launched in 2016. Skelton managed to pip Maini on



Foster (26) took his maiden British F3 win at Donington Park

DONINGTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

BRDC BRITISH F3

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Louis Foster; 2 Reece Ushijima +1.424s; 3 Kush Maini; 4 Piers Prior; 5 Kiern Jewiss; 6 Josh Skelton. **Fastest lap** Ulysse de Pauw 1m25.526s (104.69mph). **Pole** Kaylen Frederick. **Starters** 19.

Race 2 (12 laps) 1 de Pauw; 2 Frederick +2.140s; 3 Oliver Clarke; 4 Bart Horsten; 5 Benjamin Pedersen; 6 Maini. **FL** Frederick 1m40.058s (89.49mph). **P** de Pauw. **S** 19.

Race 3 (12 laps) 1 Frederick; 2 Skelton +11.112s; 3 Maini; 4 Nico Varrone; 5 Jewiss; 6 Foster. **FL** Frederick 1m39.638s (89.86mph). **P** Maini. **S** 19.

Points 1 Frederick 161; 2 Maini 132; 3 Jewiss 123; 4 Foster 115; 5 Nazim Azman 111; 6 Skelton 108.

GINETTA G40 CUP

Races 1 & 2 Giles Dawson (below)

Race 3 Tom Golding

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Races 1 & 2 Tom Jackson



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

the line by just 0.101s, as Varrone finished an incredible fourth after a charge from 14th on the grid, ahead of Jewiss and Foster.

Frederick heads to the Brands Hatch round next week with a 29-point gap over Maini, who has to yet to confirm whether he will contest the remaining races.

Tom Golding and Giles Dawson continued their titanic battle for the Ginetta G40 Cup title, with each winning again.

Dawson won from polesitter Golding in the opening race after resisting his rival throughout following a lengthy safety-car period. In the second race – held in wet conditions – it was Dawson who had to do the chasing, and he only grabbed the lead through the final turns to win by just 0.046s.

The third race proved to be even more dramatic. As the title protagonists pulled further ahead of the chasing pack, the rain intensified, Golding running wide and losing the lead at the Melbourne Hairpin on lap eight. Moments later it was Dawson's turn to lose the initiative as he spun off down the Craner Curves when lapping a backmarker. He wasn't the only one to end up in the gravel, as several stranded cars brought out the red flags.

The result was therefore pushed back to the end of lap seven and, because Dawson had been the cause of the red flag, he was not classified, costing him crucial points.

STEFAN MACKLEY

NEW PORSCHE SERIES A SHINING LIGHT IN THE RAIN

Conditions for both 25-minute races were tricky for drivers



Getting a new championship off the ground is never easy, and the coronavirus pandemic that has blighted 2020 has made that task even harder. Full credit, therefore, to the organisers of the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB, which attracted what has to be regarded in the current circumstances as a healthy 14-car grid for its second round at Donington Park last weekend.

The new-for-2020 series for both Pro and Amateur racers has certainly caught the attention of some high-profile names, in terms of not only drivers but teams too. Former Porsche Carrera Cup competitor Tom Jackson is on the grid, as is James Dorlin, the 2014 Junior Saloon Car champion and a Clio Cup and British GT4 race winner. Leading teams include In2 Racing and Redline Racing.

"You can't go wrong with Porsche," says former British GT4 driver Alex Toth-Jones, who jumped into the series after losing his British GT3 Beechdean drive due to the global health crisis.

"I don't see it as a backwards step, it's more of a sideways step as it's basically GT4 sprint racing. The lower grids are not because of the new car, it's due to COVID, and next year will see the grids get bigger. It's a nice car, a good car to drive and it's especially good for the Ams.



Dorlin took victory on the road, but was handed post-race penalty

"I think it's great, it fills a gap for people coming out of single-seaters or junior championships instead of going into Carrera Cup, which is a big jump. It fills a gap that needed to be filled.

"Porsche support is second to none, the way they run the championship is incredible and it shows at times like this, when it's hard to run a championship."

Both 25-minute races were held in Sunday's wet conditions, which only served to make the racing more entertaining.

In the opening contest, Jackson claimed a lights-to-flag victory, admitting that his only concern in the whole race had been his average start, but behind there was plenty of action. Dorlin, who had started fourth, charged through. He had set up his car to perform better in the second half of the race, but it came on song too late to challenge Jackson.

Archie Hamilton kept out of trouble and on the track to finish third, just ahead of Ethan Hawkey and Theo Edgerton – former Ginetta Junior runner Edgerton had briefly got as high as second before taking to the Old Hairpin gravel.

If Jackson had everything his own way in the opening race, there was no chance of that being repeated in the second as Dorlin pressured him throughout. He forced Jackson into taking defensive lines for the majority of the race, and then Dorlin made his move at the start of the penultimate lap, holding a wide line before cutting back underneath his rival on the exit of Redgate to take the lead.

A small mistake from Jackson at the Old Hairpin on the final tour assured Dorlin of victory, only for him to be handed a five-second penalty for exceeding track limits. That dropped Dorlin back behind Jackson, as Hamilton completed the podium.

STEFAN MACKLEY

The ex-Gott Healey had been dormant for 46 years but was in flying form in GTSCC at Thruxton



Holme run in GTSCC for Gott's Healey

THRUXTON HISTORIC BARC 15-16 AUGUST

Sensational cars and superb driving characterised the postponed Thruxton Historic event and, joy of joys, spectators and car club members were welcomed back to the banks if not the paddock. Mark Holme's surprise GT & Sports Car Cup victory in the famous ex-John Gott Austin-Healey 3000, in which Jeremy Welch middle-stinted, was but one highlight of a weekend that featured British Touring Car star Rory Butcher and past master Dave Coyne among the winners.

Holme bought SMO 746 – dormant for 46 years following Gott's death – recently, but had not driven it until qualifying. Gearbox failure then prompted an overnight dash to Newmarket to remove his other race Healey's 'box. Keith Ahlers (Morgan +4 SLR), Holme and Crispin Harris (Healey) made the early running in the 90-minute two-stop feature, before James Hanson hustled Paul Pochciol's Jaguar E-type from last to the lead. Poleman Ben Adams, meanwhile, was conserving fuel in his little Lola Mk1, its tanks brimmed with 39 litres at the start.

Butcher (in William Paul's E-type) went ahead handsomely after the first round of

pitstops, effectively presenting his car owner the lead when Adams made his second pit call. But there was a sting in the race's tail. Adams had hounded down Billy Bellinger (in Ahlers's Morgan) and repassed Paul on lap 49, with 11 minutes remaining. Two laps later the Jag was parked having drunk its 90 litres, and Adams appeared to be cruising for gold, almost a minute clear of Holme but, with three minutes until the chequer, the black Lola's engine ran dry. "We didn't even warm the engine up to save fuel, but it was fantastic fun," he said.

Holme thus led the final three laps for a remarkable success, 49 seconds clear of Ahlers. Third over the line was perennial double agent Welch, in Doug Muirhead's Healey, having robbed Nick Sleep/Joel Wykeham's GT4 class-winning Shelby Mustang GT350 at the chicane. But a three-second penalty for Muirhead's speeding in the pits reversed their order, with Harris/James Wilmoth a fine fifth, 2.473s adrift. Malcolm Paul/Rick Bourne (TVR Grantura) aced GT2 from Laurence and Tim Jacobsen's MGB.

Local man Adams had outrun the Lister-Jaguar Knobbles of Gary Pearson – racing at Thruxton for the first time in 20 years – and Jon Minshaw to win Saturday's one-hour RAC Woodcote/Stirling Moss Trophy 1950s sportscar showcase. Bellinger was in the hunt in



BTCC ace Butcher starred in E-type, winning Pre-'63 race with Minshaw



Dutton leads Brown in close
Jack Sears tin-tops battle



Wood won Historic Touring Car
opener before retiring in race two



Pre-War cars made a rare outing at
Thrupton, as Frazer Nash (left) won

THRUXTON HISTORIC WEEKEND WINNERS

GT & SPORTS CAR CUP

Mark Holme/Jeremy Welch (Austin-Healey 3000)

STIRLING MOSS TROPHY

Ben Adams (Lola Mk1)

RAC WOODCOTE TROPHY

Martin Stretton/Richard Wilson (Maserati 250S)

HRDC JACK SEARS TROPHY

Dave Coyne (Ford Mustang)

PRE-'63 GT

Jon Minshaw/Rory Butcher (Jaguar E-type)

HISTORIC TOURING CAR CHALLENGE, TONY DRON TROPHY, '60s CHALLENGE WITH U2TC

Race 1 Ric Wood (Nissan Skyline R32)

Race 2 Gregor Fiskén/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Rover SD1)

PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS

Mike Grant Peterkin/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash Super Sports)

HRDC ALLSTARS PRE-'66 SPORTS GT & TOURING

David Smithies (AC Cobra Daytona Coupe)

HRDC CLASSIC ALFA CHALLENGE

Richard Merrell (Giulia GT Junior)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Ahlers's Lola Mk1 Prototype until half-distance when a half-shaft let go at Allard.

In the concurrent Pre-'56 set, Martin Stretton/Richard Wilson (Maserati 250S) narrowly beat Steve Boulton Brooks, who piloted his Jaguar D-type through from the back, and Gordie Mutch/John Clark (Cooper T39 Bobtail) after the Mike Grant Peterkin/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards Cooper-Jaguar T38 expired. When his tow vehicle's ignition key snapped, preparer David Brazell drove the Maserati back to Northampton!

The Historic Racing Drivers Club Jack Sears Trophy encounter was fantastic. After a gearbox change, Coyne started Adrian Miles's immaculate Mustang – built by NASCAR legends the Wood Brothers to replicate their period racer – from sixth, but dived inside John Spiers's Lotus Cortina (planted on pole by Tiff Needell) to lead at Allard on lap two. A broken oil pump drive ended Spiers's challenge, but two other Cortinas joined the fight at the front before pit setbacks. Neil Brown traded the lead with Coyne, but fudged refastening his harness, while Fortec boss Richard Dutton knocked his ignition master switch off. The old pals later wagged their steeds' tails to lurid angles in their battle for second.

Four Jaguar E-types – two hooded roadsters and two fixed-head coupes – made the running in Saturday's Pre-'63 GT opener. James Cottingham's prowess

in the ex-Merle Brennan US racer, newly restored by DK Engineering, was awesome to behold as he deftly drifted it through Allard, pulling ever further clear of Jon Minshaw, Olly Bryant and Hanson.

Hanson grabbed second, but both pacemakers hit trouble with their second drivers installed. Harvey Stanley retired Cottingham's E-type when its distributor's internals disintegrated, and Paul Pochciol his car when a brake seal popped. Butcher thus went ahead in Minshaw's machine and won by 48s from Bryant, whose engine occasionally went off-song. Blakeney-Edwards was third in Gregor Fiskén's E.

A lap down, newcomer Muirhead led the 'Healey class' – an impressive first race without a novice cross – before relaying Welch. Karsten Le Blanc in DD300, started by fellow Dutchman Christiaan van Lanschot, made up almost a minute to shadow Harris/Wilmoth, but they were gifted fourth when their rivals were docked 23s for a short stop.

When the chasing Ford Sierra RS500s of Sean Brown (wiring loom) and David Tomlin (fuel fire, see News) fell and rain intensified, Ric Wood was grateful for his Nissan Skyline's four-wheel drive in Saturday's Historic Touring Car Challenge leg. After a caution, the contrasting Rover V8s of Fiskén/Blakeney-Edwards (Gp2) and Ken and Tim Clarke (GpA) put up one hell of a

fight in his wake, power telling. Wood broke a wheel against a kerb while well ahead in Sunday's sequel, leaving PBE and Ken Clarke wrestling with gearbox issues out front.

Thrupton's first Pre-War race in decades rewarded the versatile Blakeney-Edwards in his Frazer Nash 'Spam'. He converted Grant Peterkin's start to victory over early leader Rudiger Friedrichs's Alvis Firefly. "It's scary out the back, it's got two thirds of a turn of steering lock and my arms are knackered from holding on," smiled Blakeney-Edwards.

Michael 'Rubinho' Birch (Talbot AV105) just staved off former World Endurance Championship racer Richard Bradley (Aston Martin Ulster) for third. Watched by Peter Morley (86), winner here in the Bentley-Napier in 1974, son Clive and grandsons Stuart (sharing with Richard Hudson) and James upheld family honour by heading the hallowed marque's finishers.

David Smithies blasted his AC Cobra Daytona Coupe evocation clear of Coyne's Mustang in HRDC Allstars, but driver of the race was James Colburn, who finished third from last on the grid after his Lenham's alternator packed up in practice. Richard Merrell won the Alfa Challenge, while Chris Snowdon – who arrived from Silverstone and qualified Richard Melvin's Napolina GTV6 out of session – reached second before its head gasket failed.

MARCUS PYE

Griffin thunders to win before rain arrives

SNETTERTON
CSCC
15-16 AUGUST

Rain stopped play at Snetterton for the second day of the Classic Sports Car Club's second meeting of the year, but there was plenty to enjoy before thunderous showers spoiled everyone's fun.

The only race to be held on Sunday was the combined Modern Classics/Turbo Tin Tops showdown, which featured a 40-car grid and a masterful win for Dave Griffin's Diet Coke-liveried BMW M3 E36. Griffin made short work of the Porsche 911 RSR of Tony and Aston Blake, which had pipped him for pole. He established an advantage over a tight leading group of four by the end of lap one, never looking back and winning the shortened race by over 23 seconds.

This could have been more, as the first rainstorm struck and slowed everyone down for the last couple of laps. The red flags then came out with five minutes to go, as the rain sent an array of cars skittering off the circuit at Oggies.

Karl Cattliff challenged the Blakes' Porsche early on in his BMW but lost ground in the pits and finished third. Jake and Andre Severs's VW Beetle ran as high as fourth, but dropped behind a string of Porsches and BMWs, finishing just behind leading Turbo Tin Top contender Charlie Newton-Darby (BMW Mini) in 11th.

Tin Tops looked to be a shootout between former British Touring Car driver Mike Bushell in a Ford Fiesta and regular



The Modern Classics contest, won by Griffin's BMW, was the only race to run on Sunday

STYLES

CSCC winner Danny Cassar in his Honda Integra. The two younger drivers, plus their respective team-mates Richard Wheeler and Nigel Ainge, were first and third and had not been prepared for an attack from Andrew Windmill's Honda Civic.

Bushell and Cassar had been fastest in qualifying, but Windmill led after the first corner, leaving Ainge in fourth and Wheeler third. Solo driver Windmill had a lead of around a minute when he came into the pits, gambling on a tactical late stop, which almost paid off. He remained in the top three after pitting and it was only a charging Cassar, almost two seconds per lap faster than Windmill, who could stop him. When Bushell got in the Fiesta he was also quicker than Windmill and came

within three seconds of the Civic, but had to settle for third.

Andy Southcott was a familiar dominant force in Special Saloons & Modsports, although Wayne Crabtree's Ford RS200 almost got the better of Southcott's spaceframe MG. The fast Ford led from the first lap at Riches, but Southcott caught up in the latter part of the race and a last-lap struggle ensued, in which the MG prevailed.

Although he had to start from 11th in race two, Southcott wasted no time in stamping his authority over the rest, working his way to the front of the pack by the end of the first tour.

Mark Chilton also gave a masterclass in dominance in the Future Classics race,



This is the new lake, sorry, Wilson hairpin, at Snetterton

WOODROW

**SNETTERTON
WEEKEND WINNERS**

MODERN CLASSICS AND TURBO TIN TOPS

Dave Griffin (BMW M3 E36)

TIN TOPS

Nigel Ainge/Danny Cassar (Honda Integra Type R)

SPECIAL SALOONS AND MODSPORTS

Races 1 & 2 Andy Southcott
(MG Midget Spaceframe)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Mark Chilton (Nissan Skyline GT-R R32)

CLASSIC K

Allen Tice/Chris Conoley (Marcos 1800GT, below)

SWINGING SIXTIES

Mark Campbell (Triumph TR5)



STYLES

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

putting his Nissan Skyline's recurring gremlins behind him to win by over a minute from the Porsche 911 of the Blakes. The Porsche crew were promoted from third when fellow 911 driver Tim Bates was penalised for an incorrectly timed pitstop. This dropped him to fourth, behind Geoff Beale in a Talbot Sunbeam Lotus.

Miles Masarati won another Porsche duel with James Neal and Neil Harvey to finish fifth, with the second Sunbeam of Martyn and Matthew Ellis sneaking in between in sixth. The Ellis machine did not get a good start from fourth on the grid but made its way back up the order.

Classic K came down to a battle between the Marcos of Allen Tice and Chris Conoley and Mel Taylor's Lotus Elan. Taylor led for a lot of the race but was happy with second as he had spun "about 10 times". Wheeler and Bushell were third in Wheeler's Lotus Cortina, and Nigel Adams and Lyndon Griffin were fourth in their Elan, after starting 23rd and making their way to sixth in the opening two laps.

Swinging Sixties was not quite its usual sprightly self, with the race interrupted by a lengthy safety-car period due to a wheel coming off erstwhile leader Jamie Keevill's Lotus Elan. Mark Campbell drove a measured and tactical race to win in his smart Triumph TR5.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER



STYLES

A RARE SIGHT A staple of 1980s driveways, a roadgoing Montego is a rare sight these days, let alone one in race trim. Tony Walsh races his Montego, repanelled as an MG from a sound Austin body, in Future Classics. Safety modifications aside, it's almost standard, apart from having its 1600cc engine replaced with a beefier 2000cc model. It still only gives out around 115bhp and Walsh isn't expecting it to win. That is until he gets a planned new motor with a considerable horsepower hike.



STYLES

A PUG WITH BITE Another popular choice was the Peugeot 309, although this model is not your parents' car. Built to Thundersaloon regulations in the late 1980s, this special suffered damage in the early 1990s and spent 20 years languishing in a garage before being put back together in 2011 and raced by Danny Morris and Ricky Parker-Morris. It gives away some manoeuvrability due to its forward engine placement, but some ingenious aero devices give it some compensatory grip.



STYLES

AND A BUG IN FLIGHT Father-and-son duo Andre and Jake Severs are selling their VW Beetle, a winner in Modern Classics at Thruxton. It was one of 50 built for the European New Beetle Cup series in the early 2000s: number 26 to be precise. It looks like a normal 'new' Beetle but, when parked alongside its road-based counterpart, you can see it's much wider. It retains a front-wheel-drive system and, coupled with its short wheelbase, it's highly effective in wet conditions.



Clutton (second from right) was in the thick of the Radical action, taking two victories

Clutton on the button in Radical Challenge races

SILVERSTONE
MSVR
15-16 AUGUST

Marcus Clutton was the man to beat as the Radical Challenge took to the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit last weekend.

From lights-out it was Clutton and Jerome de Sadeleer making an early escape in race one, with Jason Rishover a strong third as the rest were left to fight for fourth. Clutton took his pitstop a lap after most, and rejoined with only metres to spare in front of de Sadeleer. As the leading pair retained their race-long places, Rishover lost his hold on third to Mark Richards at Brooklands with a couple of laps to go, while Shane Stoney and Jac Constable had tangled at Club in the first half of the race.

De Sadeleer got the better of Clutton as they started the sprint race, but Clutton went around the outside at Aintree on the

opening lap to lead, only for de Sadeleer to snatch it back into Brooklands. A lap later Clutton was back in front at the same spot and this time held it to the flag.

Richards was third until a collision with Constable at Club on lap four of 10 cost him dearly. While Constable continued in third, Rishover was a clear fourth and Rod Goodman just kept Spencer Bourne at bay for fifth.

There was a familiar feel to the early laps of the final race, as de Sadeleer led Clutton and Rishover. Clutton gradually closed in to lead from Brooklands on lap nine of 21, while Stoney had taken third from Rishover four laps earlier.

Stoney emerged as the new leader after the stops, taking his maiden Radical Challenge victory over Clutton and de Sadeleer.

One of the highlights of the GT Cup races was the duel between the Ferrari

488s of Lucky Khera and John Dhillon.

Grahame Tilley's early lead in race one disappeared when his Nissan GT-R GT3 had a gearbox failure and left John Seale's Lamborghini in the clear. But gradually Seale's advantage was eroded and Khera had the lead from lap 10 of 12, with Dhillon soon following. But Khera was given a track-limits penalty, handing the win to Dhillon, with Seale still third from Jensen Lunn's Marcos Mantis and the Porsche 997 of Ben Clayden.

Dhillon led the second race at the start, but Khera was in charge from Aintree on lap three and pitted just ahead of Dhillon, with Seale in third. Marcus Clutton was in for Seale, while Ross Wylie and Aaron Scott had taken over from Khera and Dhillon respectively, and it was Clutton comfortably clear at the flag. Clayden paired up with Sam Randon to take fourth, with the McLarens of Jan Klingelberg/Warren Hughes and Steve Ruston/John Whitehouse completing the top six.

Seale had the second sprint sewn up early on, after outrunning Khera onto the Wellington Straight on lap two. With Dhillon running off at Maggotts, Khera was a clear second, while Clayden completed the podium after ousting Warren Gilbert's Mantis with three laps remaining.

Khera finally got his win in the last race, supposedly another endurance contest, but red-flagged in pouring rain and abandoned after five laps. Dhillon was declared second, from Clayden and Klingelberg.

There had been little between Scott



Khera finally took a win in rain-shortened GT Cup finale

ALL PICS: READ

SILVERSTONE WEEKEND WINNERS

RADICAL CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Marcus Clutton

Race 3 Shane Stoney

GT CUP

Race 1 John Dhillon (Ferrari 488 Challenge)

Race 2 John Seale/Marcus Clutton
(Lamborghini Huracan GT3)

Race 3 Seale

Race 4 Lucky Khera (Ferrari 488 Challenge)

FOCUS CUP

Race 1 Scott Parkin

Race 2 Andy Godfrey

MONOPOSTO

Races 1 & 2 Tony Bishop (Dallara F304, below)

7 RACE SERIES

Race 1 John Byrne

Race 2 Phil Jenkins

SPORTS 2000

Michael Gibbins (MCR S2000)

MSVT SUPER CUP

Steve Gales (SEAT Leon Cup)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Parkin and Andy Godfrey for the entire Focus Cup first outing, but when it mattered Parkin was ahead by 0.19 seconds at the flag. Richard Avis completed the podium after shaking off Gary Mitchell.

It was wet and got wetter for race two, with Parkin taking Godfrey's early lead only to aquaplane into retirement at Copse on the third lap. Godfrey held on for his third win of the year, while Simon Walton and Avis survived for podium finishes after PJ Gardner slid off at Village on the last tour.

It was Dallaras to the fore in Monoposto, with a double win for Tony Bishop's F304 machine. Chris Davison (F301) was a clear second in a wet race one, with Neil Harrison (F302) heading a three-car train for third. Davison was second again in race two, from Dan Gore's Jedi.

John Byrne left his 7 Race Series rivals to dispute second after making an early break. Phil Jenkins finally claimed second on the last lap from Jon Mitchell and David Henderson. Jenkins went one better in race two, after Alex Koeberle and Byrne had led earlier on. Byrne had to settle for second, from Koeberle and Mitchell.

PETER SCHERER

HOW CLUTTON HAS WORKED TO BECOME MR VERSATILE

As well as his Radical success, Clutton was also a GT Cup winner



Marcus Clutton may not be a household name, but in motorsport circles he's known as one of the most versatile drivers around.

After starting in karts, he made his car race debut aged 16. "At the time it was fashionable for teenagers to do T Cars, but we couldn't afford that and I did two Porsche Club races with ABG, while still at school," Clutton explains. "I debuted at Snetterton and did a couple rounds, but was fast or crashed and almost bankrupted my dad."

He had a one-off race in Britcar in a Marcos Mantis in 2006, before turning his hand to Formula Renault. "I did the BARC Championship in the class for older cars – I didn't win but got some podiums with a Mygale, but money was always an issue," Clutton adds.

He made his British GT debut in 2009, paired with Phil Keen in an ABG-run KTM, and the following year met Peter Belshaw, who had a great influence on his career.

"I was working for ABG when I met Peter, and in 2010 I did the foggy European Fun Cup race at Donington with him, then we were GT4 champions with the KTM in British GT [in 2011]," he says.

It didn't prove to be a career launchpad though, and for the next two years he engineered for United Autosports on the Mark Patterson/Matt Bell Audi.



Clutton's racing schedule is now busier than ever

Clutton started to have a regular drive again in the Fun Cup in 2014, and raced for Chevron in the GT Cup and European GT4. "I had learned a lot working for the teams, setting cars up, driving the truck too, but I always wanted to be the driver," he says.

When Chevron decided to stop its racing programme in 2016 it came as another blow to his hopes: "After that I had nothing, but some one-off drives came along and I started coaching Esmee Hawkey. Of course I wanted to be a pro driver and be paid to race, but I had to make a living too."

More and more opportunities have since materialised, such as racing with John Seale in his Lamborghini and, after Belshaw stopped his Fun Cup campaigns, Clutton has moved to Andy Bicknell's DespatchBay team.

"I can do the whole package now – I run Track Focused's Radical SR1 Cup car, as well as racing regularly with John, Andy and the Valour Radical, plus setting up cars and the coaching of course," Clutton says. "Two weeks ago it was British GT with John in the Lamborghini at Donington, last week Snetterton and the Fun Cup with Andy, and then I drove the JMH truck to Silverstone on Thursday."

On his arrival at Silverstone he helped set up and worked with Seale for most of the day, but managed to fit in two sessions in the Valour Radical SR3.

It was an impressive weekend for Clutton as he contested three Radical races, with two wins and a second, three poles and two fastest laps, and also won one GT Cup race with fastest lap.

And then, when racing was finished, all he had to do was drive the truck home again and get to bed at around 1am, thinking about this weekend's Fun Cup race at Thruxton.

PETER SCHERER

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Crowhurst won the first BMW Car Club race of the season at Brands Hatch



BMW series shines in the gloom

BRANDS HATCH
750MC
15 AUGUST

The belated opening rounds of this year's BMW Car Club Racing Championship produced a 34-car grid and some of the highlights from a 12-race programme at Brands Hatch on a day when heatwave conditions gave way to rain and mist.

Race one was halted on the first lap when Wayne Lewis's M3, slow through Paddock Hill Bend, was heavily rear-ended at Hailwood Hill. Part two was headed from lap five of 14 by Graham Crowhurst, his M2-class E46 well suited to the slippery conditions. Another M2 car in Paul Cook's hands was second, with M1 class leader Garrie Whittaker third.

Much happier on a drying track later in the day, Whittaker dominated race two from the second lap, though his winning margin was small after a single lap under green flags following a lengthy caution period. This was caused by Kevin Denwood putting his Compact on its side at Paddock. Already out were Crowhurst, off at McLaren, and Lee Piercey (fourth in the opener) in the Paddock gravel. Cook finished second to win his class in front of a trio of potentially quicker cars headed by Mike Eustace.

Clio 182 table-toppers Ryan Polley and Scott Edgar took a win and a second place apiece on Saturday. Polley's race one victory drive was hampered by an unhelpful backmarker, allowing Edgar to squeeze past, but Polley fought back and an error by Edgar then dropped him briefly to third. Race two was a different story, Edgar using all the track plus a bit more at Graham Hill Bend to snatch the lead. Polley dropped well back, but a series of fastest laps brought him up to second and almost within reach of the leader by the end.

Dan Thackeray's Honda Civic qualified 1.4 seconds faster than anyone else in the Type-R Trophy and won the first race by more than 20s. Despite starting race two from eighth, he was in the lead in less than four laps and 19s clear of a squabble over second place at the flag.

Locost racer Craig Land had plenty to celebrate after his weekend's efforts. Second behind Murray Shepherd in a safety-car-interrupted opening race, he grabbed the lead on the final corner in race two and beat Daniel Garrett and Andrew Tait in a blanket finish.

Both Classic Stock Hatch races were spoiled by caution periods, but Jeff Humphries was not to be denied a pair of victories in his Peugeot 205 GTi.

WEEKEND WINNERS

BMW CAR CLUB

Race 1 Graham Crowhurst (E46 M3)
Race 2 Garrie Whittaker (E36)

CLIO 182s

Race 1 Ryan Polley
Race 2 Scott Edgar

TYPE-R TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Dan Thackeray (below)

LOCOST

Race 1 Murray Shepherd
Race 2 Craig Land

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Jeff Humphries (Peugeot 205 GTi)

FORMULA VEE

Races 1 & 2 James Harridge (Maverick)



For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

He beat Pip Hammond (Vauxhall Nova GTE) in both races, with Stewart Place (Peugeot 205) and Ryan Morgan (Ford Fiesta) sharing third-position honours.

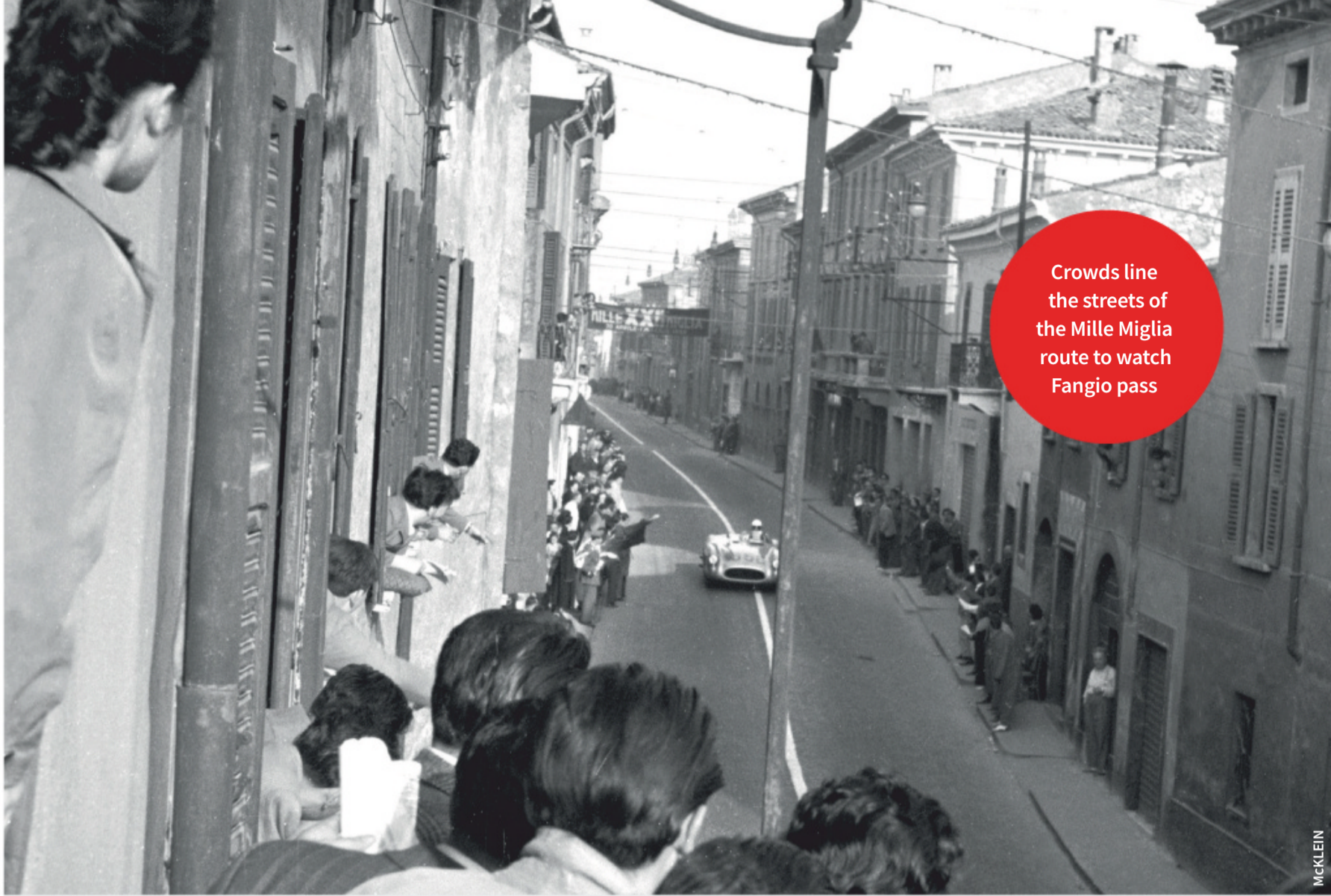
Already the combination to beat in Formula Vee this year, James Harridge and the Maverick car raised their winning total to four out of four at Brands. Easily fastest in wet qualifying, Harridge could afford a slow start in race one and, after a safety-car intervention, was in front and pulling away by lap four of 12.

Saturday's finale in the driest conditions of the day ended in shambolic fashion after two caution periods and two red flags but, sure enough, Harridge was firmly in control when it mattered. Daniel Hands (GAC) in race one and Ian Buxton (GAC) in race two were his nearest rivals.

BRIAN PHILLIPS



Edgar leads fellow Clio 182 winner Polley through Surtees



Crowds line the streets of the Mille Miglia route to watch Fangio pass

A TALE OF WAR AND RACING



BOOK REVIEW
FASTER THAN
THE BULLET
 RRP £11.99

It's probably fair to say that never before in the field of literature has one of the main protagonists of a novel been inspired to make a crucial journey by reading a brief report of an Argentinian Turismo Carretera race in a 1954 copy of *Autosport*, left in the waiting room of a Welsh doctor's surgery. So for that reason alone, Mike Breslin's latest thriller, *Faster than the Bullet*, was always going to get a thumbs-up from us. But the fact that we're already gripped by the time this pivotal moment occurs on page 258 indicates the success of Breslin's tale.

London-based Welshman Breslin's byline has already appeared in this title – he was our Pembrey contributor back in the day, after competing in Formula Ford 1600 in the 1980s. *Faster than the Bullet* is his third novel, six years after his intriguing *Pieces of Silver*, which told the story of Englishman Westbury Holt (a kind of fictional Richard Seaman) as he tried to establish himself as a 1930s grand prix hero in the Nazi-funded Silver Arrows.

The new offering moves slightly further forward in time, and is based around Ingo Six, a reluctant Nazi who joins the German army at the start of the Second World War because he's addicted to speed and wants to spend a few years riding military motorcycles around at maximum velocity. No one expects the war to last beyond a few months, and Six fully intends to serve his time without harming another human being. And this is one of the appealing tenets of this book. History, they say, is written by the winners, and we're used to Germans being portrayed as cold-blooded, order-obeying automatons. But, much as in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*, Breslin's novel includes characters

who have grave reservations about the direction in which they were heading.

Six's friendship with an army comrade nicknamed Pop, an older man who has proved himself as a competent if not particularly talented racer of motorcycles and cars in the 1930s, is multi-dimensional. Pop gives the benefit of his experience in calming down Six's exuberant style, and stands up for Six when he is in trouble with their commander, the odious and psychotic Feldwebel Kroh, for his reluctance to kill and for his taboo romance with Lidka Wadalowska, a woman he meets in occupied Warsaw.

The novel flits between Ingo's and Lidka's war experiences and a decade later, when Ingo is leading a solitary existence in the remote Argentinian countryside with a new identity as Enrique Hohberg. There is a parallel narrative of revenge attacks on Nazis carried out by the intriguing Sarah Malka, and you wonder whether she will come after him, but he also seems to be hiding from his own wartime past, which has clearly scarred him. Here, Breslin provides harrowing detail of the German attack on the Russian front and the butchery of the appalling Nazi reprisals to the Warsaw Uprising.

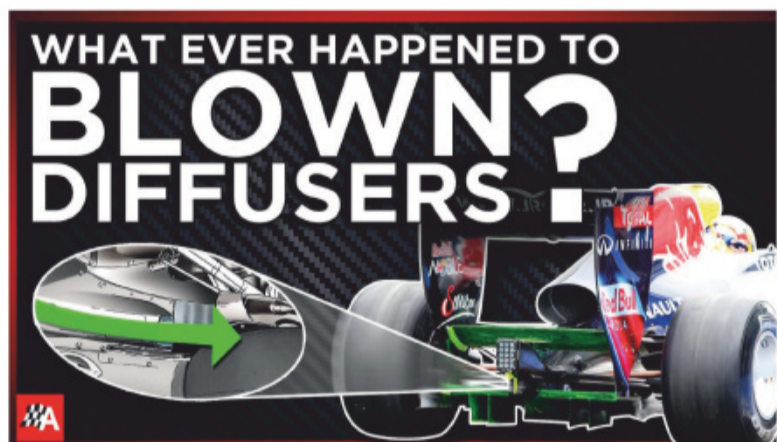
'Hohberg' befriends local garage owner and ex-racer Carlo Rossi, who becomes amazed at the driving talent of this enigmatic loner. Thanks to Rossi's support, Hohberg becomes the new 'Argentinian' star and, with finance from a pompous local businessman, plans are laid for him to compete in the 1954 Mille Miglia in the patriotic new Varela Condor sports car, and take on the Ferraris and Maseratis.

But that's only one dimension of this novel. It may have a racing context, and the account of the progress in the Mille Miglia is compelling, but so too is the story of wartime Warsaw lives. Breslin has come up with a winner – a thriller with more surprise twists than the Futa and Raticosa passes.

MARCUS SIMMONS



youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



After the infamous double diffuser was banned, there came a rise of the blown diffuser. While they've had a lasting impact on Formula 1 development, we no longer see them on today's cars... so what happened to them? Autosport explains. **Go to bit.ly/blownDiff**



autosport.com/podcast



The 2020 Spanish Grand Prix will hardly go down as a Formula 1 classic, but there were still plenty of key storylines throughout. A wealth of team radio traffic and a mix of midfield strategies plus Lewis Hamilton's victory are dissected by the Autosport GP team.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Indianapolis 500

IndyCar
Round 5
Indianapolis, USA
23 August
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1800

Formula Regional European

Round 2/8
Paul Ricard, France
22-23 August
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1000, 1710, Sun 1010

TCR Europe Series

Round 1/6
Paul Ricard, France
22-23 August
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 0940, Sun 1105

MotoGP

Round 5/14
Red Bull Ring, Austria
23 August
TV Live BT Sport 2, Sun 1230

Euroformula Open

Round 2/8
Paul Ricard, France
22-23 August

International GT Open

Round 2/6
Paul Ricard, France
22-23 August

Super GT

Round 2/8
Suzuka, Japan
23 August

IMSA Sportscar

Round 5/11
Virginia, USA
23 August

DTM

Round 3/9
Lausitzring, Germany
22-23 August
TV Live BT Sport 1, Sat 1215, BT Sport ESPN, Sun 1215

NASCAR Cup

Round 24-25/36
Dover, USA
22-23 August
TV Live Premier Sports 2, Sat 2030, Premier Sports 1, Sun 2030

Australian Supercars

Round 6/13
Hidden Valley, Australia
22-23 August
TV Live BT Sport 3, Sat 0515, Sun 0330, 0545

World Rallycross

Round 1/7
Holjes, Sweden
22-23 August
TV Live Free Sports, Sunday 1200, BT Sport 3, Sun 1300,

UK/CLUB RACING

Cadwell Park MSVR

22 August
Heritage Formula Ford, Elise Trophy, Track Attack

Silverstone Nat BDC*

22 August
Morgan Challenge, Jack Fairman and Innes Ireland Cup, FISCAR, Pre-War Challenge, TVR Challenge

Oulton Park BARC

22-23 August
BTCC, British F4, Carrera Cup, Mini Challenge, GT5 Challenge, GT4 SuperCup

Donington Park BARC

22-23 August

Trucks, Legends, Mazda MX-5s, Citroen C1s, CNC

Brands Hatch MSVR

22-23 August
Historic F1, Historic Sports Cars, HGPCA, Pre-'66 Touring Cars, Pre-'66 Minis, Equipe Classic, Gentlemen Drivers

Thruxton BRSCC

22-23 August
Caterham Academy, Roadsport, 270R, 310R, Sevens, Compact Cup, Civic Cup, Fun Cup

Silverstone Int 750MC*

22-23 August
750 Formula, F1000, Club Enduro, Hot Hatch, Ma7da, MR2s, Roadsports, Sport Specials, Sports 1000, Bikesports, MX-5s

Mallory Park VSCC

23 August
Vintage and Pre-'61 Racing Cars, Pre-War Sports Cars, Frazer Nash Challenge, Austin 7s, MGs, Allcomers, Formula Juniors

Mondello Park CCC*

22-23 August

*Behind closed doors



INDIANAPOLIS 500

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motorsport
IMAGES



FROM THE ARCHIVE

The JW Automotive Engineering mechanics go to work on the team's 'slower' Porsche 917K at the 1971 Le Mans 24 Hours. The two Gulf and single

Martini long-tailed versions qualified 1-2-3, but all hit trouble, leaving the race to be fought out by their short-tailed brethren. The #19 car of 1970 winner Richard Attwood and Herbert Muller

lost crucial time with gearbox trouble during the night, allowing the Martini 917K of Gijs van Lennep and Helmut Marko to take victory at a record speed. Attwood/Muller finished second.

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A British Touring Car great finally gets his crown

21 August 1997

Autosport interviewed newly crowned British Touring Car champion Alain Menu this week in 1997. The Swiss racer had been a top contender for years, and the Williams-built Renault Laguna allowed him to dominate. He clinched the title at Snetterton, with three events still to go.

Menu had finished second in the standings for the three seasons prior to 1997 and, in the interview with Marcus Simmons (then as now our BTCC correspondent!), railed against suggestions that he had previously lacked consistency.

"In 1994, 1995 and 1996 I could not win the title – the best I could hope for was second place," he said. "In 1994 there was Gabriele Tarquini and the Alfa Romeo, then 1995 was the first year with Williams, we had reliability problems and we were not consistently quick. And, last year, there was Frank Biela and the [four-wheel-drive] Audi."

Menu confirmed that the team knew the Laguna was special during pre-season testing, with the Sodemo-developed engine being a key area of improvement. He also had some blunt things to say about some of his rivals. Honda "had a car that was not far off ours, but they kept having driver mistakes and a lot of reliability problems", Volvo was described as "always not quite there", while Vauxhall's John Cleland came in for some of the most stinging criticism.

"You have to have fun in life, but people like Cleland – too many jokes are detrimental to the championship. He makes it look not serious enough, and I'm afraid it's a very serious business," added Menu.

Volvo's Rickard Rydell would take the 1998 crown, with Menu fourth. But Menu would secure his second title with the Ford Mondeo in 2000, the final year of Super Touring in the UK.

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IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Britain's next Mercedes F1 star?

WE SPEAK TO
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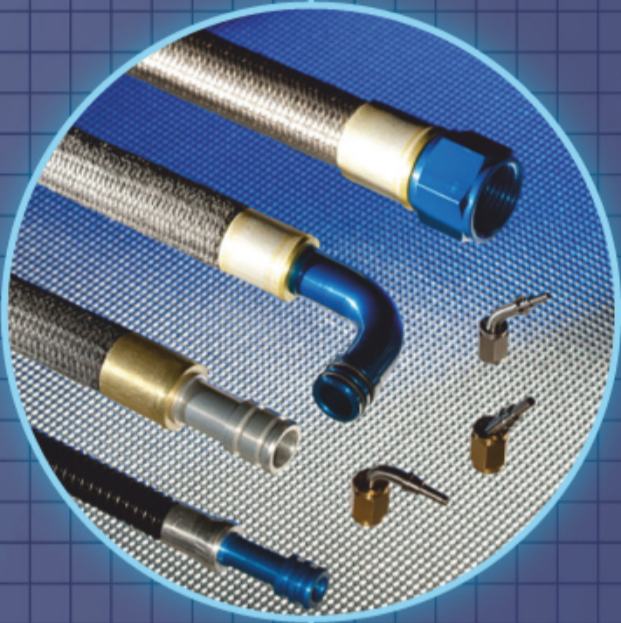
2020 PREVIEW

*Third time
lucky for
Alonso?*

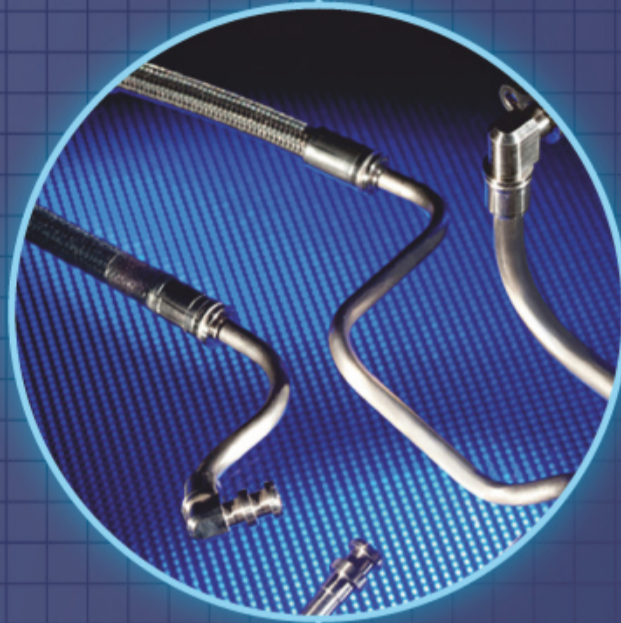


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ALONSO'S NEXT SHOT, BUT HE'S NOT THE ONLY STORY

Can Fernando Alonso win the Indianapolis 500? It's the question many have asked before each of the double world champion's outings in America's greatest race.

As David Malsher-Lopez shows in our piece on page 4, Alonso and his Arrow McLaren SP team have learned a lot from the embarrassing failure to qualify in 2019. Despite his practice crash and poor qualifying position, Alonso knows he still has a chance to join Graham Hill as a winner of the Monaco Grand Prix, Le Mans 24 Hours and Indy 500.

Picking out a favourite is incredibly difficult, particularly as the Honda-powered teams appeared to have an advantage in qualifying they are not expecting to enjoy come the race. Scott Dixon is the runaway points leader and has qualified on the front row, while 2017 winner Takuma Sato has looked good over longer runs. The same could

be said for the Chevrolet-powered drivers of Penske, the team that has won the previous two editions. Like Alonso, they are starting a long way down but, also like Alonso, the cars of the US's most famous squad can never be counted out.

It is a sign of the troubled times that, for the first time, the Indy 500 will take place behind closed doors, but at least we have a race to enjoy from afar. And Autosport will be there to bring you all the news and drama. Will the 104th running of the high-speed oval extravaganza rival the races we've picked out in our Indy 500 top 10 (p28)?



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COVER IMAGE

Barry Cantrell/Motorsport Images

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He's already crashed, but the Spaniard feels he has a chance

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The best races from 103 editions

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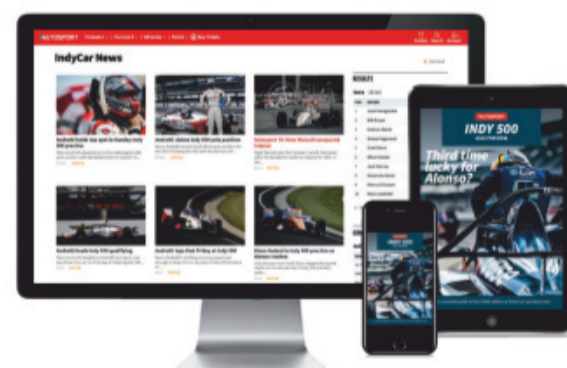
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THE GRID

Who did what in qualifying

The 33 drivers and their speeds, along with the current championship table

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ALONSO'S QUEST FOR THE TRIPLE CROWN... ...TAKE THREE

After a promising debut in 2017, then the disaster of last year, could this be the two-time F1 world champion's time to shine?

BY DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES





It was inevitable that someone this month would eventually ask McLaren CEO Zak Brown what lessons had been learned from the team's disastrous venture to Indianapolis in 2019, that resulted in Fernando Alonso's failure to qualify. He went into quite a long explanation, but he didn't need to: he had already nailed the answer in one sentence: "I think the biggest lesson we've learned is, 'Don't

do what we did last year.'"

And they haven't. The partnership with Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports to form Arrow McLaren SP made so much sense and it's already bearing fruit. Despite hiring two hugely inexperienced IndyCar drivers – albeit, the last two Indy Lights champions – the team has already earned a pole and runner-up finish with Patricio 'Pato' O'Ward at Road America, and Oliver Askew delivered a podium ►



Slick Indy stops are essential, and team claims to have one of the best fuellers in the business

CANTRELL

finish at Iowa Speedway.

“And just think how good they’d be if we could give them any track time!” said one team member, referring to the complete lack of testing and the heavily condensed race-weekend schedules of double-headers squeezed in over two days – both a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. And that throwaway remark is anything but throwaway: theoretically, this should have been the worst season to have newbies onboard. But the fact that Askew and O’Ward have shone is great credit to them, and also signals the strength of the team’s infrastructure.

And now, for the 104th running of the Indianapolis 500, the team has Alonso too. Speaking to the media the day before practice began last Wednesday, the two-time Formula 1 world champion admitted he’d been “very impressed” with both O’Ward and Askew, but was also reassured by the quality of the squad. “I saw a very well-prepared, organised team, very hungry for success, doing something good this month,” he said.

Even over a pixelated video conference call, as Alonso sat in a dimly lit motorhome, with the top half of his face in the shadow of the brim of his Kimoa cap and the bottom half covered by an anti-COVID mask, you could detect a flicker of boredom-meets-irritation when invited to make comparisons with last year.

“I think we need to wait and see where we are on speed, the pace of the car,” he said. “But, yeah, it makes a difference, the team itself, how Arrow McLaren SP is well-prepared, their experience in the series. It’s going to be a big difference compared to last year [when] we were not prepared enough for the challenge.

“I have reasonable confidence that this is going to be a good event for us. But we take it step by step. We know there are a lot of things to do from our side. We need to work very close to the team and learn every day, concentrate a little bit more on the race this year. For qualifying, there are only 33 cars. Maybe that eases the pressure and stress on the first couple of days, and we can concentrate on race day.”

“It’s a big difference compared to last year when we were not prepared enough”

However much the team’s mental burden was eased by knowing there were only as many contenders as grid slots for Indy this year, a different kind of hardship would soon arrive.

The first day went well, with Alonso finishing fifth fastest, and for most of the second day car #66 appeared destined to at least match that feat. This was no surprise to Alonso’s race engineer – the team’s R&D director Craig Hampson, who joined from Dale Coyne Racing last winter.

“As a team, Arrow McLaren SP has worked very, very hard to ensure we have good-performing Speedway cars this year, and we tried to use the extra couple of months we’ve had [due to the pandemic-related postponement of races] to continue working towards that, because this is ultimately the pinnacle of what we’re aiming for this season,” says Hampson.

“I was pretty happy with where we were in terms of speed of the car on Wednesday and Thursday. The handling [in traffic] wasn’t as good as we needed it to be but we were getting it better and better, and we still had two more practices – 2h30m on Sunday and two hours on Carb Day – to continue working on it. And what’s going to be nice is that we’ve got three or four days that we can run some simulations on what we hope will be high-percentage changes that we can try on Carb Day. But the crash was super-unfortunate...”

On his 127th lap on Thursday, Alonso



Regular drivers O’Ward and Askew have impressed despite their inexperience

CANTRELL

LEVITT



This is Alonso's last shot at the Indy 500 until 2023 at the earliest

drove a tad too low at Turn 4, unsettled his car on the concrete strip that lines the grass, slid up hard into the outside wall, and that bounced him back across the track and sent him sliding backward down the pitlane. The team worked overnight on repairs to the car, but it's not been simply a case of replacing all the damaged parts.

"It takes about three months to build an Indy 500 car," Hampson explains of the non-stop fettling, tweaking, massaging and panel-fit adjustments that are applied to a superspeedway car in order not to bleed speed. "Well, the entire right side of that car was wiped out. We lost the underwing, the tyre ramp, the front wing, both sides of

the suspension, gearbox... And that's why we were as quick or quicker than our team-mates on Wednesday and Thursday and we are slower now."

Alonso has qualified 26th, compared with 15th for O'Ward and 21st for Askew. And, while he turned 115 laps in Sunday practice and finished the session in 11th, there is only so much you can read into the speeds in that session. Rivals can be in the tow of 10 cars or one car, on tyres that are one lap old or 25 laps old, or just running a completely different programme.

Still, Hampson is confident there is time to get car #66 nearer the pace of the expected frontrunners, notwithstanding the

fact that engine supplier Chevrolet appears to be at a power disadvantage compared with Honda at Indy this year (see panel, p8).

"I have a list of everything we need to do," he says, "and the team is going to work as hard as they can between now and Carb Day. I think we can get 90% of the stuff back. It's not going to be easy: the shop crew have a lot to do. But they say they'll do everything they can for Fernando, who was very apologetic, shouldered it all, which is what a pro does."

It's fair to say Hampson has become a fan of his driver, which is hardly a surprise, for they share similar levels of intensity when it comes to their jobs. ▶

“When I learned my car was for Fernando, I did say to myself, ‘The pressure’s now on. There are no excuses.’ Everyone knows that he’s incredibly focused, incredibly serious, and when you have someone of his calibre it forces you to pick up your game. Not that you weren’t already working as hard as you could, but you need to deliver everything you can, given the level of expectation he’s functioning at.”

Building a rapport was difficult, however, due to revised logistics as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Yes, it didn’t work out nearly as well as it could have,” adds Hampson. “We did communicate on email quite frequently, and on video chat. But the first time I met him face to face was when he came to the shop last week.

“Of course, the original intention was to have him testing at Indianapolis when we were all supposed to get a test [in April] and doing multiple simulator sessions. All that went by the wayside. So one of our challenges this year is our drivers’ relative lack of experience at the Speedway. Last year Pató tried to qualify but crashed and didn’t make the show, Fernando made the show with another team in 2017 but last year he crashed, that set them back and he didn’t make the show, and Oliver had never driven an IndyCar around the Speedway prior to the first day of practice this week. So between our three entries, we have the grand total of one Indy 500 start! And while he’s an incredibly accomplished driver, Fernando doesn’t have a lot of oval racing experience. He can say, ‘We did this in 2017 [at Andretti Autosport] and it felt



Alonso shone at Indy in 2017 until his engine let him down

LEPAGE

good’, but obviously the aerokit has changed since then and now we’ve got an aeroscreen on top, which has added a lot of weight and affected the aerodynamics.

“But if that lack of experience truly bothered us, we wouldn’t have asked Fernando to drive. In fact, we’re happy to get him because he brings an amazing amount of talent and focus and smarts that add a lot to the programme. Another good thing is to have our full-time guys able to watch how Fernando approaches a race weekend – how he debriefs, how he talks about the car, his demeanour, what he

studies, his intensity.

“In terms of feedback, Fernando is clearly very, very sensitive to things like steering feel, tyres, dirty air. His sensitivity is clearly turned up to 11. And I noticed he has a steel-trap memory! I don’t know if that’s true for multiple things in his life but it definitely exists for things to do with his race car. He remembers *everything*. It may just be a God-given talent but he’s certainly using it to his advantage.”

Team founder and co-owner Sam Schmidt also believes in his temporary star driver, and also in his staff line-up. “I know

WHO DOES ALONSO HAVE TO BEAT?

Assuming that smart strategy, aggressive driving and slick pitstops get Fernando Alonso into the top 10, he’ll still face a daunting task once he gets there. Polesitter Marco Andretti has been fast and confident running in traffic, as has his temporary Andretti Autosport team-mate James Hinchcliffe, whereas Alexander Rossi has appeared less assured, and Colton Herta and Ryan Hunter-Reay have varied.

Chip Ganassi Racing’s Scott Dixon, who will start second, seems to have a car that can run fast alone or trail closely and pass, but the driver who most impressed last Sunday was the

2017 winner Takuma Sato, who will roll off from the outside of the front row. The #30 Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing Dallara-Honda was eerily consistent over its qualifying run, but come the afternoon session, when everyone reverted to race day set-ups, he appeared well able to drag past his rivals (even though Sato finished only 26th on the speed charts).

Rinus VeeKay is the highest-starting Chevrolet-powered driver in the #21 Ed Carpenter Racing car but, although he’s been looking tremendously brave in traffic, the more consistent driver for the team when in race trim has been

Conor Daly. Still, VeeKay should have a fine Rookie of the Year battle with Alex Palou of Dale Coyne Racing with Team Goh, and Oliver Askew.

It’s important not to dismiss Team Penske as having one of its off years, despite its worst average qualifying position since its infamous DNQ in 1995. In previous years, starting at or near the front, The Captain’s cars have generally been set up to run fast in a minimum of dirty air, which has often left the drivers somewhat impotent when handling traffic or running in the wake of a similarly quick rival.

With Josef Newgarden

qualifying 13th and his three Indy-winning team-mates starting outside the top 20, it forces all of them to run more downforce from the word go, which could serve them well if the track gets hot and slick, and should help reduce the lateral slip that is expected to wear out the tyres faster this year due to the weight of the aeroscreen (see page 18).

The same is true for Ed Carpenter, who couldn’t get near VeeKay’s qualifying pace and initially was some way off Daly’s race trim pace. But the only driver/owner in the field is a wily and experienced pilot at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway,



Full-time crew brings level of experience and skill that belies 'third car' billing

“Fernando’s sensitivity is turned up to 11. And he has a steel trap memory!”

the entire time, and have been practising pitstops the entire time. We’ve had our own internal pitstop competitions, and we have one of the best fuellers – if not the best, actually.

“So, this is like no other extra-car crew ever run, because these are people with full-time positions here. Everyone involved with Alonso’s car is totally on par with those on our two full-season cars. Oh, and Craig’s engineering it, which gives you some idea of the level of commitment we have to this entry.”

Alonso’s commitment isn’t wavering either, despite his lowly grid slot, because this will be his last chance to race at Indy until at least 2023, due to his new F1 deal with Renault. And he knows enough about IndyCar racing, about the 500, and about the quality of his engineer and team that 500 miles should be plenty long enough to reach the front.

“I think we have a good race car because the first few days we were on the competitive side,” says Alonso. “The starting place for the race is not changing our hopes for next Sunday. All our focus now is on the race. This place offers a lot of possibilities, even for the people starting at the back, and we will be looking to take that possibility next week.” ■

no one works harder than Fernando in terms of preparation, due diligence, debriefs and so on, and I think he’s impressed with us,” he says. “In the last 10 years we’ve had two poles at Indy, so we’ve had quick cars and chances to win and yet I’d say personnel-wise, car-wise, technology-wise, we have never been better prepared than we are this year.”

With a 500-mile race entailing seven pitstops (depending on length and number of caution periods), slick pitlane work is essential, and this is where a team that adds an extra car for Indy will often falter,

either because the crew isn’t full-time or because they’re drawn from various sources and therefore haven’t previously worked under pressure as a single entity.

That is not going to be an issue for car #66, assures Schmidt: “Before the deal with Fernando was signed, we knew it might happen *and* we also knew that we were aiming for a third full-time car in 2021. Also, before COVID, the plan was to run a third car in at least three or four races this year, including the 500. So last fall we made the commitment to hire a full line-up of crew members who have been on board



Sato starts on the outside of the front row. Power (right) will have a mountain to climb



and so even in one of those rare years when he isn’t starting from the front row he may be able to produce the goods.

Of course, extra downforce means extra drag, which may be more of a hindrance for Chevrolet runners such as

Penske, Arrow McLaren SP and Ed Carpenter Racing if the advantage that Honda showed at 1.5-bar turbo boost on Fast Friday and throughout qualifying is maintained at 1.3-bar in the race. But practice suggests that any edge the HPD units have is

reduced to near negligible at the lower boost level. And it’s been interesting that when average speeds over a 30-lap stint have been gauged throughout practice, the Penske cars – and in particular, Will Power’s – have regularly featured at or near the

top of the table.

Still, however good their handling and however gentle their cars are to the Firestone tyres, Power, Simon Pagenaud and Helio Castroneves have a steep mountain to climb right from the drop of the green flag.

THE TEAMS AND DRIVERS

How does the 33-car field shape up ahead of this weekend's race?
And who'd bet against Scott Dixon...?

BY DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES



PRACTICE	
1	66
2	5
3	7
4	1
5	47
6	60
7	22
8	4
9	20
10	14
11	59
12	41
13	8
14	81
15	10
16	24
17	12
18	45
19	67
20	3

LEVITT

TEAM PENSKE

CHEVROLET



ABBOTT

THE DRIVERS



CANTRELL

#1 JOSEF NEWGARDEN



CANTRELL

#3 HELIO CASTRONEVES



CANTRELL

#12 WILL POWER



CANTRELL

#22 SIMON PAGENAUD

You wouldn't want to be a Penske engineer this week because, even aside from the team's (by Penske standards) disastrous qualifying runs – 13th, 22nd, 25th, 28th – there are also some real conundrums. Yet-to-conquer-Indy Josef Newgarden has seemed unhappiest of the quartet with his race set-up, yet starts

“CASTRONEVES SEEMED QUICK AND CONFIDENT IN RACE TRIM BUT STARTS NEAREST THE BACK”

nearest the front. Helio Castroneves seemed confident and quick in race trim but starts nearest the back. Meanwhile, the two most recent winners of the 500

for The Captain, Will Power and Simon Pagenaud, have said they're very happy with the handling of their cars in race trim – but so many people have said that after poor qualifying runs that they can't all be right, or at least not relative to each other.

Pagenaud seemed to have a pleasingly settled car in dirty air,

and could also tow past other cars – yes, even Honda-powered ones. And this should help keep the dream alive that Chevrolet is more or less evenly matched with Honda at 1.3-bar race boost. Power, meanwhile, was consistently among the fastest in terms of average speed over a 30-lap run in practice, and

being kind to tyres could be crucial... except some drivers believe the latest track-surface treatment means the extra weight of the aeroscreen is not too detrimental to the rubber.

On Sunday, there'll be another dilemma, for race strategists. Say all four Penskes are running around

the same place they started and there's an early caution, around lap 15. Do all three of the lowly starters get called to the pits in order to go off-strategy, or do you cover more bases and pit one or two of them?

Watching how this works out for The Captain's armada will be fascinating.

#3 HELIO CASTRONEVES

Following Acura's and Team Penske's announcement that their partnership will end after the final round of the IMSA SportsCar Championship season, and with Penske having no imminent replacement, the team's sportscar aces have been told they can chase rides elsewhere.

And that's what Helio Castroneves – three-time Indy 500 winner, four-time IndyCar championship runner-up – is doing. He'd been reluctant to depart full-time open-wheel racing at the end of 2017, but a

guaranteed three-year contract with Penske and the chance to drive for a works team and being granted a Penske entry at the Indy 500 was a strong alternative, and the evergreen Brazilian star shifted disciplines.

Three years later, he's 1) free to talk with other teams; 2) still fast; 3) still in shape; 4) still motivated. He's pursuing alternatives in both IndyCar and IMSA, but his heart lies in the former, and he wants a full-time IndyCar ride for 2021.

“I'll be honest, I wanna go back,” he

says. “I've been connected with Penske for over 20 years, and I'm so grateful for all these years together, but they gave us the green flag to go look for drives in other places and that's what I'm doing.

“I think I can bring a lot. I've learned so much from Penske, and my work ethic is still there, and I think I'm driving at least as good as ever. So if the next team is an experienced team, I feel I can still add to what they know, and if it's a young team, I can add a lot to that too, because I've seen how things are done by the best.”



“MY WORK ETHIC IS STILL THERE, AND I THINK I'M DRIVING AT LEAST AS GOOD AS EVER”

CANTRELL



CANTRELL

AJ FOYT RACING

CHEVROLET



LEVITT

THE DRIVERS



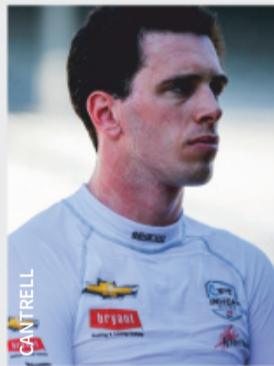
CANTRELL

#4
CHARLIE
KIMBALL



CANTRELL

#14
TONY
KANAAN



CANTRELL

#41
DALTON
KELLETT

Tony Kanaan is on an oval-only campaign in 2020, so next week's rounds at World Wide Technology Raceway in Gateway will be his final IndyCar outings... at least on a track other than Indianapolis Motor Speedway. We can't believe the 2013 Indy 500 winner won't be back at the Brickyard, and he doesn't sound like he believes it himself.

That said, he may want to seek a better ride than the one that legendary four-time Indy winner Foyt can supply him in 2020. With Chevrolet at a major deficit in qualifying and hopefully a minimal one in race mode, life has been a struggle for TK over the past

“CHARLIE KIMBALL IS INORDINATELY BRAVE, BUT HE’LL NEED TO BE – AS WILL HIS STRATEGIST – IF HE IS TO MATCH HIS 2015 ACHIEVEMENT OF FINISHING THIRD”

few days, for it has accentuated the fact that Foyt's squad is treading water. He's in good company, of course, because he'll roll off ahead of two Penske drivers and a two-time Formula 1 world champion, but whereas you'd expect to see the likes of Simon Pagenaud and Helio Castroneves move forward,

Kanaan may be mired all race.

Charlie Kimball, Foyt's full-timer in 2020, is inordinately brave but he'll need to be – as will his strategist – if he is to match his 2015 achievement (in a Ganassi car) of finishing third. Even a top-12 would be a minor miracle.

Dalton Kellett, who shares the #14 with Kanaan and (theoretically) Sebastien Bourdais, may live off the story of how he once outqualified two Indy winners, (Castroneves, Pagenaud) at Indy, but don't expect his first attempt at the greatest spectacle in racing to produce a strong finish.

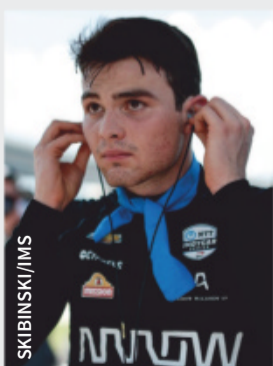
ARROW McLaren SP

CHEVROLET



ABBOTT

THE DRIVERS



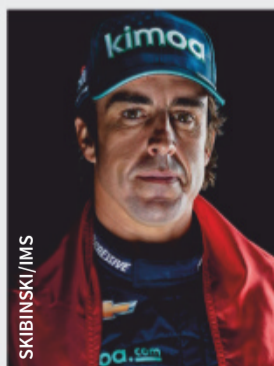
SKIBINSKI/IMS

#5
PATRICIO
O'WARD



CANTRELL

#7
OLIVER
ASKEW



SKIBINSKI/IMS

#66
FERNANDO
ALONSO

If Fernando Alonso has inevitably stolen the show over the past few days, it's the squad's full-timers Pato O'Ward and Oliver Askew who have delivered without threatening the wall. It will be disappointing to all that they've done so without threatening the Andretti cars or Dixon, but their wisdom at such a young age has been impressive all year, and that has continued at IMS.

Their performances at Iowa Speedway proved that both drivers have the guts to stick it out with any of the series' established aces, and they both have a strong feel for the car. O'Ward is the one that

you'd expect to be making the bold slashes through traffic and kissing the SAFER barrier with his outside rear tyre. He has superquick hands and mind. But Askew, while his talents are less overt, can be very incisive too. And, of course, he has the memory of the Freedom 100 Indy Lights victory last year to boost his confidence around the Speedway.

The pair of them will be learning at the feet of one of the finest talents of 21st century open-wheel racing: Alonso will doubtless be reaping the benefits of listening to two racers who have less overall experience than himself but greater

“HE’S MADE IT TOUGH ON HIMSELF, BUT IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE ALONSO NOT MAKING STRONG PROGRESS AT THE DROP OF THE GREEN”

oval mileage. He's made it tough on himself by crashing the best parts of his original car, but it's impossible to imagine him not making strong forward progress at the drop of the green this Sunday. Hopefully he'll enjoy the experience enough (again) that he'll return once his Renault F1 commitments are over.

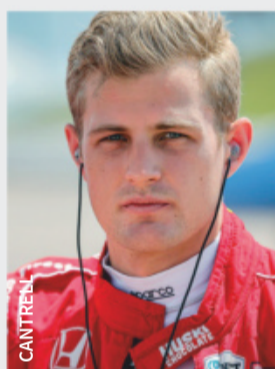
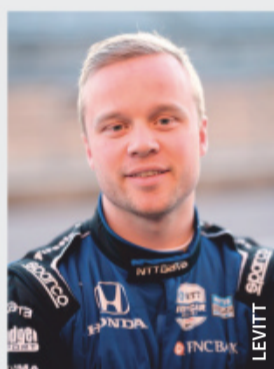
CHIP GANASSI RACING

HONDA



ABBOTT

THE DRIVERS

#8
MARCUS
ERICSSON#9
SCOTT
DIXON#10
FELIX
ROSENQVIST

In July, after the #9 Ganassi car scored its second of three consecutive wins, this writer observed to Scott Dixon's new race engineer Michael Cannon that it was surely time for another Indy win for the five-time champion who has 'just' one Brickyard triumph to his name – a dozen years ago.

"Winning the 500 is the plan," said Cannon. "I've promised Scott that his car for Indy will be better than his car for Texas [in which Dixon was in a different league from all his rivals]. That said, Tony Kanaan summed it up well when he said that the track chooses who wins. But what we can do

now is come up with a good enough car to run at the front, and then on the day, come up with a good enough strategy to stay there."

Well, the first part is done. The knock-on effect of a hummingbird beating its wings anywhere in Speedway, Indiana could have been the difference between Marco Andretti winning pole and Dixon prevailing and, while Dixon came up 0.017mph short, no one is doubting his race-winning

"DIXON'S CAR SEEMS ABLE TO RUN ANYWHERE ON THE TRACK AND IN ANY CONDITIONS"

potential. Dixon's car seems able to run anywhere on the track (if we ignore that spin in last Sunday practice) and in any conditions.

His newest teammate Marcus Ericsson looked smooth, safe and fast in traffic and continues to impress at every oval, while his Swedish compatriot Felix Rosenqvist has been far less timid than the man who shunted in practice at Indianapolis last year (see page 22). Still, given Dixon's apparent ability to deal with all circumstances and blessed with a great pitbox and a slick pitcrew, it's hard to bet against him to be at the front.

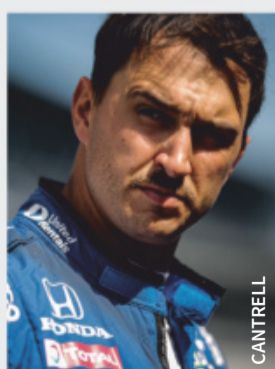
RAHAL LETTERMAN LANIGAN RACING

HONDA



CANTRELL

THE DRIVERS

#15
GRAHAM
RAHAL#30
TAKUMA
SATO#45
SPENCER
PIGOT

The team co-owned by Bobby Rahal, David Letterman and Mike Lanigan is a dark horse for Indianapolis 500 glory this year.

Takuma Sato has won the event before, and in glorious style, after a mesmerising battle with three-time victor Helio Castroneves. This year, he will start from third and appears to have a car that is comfortable in all track conditions. And it's also fast, whether following a car or running solo. He is also renowned

"RLL HAS THE DEPTH OF TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO TURN MUD INTO CHOCOLATE"

for being super-aggressive if he spies a half-chance, but now also has a veneer of maturity that will dissuade him from rash errors. His storming drive from one lap down in last year's 500 was one of the race's highlights.

Then there is Graham Rahal, a man who knows how to race an oval without putting himself or anyone else in peril, which is why he was so outraged by Sebastien Bourdais's clumsy attempts to hold him back in last year's 500. Put him in the right car – one in which he trusts what both ends are doing – and make the right changes at pitstops to keep up with the track, and he'll

reward you with a scintillating blend of pace and good judgement that extracts the maximum potential from the machinery.

Spencer Pigot, in the Citrone/Buhl Autosport entry, gradually recaptured his aggression over his final two years with Ed Carpenter Racing and sparkled again in his last outing at the Grand Prix of Indianapolis. He's a brave man around IMS and is also smooth, which will help if tyre life becomes a factor over the course of a stint.

Finally, RLL has the depth of technical expertise to turn mud into chocolate and to make last-minute breakthroughs.

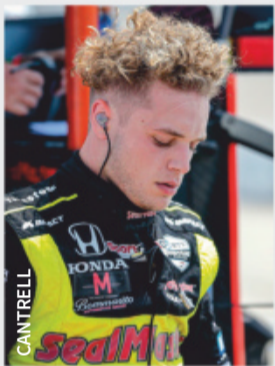
DALE COYNE RACING

HONDA



CANTRELL

THE DRIVERS



#18
SANTINO
FERRUCCI



#51
JAMES
DAVISON



#55
ALEX
PALOU

Those who expected Dale Coyne's squad to falter with engineer Craig Hampson's departure to Arrow McLaren SP and Michael Cannon joining Chip Ganassi Racing were not paying attention when it was revealed that Olivier Boisson would stay on to race engineer Santino Ferrucci and Eric Cowden would come on board to produce set-ups for Alex Palou. They both have the experience and wisdom to plug in to any project and enhance its outcome.

"FERRUCCI HAS CALMED HIMSELF A LOT AND LOOKS LESS LIKE A MAN ON THE BRINK OF AN ACCIDENT"

Cowden has done a wonderful job with Palou, who was such a star of Super Formula in his first year and then swiftly adapted to the demands of IndyCar. They already have a podium finish, and to some minds reaching the Fast Nine at Indy will be even more impressive, but then perhaps it's time to revisit the cliched theory that the Speedway behaves like an ultra-fast road course.

It's hard to find a flaw with Palou, but dealing with 200 laps of Indy while keeping composure and dealing with its Jekyll and Hyde 'personality' will be as alien a task as he's tried this year.

Ferrucci has calmed himself a lot

and looks less like a man on the brink of an accident and more like a driver who knows that respect is only earned if you push to the edge of adhesion and hope, and don't get carried away in the heat of the moment. He's due a strong finish, and as 2019 Rookie of the Year at IMS, he could pick no better venue to deliver the goods. But he hasn't looked entirely happy with his car yet.

James Davison appeared perplexed by being slower than Palou despite identical set-ups. His hopes were hardly boosted when he missed the Sunday afternoon practice to race in NASCAR's Daytona roval race.

ED CARPENTER RACING

CHEVROLET

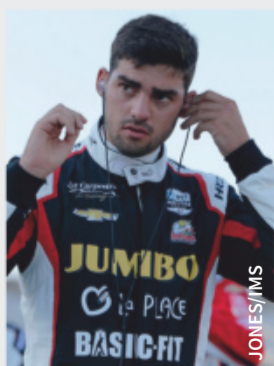


ABBOTT

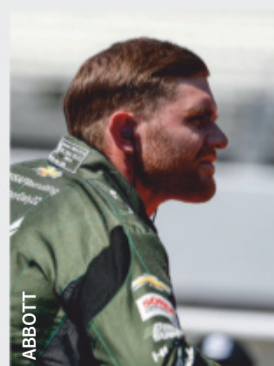
THE DRIVERS



#20
ED
CARPENTER



#21
RINUS
VEEKAY



#47
CONOR
DALY

The team that traditionally holds its rivals' feet to the flames in Indianapolis 500 qualifying has not looked its normal self in preparation for the 104th running of the event, but that is not to say it's been without promise. Crowd favourite (yes, that sounds depressingly ironic this year) Conor Daly was very strong in traffic and on ovals in general – he's worked wonders for Carlin. In fact, he may yet prove to have the strongest Chevrolet-engined car when it comes to dealing with dirty air and attempting to carve forward on race day. And he'll need to, given that he's starting mid-grid.

Team owner Ed

Carpenter was really out to lunch early last week, but gradually moved forward and made an impressive improvement in qualifying in far from ideal track temperatures. The three-time Indy polesitter has enough experience to move himself forward on race day, but does he have enough to take the fight to Andretti, Dixon et al? It seems doubtful right now.

Rookie Rinus

"DALY MAY YET PROVE TO HAVE THE STRONGEST CHEVY-ENGINED CAR WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH DIRTY AIR AND CARVING FORWARD"

VeeKay has shown some outrageous speed on road and street courses in his time on the Road To Indy, but no one would have described him as an oval *meister*... until last week. He put the other Chevrolet runners to shame by landing fourth on the grid and outpacing all but one of the Andretti Autosport cars. Watching him deal with traffic and dirty air, he has an abruptness of movement that can leave you biting your nails but hey, while the car sticks, it's all fun, right? And given where he's starting from, maybe the only cars he'll need to pass will be backmarkers...

DREYER & REINBOLD RACING

CHEVROLET

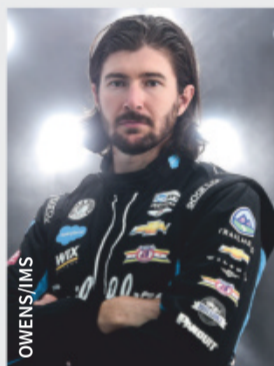


LEVITT

THE DRIVERS



#24
SAGE
KARAM



#67
JR
HILDEBRAND

A strong team that regularly shows great pace and knocks a few noses out of joint among IndyCar's full-timers, this year Dreyer & Reinbold Racing appears to be behind the eightball. Perfectly understandable in trying circumstances.

Of course, with the new aeroscreen

(ergo, revised weight distribution) and zero track time before practice due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the team has been relying on theories and surmises, and the experience of Sage Karam and JR Hildebrand. Combine all that with questionable Chevy horsepower, and you

“BOTH DRIVERS KNOW HOW TO MAKE IT TO THE END OF THIS RACE, AND BOTH HAVE SCORED TOP-THREE FINISHES ON OVALS”

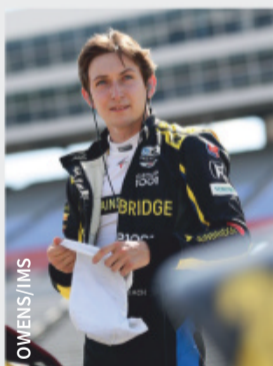
start to see DRR as punching above its weight by being up to Team Penske pace!

Both drivers know how to make it to the end of this race, and both have scored top-three finishes on ovals in their time, but both can be prone to error – big or small – and that inevitably inhibits their results. Sure, 2020 is the year where apparently anything weird can happen in any sport at any time but, unless an offbeat strategy suddenly becomes the right route to follow, it's hard to imagine that this is the year when DRR suddenly finds itself able to emulate the fourth place that Oriol Servia delivered at Indy back in 2012. A top-10 would be impressive, two top-15s would be greater still.

ANDRETTI AUTOSPORT

HONDA

THE DRIVERS



#26
ZACH
VEACH



#27
ALEXANDER
ROSSI



#28
RYAN
HUNTER-REAY

The first day of qualifying ended with the team 1-2-3-4, while Colton Herta remained just outside the Fast Nine and Zach Veach was midfield. Come the Sunday shootout, only Marco Andretti looked truly formidable, while James Hinchcliffe, Ryan Hunter-Reay and Alexander Rossi had apparently flattered to deceive. Most observers would have been prepared to bet the latter three would not be toppled by a rookie, especially one with the supposed disadvantage of running a Chevrolet engine. Yet that's how things transpired.

Interestingly, it was day one practice pacesetter Hinchcliffe



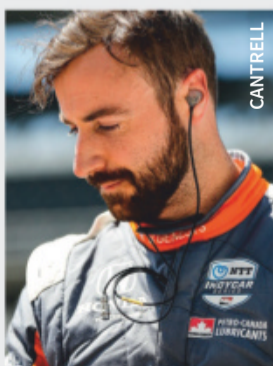
ABBOTT

who most of those on the team believe has the best all-round car for any conditions on race day, and certainly the 2016 polesitter has looked wonderfully confident in practice.

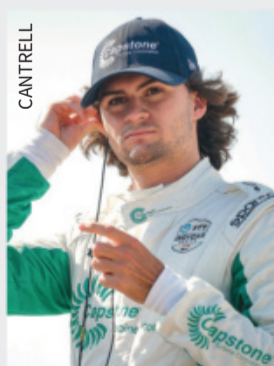
Still, in the past we've seen Hinchcliffe wobble or become overaggressive when circumstances start working against him, whereas Andretti seems to have the pace to never be more

than one or two cars back from the leader, whether the track conditions are hot or merely warm. And given the bravery of Rossi and Hunter-Reay – and the fact that each knows how to win here already – you'd imagine they would have a strong handle on how to get the job done.

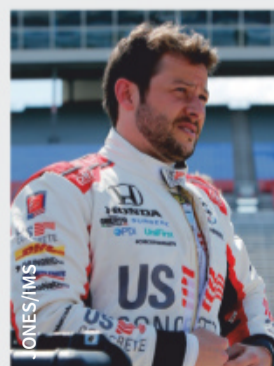
But don't ignore Herta, who has driven with great maturity this year.



#29
JAMES
HINCHCLIFFE



#88
COLTON
HERTA



#98
MARCO
ANDRETTI

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CARLIN RACING

CHEVROLET

THE DRIVER



#59
MAX
CHILTON

Max Chilton doesn't like ovals any more – even though he used to be rather good at them – so for most of the year the #59 car is steered by Conor Daly on ovals. But Chilton loves Indy because the prep time and the chance to get up to speed and hone the car are so much greater than at Texas, Gateway and the like.

But he's been fighting an uphill battle because he's

the only Carlin entry in the field of 33, so he's being guided by instinct alone. Now those instincts of his are pretty good at IMS and he led the 2017 Indy 500 for 50 laps – almost twice as many as any other driver – and eventually finished fourth. But that was with Chip Ganassi Racing, a team with vast experience of making fast cars for the Speedway. Now he's with Carlin and, while

he qualified 20th and finished 22nd in 2018, last year he didn't make the show.

So when a problem cropped up last week, he and the team struggled to pinpoint the cause and he qualified only 30th, but come Sunday afternoon on race set-ups, he believes he made a breakthrough: "We only have one more day of practice before the race, so we took full advantage of all



LEVITT

the time we had on track and turned as many laps as we could. We have a bit of work to do before the race but the car feels really

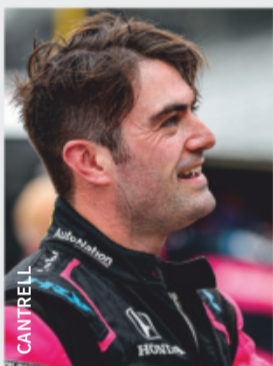
good in traffic."

With strong pitstops – Carlin is impressive on this point – he can finish in the top half of the field.

MEYER SHANK RACING

HONDA

THE DRIVER



#60
JACK
HARVEY

Jack Harvey has been one of the revelations of this IndyCar season and that's caught some so-called experts on the hop. Yet the progress of a driver who twice finished runner-up in Indy Lights can be tracked quite logically: as his gig with MSR has evolved into a full-season campaign, so his experience has increased, and his confidence has

blossomed on all types of track. He just seems to strike the right blend of wisdom and aggression when deciding what is and isn't possible, be it qualifying or a race.

Twice this season Harvey has started from the front row, outpacing his more highly touted semi-team-mates. (Michael Shank and Jim Meyer have a technical relationship with Andretti Autosport,

whereby Harvey and race engineer Andy Listes join the circle of drivers/engineers around the AA table.)

Still, Indy this year has been painful for Harvey, who will be making his fourth 500 start, and he will roll off 20th. MSR knows a trick or two about strategy, so it would not be a surprise to see Harvey finish in the top 10, but he doesn't appear to be driving a potential



ABBOTT

race-winning car.

Still, he won the 2015 Freedom 100 in Indy Lights at IMS and he's not afraid to give as good as he gets in

wheel-to-wheel combat. Should this squad make a set-up breakthrough, a top-five finish is definitely possible.

DRAGONSPEED

CHEVROLET

THE DRIVER



#81
BEN
HANLEY

There was some confusion over the identity of this last-minute project, which wasn't originally a last-minute project but then became one because a group under the name of Top Gun was about to take it over to run the underrated RC Enerson.

But then Top Gun pulled out after it was decided that 1) the 500 would be held in

front of empty grandstands; and 2) the prize fund was slashed in half due to Penske Entertainment needing to prop up other aspects of the series in these COVID-blighted times.

So the entry has gone back to Elton Julian's squad, which is good for the sake of continuity, and because the team and driver Ben Hanley

won new fans with their performance at IMS last year while bigger names hit walls and missed the show.

What we've said about Dreyer & Reinbold applies here – the team wasn't going to set the world alight having had zero oval testing and given the complexities of the aeroscreen, and the team being a one-entry



CANTRELL

operation etc, etc.

So if DragonSpeed reaches the chequered flag, and ahead of another car, they'll have earned it

the hard way. Don't underestimate the crew's ability to draw closer to the ultimate pace between now and Sunday.

LEVITT

SCREEN TEST

One sign of the aeroscreen's success is that not many people are now talking about it. But it's going to make a difference to the challenge for the teams at the Indy 500

BY DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES



You only need to make a quick scan through social media and comment forums to realise that, as with the halo's introduction in Formula 1, the number of vocal critics of IndyCar's mandatory aeroscreen is dwindling as onlookers 1) get used to it, and 2) acknowledge there's no going back. There will, of course, be some who cannot reconcile themselves to its appearance, and it's easy to sympathise. A device that is so harmonious from the side or front three-quarter view is not pleasing to behold from head on, and you can only hope that it can be better integrated into the next-gen IndyCar's design from birth, and look less like a late add-on to the otherwise handsome lines of the current Chris Beattie-penned car.

Those who remain vehemently opposed to the principle of the aeroscreens are a different matter. Too often they are folk who, somewhat ironically, sound and

write like they are in the process of failing a concussion test. But even they will have to accept the aeroscreen is here to stay.

IndyCar teams' engineers recognised this change more than a year ago, and bent themselves to the puzzle of minimising the effect of the device's extra 65lb (29kg) that moved the car's centre of gravity forward 0.6% and up by 15mm. The issue wasn't about adjusting the cars' handling to suit the drivers, but preserving front-tyre life.

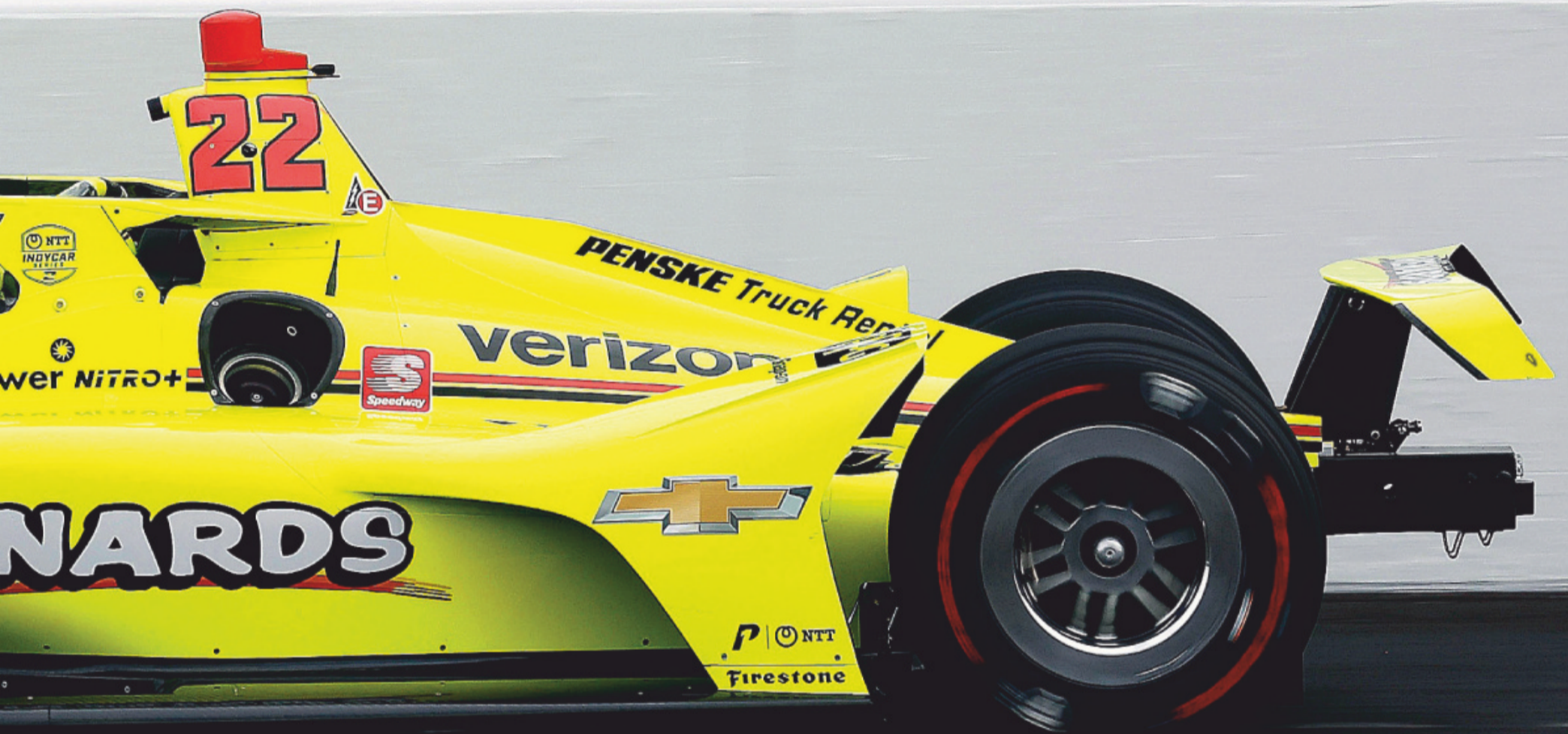
Ben Bretzman, Team Penske's race engineer for 2019 Indianapolis 500 winner Simon Pagenaud, says that, while the difference sounds minimal, the effect was not overplayed. "It's been a pretty significant change in how hard the tyres are working," he says. "They're doing a tremendous amount more work and, while it's something you can see in the simulator, you don't really know until you get on track – which has only been at race weekends because we've had no testing lately.

"Even going back as far as last August, when Will [Power] and Scott [Dixon] did the test at Indy with the aeroscreen, we could see how hard the tyres are taking it. In all our minds was immediately, 1) How do we get our balance back, and 2) How do you manage the tyres, particularly on a hot day? We won't be able to run exactly like we did last year. Balance issues are going to be very noticeable."

Bretzman expected long ago that qualifying at Indy was going to be more difficult, given the increase to 1.5-bar turbo boost (from 1.4 in previous years), and the fact that from lap one to lap four the tyres were going to go off a lot more rapidly. The race, he says, will be an extension of this, even when back to the normal superspeedway race day boost of 1.3-bar.

"Yeah, it's the same deal but over 30 laps or around that number the drivers are going to have to really manage their tyres so they don't fall off a cliff in the last 10

Spot the difference (it's quite easy): Pagnaud last week at Indy...



...and heading for victory in 2019

LePAGE

laps of a stint,” he says. “And then there’s the dirty-air issue. In recent years at Indy, we’ve seen drivers happy to run in the wake of another car to save fuel and go a lap longer, but they may want to rethink that if it’s causing the car to slide around and accelerating tyre deg. Even the leader is going to have to think about it, too: where do you want to position the car in traffic?”

“The car will need to be more versatile and the driver will have to use his tools a lot, because the difference in balance

running in clean air compared with traffic will be bigger than usual. Dirty air will amplify the car’s understeer, which in turn increases the tyre deg, which in turn amplifies the understeer...

“And of course finding that ‘ideal’ set-up with more restricted practice time and therefore a busier track – that’s great fun... But at least the tyres have stayed the same. That means we expect greater tyre wear but at least the tyres are one of the constants, a baseline that we can

build all the other decisions on.”

The fact the tyres haven’t changed in response to their extra burden will perhaps come as a surprise. Firestone’s first test in preparation for the aeroscreen’s introduction occurred last summer at Texas Motor Speedway, with Graham Rahal and Josef Newgarden running cars ‘ballasted up’ to car-plus-aeroscreen weight, and sure enough, coupled with the extreme heat that day, it seemed that at least the compound of the tyres would ▶



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need to be changed, if not the construction. But the test was far from conclusive.

“The thing is, that test couldn’t take into account the drag of the aeroscreen, which slows the cars significantly enough where they’re entering the turns at a reduced rate now,” says Firestone head of race-tyre engineering Cara Adams. “There’s less load on the tyres than we had estimated from the Texas test and our simulation work with Honda and Chevrolet, so we went into last August’s test at Indy [with Dixon and Power] a little bit conservative. We ran a couple of different tyres there but the car responded well to the 2019 tyre design.

“So we’re confident now that last year’s Indy tyre specifications will work well again. We built some of the tyres prior to the COVID shutdown [at the company’s

“I think our braking may have got a little bit better, despite the increase in weight”

Akron, Ohio plant] and the rest since we opened up.”

It’s not just blowing smoke to say that Firestone has become renowned for its priority on safety so, with the factory closed when the 2020 IndyCar season eventually got under way in June at Texas Motor Speedway, the company was obliged to see what suitable tyres it had available already. The compound was a little softer than Firestone would have liked, given the new demands of the screen and the June heat in Dallas, so IndyCar, under advice from its loyal tyre manufacturer, allowed each car to run just 35 laps per set.

Adams has no such worries about tyre performance at IMS. “Absolutely not,” she asserts. “After the test last August, this compound became the one we intended to run here, just like we ran the 2019 Iowa tyre at Iowa again this year.”

The aeroscreen has caused one

noticeable change this year in the pitlane: there are now seven crew members allowed over the pitwall during a pitstop, with the extra person serving solely as aeroscreen attendant, pulling tear-offs. But the view out of the cockpit has ceased to be even a talking point for the drivers – “after a couple of laps I didn’t notice it was there” is the essence of their mantra. Cockpit cooling has been a more persistent issue, hence IndyCar’s tireless quest for airflow options. Finding the right combination to create adequate through-flow has apparently been more difficult than finding two pandas that want to mate in captivity, but the drivers have been reasonably stoic, knowing it’s a process of trial and error, and most only mention it if asked.

Chip Ganassi Racing’s five-time champion and 2008 Indy 500 winner Scott Dixon has been far more intrigued by his car’s revised handling with the aeroscreen,

and not just because of the tyre-wear issues outlined by Bretzman. “On road courses, it’s been as you’d expect where the car’s a little lazier on turn-in and you can feel it roll more,” he says. “But there are upsides too – I think our braking may have got a little bit better, despite the increase in weight, and maybe that’s because of the extra weight transfer under hard braking.

“The other thing I’ve noticed is that the car gets a little bit more loose in traffic compared with last year without the screen. I first felt it when we tested at the Speedway last year. It was only Will and ourselves, but when I was following him, I noticed that the typical front-end washout that you’d get from mid-corner to exit when you’re behind another car had been replaced by this sort of nervousness.

“Obviously that was a year ago, and since then we as a team may have made some changes that reduce that or even eliminate it, I dunno. It felt to me like it was just an underlying characteristic of the cars with this screen. I’m not totally sure why it’s like that, but maybe the aeroscreen is blocking some of the flow to the rear wing so there’s a bit less downforce back there and that’s helping to neutralise the car and get rid of that understeer in dirty air.

“But, we can sit here and talk about tyre management and how it’s changed because of the aeroscreen, and how the new weight distribution has shifted the car’s balance, and so on. And then we get to the race and something weird could happen, so actually it’s your fuel strategy and when the yellows fall that decide how the race plays out. That’s Indy: it’s never what you expect.” ■



Power during initial IMS aeroscreen test, October 2019

IMS



CANTRELL



Dixon feels difference in response of car (far left)

CANTRELL



Aeroscreen has created some cooling challenges

LEVITT

THE WINNER WHO'S STILL LEARNING

Felix Rosenqvist took a storming maiden IndyCar win at Road America last month. Now he's aiming for a breakthrough oval result in the Indy 500

BY MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY 

“G’day,” says Felix Rosenqvist in a passable Swede-attempting-a-Down-Under accent as he picks up the phone to Autosport.

For a man who’s spent his IndyCar Series career to date absorbing all he can from his illustrious Chip Ganassi Racing team-mate Scott Dixon, it seems that it’s not just in the areas of driving, set-up or racecraft that he’s been influenced by the Aussie-born Kiwi.

Aside from picking up random speech mannerisms, for Rosenqvist it’s been the trials and tribulations of working an IndyCar race that have meant a very steep learning curve. Since winning the 2015 Formula 3 European Championship, his career had moved in maverick directions, quick in a variety of machinery in Europe, North America and Japan. It was a couple of eye-opening tests at Mid-Ohio – a year apart – that encouraged Ganassi to take a punt on him with a two-year deal for 2019-20. And, finally, that breakthrough win came last month at Road America after a superb drive from seventh on the grid.

To be fair, it was overdue for a driver who’d led on his IndyCar debut at St Petersburg, back in March 2019.

“That was a very quick lesson straight away in St Petersburg, the first race,” he says, readopting his familiar clipped Swedish accent. “You just need to be very complete, not only being fast, but you

need to be aggressive in the race. If you’re not aggressive you’ll never go forward and you get stuck behind someone, and if you get stuck behind someone early in the race then you can look after the race how much that hurt you from not being in clear air.

“Also strategy-wise, you need to be more involved than in other series where you basically just get guided by the team what to do. You need to get a better feel for what’s happening in a race and if the team calls something wrong. That’s something you really learn by experience. That’s what Scott does pretty well. He just has a really good idea of what’s happening in the race.

“And then you have the ovals as well, which is something completely new. That’s for me the hardest part, just learning how to manage yourself, how to improve the car, just a million things that you need to learn. Some drivers have an easier time to learn it, and some it takes a lot of work to get up to speed. It’s a lot of new challenges.”

Dixon is the master of that. It seems that, whatever circumstances are thrown into the melting pot of a race – cautions, weather – the #9 Ganassi Dallara-Honda always emerges at the front, even if the team has been struggling for pace earlier on. Such are the racing brains of Dixon and the Ganassi strategists that it buys them the flexibility to do that. For most IndyCar drivers, most of their results – particularly on ovals – can be put down to good or bad luck on strategies and yellows. Not so the five-time champion.

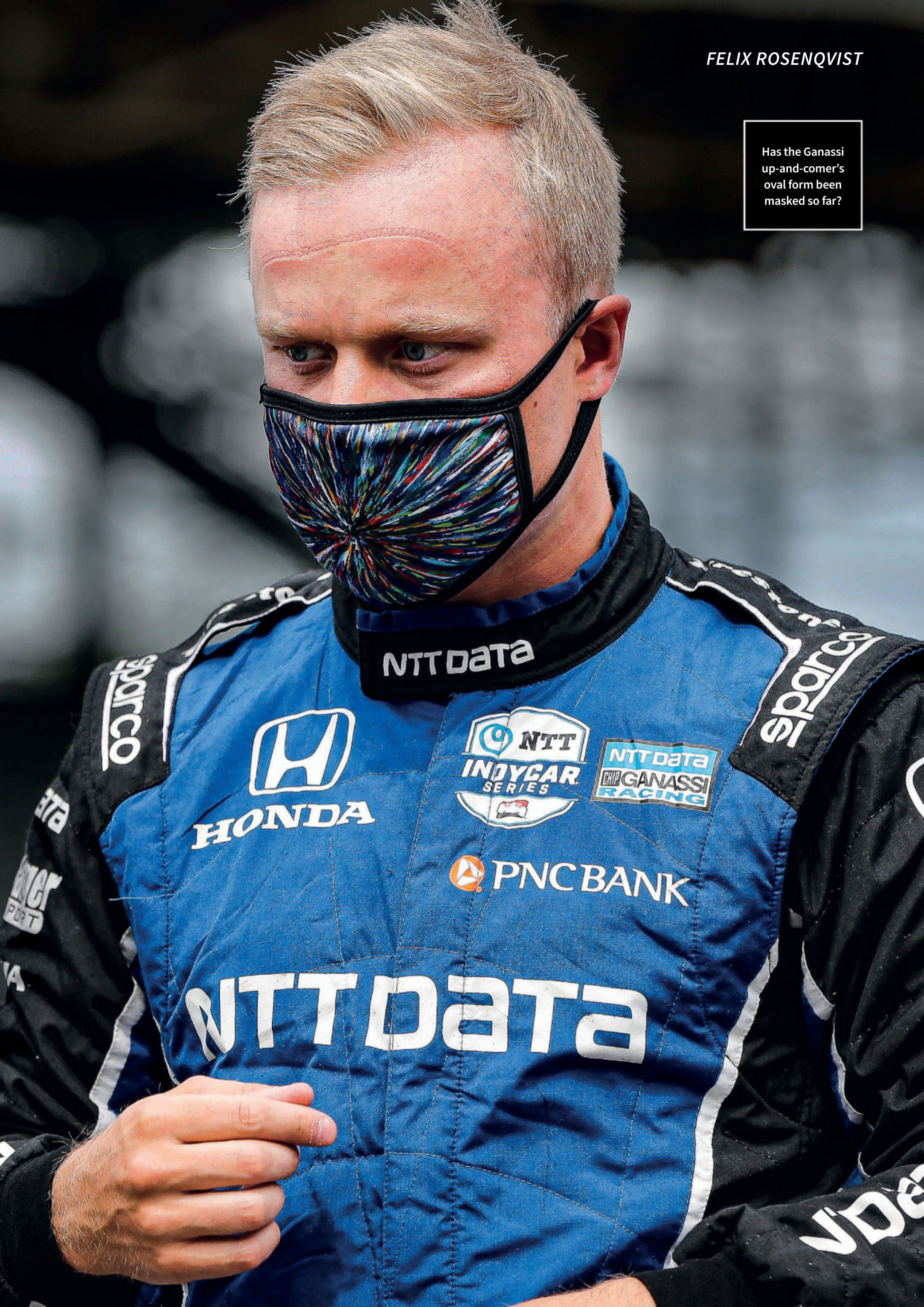
“Yeah, it’s true,” reflects Rosenqvist. “That’s why everyone is very amazed about him – he can turn an average day or a bad day into a good day. I think that goes with what I said before. Sometimes you just get a feeling for what’s going to happen in the race, and as a driver being around the cars, you get a different idea of how strong certain cars are, if one car has a lot of deg. He has that feeling, and based on that he makes the calls that turn it from being lucky to being calculated. A lower driver gets lucky and they win the race based on a yellow, and if you’re in IndyCar for ▶



ABBOTT

CANTRELL

Has the Ganassi up-and-comer's oval form been masked so far?



x amount of time that's going to happen to you eventually. That's what we always try to work on, how do we calculate, how do we turn the odds in our favour?"

Turning those odds was a work in progress in 2019. For example, Rosenqvist's first (and to date only) IndyCar pole, at the Indy GP in May of that year, was converted to an eighth-place finish, and there was a wreck the following month at Detroit Belle Isle. But in August, he finished right behind Dixon in a Ganassi 1-2 at Mid-Ohio, and a few weeks later was second again at Portland. Then there was a drive from 14th on the grid to fifth at the Laguna Seca finale.

"What is the reason for the good result?" he asks. "Is it luck or have you got there on merit? I think we were leaning to that

"My big focus during the whole off-season was definitely just improve on ovals"

[latter] direction. Even if I had a rough start to the day or the weekend we could still salvage something. Like Laguna, I got disqualified in qualifying and started P14 but I was still able to get back to P5 in the race. Road America I went from P18 to P6. I felt that we got into that rhythm at the end which was really good, but unfortunately we weren't able to carry that into this season, where it's become really up and down again, but I think that's the same for almost every driver."

Indeed, apart from that Road America win, the best result for Rosenqvist this season has been a lowly 14th. But there was a strong run at Texas Motor Speedway at the first round, when IndyCar finally emerged from hibernation following the three-month delay owing to the coronavirus pandemic. On the 1.5-mile oval, Rosenqvist charged up to second, and was chasing Dixon, before he showed his inexperience by crashing through impatience. It was

another frustrating outcome for a driver who made no bones of his difficulty in adapting to ovals during his Indy Lights campaign of 2016, and is still yet to register a top-10 finish on tracks of that nature. But at least he'd shown pace, and he credits a surprising byproduct of the coronavirus delay in helping in that respect.

"I think something that helped me was all the iRacing stuff we did with IndyCar," he professes. "After St Pete got cancelled we just spent so many hours, and we did mainly ovals. Even if it's not really the same thing, you're still racing against the same people and just the way the races turned out based on what kind of grip or wind or things like that, you get a good idea quite quickly of how that specific race would turn out. That wasn't for nothing for sure. My big focus during the whole off-season was definitely just improve on ovals, improve on ovals."

To be fair, there had been previous

flashes of speed on ovals. For example, on Rosenqvist's Indy 500 debut in 2019, Ganassi struggled in qualifying, with Dixon 18th and Rosenqvist 29th. The team then went onto an alternative strategy, enabling the new boy to lead twice before pitting, and look ensconced in the top 10 when he became one of the collateral victims of a belligerent piece of driving from Sebastien Bourdais against Graham Rahal that resulted in a pile-up.

"The whole build-up to the race, and the race itself, it was just overwhelming to be honest," he recalls. "I was watching all the videos, I had all the clever guys like Dario [Franchitti, Ganassi advisor] telling me what to expect, but when you're there it's different. I had a really, really tough build-up to the race, both Ganassi cars were struggling in qualifying with car balance, but in the race I think I probably had the better car in the team. I was actually going really well, and at





Rosenqvist gets up to speed on the first day of Indy 500 practice

ABBOTT

the time when Bourdais and Rahal got together I think I was in the top 10, from a starting place of nearly last.

“Unfortunately I couldn’t finish the race, but it was a great run and definitely a top 10 was possible, so that would have been a good first year, but good to have that experience in the bag. You’re always one set-up change away from turning around the car completely, so you can’t really give up, you’ve got to keep working on it. Sometimes you think there’s something that can’t be fixed, and then they make the change and you feel, ‘Wow, that definitely made me a lot faster.’”

A decent oval result is surely just around the (banked) corner for Rosenqvist. He feels in a good place, not just because he has the ultimate barometer in Dixon alongside him at Ganassi, but also, for 2020, his friend and compatriot Marcus Ericsson.

“Yeah, I think we have a good chance at Ganassi,” he enthuses. “And the speed we showed at Texas was really promising, and that’s probably the biggest indicator for Indy. There’s still a question mark over Iowa, where we were struggling for balance [Rosenqvist was 14th and 15th in the two races there], but it’s a very different track. We couldn’t really be in a better position right now. Our team is leading the championship [thanks to Dixon’s three-on-the-bounce at the start of the season, before Rosenqvist made it four in a row with his maiden win], and we’ve made a huge push for Indy this year. All season the engineers have had that as the biggest focus – to get Ganassi back in the winner’s circle for the 500. We’re all really excited for it.” ■



Chilton came close to victory in 2017 with Ganassi team

LEPAGE

WHY CHILTON IS STILL HAPPY TO RACE THE 500

Max Chilton made a brave choice in 2019 to stand down from oval racing, because he just didn’t feel comfortable on those tracks, but he made an exception for the Indy 500. It’s not so much the ovals themselves he’s avoiding as the race formats.

“We get a lot of practice,” he says of the Indy 500. “This year that’s heavily cut, but we still get three or four days of running, and even that’s 20 times what you get at Pocono. You’re in a settled position, and everyone treats the race with a lot of respect. Everyone wants to finish, and the first 150 laps you’re just making sure you’re still in the race. Pocono is just carnage from

the beginning. I just didn’t enjoy that [and other ovals]. You’ve got to enjoy doing something, and if you do it multiple times and still don’t enjoy it, it’s time to stop.

“The nice thing this year is that because there won’t be a Bump Day [with only 33 entries this year, everyone has qualified], instead of focusing on trimming the car out, taking off the downforce and hoping for the best, we’ll be able to concentrate on the race.”

Chilton was part of the great Carlin Bump Day Calamity of 2019, both he and Pato O’Ward, along with Carlin-affiliated Fernando Alonso, failing to qualify: “We didn’t feel comfortable last year, and when we did feel comfortable, we didn’t have the terminal velocity.” But he’s happy that Conor Daly put his Carlin #59 machine on pole last time out at Iowa Speedway. “We’ve definitely got a stable platform,” he says. Apart from work on the gearbox and paint lacquering (to reduce air friction), “we’ve worked heavily on the dampers over the winter, and that’s helped with the road-course races. We’ve just got to get it working on ovals.”

And it’s all a learning experience for Carlin, with many of the staff – including Chilton’s engineer Matt Greasley – coming from the team’s European background. “We’ve got engineers who never did IndyCar, we’re all new to it,” he points out. “It’s been very much a learning phase, but when all of you learn together that’s when you can come up with good results.”



LEPAGE

INTERVIEW

MARV MOUCHAWAR

It's been a tough year for motorsport sponsors, but it's not all doom and gloom. The board director and senior vice-president of NTT, series sponsor of IndyCar, talks to us about the challenges and opportunities brought about by COVID-19

BY KEVIN TURNER AND ANDY HALLBERY

The pandemic has put many plans on hold, but you have been heavily involved in global sports with the Tour de France, Open golf and more, and using those as a platform to give back to communities. Is motorsport, particularly IndyCar, part of that initiative?

NTT is a purpose-driven organisation focused on using technology and innovation to drive positive change in the world. The pandemic has had a big impact and will have a lasting effect on the world, so the need for companies such as NTT to help support the goodwill efforts of our sports partners via technical, financial or other means is greater than ever.

The global motorsport industry, including the IndyCar community, has also stepped up in various ways to help their communities. There have been many examples of this, including the initiative within IndyCar to produce medical devices and personal protection equipment that has united rival race teams and other industry suppliers such as Dallara and Stratasy in a common cause. To date programmes developed in conjunction with the 3D printer manufacturer Stratasy and other similar efforts have involved Chip Ganassi Racing, Andretti Autosport, Arrow McLaren SP, Team Penske, Bryan Herta Autosport and others to align and produce hundreds of thousands of medical face shields using the capabilities and rapid-printing technology found within their respective facilities. In many cases, the suppliers such as Dallara or race teams such as Chip Ganassi Racing have gone beyond that and been utilising their capabilities for other equipment production.

Other efforts have included awareness and fundraising, such as the virtual auction held from 22-24 May 2020 (the originally scheduled weekend of the Indianapolis 500). Directly organised by IndyCar and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in conjunction with its teams, partners such as NTT, and suppliers, all proceeds supported three non-profit organisations fighting against the pandemic: American Red Cross, the All Clear Foundation and Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana.



“The sport has been extremely successful with staying active through shutdown”

What have been the challenges of being a motorsport sponsor during the pandemic and have there been any unexpected opportunities?

One of the challenges during the pandemic – and one that is prevalent among many sports and entertainment sponsors – has been missing in-person opportunities to connect with clients and demonstrate our capability through the innovation we are delivering in fan engagement. The ability to host our business guests in the various cities where IndyCar competes can be difficult to recreate using other means. However, NTT has had success in delivering on some of this in new ways using virtual hospitality and insider experiences.

Also, now by using more socially distant and virtual engagement methods, NTT

finds it essential to stay closely connected with the series officials, teams, drivers and the fans to continue to get a pulse in the paddock and determine where innovative solutions may be needed, such as around fan engagement or potential business opportunities with other stakeholders and partners.

In addition to the series title sponsorship, we also are the official technology partner of the IndyCar Series, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the Indianapolis 500 and NASCAR's Brickyard 400, as well as a team partner and official IT provider for Chip Ganassi Racing.

One of the opportunities that presented itself during the pandemic was assisting IndyCar with its COVID-19 'Back To Work' business solution, enabled with NTT smart technologies for use by its competitors at race events that includes venues such as the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

An easily accessible and responsive web app provides a simplified way for the more than 850 employees in the industry to demonstrate compliance with IndyCar's workplace process. The protocols include a series of online questions, including a health self-assessment, 'no exposure' confirmation and agreement to follow paddock guidelines, to generate a digital pass that provided entry to the speedway and paddock access when combined with their credential. This solution also allowed IndyCar to filter reporting by team or organisation and enable the sanctioning body, as well as teams, to efficiently govern the protocols in place.

Overall, one of the unexpected opportunities has been that the sport of auto racing has been extremely successful with staying active and productive throughout shutdown periods where other sports leagues or competitions could not. The leading motorsports leagues proved to the general public that it is one of the few sports that could compete very realistically in the virtual world while simultaneously allowing for fans to be entertained and engaged as all follow along like the real thing. The virtual Esports racing competitions organised by IndyCar



NTT supports Rosenqvist, as well as the IndyCar Series itself

amid the sports shutdown involved the majority of the full-time drivers, as well as racers from Formula 1 such as Lando Norris, and NASCAR drivers Dale Earnhardt Jr, Jimmie Johnson, Jeff Gordon and Kyle Busch. These races filled a void for fans who consumed the content through television, digital streaming platforms, and mobile devices that not only allowed fans to be engaged and drivers get experience, but also provided branding value to sponsors like us during the stoppage.

How important is the Indianapolis 500 in terms of your support of IndyCar? Is it the main reason for being involved or are there things about the championship itself that bring extra benefits?

The Indianapolis 500 is very important to our IndyCar partnership with it being among the most iconic sporting events in the world, but the series holistically plays a prominent role in our overall business objectives for motorsport. That series sponsorship allows us the opportunity to provide business solutions ranging from being the IT provider to a team such as Chip Ganassi Racing, creating an

Accelerate Smart Platform for a venue such as IMS or markedly improving the IndyCar Mobile App. We have an opportunity to shape the sport's future of fan engagement, deliver deeper data insights through intelligent technology, and transform the business of IndyCar through innovation and partnership.

How do you think the consequences of the pandemic will affect sporting sponsorship, in particular motorsport sponsorship, in 2021? Do you think you will be cutting back? Will others?

The pandemic has presented unique challenges to each and every one of us and has had a dramatic effect on the business world, especially in sports and entertainment. NTT has a diverse sports sponsorship portfolio that includes golf's oldest major The Open, IndyCar, Major League Baseball, the Tour de France and NTT Pro Cycling. Each has been impacted on varying levels from cancellations to delayed starts and reduced seasons. This situation has only reinforced the importance of being partners with strong working relationships and together

developing contingency plans or new areas of attraction to benefit both the sport and NTT. We do appreciate the creativity and commitment these sports organisations and events have displayed during these difficult times to value our sponsorship, whether through virtual events or working tirelessly to get their seasons back on track in a responsible and safe manner.

While NTT judiciously evaluates each of its sponsorships annually, we remain committed through technology and innovation to enable revolutionary experiences for athletes, fans and sports organisations.

NTT is highly visible with its naming partnership with the IndyCar Series and Chip Ganassi's team in the United States. Is the series something you wish had more coverage in Europe? It's on Sky F1 channel in the UK, but with very little promotion. Should more be done or is it all about the home market?

NTT continues to develop its presence and support clients across many markets around the world. IndyCar has driver athletes that compete from many countries and it continues to expand its global television partnerships. In 2020, it is available to audiences in more than 100 countries. In addition to Sky Sports in the UK and Ireland, IndyCar is available in more than a dozen European countries.

The series also had significant increases in 2019 on its social media and digital platforms, which provides another important avenue for international fans. A good example is the IndyCar Mobile App powered by NTT DATA. The free app had nearly a quarter of a million new downloads last year, with one of the biggest increases among countries coming from Sweden as a result of the interest in their two countrymen in the series, NTT DATA driver Felix Rosenqvist and his Ganassi team-mate Marcus Ericsson.

How much would you like to see IndyCar return to Europe, or even Australia, in the future? Would that be something you'd encourage or support? A number of the winning drivers hail from those continents, and there are fans of the series worldwide.

NTT would be supportive of the addition of more international races in key markets given our presence as a global technology and business solutions leader, but that expansion also needs to make business sense for the series, teams and additional partners. Despite only North American venues on the schedule the last few years, the current international television package of more than 100 countries and an internationally diverse driver field representing roughly a dozen countries continues to also greatly enhance the global exposure of the sport. ■

TOP 10 INDY 500s

There have been some epic contests, dramatic moments and unbelievable finishes in the 103 Indianapolis 500s held so far. It's tough to pick out the best, but here's our attempt...

BY DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport IMAGES

SULLIVAN SPINS AND WINS

1985

10

Mario Andretti led the majority of the first half of the race, but Danny Sullivan had learned well from Penske team-mate Rick Mears about constantly fine-tuning his car for the final shootout in 500-mile races.

Sullivan's March 85C got stronger and he found it relatively easy to haul up onto Andretti's tail at the start of lap 120. Moving out to make the pass on the inside of Turn 1, Sullivan found himself having to use the track and the apron, and the transition wobbled his car into a spin.

Remarkably he completed 360 degrees without striking the wall. Equally remarkably, 1969 500 winner Andretti avoided him. Less than 20 laps later, a fired-up Sullivan moved into a lead that he'd never lose, able to pull away after all subsequent restarts.



Sullivan spins as Andretti takes avoiding action

HILDEBRAND'S GIFT TO WHELDON

2011



Wheldon (middle) sweeps by Hildebrand in the final yards



9

The closing laps of the Centenary event were epic as a variety of strategy gambles failed to mesh with yellow-flag periods, leaving some great driver/team combinations, such as Chip Ganassi Racing pair Dario Franchitti and Scott Dixon, trying to coax their cars home on fumes.

After Danica Patrick was forced to give up the lead with 12 laps to go, Bertrand Baguette took over at the front until lap 197, when his Conquest Racing Dallara was forced into taking on a late splash-and-dash.

“WHELDON LED JUST ONE QUARTER OF A LAP – THE MOST IMPORTANT QUARTER OF ALL”

Wheldon, by now a part-time driver racing for Bryan Herta Autosport in his first race of the year – and only the squad's second ever IndyCar event – was second and closing, but nowhere near fast enough to catch the 2009 Indy Lights champion.

That left rookie JR Hildebrand in the lead for Panther Racing, a team that had finished second in the previous three 500s with 2005 winner Dan Wheldon.

Then, with just a few hundred yards to go, Hildebrand went to lap Charlie Kimball through the short chute between Turns 3 and 4 on the final lap. He got up into the grey and, with 199 laps' worth of detritus now stuck to his tyres, drifted up into the wall out of the final corner.

His momentum was such that he would still tricycle across the line in second, but by then Wheldon, who had run in the top six all day, was past and into the lead, having led just one quarter of a lap – the most important quarter of all! There have been few finishes more dramatic than that anywhere.

DISPLAY CAR WINS AS ANDRETTI'S CURSE STRIKES AGAIN

1987



8

Perhaps this race shouldn't be in here because Mario Andretti, driving a Newman/Haas Racing Lola-Chevrolet that had been engineered by Adrian Newey, spanked the opposition for most of the day, leading 170 of the first 177 laps. But no one could quite believe the closing 25 laps.

With a lap on second-placed Roberto Guerrero in the Vince Granatelli Racing March-Cosworth, suddenly Andretti's Chevy broke a valve spring. That handed the lead to Guerrero, but the Colombian had earlier hit a wheel that had come off another car, sending it up into a grandstand where it

had struck and killed a spectator.

The subsequent damage to the nose of the Granatelli car had also damaged the clutch slave cylinder, making it difficult for Guerrero to move from a standstill. Twice he stalled trying to leave his pitbox after his final stop, and he emerged second.

The new leader was veteran Al Unser, who had started the month without a ride, only stepping into a third Penske entry when Danny Ongais suffered an injurious crash in practice.

"AL UNSER'S STEADY CLIMB FROM 20TH PAID OFF AND HE SCORED HIS FINAL INDY WIN"

Unser's car, a March-Cosworth 86C, had been pulled into service from a display in a hotel lobby and only qualified on the second qualifying weekend.

But Unser's steady climb from 20th – just about dodging a wildly spinning Josele Garza (above, left) on the opening lap – paid off handsomely, and the near-48-year-old veteran scored his fourth and final Indy win, 18 years after his first in 1970.

Guerrero was second, matching his debut result of 1984, and the only other driver on the lead lap, with future Formula 1 tail-ender Fabrizio Barbazza (Arciero Racing March-Cosworth) two laps down in third.

HORNISH PIPS YOUNGER ANDRETTI ON THE LINE

2006



WEBB

Hornish pipped Andretti by just 0.06 seconds



ABBOTT



WILLIAMS

7

For most of the day, this looked like being Dan Wheldon's second straight Indy triumph, and his first for Chip Ganassi Racing.

He dominated the first 140 laps, chased by team-mate Scott Dixon, and Penske polesitter Sam Hornish Jr.

Both these pursuers would earn drivethrough penalties (Dixon for blocking, Hornish for leaving the pits with refuelling equipment still attached), but an inopportune caution period shuffled Wheldon back.

For rookie Marco Andretti, who had been running second but ducked into the pits just in time, the yellows were a blessing. At the restart he made short work of passing his father Michael's sister car to grab the lead, but a resurgent Hornish was on the prowl and he too had no problem passing the older Andretti.

On the penultimate lap he tried to pass Mario's grandson heading into Turn 3 but was so firmly rebuffed he lost momentum. But Hornish recovered and kept gaining on his prey over the remaining five turns.

Exiting the final corner on the last lap, the 2001 and 2002 IRL champion was firmly in Marco's slipstream. Timing his pass to perfection, Hornish slipstreamed the rookie to claim victory by 0.0635 seconds, the third-closest in event history.

FOYT AND SACHS TOP STELLAR CAST

1961

6

After the events of the previous year (see entry number 2), it was no surprise that Indy 500 sophomore Jim Hurtubise was a force to be reckoned with again as he burst from third on the grid and led the first 35 laps before his engine let go.

Nor that the previous year's winner Jim Rathmann, along with 1959 victor (and 1960 runner-up) Rodger Ward would also lead laps. With hindsight, it's also hardly a shock that, even as a rookie, Parnelli Jones was brilliant, lining up fifth on the grid and leading 27 laps.

But it was AJ Foyt (Bowes Seal Fast Trevis-Offy) and polesitter Eddie Sachs (Dean Van Lines Ewing-Offy) who dominated proceedings and duelled into the closing stages.

“THE FURIOUS TEXAN THEN BARRELLED IN TO RECEIVE THE NECESSARY SPLASH”

They had been pretty much even on pace for most of the race, and Foyt was surprised when he caught and passed Sachs with relative impunity on lap 170. Then he saw the pitboard hung out for him – ‘Fuel Low’ – and realised the crew had suffered a malfunction in what should have been his final stop, and hadn't got enough fuel in. He was fast because he was light.



Foyt took his first Indy 500 win from ninth on the grid

The furious Texan barrelled into the pits on lap 185 to receive the necessary splash, and was on his way again after just eight seconds, but now with all hope of victory lost.

Except Sachs, with four laps to go, saw the white cord showing on his crossply tyres, having perhaps been a tad too vigorous through the turns on his full fuel load. He felt

compelled to pit a lap later and so Foyt headed on to his first of four Indy triumphs, with Sachs finishing eight seconds in arrears, as Ward was almost a minute behind in third.

The next time Foyt won, 1964, it would be the final triumph for a roadster and a dreadful day for Indy following the death of two drivers, one of whom was Sachs.

CASTRONEVES'S NEAREST NEAR-MISS

2014



Hunter-Reay celebrates a hard-fought success

5

Helio Castroneves, who this year – qualifying allowing – will make his 20th Indy 500 start, is seeking to join AJ Foyt, Al Unser and Rick Mears in the four-time winners' club. But it's easy to forget how close the Brazilian has been to nailing that fourth triumph.

In 2003, he came up 0.2290s short to team-mate Gil de Ferran, and in 2017 he was 0.2011s behind Andretti Autosport's Takuma Sato, despite suffering damage to his rear wing in the trail of debris that resulted from Scott Dixon's enormous accident. But should he finish second again, it will surely not be closer than in 2014.

On that occasion, Ryan Hunter-Reay (Andretti Autosport) edged the Penske driver by just 0.06s. In other words, Castroneves's combined losses when finishing runner-up still haven't reached half a second!

The duel between RHR and Castroneves truly began on lap 183 but was interrupted by a red flag when Townsend Bell shunted on lap 193, and IndyCar was keen to see a race to the twin chequers after the 2012 and 2013 events (won by Dario Franchitti and Tony Kanaan respectively) had both finished under caution.

There were six laps to go at the restart and, as was typical in the Dallara DW12 era, the cars' tow meant regular changes of lead down the

front stretch, where the leader would hug the pitwall to force their pursuer to go the long way around at Turn 1.

On lap 197, with Castroneves leading, Hunter-Reay came off Turn 2 with better momentum and, while Castroneves felt like he'd gone far enough to the inside to force

“HUNTER-REAY RECKONED THE GAP BETWEEN THE PENSKE AND THE GRASS WAS ENOUGH”

the American to try the long way round into Turn 3, Hunter-Reay reckoned the gap between the Penske machine and the grass was enough to

squeeze himself through. And it was... just.

Two laps later, Castroneves was back in front and this time, as he headed down the back straight and spied Hunter-Reay was close and gaining again, he eliminated any thoughts the Andretti driver might have of making an inside manoeuvre again by edging closer to the grass.

It did the trick, but it was just enough to compromise Castroneves's own line into Turn 3 and therefore his speed through the short chute. Hitting the pitstraight for the penultimate time, Hunter-Reay was past him and into the lead even before they reached the yard of bricks. He then held on throughout that final lap to score a brilliant triumph.

UNSER JR BEATS CHARGING GOODYEAR

1992



Defensive masterclass brought Unser Jr victory



Goodyear would never get closer to winning the 500

4

This event had it all, even before the race. There was a tear-jerking moment as promising Philippines native Jovy Marcelo was killed in a practice crash, and a nausea-inducing moment as three-time F1 champion but Indy 500 rookie Nelson Piquet's Menard Lola had a head-on shunt with the wall. The mangling of his legs was inevitable, but his helmet's impact with the concrete could have made it much worse.

And then the charming and talented Roberto Guerrero earned pole but, as he led the field to the green on the parade lap, lost control while trying to warm his tyres in shockingly cold race-day temperatures and struck a barrier, putting his King Motorsports Lola-Buick out before the race had even begun.

It was a portent of what was to come, as veterans and rookies alike got involved in accidents. Still, finally it looked like the since-1969 curse of the Andretti family at IMS was finally going to be broken as Michael led for 160 laps, almost as dominant as his father had been five years earlier. But like his father five years earlier, mechanical failure – in this case, a broken fuel pump with just 10 laps to go – ended his hopes in cruel fashion.

That left a duel between Al Unser Jr in Galles Racing's unique Galmer chassis and Scott Goodyear in the Walker Racing Lola. Goodyear

“DESPITE PULLING OUT AT THE RIGHT MOMENT, GOODYEAR FELL 0.043s SHORT”

had failed to qualify but had taken over the car of team-mate Mike Groff, and had put in a remarkable drive from 33rd on the grid.

Before and after the final pitstops, the Canadian was heading Little Al, but tripped up on traffic with 15 laps to go, which allowed the 1990 series champion to pass him. It looked an even more crucial error once Andretti was out and this became a battle for the lead.

Following the inevitable caution, there was a seven-lap shootout – Unser with the greater experience, Goodyear with the better car but apparently uncertain how best to use it. He never figured it out and, despite pulling out of the slipstream at the right moment on the run to the chequered flag, Goodyear fell 0.043s short in the closest-ever Indy 500 finish.

MEARS TAKES HIS BEST VICTORY

1991

3

Rick Mears went through it all in the days leading up to what would be his penultimate appearance in the race. He suffered his first-ever crash at the Speedway during practice, when the right-rear wheel of his Penske PC20 broke, and the ensuing accident put him on his head and hurt his foot.

But come qualifying, Mears bounced back astoundingly to score his sixth pole position (still the record for Indy poles) and headed up one of the greatest front rows in Indy history, with AJ Foyt (making his 34th start) second, and Mario Andretti (making his 26th start) third.

On race day, it was the Newman/Haas Racing Lola of Michael Andretti that appeared to be dominant, only ceding the lead on pitstops. But Penskes pair Emerson Fittipaldi and Mears remained a lurking threat, both constantly adjusting their cars to the evolving track.

Fittipaldi, the 1989 winner (and 1993 victor to be), retired on lap 171 with gearbox failure. Mears pitted straight after and rejoined 10s

“THE PENSKE PILOT DIVED FOR THE APRON AND KEPT HIS FOOT IN, LAYING DOWN RUBBER”

behind Michael Andretti. While he got his tyres up to temperature, that deficit extended to 13s. Andretti still needed to stop but



Injured veteran Mears (3) beat a shocked Michael Andretti

he was able to do so under caution, and he rejoined directly behind Mears.

On the restart, John Andretti and Unser Jr, who had been heading the pack but were about to be lapped, kept well out of the way of the leaders. Mears got the initiative, but Andretti had greater momentum and, despite cold and worn tyres, went around the outside of the Penske at Turn 1 to grab the lead.

Mears, however, stayed in Andretti's

wheeltracks and, when the Newman/Haas driver dived for the Turn 1 apron next time by, the Penske pilot kept his foot in it, the right rear visibly laying down rubber.

This time it was Mears who used the outside line to claim the lead. Despite Mario Andretti chugging to a halt at pit entry and causing a final yellow, son Michael had nothing left for Mears, who went on to score his record-matching fourth Indy 500 win.

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RATHMANN WINS THE GREATEST DUEL

1960



2 In qualifying the talk had been all about Eddie Sachs taking a new four-lap qualifying record of 146.592mph on Pole Day. Yet eight days later, on the fourth and final day of qualifying, astounding rookie Jim Hurtubise slid his Christensen-Offy around the Brickyard with a new technique and at an astonishing average of 149.056mph. Of course, it was the

wrong day to do that and he wound up 23rd on the grid; he would climb to fifth on race day but was halted by his engine throwing a rod. So instead the race became one of the greatest duels of all time, a rematch of the 1959 race, when Rodger Ward had beaten Jim Rathmann. This time it was anyone's guess as to who would win but it was sure to be one of these two – no one else led after lap 95, the pair

outpacing early leaders such as Sachs, 1952 winner Troy Ruttman and Johnny Thomson. Ward had overcome a stall in the pits at his first stop, which had left him stationary for over a minute in an era when stops typically lasted barely more than 20s. It took him almost an hour to get up to the lead once more, but the fact that he could do so suggested his Leader Card entry clearly had the pace. But he just could not shake Rathmann's similar Watson-Offy (left) run by Ken Paul. Over the second half of the race, they swapped the lead a remarkable 14 times.

“WARD, LEADING WITH FOUR LAPS TO GO, SAW WHITE CORD AND BACKED OFF”

Ward was trying to nurse his tyres but, when Rathmann received word via pitboard that Thomson had got a second wind and was catching the pair of them,

both were obliged to run a hotter pace, to the detriment of their rubber. Ward, leading with four laps to go, suddenly saw white cord showing through his right-front Firestone. Rather than risk a blowout, and disinclined to sacrifice a big payday by pitting, he backed off, allowing Rathmann a clear run to victory, having finished runner-up on three previous occasions.

NEW STAR VERSUS WILY VETERAN

1982

1 Most people remember the 66th running of the Indianapolis 500 for one of three reasons – Gordon Smiley's fatal accident in qualifying, the startline shunt that wiped out the two biggest names in US racing, and the fact that 1973 Indy winner Gordon Johncock edged Rick Mears in an incredibly close finish for his second 500 victory.

The Penske PC10s of Mears and Kevin Cogan lined up 1-2 on the grid, but the race had barely started when Cogan lost control and impaled the March of third front-row starter AJ Foyt before being collected by the fast-starting Pat Patrick-run Wildcat of Mario Andretti. Both legends were furious, but at least Foyt was able to restart, albeit in a now ill-handling car; Andretti, like Cogan, was eliminated on the spot.

At the restart, Foyt surged into the lead and remained in contention for the first third of the race, but would later slow with transmission problems, resulting in iconic images of Foyt setting to work on his car in the pits with a hammer.

On track, the race distilled to a straight battle between Mears – already an Indy winner in 1979 and two-time champion – and the tenacious, brave and fast veteran Johncock in the second Patrick Wildcat.



With 40 laps to go, there was a restart in which Mears retained his lead only until the back straight, when Johncock moved ahead and the pair continued in tandem. Mears was able to run anywhere in the turns as he probed Johncock's defences, but the 1976 USAC National champion's superior top-end speed allowed him to legitimately cut down from the outside to the apron and take the perfect racing line, cutting off Mears and disturbing his

“MEARS DREW ALONGSIDE AND STALLED THERE, WITH NO OPTION BUT TO BACK OFF”

downforce. It was a quite brilliant duel. A late-race fuel stop was required for both, with Mears first in on lap 183. But not only did he tag his left-front

wing on the tail of a backmarker, but he was also given more than a splash, which would hurt his dash. After Johncock stopped three laps later, he was more than 11s to the good. Mears gave full vent to his Penske's potential and slashed the deficit. Coming off Turn 4 to start the last lap, Mears was so much faster it looked like a change of lead was inevitable. But, as per pre-pitstop, he drew alongside and stalled there, and with no option but to back off as Johncock (above) came down to take his normal line for Turn 1. Mears gathered it up, moved up onto Johncock's tail as they entered Turn 4 for the final time, but crossed the yard of bricks 0.16s short. It would remain the closest finish in Indy history for 10 years.

THE GRID

ROW 1



1
Marco Andretti (USA)
231.068mph



2
Scott Dixon (NZL)
231.051mph



3
Takuma Sato (JPN)
230.725mph

ROW 2



4
Rinus VeeKay (NLD)
230.704mph



5
Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)
230.648mph



6
James Hinchcliffe (CAN)
229.870mph

ROW 3



7
Alex Palou (ESP)
229.676mph



8
Graham Rahal (USA)
229.380mph



9
Alexander Rossi (USA)
229.234mph

ROW 4



10
Colton Herta (USA)
230.775mph



11
Marcus Ericsson (SWE)
230.566mph



12
Spencer Pigot (USA)
230.539mph

ROW 5



13
Josef Newgarden (USA)
230.296mph



14
Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)
230.254mph



15
Pato O'Ward (MEX)
230.213mph

ROW 6



16
Ed Carpenter (USA)
230.211mph



17
Zach Veach (USA)
229.961mph



18
Conor Daly (USA)
229.955mph

ROW 7



19
Santino Ferrucci (USA)
229.924mph



20
Jack Harvey (GBR)
229.861mph



21
Oliver Askew (USA)
229.760mph

ROW 8



22
Will Power (AUS)
229.701mph



23
Tony Kanaan (BRA)
229.154mph



24
Dalton Kellett (CAN)
228.880mph

ROW 9



25
Simon Pagenaud (FRA)
228.836mph



26
Fernando Alonso (ESP)
228.768mph



27
James Davison (AUS)
228.747mph

ROW 10



28
Helio Castroneves (BRA)
228.373mph



29
Charlie Kimball (USA)
227.758mph



30
Max Chilton (GBR)
227.303mph

ROW 11



31
Sage Karam (USA)
227.099mph



32
JR Hildebrand (USA)
226.341mph



33
Ben Hanley (GBR)
222.917mph



Dixon is way ahead in points

CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Dixon	252
2	Pagenaud	195
3	Newgarden	191
4	O'Ward	162
5	Rahal	144
6	Power	142
7	Herta	140
8	Ericsson	137
9	Rosenqvist	120
10	Rossi	119
11	Palou	117
12	Ferrucci	116
13	Askew	115
14	Daly	111
15	Hunter-Reay	109
16	Sato	106
17	VeeKay	101
18	Harvey	101
19	Kimball	97
20	Veach	95
21	Andretti	80
22	Carpenter	52
23	Kanaan	51
24	Chilton	42
25	Hinchcliffe	35
26	Kellett	29
27	Pigot	7
28	Karam	7

Points updated following Indy 500 qualifying



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