

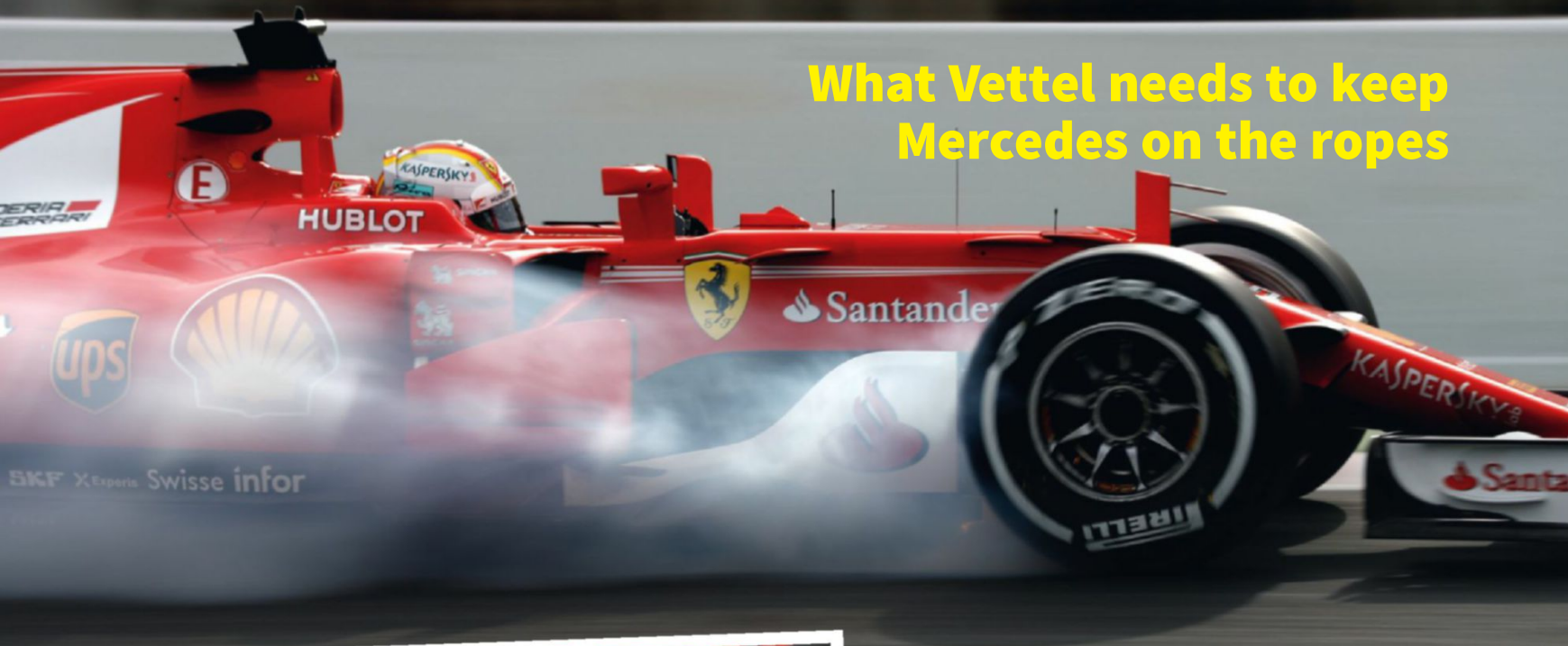
**DI GRASSI'S MIRACLE  
FORMULA E VICTORY**

**TOYOTA TOPS MONZA  
WORLD ENDURO TEST**

**ROB HUFF ON  
WTCC 2017**

# **AUTOSPORT**

# **CAN FERRARI STAY ON TOP?**



**What Vettel needs to keep  
Mercedes on the ropes**



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# Now Ferrari needs to show its true mettle

**IT'S THE QUESTION MANY FORMULA 1 FANS HAVE** been chewing over since Sebastian Vettel crossed the line to win the Australian Grand Prix last month: can Ferrari maintain its challenge to Mercedes this season?

It's an absolutely crucial question in terms of how exciting F1 will be in 2017, and what the general perception of the new rules will be. There wasn't a lot of overtaking in Melbourne, but because there was a fight for the lead – and a non-Mercedes winner – many people didn't seem to mind too much.

As recent history (2007, '08) has shown, not every race needs to be a stormer to create an entertaining season. What is important is that there are two (or more) teams that take it in turns to win, providing an interesting storyline and a championship fight.

So, the pressure is now on Ferrari to give us that. In our cover story, Ben Anderson looks at just how far the team has gone to lay solid foundations and avoid the false dawns we saw in 2010 and '16.

- The British Touring Car Championship kicked off at Brands Hatch last weekend and provided the usual mix of excitement, surprises, drama and controversy. Reigning champion Gordon Shedden emerged on top, but will be concerned about the pace of the new WSR BMW 125i M Sport. After being taken out at the start of race one, Colin Turkington charged through the field next time out and then finished right behind team-mate Andrew Jordan in the finale. The BTCC's 2017 storyline has already begun.



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Dunbar/LAT; Gary Hawkins

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# NIGEL ROEBUCK

## When drivers raced for free

### FIFTY YEARS AGO THE BRITISH

Formula 1 fan was very well served. If the 1967 season began at New Year, at Kyalami, and continued at Monaco in early May, in the interim no fewer than three non-championship races were run, all of them in the UK. At Brands Hatch Dan Gurney's Eagle narrowly beat Lorenzo Bandini's Ferrari in the Race of Champions, and at Silverstone Maranello's sole representative Mike Parkes won the *Daily Express* Trophy from Jack's Brabham.

In between times there was a race at Oulton Park, the Spring Cup, and it occupies a niche in the sport's history, for this was surely the only time the Formula 1 teams – and drivers – ever raced for free.

The foundations of the event were laid at Spa a year earlier, when the Belgian Grand Prix was run in atrocious conditions, and on the opening lap Jackie Stewart was seriously injured in an accident that might have killed him. This was the old ultra-fast Spa, of course, and given that it was nearly nine miles round, the capricious local climate frequently made for a circuit dry on one side, wet on the other.

It was just so that Sunday in June 1966. Away from the grid it was dry, but further round the lap it was not, and several drivers aquaplaned off, all escaping unhurt save Stewart, whose BRM went off at – of all places – the Masta

Kink, finishing up in a farmyard. Jackie, whose injuries included a broken collarbone, as well as fuel burns from a split tank, was trapped in the car, and so inept – so *absent* – was the marshalling that it was left to Graham Hill and Bob Bondurant (who had had accidents of their own) to release him.

The *patron* of the BRM team was Louis Stanley, and if undeniably he was a pompous and self-important fellow, so also he did more than most for driver safety at a time when it was as good as non-existent. A minute before the start an official asked Stanley if he were aware that it was pouring down on the far side of the circuit. No, he wasn't – and, more to the point, neither were the drivers, whom no-one had thought to inform.

So chaotic was the rescue operation – in a vintage bone-shaker of an ambulance Stewart was taken first to a hospital in Verviers, then to another in Liege, before finally being flown to London – that Stanley resolved to do something about it, and thus it was the following spring that the International Grand Prix Medical Service was launched, this taking the form of a huge articulated truck, containing facilities of a greater sophistication than were to be found at any circuit.

The white pantechicon, with prominent red cross, made its first appearance at Oulton,



A good crowd turned out to watch Jack Brabham win the Spring Cup at Oulton Park



International Grand Prix Medical Service truck brought new facilities

and did not come cheap, the cost being put at £50,000, which was quite a sum half a century ago – and we need to remember, too, how different were the times in other ways. In today's world it is considered a news story that this year Lewis Hamilton is choosing to travel – gasps of shock all round – without a personal trainer; in 1967 Ferrari's number one driver Chris Amon had a retainer of \$1000 a month.

Not surprisingly the drivers, together with a variety of racing-associated companies, willingly made contributions to Stanley's venture, but these did not cover its cost, so it was decided to put on a race for F1 and F2 cars – in effect, a charity event – for which there would be neither 'starting money' for the teams nor prize money for the drivers. Instead that cash would go towards the mobile hospital, as would the day's takings at Oulton.

Invited to send over a car for which there





LAT IMAGES

would be no financial return, Enzo Ferrari did not deign even to reply, and more surprisingly Cooper, too, did not attend. As well as that, an Eagle entered for Richie Ginther had to be withdrawn, as was Ken Tyrrell's F2 Matra, down to be driven by Jacky Ickx. Lotus, awaiting the new Cosworth DFV, entered a pair of F2 cars.

If there were therefore significant gaps in the entry list, and in the end only 10 cars went to the grid, most were of real quality, including BRMs for Stewart and Mike Spence, Brabhams for Jack and Denny Hulme and a Honda V12 for John Surtees. The man who could least afford to race *gratis*, privateer Bob Anderson, entered his Brabham, while present in two-litre cars were Bruce McLaren and Piers Courage. In the F2 Lotuses were G Hill and, standing in for the tax-exiled Jim Clark, Jackie Oliver.

This was Oulton in its glory days, long before falling victim to chicane blight, and

## “Invited to send over a car for which there was no financial reward, Enzo Ferrari did not deign even to reply”

my overwhelming memory of the weekend is the sight in practice of Stewart's BRM H16 – a brute of a racing car – thundering down to Knicker Brook, then up and over the top of Clay Hill on the way to a comfortable pole position, three seconds inside the lap record...

As for race day, the weather was chilly but bright, the crowd – predictably in those days – sizeable, even if, with its small field of cars, one had almost the impression of a club meeting for Formula 1. The race was run in two 10-lap heats, both won by Hulme, and a 30-lap

final, won by Brabham, and if the drivers were racing for no reward you would never have known it, Surtees wringing the neck of the cumbersome Honda en route to third place, Hill inspired in the nimble Lotus.

Back in those pre-Bernie Ecclestone days, it was customary in the race programme to list the prize money, but that April weekend at Oulton there was simply this: “To the winner of the Spring Cup race: the Spring Cup, with a souvenir award to each finisher in the final”. A pleasing memory from another time. ❧



### FORMULA 1

## Why F1 tech bosses wel

ROSS BRAWN'S RETURN TO THE FORMULA 1 world in the capacity of managing director of motorsports has been welcomed by teams – and in particular their technical directors.

Brawn has been charged by F1's new owners with finding a future direction for the category, and that means he will play a key role in helping to define the FIA sporting and technical rules. His involvement in last week's discussions over the post-2020 engine regulations (see p10) reflected his desire to see the bigger picture.

Brawn is also putting together a task force, including F1 engineers such as Pat Symonds, to help with specific projects. Either Brawn himself or members of his team will take part in rule-making forums such as Technical Regulations Meetings, where Charlie Whiting and other FIA staffers thrash out future rule changes with team technical chiefs. The latter have welcomed Brawn's involvement in the process.

"I think that too often we change regulations without doing enough research and asking why we are changing them first," says Adran Newey, briefly Brawn's colleague at the 1980s Beatrice Haas team, and then his main rival for many years. "To me what was good about the rule changes for 2009 was that there was a proper body of work done by the Overtaking Working Group. And I think it did help. It wasn't perhaps the unqualified success that was originally hoped

for, but it was a good body of work, and it produced a good set of rules.

"To me what we've suffered from recently is nobody really stepping back and saying first of all, most importantly, what do we want to achieve from a set of regulation changes? And then once we've done that, OK, what set of regulations should we draft to achieve that?"

"With the Concorde Agreement expiring at the end of 2020, it sounds a long, long way away, but if there's going to be a new set of engine regulations as part of that, then 2021 is not actually that far away. It would be great if a small group of people, or perhaps a single person, grabs that opportunity by the hands, canvasses opinion, and then sets about saying, 'What do we want to achieve in 2021 and beyond?' Ross has obviously been appointed by Liberty to start to think about that, and it's a good thing."

Newey's views are shared by his peers up and down the pitlane, who agree that Brawn's input into the regulatory framework will be a positive. "The things that I've heard reported have been very sensible," notes Toro Rosso's James Key. You've got to have a long-term plan for such a complicated sport. It's great to have someone of Ross's experience and stature to help with that."

McLaren's Tim Goss says that the old system of teams having the major say worked – stressing that the 2017 rules prove that – but





**FORMULA 1**

**GIOVINAZZI  
BACK IN  
SAUBER  
FOR CHINA**

ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI will continue to race for Sauber in this weekend's Chinese Grand Prix – and could also compete in Bahrain – as Pascal Wehrlein battles to regain fitness after pulling out of Formula 1's season opener in Australia.

Ferrari reserve Giovinazzi (above) was called up suddenly in Melbourne after Wehrlein had driven in free practice on Friday and decided he wouldn't be fit enough to complete the race. The Italian finished the GP in 12th position.

Mercedes junior Wehrlein suffered a back injury from a crash during January's Race Of Champions event, which forced him to skip the first pre-season F1 test in Barcelona and avoid heavy physical training while he recovered.

The FIA passed him fit to race in Australia, but Wehrlein only completed short stints during the second pre-season test in Spain and struggled to achieve consistent lap times in Melbourne.

Sauber anticipates that the 22-year-old may have to wait until the Russian Grand Prix at the end of April to make his comeback. "For me the most important thing is that I can train intensively to ensure a 100% performance from my side as soon as possible," said Wehrlein.

"Hopefully this can be in Bahrain but, if not, then we will take the time it needs until Russia to make sure I am completely ready."

**BEN ANDERSON**

# come Brawn's rules input

agrees that Brawn's input can only be beneficial.

"We know Ross from the past, and he's got a huge wealth of experience on the technical side," says Goss. "And it's useful to have that input into Liberty. I personally spend a lot of time with the FIA developing the regulations. We played a significant role in developing these regulations – along with several of the other teams we jointly worked it out together.

"The changes we've made this time round were there to make the cars faster, make them look more aggressive, make them harder to drive, and I think we've achieved all of those aims. And actually we're looking forward to an exciting season.

"What Liberty want to do is look beyond that to the next three to five years, and where the sport's going to go, so there's closer competition and exciting racing.

"Clearly Ross and Liberty have got ideas about the future of the sport. It is about taking a long-term view to make sure it's sustainable and exciting. But at the same time we have to keep F1 at the pinnacle of motorsport."

Force India's Andy Green is pleased that Brawn has already made it clear that he wants things to be simpler, a philosophy that will

make the sport easier for the public to follow.

"We've got our views on which direction we'd like the sport to go in from a technical perspective," says Green. "He's talking the same sort of language we're talking, which is try to make it simpler. So we're all for that. I'm looking forward to hearing what he's got to say. He's mentioned DRS and the gimmicks we've got, and we're all for simplifying the sport."

In the past the rules have been hostage to the self-interests of teams, with everyone defending their perceived advantage, and trying to sabotage anything that might help rivals. The hope has to be that, thanks to his skill set and unique standing in the sport, Brawn will be in a position to override that. Early indications

are that the teams will accept his input.

"I've known Ross for a long time; I've worked with him closely," says Renault's Bob Bell, who was previously at Mercedes. "He will bring a measure of stature to the sport, and he's a great mediator. I think he will do a very good job in representing the commercial rights holder with the teams, with the FIA and helping to bring consensus to what the sport needs for the future."

**ADAM COOPER**

**"He's talking the same sort of language as we're talking"**





WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

# Toyota v Porsche: who's ahead?

TOYOTA BEAT PORSCHE AT THE TOP of the times – and by some margin – in the official World Endurance Championship pre-season test at Monza. Yet few conclusions could be drawn from the events of last weekend's two-day 'prologue'. Especially when it comes to making predictions for the season opener at Silverstone on April 16.

The two remaining LMP1 manufacturers chose to unveil their respective 2017 contenders in low-downforce specification aimed at the Le Mans 24 Hours last Friday and then run them in that spec at the high-speed Italian venue. That meant little was learnt with regard to the season opener, even if Porsche is still not telling us which version of its latest 919 Hybrid it will run against the high-downforce Toyota TS050 HYBRIDS at Silverstone.

Toyota came out on top with marque returnee Nicolas Lapierre on a 1m30.547s after a more concerted push against the stopwatch. The Japanese manufacturer's pre-season focus on getting miles on its updated TS050, which incorporates an all-new version of the 2.4-litre twin-turbo V6 introduced last year, meant it had yet to undertake any qualification simulations prior to Monza.

Mike Conway went fastest with a 1m31.332s set on a qualification run on Saturday afternoon, before both manufacturers gave it a go with both their cars at the start of Saturday evening's

night session. Neel Jani came out on top for Porsche on a 1m31.666s, which compared with the best Toyota time of 1m31.970s from Kazuki Nakajima. But the Japanese driver had been on course to break into the 1m30s before aborting a second lap courtesy of an issue with the Toyota's lights.

Rain was already beginning to fall and there would be no more dry running that session. Porsche opted not to simulate a qualification run again, but Toyota gave four of its drivers the chance in the final session of the test on Sunday afternoon.

Lapierre, driving the #8 at Monza with Nakajima and Anthony Davidson, set his mark on his first flying lap at the start of the session. The Briton would end up just a couple of tenths slower when he was given a shot later in the three-hour session. Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi were given runs in the #7 car they shared with LMP1 newcomer Yuji Kunimoto, Kobayashi doing a 1m31.477s.

"We have done several qualification simulations because it was clearly one of our weaknesses last year," said Toyota Motorsport GmbH technical director Pascal Vasselon. "We don't really need to do long runs because we have done nearly 35,000km of testing and several times 33 hours. This was the right time before Silverstone to practise this."

Porsche opted to focus on race simulations on the second day of the test after conducting set-up work on the first,

**Toyota set the fastest time, but it's unclear what set-up Porsche will run at Silverstone**

and ran full stints of up to 31 laps with both cars over the two sessions. Its Sunday best was a 1m31.844s set by Nick Tandy in the afternoon.

"A 30.5 is a quick lap from Toyota, but that's a quality sim and we've been double-stinting [the tyres] this afternoon," said Jani. "I really couldn't tell you if we could do that or not. Only me and Earl [Bamber in the sister car] did quality sims last night and we did just one lap each because the rain was coming."

It appears that Toyota has learnt how to get the most out of its package, most pertinently the battery energy-storage system introduced last year, over one lap. That's a positive for the team and about the only conclusion pertinent to Silverstone that could be drawn from the events of last weekend at Monza.

"We have a result here and it is what it is," said Vasselon. "I cannot extrapolate too much from it, even if we can be reasonably satisfied with it. We will only know later if it means anything."

**GARY WATKINS**

## RESULTS MONZA WEC TEST – LMP1 TOP FOUR

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Nicolas Lapierre	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	1m30.547s
2	Mike Conway	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	1m31.332s
3	Neel Jani	Porsche 919 Hybrid	1m31.666s
4	Earl Bamber	Porsche 919 Hybrid	1m31.823s



## IN THE HEADLINES



**PILET AND WERNER IN PORSCHE CALL-UP**  
 IMSA SportsCar Championship team-mates Patrick Pilet and Dirk Werner have taken the final spots in Porsche's GTE Pro line-up for Le Mans. Pilet (above) will join Richard Lietz and Frederic Makowiecki, while Werner will share the other 911 RSR with Kevin Estre and Michael Christensen.

**MOLINA HEADS GTE AM TIMES**

Miguel Molina ended up fastest in GTE Am over the two days at Monza aboard his AF-run Spirit of Race Ferrari 488 GTE. The Spaniard beat second-placed Ben Barker's best in the Gulf Racing Porsche by less than two tenths.

**DI GRASSI GETS FERRARI LE MANS RIDE**

Audi-contracted Lucas di Grassi will return to the Le Mans 24 Hours with the factory AF Corse Ferrari squad. The Brazilian, formerly part of Audi's LMP1 set-up, will share the #51 Ferrari 488 GTE with James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi. Molina will move across from AF's GTE Am entry for Le Mans to drive the #71 488 with Sam Bird and Davide Rigon. Pierre Kaffer will return to Risi Competizione to share its 488 GTE with Giancarlo Fisichella and Toni Vilander.

**BYKOLLES HAS SHAKEDOWN PROBLEMS**

The ByKolles LMP1 privateer squad completed what turned out to be a short shakedown of its latest ENSO CLM-Nissan P1/01 at Monza. The car managed six laps – and just one flying lap – in the rain on Saturday night in the hands of Oliver Webb after its build was finished in the pits. What were described as “small issues” resulted in the team opting to go home before Robert Kubica could drive.

**SERRA JOINS ASTON MARTIN SQUAD**

Brazilian V8 Stock Car series leader Daniel Serra will race for Aston Martin for the first time this season in the opening three WEC rounds up to and including the Le Mans 24 Hours. Serra will drive with Darren Turner and Jonny Adam. Richie Stanaway will share the #95 car with reigning class champions Nicki Thiim and Marco Sorensen in the opening three rounds.

**IDEC LIGIER TOPS ELMS TEST**

The European Le Mans Series test at Monza was headed by Patrice Lafargue in the IDEC Sport Ligier JSP217 (below). His 1m36.461s shaded the best by Memo Rojas in the DragonSpeed-run G-Drive ORECA by two tenths.



# 911 RSRs show the way in GTE class

IF THERE WERE ANY DOUBTS THAT Porsche's new mid-engined 911 RSR was going to put the German manufacturer somewhere back near the top of the tree in GTE Pro, they were pretty much dispelled at Monza. It enjoyed a domination of sorts at the weekend.

The pair of factory Porsches ended the test one-two in the times and one or other of the two cars was fastest in four of the five sessions over the weekend, including in the wet on Saturday night. Perhaps most significant was that the Porsches, running in high-downforce configuration, were faster than the only car in GTE Pro to run Le Mans aerodynamics at the test.

Michael Christensen ended up quickest with a time set in the first session, while Frederic Makowiecki was second fastest with a lap posted on Sunday morning. The car that was consistently closest to the Porsches, the Ganassi Ford GT shared by Harry

Tincknell and Andy Priaulx, ended up third with a lap set by Tincknell.

Tincknell and Priaulx were testing with low aero, which some of Ford's rivals suggested was the fastest way around Monza. That wasn't necessarily the case, however. Olivier Pla was only four hundredths shy of Tincknell's time in the sister Ford running in high-downforce trim.

Matthieu Vaxiviere edged out Bruno Senna at the top of the LMP2 lap times. The Brazilian initially led the way aboard the #13 Rebellion ORECA-Gibson 07, setting a 1m36.094s in the opening session.

That stood as the test best until Vaxiviere pipped him with a 1m36.078s on Sunday morning aboard the TDS Racing ORECA. The Frenchman admitted that he was disappointed not to break into the 1m35s and reckoned he might have done but for a minor issue with the brake balance.

**GARY WATKINS**

**RESULTS MONZA WEC TEST – LMP2 TOP SIX**

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Matthieu Vaxiviere	TDS ORECA07	1m36.078s
2	Bruno Senna	Rebellion ORECA07	1m36.094s
3	Ho-Pin Tung	Jota ORECA07	1m36.448s
4	Roman Rusinov	G-Drive (TDS) ORECA07	1m36.456s
5	Nelson Panciatici	Signatech Alpine ORECA07	1m36.559s
6	Vitaly Petrov	Manor ORECA07	1m36.590s

**RESULTS MONZA WEC TEST – GTE TOP SIX**

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Michael Christensen	Porsche 911 RSR	1m47.397s
2	Frederic Makowiecki	Porsche 911 RSR	1m47.515s
3	Harry Tincknell	Ford GT	1m47.530s
4	Olivier Pla	Ford GT	1m47.572s
5	James Calado	Ferrari 488 GTE	1m48.192s
6	Davide Rigon	Ferrari 488 GTE	1m48.232s

LAT IMAGES



P34  
 LOTTERER  
 INTERVIEW



F1 in 1996: was that loud enough for everybody?

**FORMULA 1**

## F1 AGREES TO GO LOUDER, CHEAPER AND SIMPLER

FORMULA 1 IS SET to ditch its current engine formula of turbocharged hybrid power units in favour of cheaper and noisier engines from 2021.

FIA president Jean Todt met with F1's current manufacturers, plus representatives from outside the sport including the Volkswagen Group, in Paris last Friday to discuss whether F1 should look at a different type of power unit in the future.

During that meeting, a broad agreement was reached about a new path for F1 to follow, which will likely result in the abandonment of 1.6-litre turbo-hybrid units, although some of the technology may remain.

Although discussions to frame the exact specification of engines will take several years, the FIA issued a statement on Saturday saying that a broad outline of goals had been agreed.

It stated that there had been agreement for the engines to

remain road relevant, but at the same time becoming simpler, and cheaper to develop.

Furthermore, the engines have to maintain high power levels, with better sound and a 'desire to allow drivers to drive harder at all times'.

This desire is likely related to a move away from the fuel-economy limitations of the current regulations, which impose a 105kg petrol limit in races.

Todt said: "I was very pleased with the process, and the fact that so many different stakeholders were able to agree on a direction for the FIA F1 World Championship in such an important technical area.

"Now we must sit down and work through the fine details of exactly what the 2021 power units will be. But we have begun on the right foot, and I am looking forward to working through the process to come up with the best decision into the future."

**JONATHAN NOBLE**

**WORLD RALLYCROSS**

# Hands off, car makers!

World Rallycross wants manufacturer support – but only in assistance to the championship's teams

**T**he World Rallycross Championship will remain free from direct manufacturer influence in an effort to provide privateer drivers with a level playing field for as long as possible, according to series chief Paul Bellamy.

Audi, Ford, Peugeot and now Volkswagen are all active, high-profile carmakers in WRX, but their programmes are run through private teams rather than as pure manufacturers in the style of, for example, Hyundai in the World Rally Championship. This helps contain costs, ensuring the true privateers still have a shot at victory.

Bellamy told Autosport: "We want the manufacturers to commit to the teams in the paddock – the guys out there who have invested in their own teams and in this championship. We don't want them to come as pure manufacturers and we've been very open and clear about this. We get a lot of requests from manufacturers that aren't in already and we'll introduce them to the teams already in the paddock. We're not courting the manufacturers but we're delighted there's so much interest.

"Running things this way keeps the series competitive. Don't forget, it was only 14 months ago [in the 2015 season finale at Rosario] that Robin Larsson won. He went out there with his dad and two or three mechanics and won. This goes back to the old days where the minnows and the underdogs were still winning. I'm not sure how long we can hold on to that, but it would be nice to do so for as long as possible."

Volkswagen is the newest firm to the party and the manufacturer's motorsport director Sven Smeets is absolutely clear that the shift to rallycross in no way replicates his team's commitment to the WRC.

"We are working with Petter Solberg's team," said Smeets, "and the team is Petter's. We are building and helping to run the car, that's all."

That attitude is mirrored around the paddock, with Ford Performance backing Ken Block's Hoonigan Racing squad while the cars are run by M-Sport; the Audis are tended by Mattias Ekstrom's own EKS team and the Hansen squad fields Peugeots for Timmy Hansen and Sebastien Loeb.

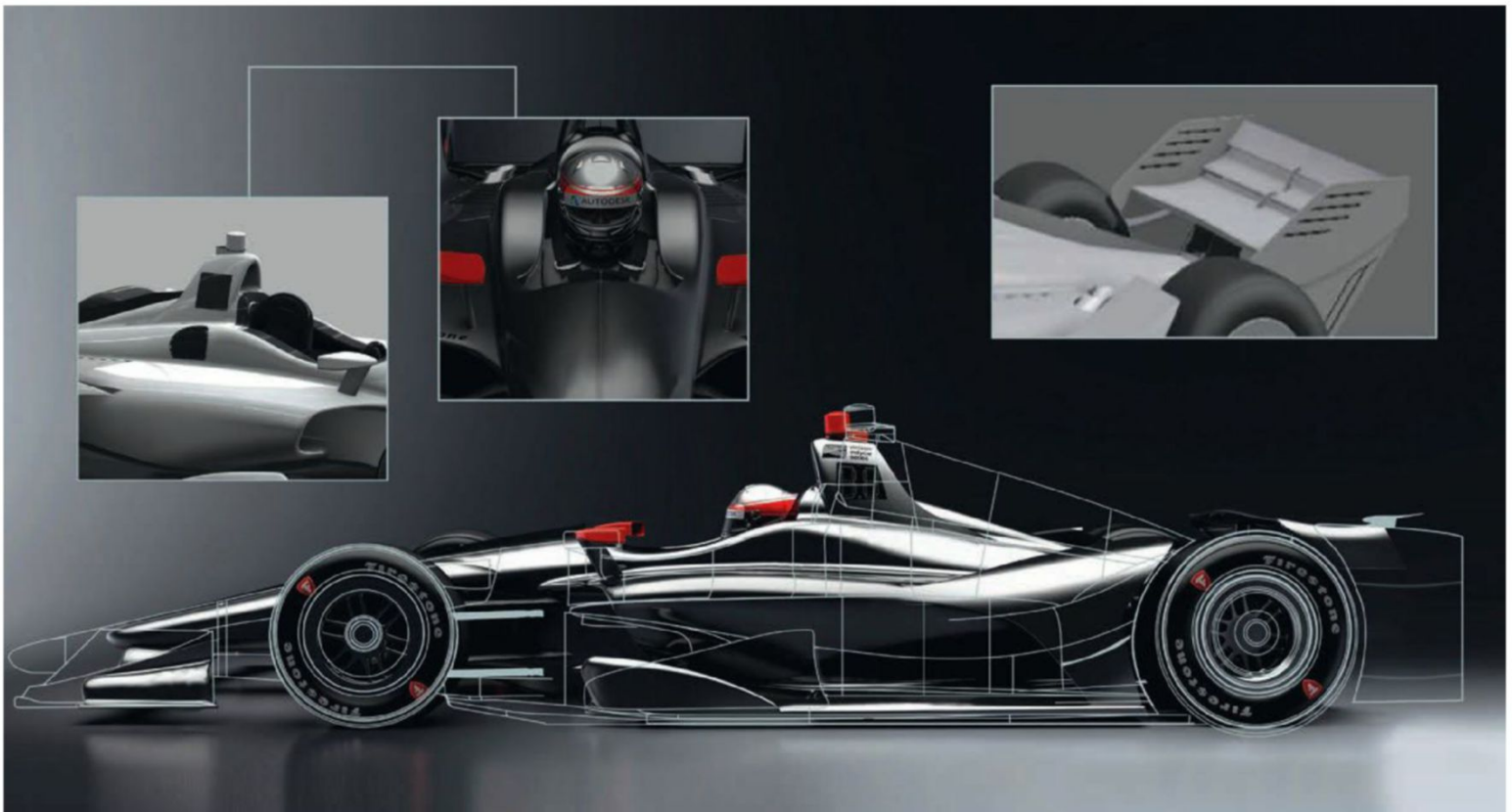
One of the areas global manufacturers are voicing an opinion is on the use of electric-powered cars. But Bellamy is firm on that: the supercars are staying in World Rallycross.

"I don't think electric necessarily fits in with what we're doing," said Bellamy. "I think electric fits in well with the format of RX, but I'm not entirely convinced of the idea of running electric cars over the same weekend as World RX. It's such a different thing and it's certainly not something we're ignoring, but it's still quite a long way off for us. This series is still growing, but we're a growing world championship based on the combustion engine."

**DAVID EVANS**







**INDYCAR** The current era of IndyCar racing isn't exactly renowned for the beauty of its cars, but things are looking up for 2018 onwards. These are the first images revealed of the rework to the spec Dallara IR-12 once the series returns to standard bodykits, after its current three-year period of allowing engine suppliers Chevrolet and Honda to sculpt their own looks for the machine. There will be two versions: high-downforce bodywork for road and street courses plus short ovals; and low-downforce for the high-speed ovals and superspeedways. Side-impact structures and radiator location have been altered for safety purposes. IndyCar describes it as a "work in progress", with testing due in the summer.

## FORMULA 2

# De Vries flourishing in F2 with Rapax

WHILE DAMS DRIVER NICHOLAS Latifi set the overall quickest time in last week's final pre-season Formula 2 test in Bahrain, the form of GP3 graduate Nyck de Vries continued to impress.

The McLaren junior, who did a late deal with Rapax for 2017, was fastest in three of the six sessions. Across the 12 sessions held at Barcelona and in Bahrain, the Italian squad has topped five (four for de Vries, one for category veteran Johnny Cecotto Jr).

Many regard Rapax as the most underrated team in the paddock, despite winning the title with Pastor Maldonado in 2010 and taking Sergey Sirotkin to third spot in '15. The Andrea Bergamini-run squad struggled to attract drivers with budgets for this year – both de Vries and Cecotto are known to have found it difficult to raise funds.

De Vries says Rapax reminds him of his karting days based in Italy. "I feel extremely happy in their environment," the Dutchman enthused. "They have a

lot of passion, they have a great workshop and it really feels like a tight-knit group, like a family. They are from the same region as the kart factory I always raced for and it feels like coming home."

The tradition for tests in F2 (and its GP2 predecessor) is for the last morning to be used as a 'dummy' qualifying session. De Vries topped this in Bahrain by 0.007s from Oliver Rowland (DAMS), but is cautious not to read too much into it. "The weather conditions were a little bit unpredictable and this probably messed things up," he said. "But of course everyone was on option tyres on the last morning.

"Tyre management in the race is more of a challenge. So it's great having Johnny as my team-mate because he is such an experienced driver."

The first day of the Bahrain test was topped by GP3 champion Charles Leclerc (Prema), with Luca Ghiotto also heading a session for Russian Time.

**MARCUS SIMMONS**



De Vries has been a testing standout in F2 pre-season



**FORMULAE**  
**FERRARI**  
**FORMULA E**  
**INTEREST**  
**HEIGHTENS**

FERRARI CEO SERGIO Marchionne says that the manufacturer needs to get involved in Formula E.

Marchionne (above) first flagged Ferrari's interest in the all-electric series last November, and has now discussed a potential programme in sterner terms.

"We need to be involved in Formula E because electrification via hybridisation is going to be part of our future," Marchionne told the FIA's official magazine, *Auto*.

"Hybridisation is crucial to Ferrari. There is no denying that regulations put us under pressure, but we could reach those targets in other ways. The challenge is to benefit from hybridisation not just in terms of emissions reduction, but also performance."

Ferrari is thought highly unlikely to become a full-blown Formula E manufacturer until at least 2022 but could enter via a branding partnership with an existing private team. This is most likely to be through the Fiat name, which recently unveiled the all-electric 500.

Ferrari has a partnership with Russian software giant Kaspersky, which is understood to have looked at Formula E.

As well as supporting Ferrari's junior drivers in Formula 2, GP3 and Formula 3, Kaspersky Racing runs GT3 cars in the Blancpain GT Series.

It is thought Kaspersky could also provide a platform for a 12th Formula E team from the 2019-20 season.

**SAM SMITH**



**WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP**

# Toyota adds at least two more years to WEC attack

TOYOTA WILL RACE ON IN THE WORLD ENDURANCE Championship until the end of 2019 at least. That represents an extension of its previous commitment to continue until the end of this season, though it was always at pains to stress that there was no end-date set for the LMP1 programme.

Toyota Motorsport GmbH team director Rob Leupen explained that a freeze on the rules until 2019, which delayed the introduction of new regulations increasing the scope for energy-retrieval set for '18, had played a major part in the decision. "We will continue at least until 2019; this has been decided but we have not spoken out loud about it," said Leupen. "Definitely the [changes to the] rules have helped us be cost-effective, but in the end the main issue is road relevance."

"We want to showcase technology in the WEC: it is important that we keep hybrid-powertrain development. So we are saying that we will continue at least until 2019; this has been decided."

Toyota and Porsche have taken further steps to reduce costs alongside the rules freeze, which means neither will produce a new monocoque during the current cycle of regulations. That means that the next two Toyotas will be built around the same tub introduced last year on the first-iteration TS050 HYBRID.

Porsche, which is committed to the WEC to the end of 2018, is using a monocoque that came on stream in its second year back in top-flight sportscar racing in 2015.

**GARY WATKINS**



**FORMULA 3**

# Prema duo's warning shot

PREMA POWERTEAM DUO CALLUM ILOTT and Maximilian Gunther were on form as the Formula 3 European Championship had its second and final official pre-season test at the Red Bull Ring last week.

Ilott (above) topped two of the sessions and set the overall fastest lap, while Gunther's effort – which put the German at the top of the times on the final afternoon – left him 0.136 seconds adrift of

his British team-mate in second overall.

Hitech GP, having hitherto stayed below the radar during testing, showed some speed with Jake Hughes netting second fastest to Ilott in the quickest session, this time being the third fastest across the test.

The remaining session was topped by Carlin's Lando Norris.

F3's junior brethren in the Formula Renault Eurocup were also in action, in

their case at the Nurburgring.

Fastest overall, with a time set on the second morning, was Josef Kaufmann Racing's Sacha Fenestraz, who was a substantial 0.373s faster than R-ace GP contender Will Palmer. Fenestraz headed two of the sessions, with the others topped by Max Defourny (R-ace) and Richard Verschoor (MP Motorsport).

**MARCUS SIMMONS**



## IN THE HEADLINES

### KOBAYASHI TO RACE IN SPA 24 HOURS

Toyota World Endurance Championship racer Kamui Kobayashi will make his Spa 24 Hours debut in July's running of the Belgian classic with the team of fellow ex-Formula 1 driver Ukyo Katayama. Kobayashi will race a Mercedes-AMG GT3 run by Super GT squad Goodsmile Racing & Team Ukyo, sharing with Super GT regulars Nobuteru Taniguchi and Tatsuya Kataoka.

### 'SUBS' LEAD THE WAY IN JAPAN

Japan's Super Formula series concluded its pre-season testing at Fuji last week with the top times set by drivers who won't even race in the series this year. Ryo Hirakawa and Joao Paulo de Oliveira headed the way for TOM'S, replacing Andre Lotterer and Kazuki Nakajima who were absent at the Monza WEC test. De Oliveira topped the first day from Pierre Gasly (Team Mugen) and 2015 champion Hiroaki Ishiura (Cerumo-Inging). On day two it was Hirakawa from de Oliveira, Gasly and Jann Mardenborough in his Team Impul machine.

### MOTOGP SET TO THAI UP NEW RACE

Thailand looks set to get a place on the MotoGP schedule for 2018, with a round at Buriram. Autosport understands that the track has a two-year deal with an option to extend it to a third. This likely means that the Finnish round at the new KymiRing will be put back a year to 2019. A round at Kazakhstan's Sokol circuit is also understood to be a contender for either 2018 or '19.

### BROKEN ANKLE DOESN'T STOP RINS

Suzuki MotoGP rookie Alex Rins is set to ride in this weekend's round at Rio Hondo, despite suffering a partial fracture of the talus bone in his right ankle. Rins fell during a motocross training crash last week, but has travelled to Argentina following checks on Monday.

### ROVANPERA DENIED WRC GREEN LIGHT

Sixteen-year-old Finnish rallying sensation Kalle Rovanpera's hopes of tackling his home round of the World Rally Championship have been dashed after the Finnish ASN and the FIA confirmed that there would be no waiver for him to start the July event. Finns have to be 18 before they qualify for a driving licence on the road and you can't start a WRC round without one.

### SARRAZIN SETS UP OWN RALLY TEAM

Versatile Frenchman Stephane Sarrazin has set up his own team and will contest this weekend's Tour of Corsica in a Sarrazin Motorsport Skoda Fabia R5. The Cevennes-based team also has a Hyundai i20 R5 and has not ruled out an expansion into circuit racing.

### DTM MAKES CHANGE TO RACE FORMAT

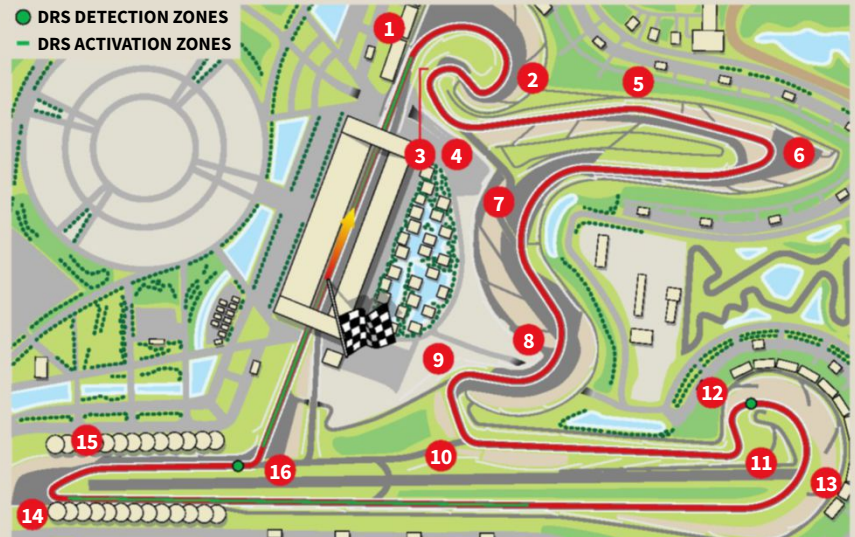
The DTM (below) has made another tweak to its race format for 2017, with both races at each round now featuring mandatory pitstops rather than just the Sunday race. Each race will run for 55 minutes plus one lap.



## F1 PREVIEW

# Chinese Grand Prix

## April 7-9



## SHANGHAI

**LENGTH** 3.387 miles **NUMBER OF LAPS** 56

**2016 POLE POSITION** Nico Rosberg 1m35.402s

**POLE LAP RECORD** Sebastian Vettel 1m33.706s (2011)

**RACE LAP RECORD** Michael Schumacher 1m32.238s (2004)



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#### LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1

##### FRIDAY

**FP1** 0300 **FP2** 0700

##### SATURDAY

**FP3** 0500 **QUALIFYING** 0800

##### SUNDAY

**RACE** 0700

**BBC RADIO 5 LIVE** 0630

**HIGHLIGHTS ON CHANNEL 4**

**QUALIFYING SATURDAY** 1300 **RACE SUNDAY** 1430

### PREVIOUS WINNERS

<b>2016</b>	Nico Rosberg	<b>Mercedes</b>
<b>2015</b>	Lewis Hamilton	<b>Mercedes</b>
<b>2014</b>	Lewis Hamilton	<b>Mercedes</b>
<b>2013</b>	Fernando Alonso	<b>Ferrari</b>
<b>2012</b>	Nico Rosberg	<b>Mercedes</b>
<b>2011</b>	Lewis Hamilton	<b>McLaren</b>
<b>2010</b>	Jenson Button	<b>McLaren</b>
<b>2009</b>	Sebastian Vettel	<b>Red Bull</b>
<b>2008</b>	Lewis Hamilton	<b>McLaren</b>
<b>2007</b>	Kimi Raikkonen	<b>Ferrari</b>

### THEMES TO WATCH

#### FERRARI v MERCEDES

Ferrari won in Australia but Mercedes topped qualifying. The pattern could hold, but this track should be more representative of what's to come this season.

#### HIDDEN HAAS

Williams was on its own in the battle for fourth-best in Australia, but what if Romain Grosjean had not retired? Haas could spring a surprise here.

#### McLAREN AT THE BACK

The Shanghai circuit, including the 1.17km back straight, is bad news for the Honda power unit. Can McLaren avoid the ignominy of being last?





AUTOSPORT

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# Infernal combustion

Far from taking the fight to F1's 'big three', McLaren-Honda is instead enduring struggles with its new engine that are little short of hellish

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

## YUSUKE HASEGAWA IS A MAN UNDER PRESSURE.

It shows. He looks tired and stressed as he walks into Honda's hospitality unit in Melbourne. "Are you OK?" I ask as we sit down to talk. He lets out a long sigh. "I'm OK..."

But all is not OK in Honda's world. It's not an overstatement to say that this new Formula 1 season has started disastrously for McLaren-Honda. This was meant to be the year this famous F1 alliance started making real waves again, after two seasons of struggle. There was genuine hope of joining the fight with F1's 'big three', but that hope now looks to be in vain.

Honda's efforts to design a more powerful engine have backfired spectacularly, and relations with McLaren have become potentially irrevocably strained. Honda is furiously trying to correct its winter mistakes, while McLaren is working out whether it can somehow file for divorce and get back into bed with the Mercedes customer engine programme.

The warning signs were there as far back as December. Development of Honda's new advanced combustion technology progressed well on the dyno, but Hasegawa says problems began to manifest when Honda tried to transfer the technology from one cylinder to six.

"As a matter of fact we were thinking [it was] too easy to achieve the new technology," Hasegawa

admits. "That was my mistake. We made some good progress in the mono-cylinder on the dyno, but when we transfer exactly the same specification to the V6 engine it doesn't work.

"It was too late that we noticed – at Christmas. After we understood the issues, this was when we needed to confirm the final specification [so] we needed to have some compromise."

Things only got worse when the new V6 was installed into the McLaren MCL32 and run on track, where the package began vibrating horrendously. Driving around this problem is further restricting McLaren-Honda's performance.

"We have huge vibrations," Hasegawa explains. "On the dyno we didn't have such a big issue. When we have a gearbox, driveshaft and tyre, it has some resonance. I'm not blaming the chassis; we have to look at the situation on the dyno as well."

Hasegawa admits Honda has missed its power target, saying the new unit has "almost the same power" as last year's engine, which of course means it has gone backwards from its 2016 position of being 80bhp away from Mercedes, which in turn has added more performance over the winter.

Honda is now working very hard on an update package.

McLaren-Honda will simply have to make do in the meantime, but there is genuine fear that on circuits that are more conventional than Melbourne – China, Bahrain, Russia, which all contain long straights – Honda's power deficit will be even more brutally exposed. It's a mess, and the only way Honda can dig itself out is by correcting this combustion problem.

"The engine has the potential, but we can't use it because of the knocking, and we can't use it without exceeding the durability limit," Hasegawa says. "We have already achieved some good level of performance with the mono-cylinder engine. The thing we have to do is transfer that technology to the V6. We have already seen good numbers in the mono-cylinder. Although we still have to improve that, we have some confidence we can achieve that level."

This McLaren-Honda crisis has obvious parallels with the tense scenario that unfolded between Red Bull and Renault in 2015. Renault over-reached after recovering from its own disastrous start under these regulations in '14, Red Bull lost patience and went after a Mercedes customer engine supply,

and Renault eventually restructured its engine programme, accelerated development, and helped get Red Bull back to winning ways last year.

Perhaps Honda needs a Renault-style shake-up – for someone like Mario

Illien to come in and do some dual development work to accelerate the learning curve. Hasegawa says this kind of work is already underway. McLaren helped Honda recruit engine experts with knowledge of the rival F1 engine programmes, and although there are questions concerning how much impact they can have, and are allowed to have, Hasegawa says they are integrated and working well.

The next stage will probably be to open up the programme to customers. Sauber has already held talks, and Honda is open about the fact that it would benefit from having more cars running its engine and thus more valuable data to draw upon. But that won't solve Honda's immediate problem, which is to transform its recalcitrant new engine into one powerful, efficient and reliable enough to vault McLaren into the top four.

McLaren has clearly lost patience with the project, and Honda is fast running out of second chances. Everything is in danger of unravelling. The fate of McLaren-Honda depends on Hasegawa. If he can't find answers quickly, the whole thing is surely doomed. The entire weight of expectation to avert this crisis rests on his shoulders. No wonder he's feeling the strain. ❄

**“Honda's bid to design a more powerful engine has backfired spectacularly”**



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# FEEDBACK

## Breaking down is hard to do, Jean

Jean Todt is trying to recreate 'the good old days' with his comment about going back to simpler, cheaper and less reliable F1 cars. Can you really see today's motor manufacturers wanting to see a car carrying their branding breaking down more often? Utter nonsense.

F1 does not need another kneejerk reaction to solve the problem of 'the show'. After all, we've only had one race.

Perhaps Jean would be better off leaving it to Ross Brawn to work in collaboration with everyone involved, as he has proposed, to come up with a more thought-out permanent solution. And perhaps Jean might pass the time reading Ross's book on strategy? He's got quite a track record, I believe...

**Alan Clark**  
Byemail

### Fins fit for purpose

It was interesting to read Ross Brawn's explanation that the shark fins on F1 cars were Jean Todt's idea to enable driver numbers to be displayed. At last, someone inside the sport realises how necessary it is for the spectator to be able to work out who is who.

I've been attending grands prix regularly since 1981. I'm a diehard fan, so

If I'm having difficulty telling the drivers apart, how hard must it be for youngsters and new fans coming into the sport?

**Adrian Morrow**  
Milton Keynes, Bucks

### Big, loud and proud

Mr Todt is still insisting that the public doesn't want big, loud and powerful engines without all the electronics, because of the extra fuel usage – I think this is rubbish.

More to the point, the plane flying the cars out to Australia burned more fuel than the total the cars will use all season, not to mention the hire cars and taxis for the personnel to move around, plus the teams' trucks and motorhomes, and the planes moving people and equipment around the world.

Let's bring back the sound of F1 we know and love.

**Alex O'Sullivan**  
Worthing

### Nice cars, shame about the aero

While there has rightly been universal support for the new aggressive-looking cars under the 2017 regulations, the Australian GP once again underlined a problem that's blighted F1 for a quarter



Autosport readers' opinions are split on the musings of FIA bigwig Jean Todt

of a century or more: the over-reliance on aerodynamics (especially front-wing aero) means cars with large performance advantages are unable to overtake.

Will Liberty Media and Ross Brawn take their opportunity to allow F1 to reach its full potential by implementing new regulations that shift the balance towards mechanical grip and/or ground effects as soon as possible?

**Andrew Dale**  
Swindon

### Time to iron this out

Thank you for publishing my letter about ways to allow overtaking in F1 (March 30). But I must have had a rush of blood to the head when I suggested the use of cast-iron instead of carbon in braking systems. Everyone knows CI is far too brittle for such use and what I really meant was steel discs. As a qualified metallurgist I should not have made such a basic mistake. *Mea culpa!*

**Steve Tan**  
Runcorn

### Close racing at Crystal Palace

Re 'Stirring Thruxton memories' (Letters, March 23) – make that Crystal Palace memories of the same era! Not slipstreaming, but close racing on such a tight circuit.

I recall as a teenager seeing the adjustments of the wheel as Jackie Stewart in his Brabham went through South Tower corner, whereas Jochen Rindt in his Lotus 69, having set himself up for the corner, held the wheel fixed, no need for any adjustment!

That turned me on to motorsport.

**Chris Little**  
Byemail

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COVER STORY/FERRARI'S REVIVAL

# ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

or just another false dawn?

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor [@BenAndersonAuto](#)









**W**hat a difference a year can make. Twelve months ago Ferrari completed the opening lap of the Australian Grand Prix in one-two formation, a prime position from which to kick off the 2016 world championship in perfect fashion. But it threw that race away with a poor strategic call during a red-flag period, inexplicably conceding vital track position back to Mercedes. Sebastian Vettel eventually finished a frustrated third, as Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg restored the natural order of things.

In truth, had Ferrari won that race it would have been a victory for opportunism – a triumph against adversity for an inferior car. Mercedes had locked out the front row, but Hamilton and Rosberg hashed the start, allowing Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen to leap ahead unexpectedly.

But Ferrari had made a minor habit of such unlikely success in 2015, and this only served to raise expectation to new heights. Victory in Melbourne would have been the perfect way to answer president Sergio Marchionne's pre-season call to arms, "Ferrari must challenge for the world championship."

The unravelling of that Albert Park race proved to be a microcosm of Ferrari's season – a missed opportunity, underpinned by shambolic decision-making and an underlying lack of competitiveness.

One year on, Ferrari laid those ghosts to rest, Vettel beating Hamilton to victory in the first race of 2017. It was the team's first grand prix win in 28 races. "About time," Marchionne said. Vettel roared "Forza Ferrari!" The Prancing Horse was back on its feet.

Not since Singapore 2015, when Ferrari took full advantage of Mercedes' inexplicable inability to get the Pirelli tyres to work in searing heat and humidity, had Ferrari enjoyed the sweet taste of victory champagne. But that weekend was an

outlier in the grand scheme of things. Mercedes was off the pace all weekend, unable to get the tyres to warm up properly and stay there. Hamilton was more than three tenths off the pace on Friday, over a second adrift in final practice, even further away come the end of qualifying.

It was a weekend that simply spiralled out of control – the only time during F1's V6 hybrid-turbo era that Mercedes has simply not been fast enough to challenge for the podium.

Melbourne 2017 was very different. Mercedes dominated Friday practice, Hamilton beat Vettel to pole by well over two tenths of a second, and Vettel didn't need to rely on a poor Mercedes start to get ahead and then try to hang on for grim death. He was fast. So fast he pressured Hamilton relentlessly until the Mercedes driver cracked, pitting too early and getting stuck behind Max Verstappen's slower Red Bull. Hamilton could find no answer to Vettel later in the race either. He was beaten fair and square. His team boss Toto Wolff admitted that Ferrari simply had the faster car.

That hasn't happened since that 2015 race in Singapore, which is particularly pertinent, for Mercedes blamed its own struggles in Albert Park on an inability to get the new 2017 Pirelli tyres – especially the ultra-soft compound used at the start of the race – working correctly. Valtteri Bottas suggested that the hot weather seen in Melbourne played a major role in the unravelling. This is rather surprising. Mercedes took steps to correct the failings that spoiled its party in Singapore in 2015, and we hadn't seen a repeat since – until the Australian GP of 2017, that is.

Conversely, Ferrari team principal Maurizio Arrivabene claimed that last year's Ferrari suffered from an "endemic" problem in hot conditions, making it temperamental and difficult to set up all year long.

That situation, based admittedly on a sample set of just one at present, appears to have been corrected. Ferrari struggled badly in the cooler weather of Friday, but was bang on form when temperatures climbed on Saturday and Sunday in Melbourne. By contrast, Mercedes looked almost untouchable





Vettel put Hamilton under pressure in Australian Grand Prix



in cooler and cloudy conditions, but was left floundering when track temperatures rose by 10C.

Perhaps Mercedes saw this coming. The Wo8 always looked a bit edgy to drive throughout pre-season testing in Spain, and the problems it suffered – particularly with a disintegrating floor in week two at Barcelona – could well mean the team is just a little behind the curve understanding exactly how to get its new high-downforce car to behave properly on this year’s bigger, stiffer, lower-degradation Pirelli tyres. In short, Melbourne could merely be a bump in the road.

Or it may not. Ferrari made a concerted effort to destabilise Mercedes and Red Bull by pushing the FIA to clamp down on trick suspension systems – those designed as aerodynamic aids rather than as pure mechanical platforms – ahead of the season. Mercedes and Red Bull both played down the effect of this directive, despite both being required to change course with their designs.

It is worth remembering that these cars were conceived in early 2016. Mercedes engineering director Aldo Costa says work on the Wo8 began in March of last year, so any enforced >>

Vettel’s victory in Australia was earned, not inherited



## GARY ANDERSON ON FERRARI

WHAT REALLY STRUCK ME ABOUT FERRARI FROM THE very first day of pre-season testing was how much more professional the team has been in the way it operates. Ferrari focused on running on the medium tyres rather than bolting on quick tyres just to fool itself by setting quick times, so on the engineering side things looked far more sensible.

There was a lot of criticism for Ferrari when it promoted engine specialist Mattia Binotto to replace James Allison as technical director. But you have to say that he’s done a good job, apparently with a little assistance from the experienced Rory Byrne, who remains with Ferrari as a consultant after his many years leading the Scuderia’s F1 designs.

The only criticism I had from testing was that Ferrari didn’t do enough running on the softer compounds to ensure that it got the most out of the car in something closer to qualifying trim. Perhaps that hurt it in Australia but, if you concentrate on race pace, single-lap pace will inevitably come.

Ferrari also got the strategy right in Australia, while it was Mercedes that cracked. Last year, things were usually the other way around, and if Ferrari’s car stays on the pace of Mercedes then it’s going to be interesting to see how that battle pans out. Mercedes made the error in Australia by letting Lewis Hamilton pit too early, which suggests perhaps that three years of having a big advantage has made it less sharp than it needs to be.

We don’t know what the development curve for Ferrari and Mercedes is going to be like. Mercedes has shown itself to be strong in this area, so it’s up to Ferrari to match or exceed that progress. My concern with the very complex, multi-component turning-vane/argeboard area of the car is that small changes can have a very big impact, so Ferrari has to be careful not to make ‘improvements’ there that damage the way the whole system works. It would be easy to make things worse by accident.

Ferrari has the resources and the facilities to build on this strong start. If it can and this form continues, then we have to see it as being back where it should be, at the front, for the foreseeable future.





# FERRARI'S PAST DECADE

The Italian team has had a tricky time since Kimi Raikkonen took its last drivers' title in 2007. Here's how it has fared, with supertimes calculated as a percentage of the fastest lap at each event, giving a good indication of the team's pace across the season.



2008

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION**  
2nd (Felipe Massa)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 1st  
**WINS** 8  
**SUPERTIME** 1st (100.102)



2009

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION** 6th  
(Kimi Raikkonen)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 4th  
**WINS** 1  
**SUPERTIME** 5th (100.562)



2010

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION** 2nd  
(Fernando Alonso)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 3rd  
**WINS** 5  
**SUPERTIME** 2nd (100.484)



2011

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION** 4th  
(Fernando Alonso)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 3rd  
**WINS** 1  
**SUPERTIME** 3rd (100.831)



2012

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION** 2nd  
(Fernando Alonso)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 2nd  
**WINS** 3  
**SUPERTIME** 4th (100.728)



2013

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION** 2nd  
(Fernando Alonso)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 3rd  
**WINS** 2  
**SUPERTIME** 3rd (100.656)



2014

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION** 6th  
(Fernando Alonso)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 4th  
**WINS** 0  
**SUPERTIME** 4th (101.129)



2015

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION** 3rd  
(Sebastian Vettel)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 2nd  
**WINS** 3  
**SUPERTIME** 2nd (100.775)



2016

**BEST DRIVERS' POSITION** 4th  
(Sebastian Vettel)  
**CONSTRUCTORS' POSITION** 3rd  
**WINS** 0  
**SUPERTIME** 3rd (100.877)

LAT IMAGES



Vettel led in Melbourne after later pitstop

## “This year’s Ferrari has looked fast and consistent since it first hit the track”

late changes were bound to have a destabilising effect on how a car behaves, especially when you're dealing with new aerodynamic packages, new geometries and new tyres.

But whether Mercedes is in real trouble, or simply a few small corrections away from restoring the advantage it displayed at various points during the Melbourne weekend, that has no bearing on the fact that Ferrari has clearly made a significant step forward this year.

The team came into 2016 full of big hopes and expectations, with a car that was significantly redesigned in an effort to bridge the gap to Mercedes. But Ferrari appeared to lose its way technically, conceiving a car that behaved inconsistently and didn't develop particularly well through the season. By the summer, technical director James Allison had left the team, apparently after a row with Marchionne.

But he also left Maranello a parting gift – the SF70H was a project begun under Allison's stewardship. So it would appear his former employers owe him a debt of gratitude, though it's also fair to say that Ferrari's new car is not only Allison's baby.

The remaining technical team, headed up by Mattia Binotto





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3



4

1. Michael Schumacher era was Ferrari's longest run of success
2. Bahrain 2010 proved to be a false dawn
3. Strategic blunder cost Ferrari victory in first grand prix of 2016
4. Could Vettel's win in Melbourne herald a more consistent challenge from Ferrari?



and still including chief designer Simone Resta, has clearly done an excellent job in carrying the baton handed to them. This year's Ferrari has looked fast and consistent since it first hit the track in pre-season testing. It clearly lacks the absolute outright pace of the Mercedes – Ferrari estimates two tenths in qualifying trim when the engines are fully cranked up – but it is arguably more driveable, and appears to have a much wider set-up window than the slightly overweight Wo8 does at present.

That bodes well for Ferrari's chances at future races, and it will surely need to make hay now, while Allison busies himself in his new role trying to get Mercedes back on track.

What's also encouraging for Ferrari is how close it got to Mercedes on pure pace in Melbourne. Vettel's qualifying deficit to Hamilton equates to 0.326% around Albert Park. That compares favourably to a 1% deficit for Ferrari in 2016, and 1.639% in 2015, when it was fighting Williams to be best of the rest at the first race.

That's closer than Ferrari has managed to get at any race held over the past two seasons, apart from Canada 2016 – where Vettel qualified within two tenths of pole and led the race initially – and Singapore 2015.

Whether the substantial year-on-year gain Ferrari made in Melbourne will translate to other circuits, only time will tell. The conditions were warm, but certainly not extreme along the spectrum of Formula 1 events. That's a good sign for Ferrari, and will be a worry for Mercedes given the last time it suffered this sort of trouble was at the hottest and most humid grand prix on the calendar.

But Ferrari has only won the first race of the season on eight occasions over the past 20 years, and Vettel's triumph was Ferrari's first in a season-opening grand prix since

Fernando Alonso won the 2010 Bahrain GP on his debut for Maranello. The Tifosi will undoubtedly look on this as a good omen. Alonso arguably should have won the championship that season, and on five of the other six occasions on which Ferrari has won in Melbourne it has gone on to take the drivers' championship at the end of the year.

That's all well and good, but one major element of F1 2017 is expected to be a development war the likes of which F1 has not seen for some time. Rapid progress is predicted as the most gifted aerodynamicists in the sport exploit the early immaturity of the new aerodynamic regulations.

This is arguably Ferrari's key sticking point. It has clearly designed and built a very strong foundation, but can it build on that effectively under Binotto's revamped technical structure?

"If you change something, it's for the better, not to get worse," says Arrivabene. "The team is working very well together. Over the winter the guys were exchanging information; they have a common goal. Working all together, having a common goal and exchanging all the information they have, the car becomes not the car of one but the car of everybody."

There is a feeling that Ferrari's internal structure has improved – that Resta now has more say in the development direction, which will have helped make the chassis a more potent element of the performance equation, and that Ferrari's technical teams are working well together despite the loss of Allison and aero chief Dirk de Beer, who has joined Williams.

"Last year we learned a lot of lessons, and the whole organisation, the whole team has grown," said Vettel during pre-season testing. "I think it was the most important >>





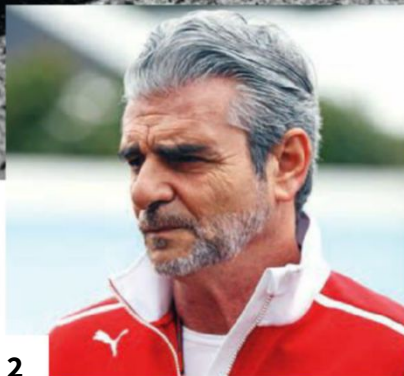
The Prancing Horse is hoping to topple the Mercedes kings



- 1. Former technical director James Allison walked after row with Sergio Marchionne
- 2. Team principal Maurizio Arrivabene remains in place
- 3. Engine man Mattia Binotto took over from Allison
- 4. Luca di Montezemolo was another casualty of Ferrari's turmoil



1



2



3



4

year. Obviously '15 was a great year for the team to restart the mission to win. '16 was a step back in terms of results, but I think a massive step forward in terms of organisation."

"Mostly we have the same people," adds Raikkonen. "Obviously it takes a while to find the right way to work, but I think we've been doing, for quite a while already, very good things as a team, but results hadn't really come yet."

"But we've been working very well. I trust what we've done and how we go about things and pushing forward. I'm sure we're doing things right. I said that many times last year, but when you don't have the results that you want then people are questioning a lot of things."

Ferrari certainly won't be facing so many questions now that it has won the first race of the new season, but it is vital not to get carried away. Melbourne is an atypical F1 track – temporary, bumpy, short on fast corners and long straights. As Raikkonen says, "This is a very special place, so let's wait and see when we get to the normal circuits."

Perhaps then the picture will change. Ferrari will of course hope not – that its Barcelona testing form (on the most





**“Formula 1 should hope that Ferrari’s improvement also galvanises Vettel”**

typical F1 track of all) and its superb display in Melbourne will be true signs of things to come.

Formula 1 should hope so too. As Lewis Hamilton said, “It’s great to see Ferrari up there; I think it’s good for the sport that we have this close battle.”

F1 should also hope that Ferrari’s improvement galvanises Vettel to get back to his own best this year. He looked frustrated and out of sorts in 2016 – particularly in the second half of the campaign – but already it looks as though he is starting out in better shape personally, ready for a potentially explosive rivalry with Hamilton.

His former team Red Bull knows Vettel is an emotionally driven driver, who will perform better if the car underneath him is capable of winning. As Arrivabene said in Melbourne, “I would like to see Sebastian happy during the season, because if Sebastian is happy that means the car is very quick.”

Ferrari certainly looked quick in Australia. The big question is whether that will continue in China this weekend, and for the rest of the season thereafter. If it does, Melbourne will be remembered as the beginning of a genuine Ferrari revival.✽

## WHAT’S WRONG WITH RED BULL?

RED BULL IS THE TEAM MOST were expecting to carry the fight to Mercedes in 2017, after taking a pole position, winning two races, and finishing runner-up in the constructors’ championship last year.

But pre-season testing did not go to plan – Renault’s redesigned engine had to be detuned to protect the new energy-recovery systems, which were hampered by a recurring problem with the insulation on the MGU-K. The RB13 thus lacked power, and also proved difficult to set up, particularly as parts wore out through the course of the second test.

It was expected that Red Bull would nevertheless come out swinging in Melbourne – armed with a big chassis update and empowered by what Renault’s Jolyon Palmer called a “big fix” for its faulty ERS.

But the trouble persisted. Renault was forced to revert to its 2016 MGU-K – which is less powerful, cools less well, and weighs 5kg more than the new design – to preserve reliability.

The engine still cannot be cranked up to full power, so is lacking compared with Mercedes and Ferrari, while Red Bull also continued to struggle to get the RB13 working consistently, as well as suffering further reliability problems on Daniel Ricciardo’s car.

After qualifying 1.297 seconds adrift of Lewis Hamilton’s pole position time in Melbourne, and more than four tenths behind the underperforming second Ferrari of Kimi Raikkonen, Max Verstappen has been particularly downbeat about his team’s prospects.

“We are behind – lacking grip, lacking power,” he says. “It was similar in testing, it was quite tricky to find a good balance. We definitely need to work on that.”

“[But] I’m not blaming everything on the chassis. It’s a bit of a combination, because if you’re lacking power you try to make a more efficient car, which means you can’t

run as much downforce as other teams. We don’t have a lot of parts on the side [of the car]; we are finding a compromise. At the moment it’s not giving us enough grip, so we have to find another solution.”

Perhaps this lack of speed has roots in the regulations. Along with Mercedes, Red Bull was the other team required to switch course on its suspension design following a new directive against trick systems by the FIA. Team boss Christian Horner played down the effect of this, saying that such a suspension design would have been excluded from the car regardless owing to its weight.

His big hope is that Renault’s first major engine upgrade, scheduled in two parts for the Spanish and Canadian GPs according to Red Bull motorsport boss Helmut Marko, will be the catalyst that sparks Red Bull’s season into life.

But Marko admits that Red Bull’s difficulties do not lie solely in the back of the RB13. As Verstappen says, the team needs to work harder to get the chassis working too. It will hope dearly that this is not a repeat of 2015, when the Renault engine proved weak and Red Bull spent half a season correcting aerodynamic weaknesses on the RB11.

“I just had shivers!” quips Daniel Ricciardo at the thought of a repeat of that troubled season. “Hopefully not. I personally just don’t think we’ve had enough quality time with the car yet.”

“If we calculate everything – the tyres, the fuel loads, I think FP1 we only had a super-soft [tyre] – we’ve actually gone slower [in qualifying] than we did in first free practice. And that’s not accounting for any track evolution, which normally you get on street circuits.”

“At the moment there’s not a clear answer why, so I guess what I’m getting at is there’s still a bit to learn with the car, with the package. I think it’s just going to need some more trial and error.”



Ricciardo had a troubled home grand prix





# Saving grace or one last hurrah?

Citroen and Lada have gone and there are only 16 entries, but paradoxically the World Touring Car Championship is potentially looking more intriguing than it has for some time

By Jack Cozens, Special Correspondent

[@JHCozens](#)

**W**hat loses two manufacturers in an off-season and becomes stronger? In this case, 'stronger' may be a tenuous term to describe the World Touring Car Championship. It's subjective, at the very least.

Numbers are an obvious deficit this year, with just 16 cars – the minimum required if an event is to avoid the threat of cancellation – registered for the season, while the championship seems to be going through an identity crisis over its future direction. Both of those points are fundamental to the current and future health of the WTCC.

The hasty adoption of a WTCC-2 class (based on the ever-expanding TCR concept) last November and subsequent hushed announcement last month of its removal from the 2017

plan, when it became clear that 16 TC1 cars would enter the full season, didn't help matters. Other new rules include the implementation of joker laps on street circuits – which have been canned for the opening round of the season – as well as changes to the points system, to give greater weight to the opening 'main' race.

Plenty to be sceptical about, then. But putting that to one side, what the WTCC lacks in quantity it should make up for in quality of competition.

Four Citroen C-Elysees might once have struck fear into the hearts of the rest of the grid. But with the manufacturer ending its works involvement, and deciding against submitting a new homologation form, the fact that all four of the French machines are independently run takes away some of the edge.

Citroen will still send engineers to events, and Rob Huff's pace at the pre-season test was ominous – he topped all four sessions at Monza – but the fact that Huff and his Munnich





Motorsport team are new to the package should give his rivals the chance to strike early.

With Honda reworking its splitter and bodywork, including wheelarch and boot sculpting, it will hope to sustain a title challenge with Tiago Monteiro and Norbert Michelisz after its efforts ultimately fizzled out in 2016 – but it's fellow manufacturer Volvo that has the most intriguing package of all.

An expanded three-car line-up was expected, but it's signalled a real statement of intent by signing Lada refugee Nick Catsburg and Argentinian champion Nestor Girolami to join Thed Bjork. Then comes its top trump: Yvan Muller. The Frenchman might have formally ended his driving commitments, but he has been working with the Swedish manufacturer as an advisor since the turn of the year.

Throw in privateers Tom Coronel in his venerable ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet Cruze, one-time single-seater star Esteban Guerrieri in the same machinery, plus the revived Lada effort – in the hands of Yann Ehrlacher (Muller's nephew) through RC Motorsport – and there's plenty of interest.

While not all of those will make the cut, there are enough drivers there for an open title fight, and the genuine prospect of an independent champion. But is it enough to mask the WTCC's deficiencies, and will it help to guarantee a strong 2018? The WTCC will certainly be worth watching, but it's not yet clear if it's the answer to its own riddle. ❄

The grid's hardly brimming, but the quality of the line-up is enough to pique interest

## ENTRY LIST

### Sebastien Loeb Racing Citroen C-Elysee WTCC

3	Tom Chilton (GB)
25	Mehdi Bennani (MA)
27	John Filippi (F)

### Honda Racing Team Honda Civic WTCC

5	Norbert Michelisz (H)
18	Tiago Monteiro (P)
34	Ryo Michigami (J)

### Polestar Cyan Racing Volvo S60 Polestar TC1

61	Nestor Girolami (RA)
62	Thed Bjork (S)
63	Nick Catsburg (NL)

### Munnich Motorsport Citroen C-Elysee WTCC

12	Rob Huff (GB)
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### ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1

9	Tom Coronel (NL)
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### Campos Racing Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1

TBC	Esteban Guerrieri (RA)*
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### Zengo Motorsport Honda Civic WTCC

8	Aurelien Panis (F)
99	Daniel Nagy (H)

### RC Motorsport Lada Vesta WTCC

68	Yann Ehrlacher (F)
TBC	TBC

\*Confirmed for five events

## CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT
April 9	Marrakech (MA)
April 30	Monza (I)
May 14	Hungaroring (H)
May 27	Nurburgring (D)
June 25	Vila Real (P)
July 16	Termas de Rio Hondo (RA)
October 15	Ningbo (PRC)
October 29	Motegi (J)
November 19	Macau (PRC)
December 1	Losail (Q)









# Rob Huff

After a year at Honda that at times flattered to deceive, Rob Huff has moved to Munnich Motorsport for the 2017 WTCC season with one goal in mind: to claim a second world title

By Jack Cozens, Special Correspondent

[@JHCozens](#)

**JACK COZENS** I'll give you a direct quote here. This time last year, after moving to Honda, you said, 'I can't help but feel this puts me in a very strong position for 2017 with JAS and Honda to give ourselves a very realistic and fantastic opportunity to be a champion again'. What's changed in those 12 months, and what did Rene Munnich [Munnich Motorsport owner] say that tempted you to join his team?

**ROB HUFF** Do you want to drive a Citroen? [laughs, for an extended period] That pretty much sums it up. I was always going to struggle to stay at Honda this year because basically it was [costing] money. They worked very hard to get the money, but the only way they could get it was from Japan, and as we know with Japan it's almost [always the case that] if they're a manufacturer and they're putting money in, they want a Japanese driver.

Rene and I have stayed in touch over the years. I did some work with them towards the end of last year. He called me to go and see him, and he proposed one idea. I said, 'OK, nice, no problem – but you know we could get a Citroen?' That took a bit of time, but it was a combination of everything – with the team already in the World Touring Car Championship, it was a good fit.

It's all down to Rene that we're here. He does this because he loves motorsport. He gains nothing from us being here. But it's good for the team to have brought the car in. It lifts the team, especially if we've got a car we can do well with. Look around the table and believe it or not they're all smiling. The only reason they don't smile is maybe they've got a bit of a job on with scrutineering this year! A lot of late nights. I hope they have some – it means we're doing the right things if we do! They might hate me, but it's nothing a beer or two won't put right.

**JC** How early were these conversations going on with Rene? When did you know the game was up with Honda?

**RH** I was speaking with Volvo as well; I was speaking with everyone really. But as soon as I'd sat down with Rene – I went to see him, we had our chat. The second meeting was with Dominik [Greiner, team principal] as well and basically from that meeting, which was one week before Christmas, things started to take off. I was still talking with other people, but Rene told me, 'If you want to put this plan together, let's do it'. I sat down again with him and went through it meticulously – what it was going to cost, how we wanted to do it – and the only way we wanted to do this year was

properly. By doing it properly, it means we've got the full team we've got here, we've got loads of new tyres at every round and the budget we want to throw at this project. We're going to attack it properly.

**JC** You've had two days of testing at Navarra, then the two days at Monza and finally two more days at the Hungaroring before the first round of the season...

**RH** We've got those tests, and then throughout the season we're looking to do a test maybe at the Slovakia Ring after three or so races when we have a bit of a gap.

**JC** Is that enough preparation for a full WTCC campaign?

**RH** You always want more. Always. But it does make it that much easier that we have a car we can't really develop, because of where it is [Citroen did not submit a new homologation form for 2017]. That's simpler, as such. It's purely a case of us having to learn the car, which of course we'd have a better grip on if we had more days. But I think we're learning it pretty quickly, and I think everyone's working really well. Marco [Calovolo, the team's technical chief] and I are understanding each other well – or rather Marco is understanding me, which is good. It seems we've found a good path.

**JC** You were quickest in all four sessions of the Monza test. What were you working on?

**RH** We've just been working within the parameters of what we know from the first few days of testing we've completed, and what we've been advised works [by Citroen]. We've been working through a programme, but speaking to Marco I think what we need is a feeling process; how about changing this to just calm the car down, and just trying to understand what was slowing us down a little bit and what we needed to go faster... Marco and I chatted and we came to the same conclusion about what to change and it felt like an instant improvement.

We wanted to run a new set of tyres before lunch on the second day because we could see that [Sebastien Loeb Racing Citroen drivers Tom] Chilton and [Mehdi] Bennani and the others – Volvo – were running new tyres. We wanted to get a reference and it worked out quite well. It felt really nice – it was on rails, and that was a slight difference to earlier runs. We've been working on tyre temperatures and pressures and the rest of it. It's taken a little bit of time, but everything is starting to come together. >>

**“If there are a lot of late nights, it means we're doing the right things”**

Superbly sorted  
Citroen just  
needs tweaks



FLAMAND/OPPEL

**JC And the two days you did before the Monza test?**

**RH** It's ultimately about understanding the car. With these cars, there's so much to do, so much that's available to change. The nice thing about this car is the laws of physics really apply, in the sense that the rule of touring cars really applies to this car with set-up changes. We're trying different things – there was one part of a corner we were struggling with, how can we adjust it to help, and we found it.

**JC How does this size of team compare with what you've been used to?**

**RH** It's different, because with a three-car team you can have two people covering three cars for one particular job, where we can't – we need one person for each thing. So we've probably got more here for one car than you would have individually on each car effectively for a team that's bigger.

**JC Does it help that you'll have data from last year, with Citroen sharing Jose Maria Lopez's and Yvan Muller's data?**

**RH** It will, but we didn't have it for the first two tests. The final test was the first time we had data and video that will apply to that track, which means we've found our own way. Obviously we might have had some help with the boys in red [Citroen], but the beautiful thing about a car like this

is it works straight away. Then it's just a case of fine-tuning it to my preferences, and fine-tuning it to each of the circuits we visit. You just stand and look at it and it's fast!

**JC And it's Muller's car from 2016?**

**RH** Yep, it's Yvan's old car that I've got. It's his chassis, which I think was [Sebastien] Loeb's the year before. I'm very happy with it – it goes very well in a straight line, turns left and right, it's good.

**“The beautiful thing about a car like this is it works straight away”**

**JC Where does the C-Elysee feel different from the Civic, or the Lada? Do you have a feel at all for the development path Honda was going down this year?**

**RH** Yes, I did, but it's not really for me to talk about

the Civic – if Honda wants to talk about it they will. Every touring car I've ever driven has had what I'd describe as 'ticks'; it's always had a certain character where, let's say, you're braking fully loaded, hit the kerb and the steering goes heavy or locks, or in certain corners you change direction and the power-steering pump can't keep up. Those are traits that you really struggle to ever properly get rid of. Wheels spinning on a kerb in second gear, when changing gear you have to fight it, or it'll cut but it won't change gear – that's another I've experienced.



It was Huff's choice that he's in a one-car team



FLAMAND/DPPI

Problems like that just don't exist with this car. Citroen went so far with it that it's just a weapon and it works, and it does so beautifully. By doing the development work they've done with it, it makes my life as a driver a lot easier, in a sense that I'm not fighting the car. I'm constantly working with it and letting it roll. The biggest problem we've had has been that the timing beacon hasn't worked.

I don't wish to change the car in any mechanical way, other than balance-wise. Immediately when I joined Honda last year there were two or three things that Norbi [Norbert Michelisz] and Tiago [Monteiro] had also been pushing them to try to fix, and ultimately they couldn't quite do that. With this car, there's nothing like that. It's just beautiful; it's a work of art.

**JC** How about things like spares?

**RH** Dominik can probably fill you in on that. Ultimately we will have everything...

**DOMINIK GREINER** We have a big package of spares; we're still missing some parts that are in production or on order, but they'll be with us.

**RH** Citroen's helping us with everything we could need, that we want. They've done us a working deal. This is why when we sat down in the first place I said we're only doing it one way – 100% fully with all the parts we need, all the support we need and the budget, the people. So far, so good.

**JC** How about the operation – are there any limitations of Munnich Motorsport being a one-car set-up? >>

# ROB HUFF'S WTCC CAREER



LAT IMAGES

**2005** 3 points, 20th in championship

Placed alongside touring car masters Nicola Larini and Alain Menu for the first season of the new WTCC era, Huff chucks up Chevrolet's first points of the year in Mexico in his RML-built Lacetti – but fails to score thereafter and finishes 20th overall.

**2006** 1 win, 16th in championship

With a more competitive Lacetti, Huff scores a strong fourth in front of his home crowd at Brands Hatch. Brno is the highlight of the year, however, as the Brit takes a landmark first WTCC win in the reversed-grid race two – having started race one from 24th.



XPB IMAGES



XPB IMAGES

**2007** 1 win, 9th in championship

As Chevrolet adds a fourth car for two rounds, Huff strings together a consistent scoring pattern across the second half of the year and finishes in the top 10 overall for the first time. He adds a second win to his WTCC collection, this time at Anderstorp.

**2008** 2 wins, 3rd in championship

The year that Huff establishes himself as a team leader. He can do little to challenge the dominant combination of Yvan Muller and SEAT, but falls just a point shy of runner-up spot in the championship, despite failing to score in any of the first four races.



XPB IMAGES



XPB IMAGES

**2009** 3 wins, 5th in championship

Despite failing to hit the same heights as a year earlier, Huff is once again top of the Chevrolets by some margin and adapts best to the team's decision to switch to racing Cruzes, landing three victories – all of which are qualifying-grid affairs.

**2010** 3 wins, 3rd in championship

Yvan Muller's switch to Chevrolet means Huff loses his top-dog status. Muller wins the championship by a handsome margin, but Huff records another three wins and gets even closer to runner-up spot – this time missing out on victory countback.



XPB IMAGES





Brit reckons this is his best shot at the title

**RH** The limitation was Rene asked me if I wanted a team-mate and I said no.

**DG** Sometimes it's better, it narrows the focus.

**RH** There were, of course, some other drivers floating around who had budgets and wanted to come in. Eurosport and Francois [Ribeiro, series boss] were obviously pushing for us to have two cars, for the sake of the championship. But ultimately it was going to cost Rene more money and I said he was better saving it. Having another car would potentially have hindered us, rather than helping, and if we need a team-mate Rene has two Chevrolet Cruzes, so if we need some help we can bring the old girls out to play.

**JC** You're using the same car as Sebastien Loeb Racing; will there be any collaboration between the two teams?

**RH** Nope.

**JC** None at all?

**RH** We want to be completely independent and do our own thing. That's why we've got some of the boys from Citroen helping us out to keep an eye on everything we're doing and guide us in the right direction if we need it. There was some talk early on about whether or not we wanted to share data and set-up options with SLR, but we quickly said no. Rene's quite strong about that – he wants to have his own outfit and for us to solve our own problems as we work towards our main goal, and I agree, Dominik agreed and so did the rest of the team. I don't think we're going to learn anything from them, but they can learn a lot from us. I think it was the right decision.

**JC** So your outlook this season must be completely different to last, when you were planning a year ahead; now you're very much looking at winning the title for a second time...

**RH** This is the best opportunity I've ever had to win the world championship. When I was at Chevrolet [with which Huff won his title in 2012] I had two quite difficult team-mates – awkward, shall we say! Ultimately, I don't have Yvan Muller, Alain Menu or Nicola Larini in a Citroen against me. This is definitely the best opportunity I've ever had. We need to steer clear of bad luck – I don't wish us any good fortune; I just wish us as little bad luck as possible. As long as we get that break and score points and are as sensible as we can be – winning when I have the opportunity to do so, knowing when to settle for points...

We know we've got Macau back on the calendar, which I'm obviously very happy about [Huff has seven WTCC wins at the circuit]. I think everybody here's quite happy we're going there.

I think we've got a really good shot this season. We've got the car, the team is very strong and I think we can have a really good go. The great thing here is that it has the essence of a family-run team. We're all here because we love motorsport and there's no pressure – the only pressure we have is what we put on ourselves. We don't have a manufacturer looking down on us – so it's for Honda and Volvo and the boys there to lose this championship. It's not necessarily for me to win – I just need to be in the way and causing problems. That's what I damn well plan on doing. 🍀





FLAMAND/DPPi

## WTCC CAREER CONTINUED



XPB IMAGES

### 2011 8 wins, 2nd in championship

As Chevrolet becomes increasingly dominant, an intra-team power struggle becomes increasingly significant. Huff starts well, winning four of the first six races, but ultimately loses out in a sometimes ugly head-to-head with Muller by three points.

### 2012 5 wins, champion

Huff marks Chevrolet's exit as a manufacturer with his finest hour, claiming the title from team-mates Menu and Muller. Those two colliding in Shanghai aids Huff's cause, but with five victories, 12 further podiums and only one DNF all year, the Brit is a worthy champion.



XPB IMAGES



XPB IMAGES

### 2013 2 wins, 4th in championship

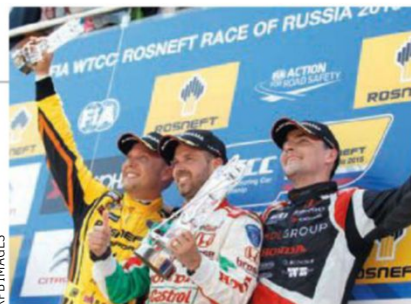
Champion Huff's participation hangs in the balance for a while, but in late February he secures a deal to race a SEAT Leon for Munnich Motorsport – his first WTCC season outside of Chevrolet. Two victories secure fourth overall with the independent team.

### 2014 1 win, 10th in championship

Huff returns to factory surroundings for the first year of the TC1 era, though Lada's clunky Granta is no match for the dominant Citroens. Points are harder to come by, but Huff still achieves another two wins – including his seventh, and most recent, WTCC Macau success.



XPB IMAGES



XPB IMAGES

### 2015 2 podiums, 10th in championship

For the first time in 10 years, Huff goes winless all season. Lada's switch to run ORECA-built Vestas provides a more competitive package, but at times in the second half of the season Huff is outperformed by team-mates and WTCC new boys Nick Catsburg and Nicolas Lapierre.

### 2016 1 win, 6th in championship

In new surroundings with Honda, Huff admits a title challenge is unlikely to be on the cards. Victory in the first race of the year proves to be a false dawn, for while sixth overall marks progress, Huff is beaten in the points by team-mates Tiago Monteiro and Norbert Michelisz.



FLAMAND/DPPi



LEMEUR/DPPi

Honda stint lasted just one season



XPB IMAGES

Late Munnich deal in 2013 was career lifeline

# “The goal was to kind of grow old together”

Audi's departure from the World Endurance Championship left three-time Le Mans winner Andre Lotterer in a difficult position

By Gary Watkins, Special Contributor

[@gazzasportscars](#)

**T**he bombshell that was Audi's official withdrawal from the World Endurance Championship left Andre Lotterer in a painful quandary. He had both Porsche and Toyota offering contracts to remain in LMP1, but at the same time he'd just signed a long-term deal with his existing employer and there was the chance to segue into the DTM.

It was why, he says, his “head was steaming”.

Lotterer has never made any secret of his love for the Le Mans 24 Hours, an event he's won three times. He doesn't call it an obsession, but most people who know him would. Yet it wasn't a given that he would take up one of the offers from the manufacturers against which he'd competed in the reborn WEC. And the reason for that was one of the other love affairs in the German's motorsport life: his love of Audi.

“The difficulty wasn't so much giving up the chance to race in the DTM, it was giving up Audi,” explains Lotterer, with typical candour. “We'd built something special together. I had many years left on my contract and the goal was to kind of grow old together.

“I have a lot of history with them and the contract would have meant we'd have been together for 10 years. We'd made a contract that might have taken me to the end of my career and maybe they would have offered me something afterwards, like as an ambassador.”

Lotterer says he felt “honoured and proud” that Audi gave him first refusal on a DTM seat. The chance came at a time, remember, when the manufacturer was downsizing its line-up from eight to six cars, which meant tricky conversations with at least two drivers – three if Lotterer had come on board.

“I felt privileged to be in that situation that they put me in priority for the DTM and trusted me to go on to that challenge,” he says. “Dr [Wolfgang] Ullrich [Audi's former motorsport boss] said, ‘Come to the DTM and show them what you can do.’”

It was a prospect that definitely titillated Lotterer's competitive instincts.

“It would have been a challenge to excel in a new arena and somehow become more complete as a driver,” he suggests. “I was tempted, but only because it was Audi making the offer.”

Lotterer concedes, though, that he is probably the wrong age to be contemplating a step into the DTM, and that this was just one of several compelling reasons not to take up Audi's offer.

“If I were younger, it would be easier to choose something new and build success there,” he explains. “But at 35, it's probably the wrong time. I needed something that would be good from the get-go.

“I also talk to a lot of frustrated drivers in that series. You hear a lot of stories that the DTM is a bit political. It's probably more of a career breaker than a career maker.”

Lotterer's big decision was further complicated by an offer from Toyota. There's an obvious connection there. He's had the Japanese manufacturer's engines behind him during his single-seater campaigns in Super Formula and its predecessor, Formula Nippon, since 2006. That was the same year that he began a six-season stint with Toyota

in Super GT that lasted until his endurance programmes with Audi in 2010 and '11 turned into a full-season drive.

“The offer was really great and a difficult one to turn down; I know a lot of people there because I've raced with them for so long in Japan,” says Lotterer, who doesn't want to go into too many details about what was on the table. Exactly how he would have fitted into the line-up given that Jose Maria Lopez had been signed much earlier in the year isn't entirely clear.

Lotterer's anguish was made all the worse by the timescale in which he had to make up his mind.

“All the different sides were in touch and I had to make my decision really quickly – that's where the headache came,” he recalls. “I had three or four days to make up my mind and I was racing at Suzuka at the Super Formula finale at the time. I didn't get too much sleep that weekend. It might sound >>

**“I had three or four days to make up my mind. I didn't get much sleep that weekend”**







New Porsche  
has the makings  
of a winner

strange that the decision to go to Porsche was a hard one, but it was. I do realise that I was in a fortunate position compared with a lot of other drivers.

“In the end I followed my heart. I want to win Le Mans more times, or at least fight for wins there and in the world championship. That ultimately has more value to me than winning in the DTM. Dr Ullrich understood because his heart is at Le Mans too. I didn’t have to explain to him why I felt that way. He had no issue with me breaking my contract and letting me go.”

Lotterer was tempted by the Toyota offer, but he suggests that driving for Porsche at Le Mans is akin to “racing for Ferrari in Formula 1”. He also happens to be a fan of the brand as the owner of four Porsches, including a Carrera GT supercar.

“It was,” he concludes, “a bit too good to turn down and I think I might have regretted it one day if I’d let the Porsche opportunity go. I’m happy that I’ve now got two more Porsches: a company car and a race car.”

The emotional wrench of leaving Audi coincided with the end of his long-standing partnership with Benoit Treluyer and Marcel Fassler. Every start he made at the wheel of a factory prototype since his first steps with Audi Sport back in 2010 came alongside those two drivers. Or at least one of them – Treluyer missed two WEC rounds through injury last season.

A shade over two years ago, Lotterer said in these pages that

## “I think I might have regretted it one day if I’d let the Porsche opportunity go”

he couldn’t imagine driving a prototype with anyone but Treluyer and Fassler, though he knew the day would come.

“That day came sooner than expected unfortunately and I’m sad about that,” he says.

The relationship between three good friends was part of their strength as a driving combination, and Lotterer knows that he has to achieve something along those lines with new team-mates Neel Jani and Nick Tandy. Yet he doesn’t want to make a direct comparison between then and now.

“It will never be the same as what I had with Ben and Marcel. It was so unique, so natural,” he explains. “Ben and I were already good friends from Japan. We’d been racing against each other for so long and there was never any jealousy between us, and we’d always said that it would be awesome if we could >>



## CHILDHOOD BUDDIES IN THE OTHER PORSCHE

PUTTING KIWS BRENDON Hartley and Earl Bamber together in one car alongside Timo Bernhard at Porsche made more sense than you may imagine. The two share much more than their nationality. They were karting buddies and the best of friends when they were taking their first steps in motorsport.

Both started out racing at the Manawatu Kart Club on New Zealand's North Island back in the late 1990s. Hartley lived just across the road in Palmerston North, while Bamber was brought up down the road in Whanganui, but they became team-mates of

sorts. Hartley's father Brian is an engine builder by profession and tuned their kart motors.

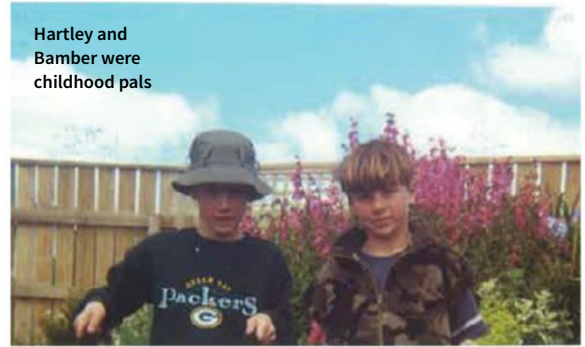
"I started karting a year and a half before Earl, so I used to help him out," recalls Hartley. "We'd go to the track and he'd follow me around to learn the lines, and I'd get bought lunch. So I've always said that I made him.

"We became good mates travelling to races together and I'd spend time in the holidays up at their family farm. I learnt to drive a manual car on their 10km rally stage of a front drive and we got up to all sorts of things that we shouldn't have at that age."

The careers of Hartley and Bamber diverged when the former switched to cars in Formula Vee at the age of 12. They were both on the books of the Kiwi A1GP squad for a short time, but remarkably they wouldn't race against each other again until they were both driving Porsche LMP1 machinery at the 2015 Spa WEC round.

Two months later they were both up on the podium at the Le Mans 24 Hours after Porsche's one-two victory.

"It's quite crazy to think that we grew up karting together and now we've ended up in the same car at Porsche," says



Hartley and Bamber were childhood pals

Bamber, who reckons that he and Hartley first started karting together in the year of Porsche's previous Le Mans triumph in 1998. "We were seven or eight years old and

just starting out in karting back then. No-one could have imagined that we'd be two of the guys to stand on the podium in another one-two for Porsche."







Lotterer took three Le Mans wins with Audi

drive together. Ben and I were discovering Audi at the same time, and Marcel, well, he's probably the nicest guy in the world.

"We didn't have to try to build that strong bond. We cheated in a way because Ben and I were already so close. You can't force these things; they have to happen naturally. You can put the ingredients in place and work in that direction, but you can't tell three people to develop a strong relationship.

"I'm the new kid and I have to say that I have been welcomed very nicely. I knew Neel already because we share a trainer and sometimes overlap on our days. I hadn't met Nick before apart from shaking his hand on the podium at Le Mans in 2015, but he's pretty easy going just like me."

Lotterer thought that Audi might have been his final employer, but he's understandably reticent to suggest that he's just changed jobs for the final time. What opportunities his new employer will give him isn't clear either.

"Motorsport is changing a bit at the moment, so it's hard to make predictions [about future contracts]," he ruminates. "I thought I had my last job with Audi."

There are ambitions to be ticked off on the Lotterer bucket list that he could fulfil with Porsche. Brought up in Belgium, he has an affinity with the Spa 24 Hours, also because his late father Henry was a senior player with the RAS Sport touring car team in the 1980s.

"I do want to win that race because of my family history," Lotterer says. "The problem is I'm not a GT3 guy. It's a great platform and there are some great drivers in it, but it's a different world from what I'm used to."

He also admits that he has aspirations to get a Sebring 12 Hours victory on his CV, having missed out during Audi's last assault in 2013 when Treluyer and Fassler triumphed with Oliver Jarvis.

"I want to win Sebring and what's happening in IMSA in the US looks interesting," he says. "I've never done the Daytona 24 Hours and it's one of the classic races. Maybe I need to do it."

But mostly Lotterer wants to win Le Mans again. Any conversation of any depth with him leaves you convinced about that. So is he, as mooted earlier, obsessed with the race?

"It's who I am; it is my challenge," he says. "I love the cars and the engineering and I love the speed." ❦

LAT IMAGES



ANDREAS SEIDL DOESN'T LIKE THE term 'superteam'. Porsche's LMP1 boss is adamant that this word, or anything similar, never crossed his mind when it was decided to put three Le Mans 24 Hours winners together in Andre Lotterer, Neel Jani and Nick Tandy. He does, however, suggest that he's already had "one of the strongest line-ups we've ever seen" under his watch.

He's talking about Mark Webber, Timo Bernhard and Brendon Hartley, who over the 2015-16 seasons not only claimed a world title, but also won nearly 50% of the races. Eight from 17 was their impressive tally.

Their strength as a trio offers an insight into why it was wrong to

herald the Lotterer-Jani-Tandy combo as a 'superteam' on its announcement last December. The now-retired Webber and his team-mates were a close-knit fighting force along with their engineer Kyle Wilson-Clarke in a way Jani and Romain Dumas and Mark Lieb never were, and it gave them an advantage over a trio who won only three races over the two-year period in which the Porsche 919 Hybrid enjoyed a kind of supremacy.

Those in the know will tell you that Webber and co and their engineer ate together, and to some extent played together when they were away at the races. Sightings of the other Porsche crew as one





## WHAT MAKES A SUPERTEAM?

outside of the pit garage appeared to become increasingly rare over their three years together.

Nothing is straightforward in motor racing, of course. The vital statistics of the 2015 WEC champions mask the team orders that were in play for much of the second half of that season. And Jani and his team-mates had a different race engineer in each of their three seasons together, but they never appeared to gel in the same way as their team-mates.

The Webber-Bernhard-Hartley relationship was reminiscent of that of Tom Kristensen, Allan McNish and Rinaldo Capello – and, of course, Lotterer and his long-term team-mates at Audi,

Benoit Treluyer and Marcel Fassler. Those were two driver combinations that enjoyed phenomenal success over the years. As talented as they all are or were as drivers, they became, as teams, more than the sum of their parts. They pulled each other along and nurtured each other – and, perhaps most importantly, stood as one. That’s always been important in endurance racing and is probably more so in today’s ultra-competitive world of high-tech racing machinery.

And that kind of working relationship doesn’t just happen when three drivers are thrown together. Look at the line-up in what we can call the ‘other’ Audi

over the past few years. There was a revolving door of drivers as first McNish and then Kristensen retired, and it took the new combination of Loic Duval, Lucas di Grassi and Oliver Jarvis more than a season to get into its stride. Sure they had a monopoly of Audi’s misfortune in 2015, but they didn’t emerge as a true force until what turned out to be Audi’s final season in the prototype arena.

‘Superteams’ aren’t just created by strokes of the pen on an entry form. They emerge and evolve, often with a lot of hard work. That’s why only time will tell if the new line-up in the #1 Porsche will be worthy of the grand title some time down the line.



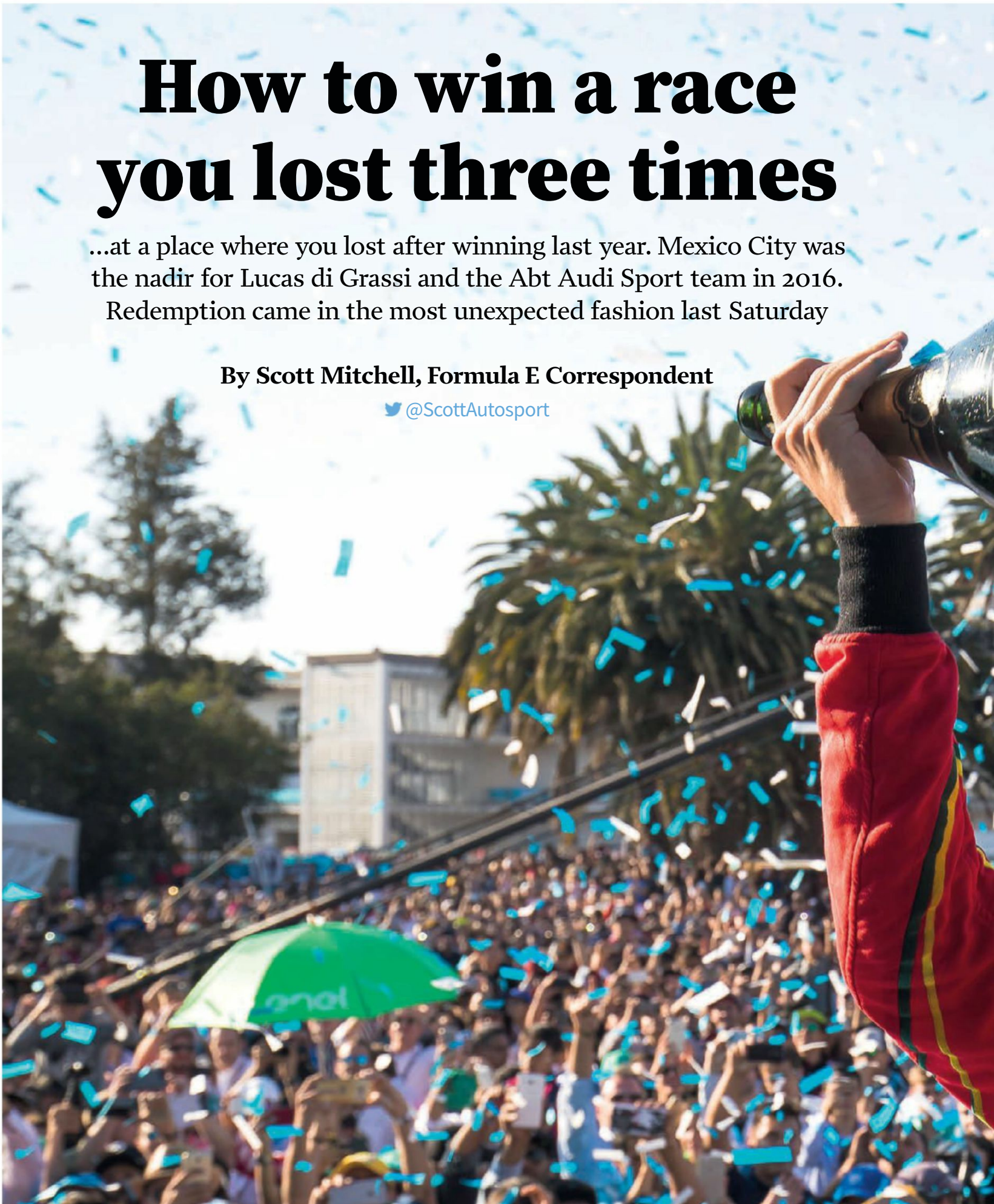


# How to win a race you lost three times

...at a place where you lost after winning last year. Mexico City was the nadir for Lucas di Grassi and the Abt Audi Sport team in 2016. Redemption came in the most unexpected fashion last Saturday

By Scott Mitchell, Formula E Correspondent

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LAT IMAGES

**L**ucas di Grassi didn't win the Mexico City ePrix with an offset strategy. No, 'offset' doesn't do this justice. After overcoming an early rear-ending and pitstop, an improbable energy target and the complete eradication of a 30-second lead, di Grassi won through a gamble that needed luck as much as skill to succeed.

Three laps into the race, di Grassi was in the pitlane with a broken rear wing. Slick work from his Abt Audi Sport team, coupled with a safety car, kept him on the lead lap, but the outlook was bleak over the following laps. He was at the back, using up plenty of energy and making little progress.

Half a dozen laps short of the race's halfway point, the traditional target to change cars, di Grassi was in the pits again under a second safety car – eight laps before the majority of leaders did the same. This time it was intentional. If the safety car could stay out long enough, he could save as much energy as possible while inheriting track position as others

stopped. It had worked in Hong Kong, where di Grassi broke his front wing early on and recovered to finish second...

But this time racing resumed shortly after di Grassi exited the pits in his second car. The safety car was out long enough to give di Grassi – and Jerome d'Ambrosio, who employed the same strategy and was actually ahead of di Grassi, but fell behind when the race went green again – the edge once the rest of the field stopped, but not as long as he'd have liked. That was the second blow: with 19 laps in the book, di Grassi faced 26 racing laps with a third less energy than the rest.

Still, di Grassi and d'Ambrosio had an advantage of more than half a minute, so the cat-and-mouse game had started. And then came the third blow in the form of a third safety car. Cautions were di Grassi's salvation earlier on, but this final interruption appeared to be a death knell to his victory chances.

"Today there were three occasions where I thought, 'That's over,'" di Grassi said. "If the third safety car didn't come up I thought I could manage the gap. But when the third safety car came I went on the radio and said, 'It's not possible!'"

With a 32.4s lead over Jose Maria

**Turvey led first quarter of the race from inherited pole position before being stricken by a loss of power**

Lopez on lap 27 of 45, di Grassi could afford to lose 1.7s a lap to his pursuers. He was running in the low 1m15s, while Lopez and Jean-Eric Vergne were capable of posting low 1m13s, but would have consumed a significant amount of energy in doing so. So di Grassi's optimism that he could see the race out was justified – as was his frustration, and concern, when his lead evaporated and racing resumed after just two laps. Especially given that the safety car was probably unnecessary, as Loic Duval's Faraday/Dragon car had got going pretty swiftly after it stopped.

It seemed inevitable that the leaders would be swallowed up by the chasing Lopez and Vergne. But di Grassi didn't count on d'Ambrosio acting as an unlikely wingman. There was something quite poetic about this – d'Ambrosio's two Formula E wins have come after di Grassi took victory on the road but was later excluded, including in Mexico City last season. This time, he made a win possible for di Grassi.

D'Ambrosio's stern defence allowed di Grassi to escape. Vergne twice threw his Techeetah-Renault down the inside of Lopez's DS Virgin car into the Turn 3 chicane and, while neither move was





successful, contact was made and Lopez was given a clear message.

That, perhaps, is why Lopez ran out of patience behind d'Ambrosio and attempted a reckless around-the-outside pass into Turn 1. It didn't work. Lopez locked the rears and spun, dropping out of the top 10 in the process.

That thrust Vergne into the role of d'Ambrosio chaser, but the Frenchman had no more luck than Lopez. He was glued to the rear of the Faraday Future Dragon Racing car, but lap after lap passed and di Grassi edged further and further away. When d'Ambrosio locked up into Turn 1 with three laps to go, ran wide and allowed Vergne to steal second, di Grassi's lead was almost six seconds.

"When Jerome started to hold people up I opened a small gap," said di Grassi. "He did a fantastic job. That helped massively to win the race. With the difference in energy we had I thought it would be almost impossible."

Vergne had been pushing so hard trying to pass d'Ambrosio that the energy difference was practically nothing by the time he was released into clear air. While he did hack into the gap over the final two and a half laps, he never came close >>

## AGONY TO ECSTASY AS JAGUAR BREAKS ITS POINTS DUCK

HEARTS SANK. THREE LAPS FROM THE END OF a topsy-turvy Mexico City ePrix, Mitch Evans was rear-ended by Felix Rosenqvist, after the Kiwi hit the brakes trying to avoid the spinning Nick Heidfeld. Driver and team thought their race was run, having spent the previous 42 laps comfortably in the points.

"I thought 100% we're out," said Evans. "Normally when you get a hit that big in the rear it breaks the suspension or rips a wheel off. Something was with us today to help us get through that; any other time I don't think the car would survive that big a hit."

Evans emerged through that carnage unscathed and, what's more, in fifth position – he'd been in the mix for seventh or eighth throughout, getting the better of team-mate Adam Carroll mid-race and duelling with Rosenqvist and the Renault e.dams of Nico Prost (who triggered the shunt in the first place by hitting Heidfeld into a spin in the stadium section).

Then, to throw a cherry on top of the cake, Jerome d'Ambrosio ran out of energy, and Evans inherited fourth. Jaguar, the team that was nowhere after the first two races, had completed a remarkably quick journey from the back into the points.

"We've had a bit of luck, which we needed, but our pace was quite strong and we were in the mix the whole race," said Evans. "Regardless of the collisions we would have been in the points. To get fourth is a massive highlight, and a double

points finish is very special."

Carroll was running close to Evans, but lost out in the melee because Rosenqvist attempted to continue with the front end of his Mahindra crumpled. This cost Carroll a couple of places, but the Northern Irishman still put an end to his own tricky start to Formula E with points in eighth place.

"Sometimes you need a little bit of help to go the right way," he said. "There's a lot of things you need to come together to have the car under you. This is where we're improving all the time. I've had a few issues; it hasn't gone my way."

"I was pretty gutted after the crash because normally I'm like, 'Yes I'll have this' and gain a few places, but I ended up being pushed out. At least we got through it and came out the other side."

Evans missed out on breaking Jaguar's points duck in Buenos Aires last time out after qualifying seventh, and admitted the result in Mexico was a weight off the team's shoulders.

"You don't know when the next opportunity will come about, and I didn't think today would be that day after qualifying," said Evans, who started 11th, one place behind Carroll, after a trio of grid penalties elevated the Jaguars up the starting grid.

"For everyone involved it's massive. Those first points are always the hardest. It's great for everybody's mindset going into the rest of the championship – we can be a bit more aggressive and it takes the pressure off."



Evans survived rear-ending to finish fourth



to mounting a challenge. Di Grassi's back-to-front job was complete after a mammoth effort – using around 4% of his energy per lap compared to 5-6% for his trackers – that took its toll physically and mentally.

“You can only do that move on strategy if you use the energy [well] and have a very energy efficient car/driver combination,” he said. “Nobody stopped, just me and d’Ambrosio. Everybody could have stopped.”

He’s right. It’s easier to make that gamble when you’re at the back, and d’Ambrosio only stopped because he’d damaged his front wing. But debutant Esteban Gutierrez was behind di Grassi on track, as was Stephane Sarrazin – both had quick cars, both could have gone bold on the strategy. This is where the argument that Abt deserves more credit gains traction.

“What I don’t understand is that, after Hong Kong, why no-one has learned from what we did,” mused di Grassi’s engineer Franco Chiocchetti. “We did it again here and it worked once more. The other guys at the back should have done the same. What did they have to lose?”

No more than di Grassi, who put himself in the right place at the right time to atone for last year’s exclusion. D’Ambrosio deserved similar recompense for the strategy call, but could not quite execute it in the same way. After losing out to Vergne he tried to keep Sam Bird at bay in the fight for the final podium position, but was nailed around the outside into Turn 3, and then ran out of energy on the final lap in agonising fashion. The team blamed incorrect energy figures on his dash.

D’Ambrosio was not the only driver to leave Mexico City unrewarded. While 15th-place starter di Grassi’s fortunes swung wildly to the good, championship leader Sebastien Buemi’s went in reverse. After his overnight flight from Toyota’s LMP1 programme launch at Monza, Buemi was quickest in practice but got caught out in qualifying (along with di Grassi), running in the first group with the worst of the track conditions. He ran sixth in the first half of the race, but lost out hugely in the pitstops when the



Andretti duo of Antonio Felix da Costa and Robin Frijns were three seconds under the minimum pitstop time. That was enough to put them back into the pitlane ahead of Buemi, who had to wait to avoid an unsafe release. He emerged 10th, and in his haste to recover ground he tried to pass Felix Rosenqvist’s Mahindra at Turn 1 on the outside, then spun avoiding Lopez’s rotating car ahead.

Buemi’s tale of woe was surpassed by that of Oliver Turvey, who led the opening quarter of the race after inheriting his first Formula E pole when Daniel Abt was sent to the back of the grid for a tyre-pressure infringement. Turvey was coming under increasing pressure from Lopez in the early stages before his NextEV lost power on the start/finish straight and came to a halt on the exit of Turn 1.

“There was no warning,” said Turvey. “Lopez seemed quite close behind and I felt comfortable keeping him there. It was a real shame.”

Lopez led in Turvey’s absence but the split strategies from di Grassi and d’Ambrosio dropped him to third on the

**Di Grassi rode his luck to take the win in Mexico City, atoning for last year’s exclusion**

road after the stops, and his race came completely unstuck by his spin. Still, he fought back to sixth – his best result in Formula E – thanks to a multi-car crash three laps from the end that wrecked the races of another two innocent drivers.

Nick Heidfeld ran second behind Lopez in the first half of the race but, like Buemi, was hindered in the pitlane by the two eager Andretti drivers and dropped back. While running fourth late on he was attacked by Nico Prost into the stadium section and got turned around, which caused the chasing Mitch Evans to throw the anchors on and Rosenqvist to plough into the back of the Jaguar before flying over his own team-mate. Both Mahindras’ races were ruined, although Evans somehow continued and bagged Jaguar’s first points with a shock fourth to boot (see p43).

Another beneficiary was Gutierrez, who rose to 10th. The ex-Formula 1 driver made the most of several lucky breaks – that late carnage, da Costa stopping on track with a suspected driveshaft problem and Frijns getting a drive-through penalty for his short pitstop – to recover from an early setback and score a point on his debut with Techeetah.

The home favourite was a fortunate beneficiary of a Formula E race of old – a mix of technical problems, mistakes, close racing and a bit of ‘what the hell is going on?’ as well.

Audi’s new head of motorsport, Dieter Gass, had perhaps the best summary when reflecting on his charge’s triumph: “It was thrilling, nerve-wracking, full of strategy and also some fortune.

“I thought when the safety car came out for the third time we had no chance. It looked like it was over. In racing you never know, you never give up. It happens like this – but very rarely.” ❁



Rosenqvist is launched over team-mate Heidfeld

TWISS/SPACESUIT MEDIA



Safety car was deployed three times



LAT IMAGES

## RESULTS ROUND 4/9, MEXICO CITY (MEX), APRIL 1 (45 LAPS – 58.524 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Abt Audi Sport · Abt Schaeffler FE02	56m27.535s
2	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Techeetah · Renault Z.E.16	+1.966s
3	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing · Virgin DSV-02	+7.480s
4	Mitch Evans (NZ)	Jaguar Racing · Jaguar I-type 1	+9.770s
5	Nico Prost (F)	Renault.e.dams · Renault Z.E.16	+9.956s
6	Jose Maria Lopez (RA)	DS Virgin Racing · Virgin DSV-02	+10.631s
7	Daniel Abt (D)	Abt Audi Sport · Abt Schaeffler FE02	+11.694s
8	Adam Carroll (GB)	Jaguar Racing · Jaguar I-type 1	+13.722s
9	Nelson Piquet Jr (BR)	NextEV · NextEV TCR002	+14.156s
10	Esteban Gutierrez (MEX)	Techeetah · Renault Z.E.16	+15.717s
11	Robin Frijns (NL)	Andretti · Andretti ATEC-02	+21.459s
12	Nick Heidfeld (D)	Mahindra · Mahindra M3ELECTRO	+27.232s
13	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renault.e.dams · Renault Z.E.16	+1m01.365s
14	Jerome d'Ambrosio (B)	Faraday Future Dragon Racing · Penske 701-EV	+1m09.646s
15	Stephane Sarrazin (F)	Venturi · Venturi VM200-FE-02	-1 lap
16	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Mahindra · Mahindra M3ELECTRO	43 laps-accident
R	Maro Engel (D)	Venturi · Venturi VM200-FE-02	38 laps-lost power
R	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Andretti · Andretti ATEC-02	32 laps-gearbox
R	Loic Duval (F)	Faraday Future Dragon Racing · Penske 701-EV	25 laps-electrical
R	Oliver Turvey (GB)	NextEV · NextEV TCR002	12 laps-electrical

Winner's average speed 62.194mph. Fastest lap Buemi 1m03.102s, 74.195mph.

### SUPERPOLE

1 Turvey 1m02.867s; 2 Lopez 1m03.072s; 3 Vergne 1m03.202s; 12 Engel 1m03.045s\*; 18 Abt 1m02.711s\*\*.

### QUALIFYING

Turvey 1m02.712s; Abt 1m02.765s; Lopez 1m02.831s; Engel 1m02.974s; Vergne 1m02.983s; 4 Heidfeld 1m03.022s; 5 Bird 1m03.099s; 6 da Costa 1m03.363s; 7 Buemi 1m03.402s; 8 Rosenqvist 1m03.425s; 9 Gutierrez 1m03.509s; 10 Carroll 1m03.553s; 11 Evans 1m03.563s; 13 Prost 1m03.589s; 14 Frijns 1m03.688s; 15 di Grassi 1m03.690s; 16 Piquet 1m04.082s; 17 Sarrazin 1m03.491s\*; 19 d'Ambrosio 1m03.366s\*; 20 Duval 1m11.575s. \*grid penalty. \*\*excluded from qualifying.

### CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Buemi 76; 2 di Grassi 71; 3 Prost 46; 4 Vergne 40; 5 Bird 33; 6 Rosenqvist 20; 7 Abt 20; 8 Heidfeld 17; 9 Piquet 15; 10 Turvey 15.

## IN THE HEADLINES



LAT IMAGES

### DIDN'T YOU GET THE MEMO?

Antonio Felix da Costa conceded that the Andretti team was not aware the minimum pitstop time had been changed ahead of the race. Da Costa (above) and team-mate Robin Frijns spent 57 seconds in the pits, but the time had been altered to 60s on Friday evening. Frijns was hit with a drive-through penalty, while da Costa retired with what he suspected was a driveshaft problem.

### BIRD KEEPS PODIUM PERCH

Sam Bird was hit with a two-second penalty for an unsafe release after swapping cars, but the sanction was not enough to cost him his third-place finish. The officials took into consideration the incorrect presence of the two Andretti drivers, after their short pitstops put them into the middle of the train attempting to rejoin.

### NO PENALTY FOR NICO

Nico Prost and Nick Heidfeld had differing opinions on the late-race accident that cost the Mahindra team a likely double points finish. No post-race action was taken by the stewards, but Heidfeld said: "Nico just crashed into my car. It's pretty clear what happened." Prost retaliated: "He didn't leave me any room when I was at his side."

### ROSENQVIST ANGERED

That late-race collision led to Felix Rosenqvist lamenting it was "really shit to end like that" after another strong race for the rookie. He felt "I could have fought for a win" without the second safety car, having saved enough energy to run a lap longer than his rivals, but the caution period "made it a flat-out race" thereafter.

### RAPID BUEMI MAINTAINS STREAK

For the 20th Formula E race in succession, Sebastien Buemi scored a point. His fastest lap in Mexico means that despite finishing outside of the top 10, he added to his tally yet again to hold a five-point lead over Jean-Eric Vergne. Buemi (below) has not failed to score since Miami, round five of the inaugural season.



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# Shedden ahead as BMW fires warning shot

Civic driver scores 46th BTCC career win but revamped WSR-run Team BMW proves it will be one to watch in the coming weeks

By Matt James, BTCC Correspondent

[@MattJMNews](#)

**G**ordon Shedden drove out of the gates of Brands Hatch last Sunday in the same position he had been at the fall of the curtain on the

British Touring Car Championship in 2016 – at the top of the points table.

The Team Dynamics Honda Civic driver took his 46th BTCC career win in the second race of the day after a patient pursuit of winner Tom Ingram's Speedworks Toyota Avensis in race one. In race three, saddled with ballast and soft tyres, he settled for a comfortable seventh. That was enough to put the Scot at the head of the standings by a handsome six points from Ingram.

Despite that, it's unlikely that the 38-year-old is going to be smiling as much as he was when he left Kent last year. That will be mainly due to the prowess of the revamped WSR-run Team BMW cars of Colin Turkington, Andrew Jordan and Rob Collard.

Jordan won race three under pressure from Turkington in a spellbinding race where the pair exchanged a few gentle touches but remained respectful of each other. For Jordan, that was the feather in the cap that had earlier provided two sixth-place finishes as he is learning to

handle a rear-wheel-drive BTCC car for the first time.

Even the 2013 champion admits as much himself. "In race two on my initial start, for example, I tried to go around Ingram [for the lead, from sixth on the grid!] and I had some understeer and I learned that the front tyres aren't in the sweet spot straight away," he explained. "It's things like that which I need to get to grips with. I haven't felt so sharp in terms of racecraft. It's about intuition, and that takes a bit of time to build up."

"You can do all the race runs you want [in testing], but it's not like when someone is stuck in front of you and there's someone stuck up behind you. It's all experience I have yet to pick up."

That race-two start should have led to a big result, but the race was restarted after a scary startline shunt for Jason Plato in the Team BMR Subaru Levorg (see panel, page 48). Jordan didn't get things quite so right at the second time of asking, but his launch in race three – where he went from third to the lead at Paddock – showed he was gaining experience all the time.

Turkington, too, can be rightly optimistic about the season ahead – although he might not have felt that way just a few yards into the opening round of the year. He swung out from fifth on the grid to pass Shedden ahead of him just as the wheelspinning Matt Neal, >>



Shedden leads Jordan into Druids. Both won races last Sunday



# Hatch







## REAL WOES AT SUBARU

THERE WERE SOME FURROWED BROWS AT Team BMR Subaru at Brands Hatch, and they started from the very moment the four cars took to the circuit.

Drivers Jason Plato, Ash Sutton, James Cole and Josh Price were all struggling with the handling of the reworked Levorg cars, which have had an alteration to the centre of gravity for 2017 to bring them in line with other configurations on the grid.

The car was designed and built because it had an advantageous boxer-style engine, which carries the mass of its weight low down. Those who had studied the rulebook – and it wasn't only Team BMR, others had done it too – realised that a Subaru could be the magic bullet when it came to getting the most from the current British Touring Car Championship rulebook.

But it was BMR that tempted the Japanese firm to throw its weight behind the campaign and get involved.

Now, for 2017, the rules have been amended and that has, at the moment, given the team a mountain to climb. That move was made because the car was a six-time race winner in 2016, but it looks a very long way from being a winner now.

The car has tested with some elements of the revamped rules but, when the final settings were applied at Brands, it was a disaster.

Watching the rear-wheel-drive cars from trackside, it appears that the problems run very deep. The estate-shaped Subaru was an animal going into the corners and its drivers were on a voyage of discovery every time they even tried to look at an apex.

The wet-dry qualifying session meant that

direct comparisons were not realistic, so delving into the times in the warmer and dry second free practice is probably the best indication of the true picture.

The four Subaru were in the bottom four in the speed traps in the second sector, which finishes at the start-finish line. They were around 5mph slower than the pacesetters. In the first sector, which finishes along the Cooper Straight, they weren't much better. Cole was top in 27th – still 3mph behind the guys leading the field.

The modern BTCC is a place where teams will constantly complain about boost levels and the equalisation-of-turbo-boost formula that is in place. But for all four of the cars to be so far from the pace at Brands Hatch – a venue that generally keeps cars tightly bunched – means something is badly wrong.

A poor speed-trap time may not just be about the performance of the engine: it can also be about how a car comes out of the preceding corner.

Plato's race weekend was ruined by a startline crash in race two, which ruled him out of race three. Even so, the rewards would only have been slim pickings anyway. He had already banked the best result that the car would get over the course of the weekend with a 12th in race one.

No-one from the team wanted to put their head above the parapet and explain why. Plato was particularly circumspect and all he would offer was that the team has a lot of work to do to get on top of the car and its new characteristics if it wants to return to the successful ways of 2016.

**MATT JAMES**

Rear-drive Subarus need work if they are to return to winning ways of 2016



in the sister Team Dynamics Honda, slid down the banked starting grid at Brands. Neal and Turkington made solid contact and were both out, each fortunate not to have been gathered up by the accelerating pack behind.

That can torpedo a race weekend, because race-one finishing positions dictate the race-two grid. But, from 32nd, Turkington mounted the mother of all comebacks on the tight Indy track to land 10th (which became ninth after a penalty for Rob Austin). That meant he went into the finale with very little ballast and a very real chance.

As he crept up to Jordan's bootlid in the dying moments of race three, he came oh so close to turning his entire weekend around.

"That was a great race and I raced brilliantly with Andrew," said Turkington after a slight nudge and a lift at Clearways as they both dashed for the line. "I wasn't going to be silly."

It still left him a considerable 22 points away from Shedden but, as comebacks go, it was strong.

Collard was desperate to relieve himself of the qualifying bogey he had picked up in 2016, but his heart





Above: Turkington says he “raced brilliantly” with team-mate Jordan but “was not going to be silly”

Left: Ingram won the season opener for the second year running



must have sunk during the wet-dry 30-minute session on Saturday, which left him in 15th place due to nothing but unfortunate timing.

He always races brilliantly and his climb to seventh in race one set him up for the second encounter, when he finished second after a fine move to pass Ingram just after a mid-race safety-car period. “I actually thought I could have won that race,” said Collard. “I could see Shedden was just in front of Tom and the car was superb.”

But it took him three and a half laps after the five-lap caution period to unseat the stubborn Toyota ahead and, by then, Shedden had enough of a buffer.

In race three, with the softer rubber and 66kg of ballast, Collard gamely hung on in the top six and let team-mate Turkington through when he could see that the Northern Irishman behind was on a charge. Nevertheless, he left the venue fifth in the overall points table.

And all this came from a programme that even team boss Dick Bennetts

admitted wasn’t 100% ready in the build-up to the kick-off.

New engines from BMW had arrived at the last minute and the team needed to test all three drivers in a single car just a handful of days before the race weekend to give them experience of a new fly-by-wire throttle system.

Bennetts was positive: “We’re pleased with the whole team; they’ve done a lot of hours. The lads pulled an overnighter on Wednesday before shakedown because we got the engines so late. It’s not the best way to start the year, but it has paid off today.

“There are couple of little things we need to sort out – it’s nothing to do with power, it’s to do with little reliability things, but we had no problems today, so we’re happy with that. It has, on reflection, been a great start for us.”

Aside from Shedden, Ingram was the other big winner at Brands. Speedworks had been hunting for balance in its reworked Toyota during testing, and it paid off. Ingram ruled the free-practice sessions and was only put in the shade by a great lap from Jeff Smith (Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R) in the interrupted and dry-wet-dry-wet >>





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qualifying session for pole position. The 23-year-old made swift work of Smith (who was later to retire from the opener with a loose wheel) on the run to Paddock and scampered clear to repeat his first-round triumph from 2016.

But Ingram had the luck that can make or break a season in race two. His car failed to get away for the warm-up lap after an electrical problem, and he managed to reboot the system (“I just turned it off and on again,” he said) without dropping to the back of the pack, allowing him to weave through the grid and regain his position.

But then, as the field prepared to blast off, his car died again. He waved

**Austin was excluded from race two after pitching Jordan out of fourth place**

frantically at the marshals from the cockpit, and the yellow flag was produced to abort the start.

As the field toured around again, he was instructed to start from the back as he had been the cause of the abandoned getaway. But he was already making his way over the grid markings by the time the message was relayed to him.

“I got the call when I was half way to pole. What was I supposed to do? The problem only occurred when the car was stationary, and we still don’t know what it was,” he explained.

Ingram took his place at the front and officials deemed that he would have to serve a drive-through instead once the race was under way.

But that point never fully came as Plato had his shunt, the race was red-flagged and a new race was declared: all previous sins were cast aside. Although Shedden and Collard had passed him by the flag, it was a mighty relief.

Ballast and soft-tyre pain restricted him to 11th in race three, but it had been a successful weekend despite everything.

“I was just thinking to myself ‘points, points’ all the time,” said Ingram, referring to his 2016 habit of having a weekend fall apart after a strong race one.

There were two other significant podium interlopers during the course of the weekend. Adam Morgan followed Ingram and Shedden in the opening race to land Ciceley Racing’s first silverware of the weekend in the racy Mercedes-Benz A-Class. The compliant chassis always performs superbly at Brands, particularly over the kerb-crashing section at Surtees, and he even had a

sniff of second in race one as Shedden grappled with a dashboard showing him all kinds of warning signals, without actually damaging his performance.

Morgan profited when Rob Austin (Handy Motorsport Toyota) nerfed Jordan out of fourth in race two under yellows, a move for which Austin would later be excluded. In the finale Morgan hung on gamely for fifth to provide a weekend with the consistency that has sometimes been missing from his make-up.

The other major mover was championship returnee Tom Chilton in the new Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra. The car had been a solid top-10 contender from the off, despite the huge learning process going on.

Chilton was convinced that his 12th-place grid slot did not reflect the car’s true potential, and so it proved. He climbed to 10th in the opener and was gifted eighth in the second after Austin’s visit to the clerk of the course’s bus.

That was a double bonus, as it landed him pole for race three.

While no-one had an answer for Jordan’s magnificent start in the finale, Chilton kept him honest in the opening stages – although, in truth, Jordan was in tyre-preservation mode. Turkington muscled ahead too, but third was a landmark for the team and the new car.

“It was unbelievable to come here and get a podium,” said Chilton. “The whole project is new, brand new, and the work we have done has been stunning. There is much, much more to come as well. We’re leaving Brands Hatch sixth in the points. As a starting point, that really is quite something.”



Chilton landed pole position for race three

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**RESULTS** ROUND 1/10, BRANDS HATCH, APRIL 2, RACE 1 (27 LAPS – 32.613 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Tom Ingram (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport · Toyota Avensis	24m23.405s
2	Gordon Shedden (GB)	Team Dynamics · Honda Civic Type R	+3.181s
3	Adam Morgan (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport · Mercedes A-Class	+3.348s
4	Jack Goff (GB)	Eurotech Racing · Honda Civic Type R	+12.387s
5	Rob Austin (GB)	Handy Motorsport · Toyota Avensis	+16.410s
6	Andrew Jordan (GB)	WSR · BMW 125i M Sport	+16.610s
7	Rob Collard (GB)	WSR · BMW 125i M Sport	+16.760s
8	Mat Jackson (GB)	Motorbase Performance · Ford Focus	+18.109s
9	Michael Epps (GB)	Team Hard · Volkswagen CC	+18.326s
10	Tom Chilton (GB)	Power Maxed Racing · Vauxhall Astra	+18.632s
11	Matt Simpson (GB)	Team Dynamics · Honda Civic Type R	+20.347s
12	Jason Plato (GB)	Team BMR · Subaru Levorg	+20.705s
13	Josh Cook (GB)	Team Parker Racing/Maximum Motorsport · Ford Focus	+22.792s
14	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Triple Eight Racing · MG6	+23.589s
15	Martin Depper (GB)	Motorbase Performance · Ford Focus	+25.015s
16	Ash Sutton (GB)	Team BMR · Subaru Levorg	+25.517s
17	Senna Proctor (GB)	Power Maxed Racing · Vauxhall Astra	+26.153s
18	Aiden Moffat (GB)	Ciceley Racing · Mercedes A-Class	+27.137s
19	Luke Davenport (GB)	Motorbase Performance · Ford Focus	+27.917s
20	Stephen Jelley (GB)	Team Parker Racing/Maximum Motorsport · Ford Focus	+28.169s
21	Chris Smiley (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing · Chevrolet Cruze	+28.226s
22	Ollie Jackson (GB)	AmD Tuning · Audi S3 Saloon	+28.721s
23	Dan Lloyd (GB)	Triple Eight Racing · MG6	+32.441s
24	Josh Price (GB)	Team BMR · Subaru Levorg	+36.234s
25	Ant Whorton-Eales (GB)	AmD Tuning · Audi S3 Saloon	-1 lap
26	Will Burns (GB)	Team Hard · Volkswagen CC	-2 laps
R	James Cole (GB)	Team BMR · Subaru Levorg	23 laps-loose turbo pipe
NC	Jake Hill (GB)	Team Hard · Volkswagen CC	21 laps
R	Jeff Smith (GB)	Eurotech Racing · Honda Civic Type R	14 laps-loose wheel
R	Dave Newsham (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing · Chevrolet Cruze	11 laps-loose wheel
R	Matt Neal (GB)	Team Dynamics · Honda Civic Type R	0 laps-accident
R	Colin Turkington (GB)	WSR · BMW 125i M Sport	0 laps-accident

**Winner's average speed** 80.22mph. **Fastest lap** Shedden 48.742s, 89.21mph.



Shedden now has a six-point standings lead

**QUALIFYING**

**1 Smith 48.367s**; 2 Ingram 48.429s; 3 Shedden 48.527s; 4 Neal 48.543s; 5 Turkington 48.552s; 6 Morgan 48.596s; 7 Goff 48.666s; 8 Austin 48.819s; 9 Hill 48.861s; 10 Simpson 48.899s; 11 Jordan 48.919s; 12 Chilton 48.937s; 13 Epps 48.942s; 14 M Jackson 48.948s; 15 Collard 49.026s; 16 Proctor 49.040s; 17 Davenport 49.111s; 18 Plato 49.118s; 19 Taylor-Smith 49.129s; 20 Jelley 49.178s; 21 Cook 49.180s; 22 Sutton 49.193s; 23 Moffat 49.251s; 24 Depper 49.329s; 25 Lloyd 49.389s; 26 Whorton-Eales 49.432s; 27 Cole 49.542s; 28 Smiley 49.559s; 29 O Jackson 49.581s; 30 Burns 49.794s; 31 Price 49.847s; 32 Newsham no time.

**RACE 2 (23 LAPS – 27.782 MILES)**

**1 Shedden** 20m46.471s; 2 Collard +0.870s; 3 Ingram +2.657s; 4 Morgan +4.565s; 5 M Jackson +5.125s; 6 Jordan +5.140s; 7 Cook +8.013s; 8 Chilton +8.197s; 9 Turkington +9.441s; 10 Epps +9.492s; 11 Neal +9.672s; 12 Goff +10.280s; 13 Proctor +10.488s; 14 O Jackson +11.265s; 15 Taylor-Smith +12.741s; 16 Smith +13.002s; 17 Newsham +14.025s; 18 Jelley +14.916s; 19 Hill +17.857s; 20 Simpson +18.084s; 21 Cole +18.450s; 22 Burns +20.479s; 23 Lloyd -1 lap; 24 Price -3 laps; EX Austin +4.328s; R Moffat 18 laps-accident; R Sutton 18 laps-accident; R Smiley 17 laps-accident damage; R Davenport 9 laps-damage; R Whorton-Eales 9 laps-accident damage; R Plato 0 laps-accident; R Depper 0 laps-radiator damage. **Winner's average speed** 80.23mph. **Fastest lap** Turkington 48.657s, 89.36mph.

**GRID RACE 2** Decided by result of Race 1.

**RACE 3 (24 LAPS – 28.989 MILES)**

**1 Jordan** 19m53.418s; 2 Turkington +0.315s; 3 Chilton +4.692s; 4 Neal +7.558s; 5 Morgan +10.205s; 6 Collard +10.812s; 7 Shedden +11.719s; 8 Goff +12.141s; 9 Epps +12.970s; 10 Hill +14.367s; 11 Ingram +18.859s; 12 Taylor-Smith +21.500s; 13 M Jackson +21.648s; 14 Newsham +22.117s; 15 Lloyd +22.587s; 16 O Jackson +23.653s; 17 Smith +25.070s; 18 Austin +25.546s; 19 Proctor +25.942s; 20 Davenport +26.183s; 21 Sutton +26.540s; 22 Depper +26.932s; 23 Whorton-Eales +29.636s; 24 Price +30.355s; 25 Smiley +33.244s; 26 Cook -1 lap; 27 Jelley -2 laps; 28 Burns -3 laps; R Moffat 20 laps-engine; R Simpson 0 laps-damage; R Cole 0 laps-damage; NS Plato-accident damage. **Winner's average speed** 87.44mph. **Fastest lap** Turkington 48.713s, 89.26mph.

**GRID RACE 3** Decided by result of Race 2, with the top eight reversed.

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

**1 Shedden** 48; 2 Ingram 42; 3 Jordan 41; 4 Morgan 39; 5 Collard 36; 6 Chilton 29; 7 Turkington 26; 8 Goff 25; 9 M Jackson 22; 10 Epps 20.





Perera leads from Meadows and Abril early in the main race

## Perera helps Buhk start a new chapter

**BLANCPAIN GT SPRINT CUP**  
**MISANO (I)**  
**APRIL 1-2**  
**ROUND 1/5**

HTP MOTORSPORT'S RESHUFFLED DRIVER pairing of Maximilian Buhk and Franck Perera enjoyed a perfect start to the Blancpain GT Series Sprint Cup Championship at Misano last weekend, their Mercedes-AMG GT3 claiming commanding victories in both races.

Marco Mapelli of Attempto Racing set the fastest time in Saturday afternoon's final qualifying shootout, in which the fastest eight cars were separated by just two tenths of a second, and so lined his Lamborghini Huracan up on pole for the qualifying race. Just behind him was Perera, who couldn't make his move for the lead stick as the lights went out and the 34-car field set off into the darkness.

This qualifying race was by far the most eventful part of the weekend. All cars got away cleanly from the line, but by the time the pack reached Turn 6 chaos ensued as the Audi of Will Stevens speared sideways across the track when "I was touched from behind", causing a chain reaction that ended the races of six other cars and brought out the red flag. The chassis damage sustained by Stevens was so great that he and team-mate Markus Winkelhock were unable to run in the main race on Sunday.

There was disaster for Mapelli at the restart as he was forced to pull his Lamborghini into

the pits with a fuel-pressure problem, putting him and team-mate Giovanni Venturini out of the race. Buhk capitalised on the Lamborghini's retirement to take the lead, with Perera taking over at the pitstop and building a margin of over five seconds.

Young duo Fabian Schiller and Jules Szymkowiak, 19 and 21 respectively, starred on their maiden outing together in another of the HTP Mercs. Szymkowiak, who impressed last year in a car he shared with Bernd Schneider, had started 10th on the grid but was fifth as the pitstop window opened, leaving Renault Sport Trophy Am-class champion Schiller to consolidate their position. But a time penalty for a pit-entry collision with a Strakka McLaren dropped them to 11th.

That moved another GT newcomer up to second in the form of GP2 race winner Raffaele Marciello, partnered with Michael Meadows in one of the French ASP team's Mercedes. Marciello went on a charge at the restart, but tangled with Dominik Baumann, sending the 2016 overall champion into a spin. Marciello was placed under investigation, but no action was taken.

The restart also helped Mirko Bortolotti, who made it up to second place, handing the GRT Grasser Lambo over to Christian Engelhart during the stops. Engelhart was doing battle for fourth place on the final lap of the race with the Strakka Racing McLaren of Andrew Watson when they got caught up with a lapped Lambo, sending all three spinning into the gravel.



# NCPAIN



VISION SPORT AGENCY

Engelhart recovered to seventh, while Watson came home in a lowly 18th place.

Reigning Sprint Cup Champions Enzo Ide and Christopher Mies endured a torrid qualifying session, with their WRT Audi not even making it through to Q3. But Mies drove a solid first stint from 18th to 12th, with Ide taking over the car and finally being classified fifth.

Sunday's race, held in bright daylight, was considerably less chaotic than the qualifying race. Buhk and Perera enjoyed a dominant lead from lights to flag, finishing 23 seconds ahead.

Meadows held on strongly to second in the opening stages, but a problem with the wheelnuts on the Mercedes forced a second unscheduled pitstop and left the ASP Mercedes languishing in an eventual 16th.

The main event brought scenes of jubilation to Bentley Team M-Sport after the disappointment of having its second Continental GT3, driven by Maxime Soulet and Andy Soucek, eliminated from the main race because of the qualifying-race accident. Vincent Abril and Steven Kane had moved up from fourth on the road to third in the qualification race. With Kane at the wheel, the Bentley fought off a chasing group of four cars to take second in the championship race.

The resurgent Baumann hunted down Kane, but ultimately could not make any move stick and finished in third. Right behind the Australian were Daniel Juncadella in the ASP Mercedes he shared with Felix Serralles, and Christopher Haase in the Sainteloc Racing Audi that had been started by Romain Monti.

The final point was claimed by Jake Dennis and Pieter Schothorst, who started free practice with a fire in the engine compartment and hadn't completed a lap by the time the qualification race started. They hauled their WRT Audi to 10th. That was one place ahead of the fancied sister car of Ide and Mies, which spun while running sixth with Ide at the wheel.

## RESULTS ROUND 1/5, MISANO (I), APRIL 1-2 MAIN RACE (38 LAPS - 99.785 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Franck Perera (F) Maximilian Buhk (D)	HTP Motorsport · Mercedes-AMG GT3	1h00m29.750s
2	Vincent Abril (F) Steven Kane (GB)	Bentley Team M-Sport · Bentley Continental GT3	+23.353s
3	Jimmy Eriksson (S) Dominik Baumann (A)	HTP Motorsport · Mercedes-AMG GT3	+23.743s
4	Felix Serralles (USA) Daniel Juncadella (E)	Auto Sport Promotion · Mercedes-AMG GT3	+24.346s
5	Romain Monti (F) Christopher Haase (D)	Sainteloc Racing · Audi R8 LMS	+24.987s
6	Tom Blomqvist (GB) Philipp Eng (A)	Rowe Racing · BMW M6 GT3	+37.696s
7	Jesse Krohn (FIN) Markus Palttala (FIN)	Rowe Racing · BMW M6 GT3	+41.170s
8	Andrew Watson (GB) Rob Bell (GB)	Strakka Racing · McLaren 650S GT3	+41.498s
9	Christian Engelhart (D) Mirko Bortolotti (I)	GRT Grasser Racing Team · Lamborghini Huracan GT3	+44.035s
10	Pieter Schothorst (NL) Jake Dennis (GB)	WRT · Audi R8 LMS	+46.961s
11	Enzo Ide (B) Christopher Mies (D)	WRT · Audi R8 LMS	+54.584s
12	Fabian Schiller (D) Jules Szymkowiak (NL)	HTP Motorsport · Mercedes-AMG GT3	+58.140s
13	Nick Leventis (GB) Lewis Williamson (GB)	Strakka Racing · McLaren 650S GT3	+1m10.934s
14	Alexander Mattschull (D) Daniel Keilwitz (D)	Rinaldi Racing · Ferrari 488 GT3	+1m16.126s
15	Clemens Schmid (A) Filip Salaquarda (CZ)	ISR · Audi R8 LMS	+1m17.236s
16	Michael Meadows (GB) Raffaele Marciello (I)	Auto Sport Promotion · Mercedes-AMG GT3	+1m26.543s
17	Gustavo Yacaman (CO) Fabrizio Crestani (I)	Team Lazarus · Lamborghini Huracan GT3	-1 lap
18	Ben Barnicoat (GB) Alvaro Parente (P)	Strakka Racing · McLaren 650S GT3	-1 lap
19	Piti Bhirom Bhakdi (T) Carlo van Dam (NL)	Kessel Racing · Ferrari 488 GT3	-1 lap
20	Christophe Bourret (F) Jean-Philippe Belloc (F)	Auto Sport Promotion · Mercedes-AMG GT3	-1 lap
21	Caitlin Wood (AUS) Marko Helistekangas (FIN)	Reiter Young Stars · Lamborghini Gallardo R-EX	-1 lap
22	Michal Broniszewski (PL) Giacomo Piccini (I)	Kessel Racing · Ferrari 488 GT3	-2 laps
23	Kenneth Heyer (D) Yoshiharu Mori (J)	Kornely Motorsport · Mercedes-AMG GT3	-2 laps
24	Stuart Leonard (GB) Jamie Green (GB)	WRT · Audi R8 LMS	-5 laps
25	Frank Stippler (D) Kevin Ceccon (I)	ISR · Audi R8 LMS	32 laps-DNF
26	Jean-Luc Beaubelique (F) Jules Gounon (F)	Auto Sport Promotion · Mercedes-AMG GT3	-6 laps
27	Giovanni Venturini (RSM) Marco Mapelli (I)	Attempto Racing · Lamborghini Huracan GT3	26 laps-DNF
R	Marcel Fassler (CH) Dries Vanthoor (B)	WRT · Audi R8 LMS	1 lap
R	Adrian Zaugg (ZA) Max van Splunteren (NL)	Attempto Racing · Lamborghini Huracan GT3	0 laps
NS	Markus Winkelhock (D) Will Stevens (GB)	WRT · Audi R8 LMS	
NS	Maxime Soulet (B) Andy Soucek (E)	Bentley Team M-Sport · Bentley Continental GT3	
NS	Ezequiel Perez Compagnon (RA) Norbert Siedler (A)	GRT Grasser Racing Team · Lamborghini Huracan GT3	
NS	Loris Hezemans (NL) Jonny Kane (GB)	Strakka Racing · McLaren 650S GT3	
NS	Phil Quaife (GB) Lorenzo Case (I)	AF Corse · Ferrari 488 GT3	

**Winners' average speed** 98.966mph. **Fastest lap** Parente 1m33.126s, 101.510mph.

### QUALIFYING RACE (37 LAPS - 97.159 MILES)

**1 Buhk/Perera 1h23m17.761s**; 2 Marciello/Meadows +19.683s; 3 S Kane/Abril +25.826s; 4 Juncadella/Serralles +27.757s; 5 Mies/Ide +34.969s; 6 Haase/Monti +37.809s; 7 Bortolotti/Engelhart +38.827s; 8 Vanthoor/Fassler +39.309s; 9 Salaquarda/Schmid +40.148s; 10 Palttala/Krohn +44.372s; 11 Szymkowiak/Schiller +45.783s; 12 Green/Leonard +49.735s; 13 Piccini/Broniszewski +1m24.403s; 14 Dennis/Schothorst +1m25.164s; 15 Crestani/Yacaman +1m30.558s; 16 Eng/Blomqvist +1m37.067s; 17 van Dam/Bhirom Bhakdi -1 lap; 18 Bell/Watson -1 lap; 19 Williamson/Leventis -1 lap; 20 Baumann/Eriksson -1 lap; 21 Parente/Barnicoat -1 lap; 22 Ceccon/Stippler -1 lap; 23 Mapelli/Venturini -2 laps; 24 Mori/Heyer -2 laps; 25 Keilwitz/Mattschull -2 laps; 26 Helistekangas/Wood 33 laps-DNF; R Gounon/Beaubelique 8 laps; R van Splunteren/Zaugg 1 lap; R Stevens/Winkelhock 0 laps; R Soucek/Soulet 0 laps; R J Kane/Hezemans 0 laps; R Siedler/Perez Compagnon 0 laps; R Case/Quaife 0 laps; R Belloc/Bourret 0 laps.

**Winners' average speed** 69.985mph. **Fastest lap** Buhk 1m33.175s, 101.457mph.

### QUALIFYING

**Q3** 1 Mapelli 1m32.319s; 2 Buhk 1m32.394s; 3 Marciello 1m32.404s; 4 Baumann 1m32.419s; 5 Bell 1m32.439s; 6 Bortolotti 1m32.472s; 7 Williamson 1m32.484s; 8 Serralles 1m32.512s; 9 S Kane 1m32.593s; 10 Szymkowiak 1m32.595s; 11 Stevens 1m32.717s; 12 Vanthoor 1m32.793s; 13 Parente 1m32.861s; 14 Gounon 1m32.866s; 15 Salaquarda 1m33.004s; 16 Piccini 1m33.032s; 17 Soucek 1m33.141s.  
**Q1/2** 18 Mies 1m33.272s; 19 Ceccon 1m33.312s; 20 J Kane 1m33.333s; 21 Green 1m33.378s; 22 Haase 1m33.461s; 23 Keilwitz 1m33.516s; 24 van Dam 1m33.524s; 25 Eng 1m33.577s; 26 Crestani 1m33.609s; 27 Siedler 1m33.633s; 28 Krohn 1m33.668s; 29 Quaife 1m33.777s; 30 van Splunteren 1m34.232s; 31 Belloc 1m34.388s; 32 Helistekangas 1m34.887s; 33 Mori 1m35.184s; 34 Dennis no time.

### CHAMPIONSHIP

**1 Perera/Buhk 33**; 2 S Kane/Abril 21; 3 Baumann/Eriksson 15; 4 Juncadella/Serralles 14; 5 Monti/Haase 10; 6 Blomqvist/Eng 8; 7 Schiller/Szymkowiak 6; 8 Palttala/Krohn 6; 9 Meadows/Marciello 4; 10 Watson/Bell 4.





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## Champion Ekstrom beats Scheider home

**WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**BARCELONA (E)**  
**APRIL 1-2**  
**ROUND 1/12**

REIGNING CHAMPION **MATTIAS** Ekstrom repeated his 2016 Barcelona victory to claim the first win of the new season on his EKS team's first outing with official Audi support.

Ekstrom started on pole position despite having set a slow time in a rain-hit Q2 race and led for the duration of the six-lap final, resisting constant pressure from another double DTM champion, Timo Scheider. The German ace made his maiden appearance in an MJP Racing Team Austria Ford Fiesta and was top qualifier at the Intermediate Classification.

Second to new PSRX Volkswagen Sweden recruit Johan Kristoffersson in semi-final one, Scheider reclaimed the advantage when Kristoffersson stalled on the startline of the final – the Polo GTI was narrowly avoided by the sister car of team boss Petter Solberg, who launched from the third row and took his joker on lap one.

Andreas Bakkerud recovered from heavy damage sustained from a crash in his Q2 race to be third on the first lap of the final and took his joker on lap three, the Ford Focus man repassing Solberg in the following corners to maintain the position.

Ekstrom and Scheider took their jokers on the fifth lap and held on to finish first and second, with Bakkerud third. Team Peugeot-Hansen's Timmy Hansen was fifth, between Solberg and Kristoffersson.

**It's a DTM double! Ekstrom beat fellow champ Scheider to the line at Barcelona**

"Yesterday was probably the most challenging of my RX career," said Ekstrom of the wet Q2 conditions. "But today we turned it around. To be on pole for the semi-final was key. I'm super-impressed with Timo – to come from a privately run team and be leading after Q4 is very impressive. I think we'll see the most evenly matched year in World RX so far."

Sebastien Loeb, slowed in Q3 by a broken driveshaft, failed to make the semi-finals.

### RESULTS

**1 Mattias Ekstrom (Audi S1)** 6 laps in 4m32.260s;  
 2 Timo Scheider (Ford Fiesta) +0.362s; 3 Andreas Bakkerud (Ford Focus RS); 4 Petter Solberg (Volkswagen Polo GTI);  
 5 Timmy Hansen (Peugeot 208 WRX); 6 Johan Kristoffersson (VW). **Points 1 Ekstrom 29**; 2 Scheider 26; 3 Bakkerud 22;  
 4 Kristoffersson 21; 5 Solberg 19; 6 Hansen 17.



Kajaia got his Alfa in front – and kept it there

## Tbilisi dynamo Kajaia causes Georgian joy

**TCR INTERNATIONAL SERIES**  
**RUSTAVI (GE)**  
**APRIL 2**  
**ROUND 1/10**

ALMOST AS IF IT WERE SCRIPTED, Tbilisi's Davit Kajaia thrilled the local crowd by taking home glory in Georgia's first-ever international motor race.

Kajaia qualified the GE-Force Alfa Romeo

Giulietta on pole and then led a soggy-yet-thrilling opening race from start to finish thanks to sound defensive driving.

Once Ferenc Ficza had overtaken fellow Hungarian Attila Tassi for second, he brought the Zele Racing SEAT onto Kajaia's bumper. In turn, double champion Stefano Comini in the new Comtoyou Audi and Roberto Colciago (MIRA Honda) closed up, with Tassi in their wheeltracks.



# Keselowski wins duel with Busch for victory

**NASCAR CUP**  
**MARTINSVILLE (USA)**  
**APRIL 2**  
**ROUND 6/36**

BRAD KESELOWSKI EARNED HIS FIRST Martinsville Speedway Cup win and in the process the Team Penske star ended a nearly 15-year winless drought at the diminutive Virginia track by Ford.

Before Keselowski's win, the last time a Ford visited Victory Lane at the historic short track was during the 2002 season with Kurt Busch.

Keselowski, who had recovered from being put to the back of the field as penalty for speeding in the pits, dived to the inside of Kyle Busch's Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota on lap 458 of 500 to take the lead for the final time in the race and held on to the finish. The win is his second of the season and the 23rd of his career.

"Martinsville is just one of those champion's tracks," said Keselowski. "The guys that run well everywhere run well here, and it's really just an honour to win here and get to compete here. This track is 70 years old and a lot of legends have won here. It feels great to be able to join them

and bring home a [grandfather] clock."

Chase Elliott finished third in his Hendrick Chevrolet, while Joey Logano (Penske Ford) rallied from two laps down to finish fourth and Austin Dillon (Childress Chevy) rounded out the top five.

The final caution came out with 69 laps remaining when Martin Truex Jr spun out trying to pass Matt Kenseth for fifth. Keselowski had the lead but Busch came back with 56 laps to go. Then, 14 laps later, Keselowski passed Busch on the inside to retake the lead, and broke free as Busch suffered from handling problems.

**JIM UTTER**

## RESULTS

**1 Brad Keselowski (Ford Fusion)** 500 laps in 3h44m59s; 2 Kyle Busch (Toyota Camry) +1.806s; 3 Chase Elliott (Chevrolet SS); 4 Joey Logano (Ford); 5 Austin Dillon (Chevy); 6 AJ Allmendinger (Chevy); 7 Clint Bowyer (Ford); 8 Ryan Newman (Chevy); 9 Matt Kenseth (Toyota); 10 Ricky Stenhouse Jr (Ford). **Playoff qualifying**

**1 Keselowski 234/2 wins;** 2 Kyle Larson 268/1; 3 Martin Truex Jr 236/1; 4 Newman 152/1; 5 Kurt Busch 119/1; 6 Elliott 264; 7 Logano 207; 8 Kyle Busch 188; 9 Ryan Blaney 179; 10 Bowyer 174; 11 Jamie McMurray 163; 12 Kevin Harvick 154; 13 Kasey Kahne 146; 14 Erik Jones 144; 15 Jimmie Johnson 141; 16 Trevor Bayne 140.



Keselowski is first two-time winner of 2017

It looked as though Kajaia would surely crumble, but he put his Alfa in all the right positions and was still leading as the quintet swarmed over the finish line, covered by less than 1.8 seconds.

Sixth was Jean-Karl Vernay, and the Leopard Racing Volkswagen Golf man was immediately involved in the event's major controversy. He got ahead of former team-mate Comini – who left Leopard in acrimonious circumstances during the winter – on the slowdown lap. Comini, who claimed Vernay brake-tested him – something Comini denied – ran into the Golf, wrecking the Audi's radiator and forcing a pitlane start to race two, from which he ultimately retired.

This was a dry – yet slippery off-line – reversed-grid race. The Craft Bamboo SEATs of Pepe Oriola and Hugo Valente dominated, but Valente was penalised for passing under a yellow flag, promoting Tassi and Vernay to second and third.

## RESULTS

**Race 1 1 Davit Kajaia (Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR)** 15 laps in 25m56.717s; 2 Ferenc Ficzá (SEAT Leon TCR) +0.374s; 3 Stefano Comini (Audi RS3 LMS TCR); 4 Roberto Colciago (Honda Civic Type R TCR); 5 Attila Tassi (Honda); 6 Jean-Karl Vernay (Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR).

**Race 2 1 Pepe Oriola (SEAT)** 17 laps in 29m40.114s; 2 Tassi +4.823s; 3 Vernay; 4 Dusan Borkovic (Alfa Romeo); 5 James Nash (SEAT); 6 Kajaia. **Points 1 Kajaia 38;** 2 Tassi 32; 3 Oriola 31; 4 Vernay 25; 5 Ficzá 21; 6 Comini 15.

# Serra on top before Zonta vaults in front

**V8 STOCK CARS**  
**GOIANIA (BR)**  
**APRIL 2**  
**ROUND 1/12**

DANIEL SERRA CELEBRATED HIS MOVE FROM THE Red Bull A Mattheis team to the RC squad by winning the opening round in emphatic fashion.

After dominating five of the six free practice sessions, Serra beat closest rival Max Wilson to pole position by no less than 0.422 seconds, led all the possible laps and set fastest lap in the process. Wilson, who has switched from RC to the sister RCM team, kept Serra under pressure until the mandatory pitstop, but dropped to third behind Thiago Camilo, who took on less fuel.

Camilo crossed the line 1.291 seconds adrift of Serra and 2.429s in front of Wilson, with Ricardo Mauricio, Atila Abreu and Galid Osman chasing them home.

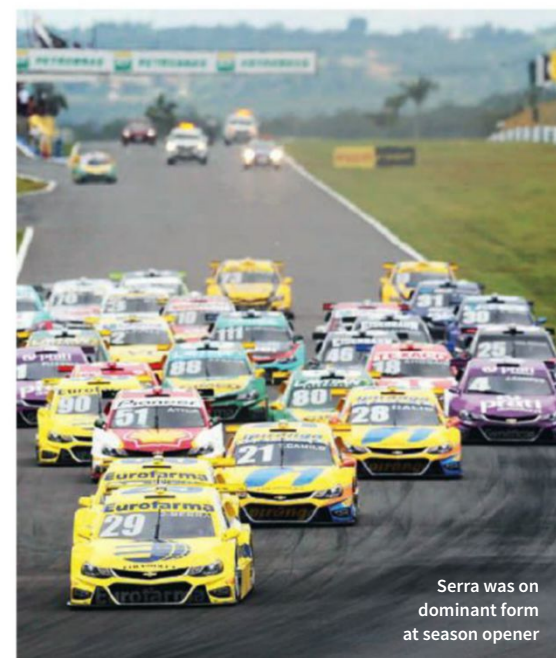
After finishing 10th in the first race, ex-Superleague Formula and Euro 3000 exponent Tuka Rocha sat on pole for the reversed-grid encounter. He held on for six laps under pressure from reigning champion Felipe Fraga, who then moved in front. Fraga pulled out a comfortable lead only to slide off the track after hitting an oil patch left by the blown engine of Sergio Jimenez's car.

The turning point came at the pitstops. A chain-reaction shunt on lap one of the first race had eliminated big names such as Ricardo Zonta and Rubens Barrichello. But the payoff was that they could start race two on new tyres, with fuel enough to only require a splash-and-go stop – and all 16 push-to-pass 100bhp boosts. That meant Zonta was second behind Abreu after the stops, and the ex-F1 driver charged into the lead. Wilson took a second podium, while Barrichello came through to fourth.

**LITO CAVALCANTI**

## RESULTS

**Race 1 1 Daniel Serra (Chevrolet Cruze)** 28 laps in 42m12.419s; 2 Thiago Camilo (Chevy) +1.291s; 3 Max Wilson (Chevy); 4 Ricardo Mauricio (Chevy); 5 Atila Abreu (Chevy); 6 Galid Osman (Chevy). **Race 2 1 Ricardo Zonta (Chevy)** 29 laps in 42m28.436s; 2 Abreu +2.968s; 3 Wilson; 4 Rubens Barrichello (Chevy); 5 Denis Navarro (Chevy); 6 Serra. **Points 1 Serra 40;** 2 Wilson 39; 3 Abreu 37; 4 Camilo 33; 5 Mauricio 21; 6 Caca Bueno 21.



Serra was on dominant form at season opener

CARSTEN HORST





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Palou (left) and Takaboshi (yellow car) split wins

LAT IMAGES

# Nissan protege's fine return

**JAPANESE FORMULA 3**  
**OKAYAMA (J)**  
**APRIL 1-2**  
**ROUND 1/9**

AFTER A SEASON IN NISSAN'S BLANCPAIN GT line-up, Mitsunori Takaboshi began his return to single-seaters in style with a double win at the F3 season opener, although it was GP3 race winner Alex Palou who took the other encounter.

Palou dominated qualifying, the Spaniard taking all three poles in his Tomei-engined car run by Drago Corse, the Ryo Michigami-run team that is new to F3. But Takaboshi made superb starts to all three races, the first launching his B-Max Dallara-Volkswagen from third on the grid to the lead. He was chased by the Toyota-backed TOM'S duo of Sho Tsuboi and reigning Formula 4 champion Ritomo Miyata, with Palou fourth.

Takaboshi and Tsuboi again got the jump on Palou in race two, but a battle between the two Japanese drivers at the hairpin resulted in both running wide, allowing Palou in front. Tsuboi later dropped out of the race on the final lap.

Palou's least-bad start was in the finale. He was second behind Takaboshi and in front of Miyata.

**JIRO TAKAHASHI**

**RESULTS**

**Race 1 1 Mitsunori Takaboshi (Dallara-Volkswagen F312)**

25 laps in 34m34.084s; 2 Sho Tsuboi (Dallara-Toyota F317) +4.609s; 3 Ritomo Miyata (Dallara-Toyota F314); 4 Alex Palou (D-Tomei F314); 5 Hiroki Otsu (Dallara-Toda F316); 6 Sena Sakaguchi (D-Toda F316).

**Race 2 1 Palou** 18 laps in 24m44.011s; 2 Takaboshi +2.994s;

3 Miyata; 4 Ye Hong Li (Dallara-VW F315); 5 Sakaguchi; 6 Tairoku Yamaguchi (D-VW F316). **Race 3 1 Takaboshi** 18 laps in 24m43.017s;

2 Palou +1.682s; 3 Miyata; 4 Otsu; 5 Tsuboi; 6 Ye. **Points 1 Takaboshi 29**; 2 Palou 23; 3 Miyata 15; 4 Tsuboi 9; 5 Otsu 5; 6 Ye 4.

# Attrition helps Magalhaes

**EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**AZORES RALLY (P)**  
**MARCH 30-APRIL 1**  
**ROUND 1/8**

BRUNO MAGALHAES SCORED A SURPRISE victory on the season opener in the Azores after likely title contenders Kajetanowicz and Alexey Lukyanuk both hit trouble.

Two-time champion Kajetanowicz had moved ahead of Lukyanuk into the lead on the Thursday evening superspecial, but crashed his Ford Fiesta into a wall around two kilometres into the following day's action. Lukyanuk then began to take control, yet for the second year in a row conceded a winning position on the final day, breaking a steering arm on his Fiesta.

Portuguese driver Magalhaes and local hero Ricardo Moura were split by less than 10 seconds

heading into the afternoon, only for Moura's Fiesta to grind to a halt on the next test. That gave Magalhaes victory by a minute and a half on his first gravel rally for 18 months and his debut in a Skoda Fabia R5.

The new ERC Junior Under 28 category for youngsters in R5 machinery was won, in second overall, by German Skoda driver Marijan Griebel, reigning champion of its two-wheel drive equivalent. Ireland's Josh Moffett completed the overall podium in his Fiesta.

Ralfs Sirmacis was fourth before no fewer than five punctures, leaving him seventh, two places behind SRT Skoda team-mate Nikolay Gryazin, who headed Griebel into the final day before punctures and broken power-steering.

Chris Ingram took the ERC Junior U27 win in a dramatic finale against Opel team-mate and debutant Jari Huttunen, who was stopped by a driveshaft failure just 200 metres from the finish having taken the lead when Ingram suffered car gremlins earlier in the day.

**PETER ALLEN**

**RESULTS**

**1 Bruno Magalhaes/Hugo Magalhaes (Skoda Fabia R5)**

2h37m04.3s; 2 Marijan Griebel/Stefan Kopczyk (Skoda) +1m34.4s; 3 Josh Moffett/James Fulton (Ford Fiesta R5); 4 Jose Maria Lopez/Borja Rozada (Peugeot 208 T16); 5 Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov (Skoda); 6 Pedro Meireles/Mario Castro (Skoda). **Points 1 Magalhaes 38**; 2 Griebel 26; 3 Moffett 20; 4 Lopez 16; 5 Gryazin 14; 6 Meireles 9.



Magalhaes survived where many didn't

CUNHA/DPPT

# IN BRIEF

**GT4 NORTHERN EUROPEAN CUP**

KTM and Porsche claimed honours in the opening round of this burgeoning series at Misano. Duncan Huisman took pole in his McLaren, but was hit twice on the opening lap, putting him out. Matt Nicoll-Jones (Aston Martin) and Pavel Lefterov (Porsche Cayman) fought for the lead until the stops. Jonathan Cecotto, younger brother of Johnny Jr, was third before the stops and then co-driver Lennart Marioneck pulled the KTM X-Bow clear to victory. William Moore was second in his Aston after Alessio Picariello was given a drivethrough for passing under yellows. PROsport Performance's Porsche Caymans finished one-two in race two, with Nicolaj Moller Madsen (in the car started by Jorg Viebahn) beating Kevin Rossel (who replaced Picariello) in a one-lap dash after a late safety car. The KTM of Jamie Vandenbalck led but was black-flagged for passing the safety car.

**BLANCPAIN GT SPORTS CLUB**

Ex-British GT champion Daniele Perfetti beat Anthony Pons home in an ASP Mercedes one-two in the opening round at Misano. Cedric Leimer led initially in his Lamborghini and was lying second to Swiss lollipop magnate Perfetti when he copped a drivethrough penalty for breaching track limits. Leimer still finished third. Pons had soaked up pressure from Leimer to win the qualifying race, with Perfetti third.

**NASCAR TRUCK SERIES**

Chase Elliott won at Martinsville after denying a passing attempt by reigning champion Johnny Sauter on a restart with 12 laps remaining. Christopher Bell was leading when he tangled with Austin Cindric, causing the final caution and elevating the GMS Racing Chevrolets of Elliott and Sauter. Bell claimed third, ahead of rookie Noah Gragson.

**ITALIAN FORMULA 4**

Venezuelan talent Sebastian Fernandez topped qualifying and won all three races in the opener at Misano. The Bhaitech-run Fernandez (below) led all the way in race one, beating Artem Petrov and Juri Vips to the flag. It was another start-to-finish win for Fernandez in race two, with Lorenzo Colombo shadowing him to a Bhaitech one-two and Ferrari junior Marcus Armstrong claiming third. Colombo had pole for the finale, but a poor start dropped him to 10th before he stormed back to cross the line third. Then a track-limits penalty for Felipe Drugovich promoted Colombo to second. Petrov completed the podium.





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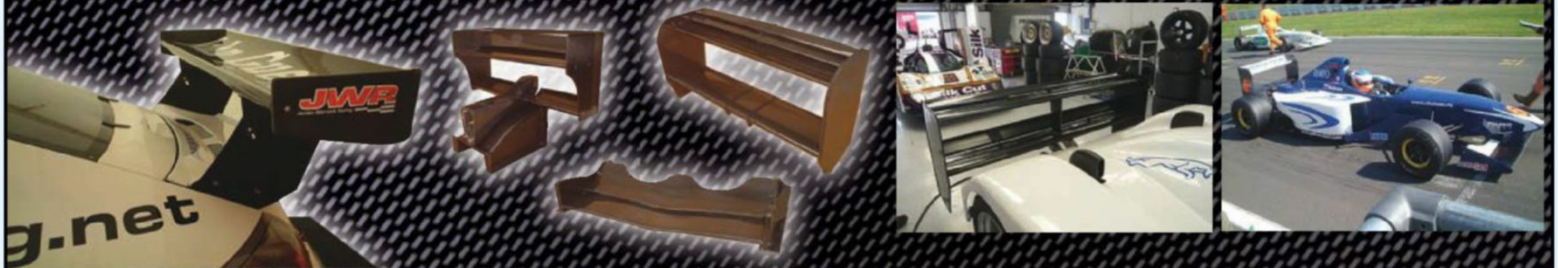
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On the sport side, the FIA administers the rules and regulations for the main international four-wheel motor sport disciplines. On the mobility side, the FIA represents the rights of motor sport organisations, motorists and travellers worldwide.

The International Karting Commission (CIK-FIA) is one of the FIA's Sporting Commissions. The role of the CIK-FIA is to coordinate Karting-related activities around the world, in accordance with the principles enacted by the FIA.

#### Main duties and responsibilities:

- Contact person for all technical questions/requests related to the CIK-FIA.
- Responsible for all CIK-FIA Technical and Homologation Regulations.
- Chair and secretariat of the Technical Working Group: drafting and follow-up of the Technical Regulations, implementation of the homologation procedures and technical checks.
- Attend all CIK-FIA events as the CIK-FIA Technical Delegate.
- Responsible for all the CIK-FIA technical/control equipment needed for each CIK-FIA event.
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### R&D Test Engineer / Senior Technician

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Honda (Formula 1) require candidates to have the following personal competencies:

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# HRDC 2017 RACE CALENDAR



2017	Count	Venue / Event	Track Capacity	Content	Content	Format	ACD	ALL	ASC	TG/TC63	JAG	COYS Pre-'66
11-Feb		Eastbourne	180	Dinner/Dance	ALL HRDC	Evening	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
06-Mar	✓	Goodwood	35	Track Day	ACD	Full Day	✓					
30-Mar	✓	Goodwood	35	Track Day	TG	Full Day				✓		
09-Apr	✓	Brands Hatch BRSCC	Indy 34	Race	ACD / ASC	30/15	✓		✓			
09-Apr		Brands Hatch BRSCC	Indy 34	Race	TG/TC63	45/25	✓			✓		
* 23-Apr	✓	Silverstone VSCC	Nat 40	Race	JAG	30/15					✓	
Apr 28-30	✓	Donington Festival	Nat 40	Race	TG/TC63	45/25	✓			✓		
Apr 28-30		Donington Festival	Nat 40	Race	COYS	45/25	✓			✓	✓	✓
28-May	✓	Silverstone BRSCC	Nat 40	Race	ALL/ ACD / ASC	30/15	✓	✓	✓			
28-May		Silverstone BRSCC	Nat 40	Race	TG/TC63	45/15	✓			✓		
11-Jun	✓	Snetterton BRSCC	(300) 45	Race	ALL/ ACD / ASC	30/15	✓	✓	✓			
11-Jun		Snetterton BRSCC	(300) 45	Race	TG/TC63	45/15	✓			✓		
16-Jul	✓	Castle Combe BRSCC	42	Race	ALL/ ACD / ASC	30/15	✓	✓	✓			
16-Jul		Castle Combe BRSCC	42	Race	COYS	45/25	✓			✓	✓	✓
16-Jul		Castle Combe BRSCC	42	Race	JAG	30/15					✓	
* July 28-30	✓	Silverstone Classic	Hist GP 58	Race	ACD	2-part	✓					
24-Sep	✓	Mallory Park BRSCC	30	Race	ACD / ASC	30 /15	✓		✓			
24-Sep		Mallory Park BRSCC	30	Race	COYS	45/25	✓			✓	✓	✓
15-Oct	✓	Donington BRSCC	Nat 40	Race	ALL/ ACD / ASC	30/15	✓	✓	✓			
15-Oct		Donington BRSCC	Nat 40	Race	TG/TC63	45/25	✓			✓		
15-Oct		Donington BRSCC	Nat 40	Race	JAG	30/15					✓	

\* Please note these date changes!

## KEY:

ACD:  ACADEMY	ALL:  ALLSTARS	ASC:  A-SERIES CHALLENGE	COYS:  COYS TROPHY	TG:  TOURING GREATS	JAG:  COOMBS	TC63:  TC63
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LMP3 organisers are expecting a 15-car grid for series opener

LAT IMAGES

## UKLMP3 CHAMPIONSHIP

# Matt Bell and Tony Wells join UK LMP3

BRITISH GT RACE WINNER MATT BELL and Radical European Masters champion Tony Wells will contest this year's UK LMP3 Championship aboard a United Autosports-run Ligier JSP3.

Bell and Wells are the second pairing confirmed for the Anglo-American team, joining American duo CJ Wilson and Andrew Evans.

Bell finished fifth in last year's European Le Mans Series LMP3 class, sharing a UA JSP3 with Wayne Boyd and Mark Patterson, while Wells lifted the Radical title alongside James Littlejohn, who switches to British GT.

Bell will split this year between UK LMP3 and the Michelin Le Mans Cup, in which he will drive another Ligier alongside Jim McGuire.

"I raced against Tony for a few rounds of the ELMS last season and saw some great potential in him," said Bell. "I'm really looking forward to working with him and seeing what we can achieve

together. From the testing we've done so far we've got high hopes."

The LMP3 Championship ranks were swelled further by an entry from former British GT frontrunner Ecurie Ecosse, which has joined forces with Radical team Nielsen Racing to run a JSP3 in the UK and Le Mans Cup.

BGT driver Alasdair McCaig will race the car alongside Formula Renault graduate Colin Noble Jr. The team will also enter the Road to Le Mans event at the 24 Hours to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Ecurie Ecosse's last Le Mans victory in 1957, taken by Ron Flockhart/Ivor Bueb in a Jaguar D-type.

"We are pushing hard to get back into the sportscar scene and we feel this is the perfect time for us to build on our experience, history and passion for endurance racing," said McCaig.

LMP3 Championship organisers are predicting a 15-car grid for the first race at Donington Park on April 22.

## LMP3 CUP CONFIRMED DRIVERS

DRIVER	TEAM	CAR
Andrew Evans/CJ Wilson	United Autosports	Ligier JSP3
Jack Butel/TBA	Speedworks	Ligier JSP3
Mike Newbould/Thomas Randle	Douglas Motorsport	Ligier JSP3
Paul Bailey/Andy Schulz	Horsepower Racing	Ligier JSP3
Jim Geddie/Glynn Geddie	ABG Motorsport	Ligier JSP3
Matt Bell/Tony Wells	United Autosports	Ligier JSP3
Alasdair McCaig/Colin Noble Jr	Ecurie Ecosse/ Nielsen Racing	Ligier JSP3

Alasdair McCaig will co-drive Ecosse-run Ligier

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BRITISH GT

# McLaren could run 650S in British GT

McLAREN GT BOSS ANDREW KIRKALDY has not ruled out running a GT3 entry in the 2017 British GT Championship.

The Woking firm's factory Garage 59 operation ran works driver Rob Bell and Alasdair McCaig to seventh in last year's GT3 points aboard a 650S GT3.

This year's British GT entry includes two 570S GT4 cars for the team, but no GT3 machinery. Kirkaldy said: "The only reason we haven't committed to the championship this year is because we have so many customer cars to look after, and we have to split resources to give them all the best service. GT4 is hugely busy in British GT with six cars, and we've got GT3s around Europe, Asia and America.

"We do have a test car in the UK that we'd like to do something with. The only reason we haven't entered is that we couldn't commit it to the full championship. But we'd certainly like to bring it out later in the year."

The Optimum Motorsport team is also keen to field its Audi R8 LMS, but is seeking drivers. Team head Shaun Goff said: "We brought the car [to the British GT test at Snetterton] to remind people that it is available to race in the UK, and we want to be in British GT3 as well as Europe too."

- Team Parker Racing duo Seb Morris and Rick Parfitt Jr topped the times in British GT's official test at Snetterton last week. The Bentley

Continental GT3 duo topped the charts by 0.119s ahead of GT convert Sam Tordoff and Liam Griffin in a Barwell Lamborghini.

Ryan Ratcliffe and Lee Mowle rounded out the top three, 0.357s down on Morris/Parfitt. New-to-BGT Ratcliffe is targeting events in Europe and the US this year in the AmDTuning.com Mercedes AMG GT3 he'll share in Britain with Mowle.

"We're looking at the Spa 24 Hours if we can, and the Creventic series' new 24-hour race at the Circuit of the Americas looks amazing too," said Ratcliffe. "The new Mercedes is awesome. Last year's Audi was always on the limit – you either crashed or were on pole. This car is much more friendly."

BRITISH GT

## Ginetta duo upbeat about tech upgrades



REIGNING BRITISH GT4 champions Graham Johnson and Mike Robinson believe that technical upgrades to their Ginetta G55 – run by Optimum Motorsport – can help them win a second crown.

The G55s will now run with new traction control and ABS systems, and also benefit from an additional 33bhp from the 3.7-litre Ford V8, as the marque looks to match new

GT4 cars such as the carbon-chassis McLaren 570S.

"The traction control and ABS will be key, especially in the wet," said Johnson. "Before we always struggled for traction out of the slow corners, and now we can stand on the throttle more and hit the brakes harder. Hopefully the extra power will help us to fight cars like the McLaren and Aston Martin in a straight line too."

SILVERSTONE 24 HOURS

## Late Creventic deal for Tordoff

SAM TORDOFF WAS A LATE ADDITION TO the 24 Hours of Silverstone last weekend as part of a programme to prepare him for further endurance races this season.

Tordoff – last year's British Touring Car Championship runner-up – will contest a dual GT programme, taking in British GT with a Barwell Lamborghini and the Blancpain Endurance Cup with a Strakka McLaren.

Last weekend he joined the Sorg Rennsport BMW team to race an M235i Racing alongside Paul Abercrombie, William Lucas and ex-Radical SR1 racers Rob Elice and Kye Wheatley.

Tordoff said: "I'm doing as many extra races as I can this year to adapt to GTs, and more importantly get used to 24-hour events."

The team finished eighth overall and second in class in the Creventic event.





#### BRITISH F4

## Ericsson's brother for British F4

THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF SAUBER Formula 1 driver Marcus Ericsson will join the British Formula 4 Championship grid at Donington Park next week.

Hampus Ericsson, 15, will take part in F4's Challenge Cup with Fortec Motorsport after testing with the team late last year.

"This season is very much a learning year," said Ericsson. "At the moment I'm not looking too far ahead in my career beyond British F4. I need to take things one step at

a time, but it would be nice to be overtaking my brother Marcus in an F1 race one day."

Ericsson is being mentored by Volvo tin-top star Fredrik Ekblom, who worked extensively with Fortec boss Richard Dutton during Ekblom's single-seater days in the 1990s, and ex-Formula 2 race winner Eje Elgh.

"For someone who'd never driven a car he did a good job [in testing] at Valencia," said Dutton. "Marcus will come over when he can, and it'll be great to see him."

## IN BRIEF



#### FILES TO TCR GERMANY IN TITLE DEFENCE

Reigning TCR Germany champion Josh Files will return to the championship with the Honda Civic he used to clinch last year's title (above). The 2013 Renault UK Clio Cup champion also won the TCR Asia series in March, and will return to Germany with the Target Competition squad. The series has around 40 entries for 2017.

#### KELLETT TARGETS MASERATI SEAT

Ginetta GT5 Challenge champion James Kellett is targeting a move to the British GT4 Championship this season with the Ebor GT team. Kellett, 19, won the GT5 title in 2015 but didn't compete in a championship full-time last year. The deal hinges upon the team securing a second silver or bronze-graded driver. Kellett said: "It was tough not racing last year, but I kept inside the motorsport circle and this deal is really exciting."

#### CHAPMAN REPLACES FULLER IN GT4

Last year's Ginetta GT5 Challenge runner-up Matt Chapman will contest this year's British GT4 season after replacing Howard Fuller in the RCIB Insurance Racing team's line-up. Chapman, 17, will share one of the squad's Ginetta G55 GT4s with Sam Webster.

#### FIERY RETURN FOR ELSOM

An engine fire in qualifying cruelly denied Classic Sports Car Club Puma Cup driver David Elsom his return to racing at Snetterton last weekend. It was due to be his first competitive outing since a crash at Rockingham in 2013 that required the 2012 BRSCC Fiesta Class A champion to be airlifted to hospital. A ruptured fuel line was believed to be the cause of the fire.

#### BARRIE TO RACE RARE STANGUELLINI

Formula Junior racer Robert Barrie will switch to a front-engined Stanguellini this season after acquiring the car that was most recently raced by Gordon Wright. "They are just lovely cars," said Barrie of chassis 139 (below). That car was the first Stanguellini to race in the US when Walt Hansgen entered it in the 1959 US Grand Prix support event at Sebring.



LAWRENCE

#### RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

## Hand in shock Pyro Clio comeback

FORMER RENAULT UK CLIO Cup runner-up Ash Hand signed a last-minute deal to return to the series ahead of last weekend's Brands Hatch season opener with Team Pyro – the squad he accused of sabotaging his car in 2015.

Hand claimed on live TV that the squad had meddled with his car to allow

team-mate Ash Sutton to take the title two years ago, something the team denied.

But now Hand, who raced very little last season after a deal to compete in the now-defunct Renault Sport Trophy fell through, will return to the Pyro fold.

"It was a misunderstanding and that's all sorted now,

otherwise he wouldn't want to race for us," said team boss Mark Hunt. "It's taking a bit of time for him to get used to it again, but Ash can win races."

He returned using the same car he raced in 2015 and believes a change to a newer car – which is planned at some point this season – could lead to improved pace.



#### CATERHAM GRADUATES

## Graduates to debut new Pembrey

CATERHAM GRADUATES WILL BE THE first series to race competitively on the new Pembrey Circuit on April 22-23 in a soft launch for the track.

The series, which will split into four different grids over the weekend, will race on the original layout on the Saturday before taking part in two additional qualifying sessions to familiarise themselves with the recently added corners. Each grid will then have one

20-minute race on the all-new layout.

The British Truck Racing Championship – which is also on the bill for the weekend along with the Welsh Sports and Saloons and the Pickup Truck Racing Championship – will be unable to use the new layout at Pembrey on licensing grounds.

At present, the permissions for the new configuration only extend to cars and bikes. The track has no plans to apply for a licence to include trucks in the near future.





CIVIC CUP

## DEEGAN TARGETS CIVIC CUP TITLE

TWO-TIME 750MC STOCK Hatch runner-up Lee Deegan is targeting the Civic Cup title in 2017, having won on his series debut at Oulton Park.

The 24-year old finished runner-up to younger brother Shayne (now racing in the UK Renault Clio Cup) in Stock Hatch in '14 and '15.

"I had no plans for this season when the car came up for sale cheaply," said Deegan. "We only finished it at 2am on Friday, so to qualify quickest was a surprise.

"So was being bumped to second for not having the right stickers. With the car held in the scrutineering bay, we only had time to put new front tyres on, refuel and guess wet settings for race one."

He scored fourth place in the first race, but there was a reason for the lesser result.

"I was starting to get a feel when it popped out of third gear at Old Hall, spun through 360 degrees and hit the tyres," he said.

"I drove out thinking the front bumper was gone, but it felt good so I continued and finished fourth. To win [in race two] was brilliant.

With three weeks until Snetterton we can spend time on tweaks and getting to know the car."

**RENAULT UK CLIO CUP** Paul Streather and Graham Field were forced to miss the opening rounds of the Clio Cup season at Brands Hatch last weekend after a hefty testing shunt. Streather spun at Graham Hill Bend and was collected by Field during Friday testing. Both drivers were taken to hospital but suffered no injuries. WDE Motorsport set about repairing Streather's car (above) and worked all night to get it ready, only for Streather to be deemed unfit to race after suffering concussion-like symptoms moments before qualifying. "I just had a bit of a spin and was about to pull away when I got a huge smack – it was the biggest I've experienced," said a disappointed Streather. "It really shook me up."

CSCC

## Code 60 starts in club racing

THE NEW-FOR-2017 CODE 60 PROCEDURE WAS deployed for the first time in the UK during the opening meeting of the Classic Sports Car Club season at Snetterton last weekend.

Similar to the Full Course Yellow used in other series, it has been introduced to neutralise a race without the need for a safety car or a red flag. Drivers slow their cars to 60km/h (37mph) and are not permitted to overtake in order to allow an on-track incident to be cleared.

The CSCC meeting was a trial for the new regulations and other clubs are currently considering adopting it.

The Code 60 was used twice during Sunday's running. The first time was for the retirement of Richard Wheeler's Ford Fiesta ST in the Tin Tops series after his driveshaft broke on the exit of Agostini. The second was required to recover the Ginetta G20s of Steve Griffiths and Paul Calladine following a collision on the Bentley Straight during the Modern Classics race.

During the two deployments, Code 60 etiquette was immaculately observed by all competitors.

The system was used for the opening round of British GT last year at Brands Hatch but proved unpopular.

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

## Rear-wheel-drive Sunbeam to Classic Stock Hatch series

A TALBOT SUNBEAM WILL become the first rear-wheel-drive car to enter the 750 Motor Club's Classic Stock Hatch Championship next year.

Owner Nick Thornton-Jones – a one-time Hot Hatch racer – was given the 1.6Ti Sunbeam as an 18th birthday present in 1997, but it sat under wraps for nearly 20 years. Club regular Thornton-Jones has started

restoration work on the car and received approval from the club to enter it against the front-wheel-drive pre-1992 hatches.

"When dad first bought it for me, I taxed it and used it on the road for six months," he explained. "Originally I was going to race it, but then other things came along and it never happened.

"I hope to be in among the front-wheel-drive cars. Until you build it and drive it, you'll never know."

The championship features Peugeot 205s – used by current champion Matt Rozier – as well as Citroen AXs, Vauxhall Novas and Ford Fiestas.

**P80 CLASSIC STOCK HATCH**  
WITH ANTHONY REID



Sunbeam sat dormant for 10 years





# Historic FF1600 kicks off HSCC season

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

[@autosport](#)

## HISTORIC FORMULA FORD CHAMPIONS CALLUM

Grant, Sam Mitchell and Benn Simms – with six titles between them – head a sensational 56-strong entry for Saturday's HSCC pre-1972 season opener at Donington Park.

The field includes talented teenagers Benn Tilley and Ed Thurston, rapid returnee Michael O'Brien, 1999 Formula Palmer Audi champion Richard Tarling, Formula Junior/F3 racers Andrew Hibberd and Cameron Jackson, plus Tim Brise, who last raced in FF1600 in the early 1970s alongside his brother Tony, who graduated rapidly to F1 but died in Graham Hill's plane crash in '75 before his potential was realised.

The championship, for Kent-engined machinery, spans 16 chassis marques, including such rare birds as Beattie, Brabham, Jomo, Kvantti, Macon, Nike and Palliser among the Crossles, Merlyns et al. The number – and variety – of entries demonstrates unprecedented interest in the category in the build-up to its Golden Jubilee celebration at Brands Hatch's GP circuit on July 2.

Competitor support for Historic Formula Ford 2000 has picked up dramatically over the winter. Reynard and Royale constructor rivalry resumes, with a strengthened Delta challenge within the Pinto-powered pack, shuffled with Van Diemens from the subsequent Classic era.

A fortified Classic F3 (pre-1985) brigade is unhappy about having to share the track with the slim Derek Bell Trophy F5000, F2 and Atlantic entry on a compact one-day programme. Should local man David Shaw race his dramatically-styled F1 Eiffelland March-DFV 721 instead of his ex-Nelson Piquet Ralt RT1, Richard Evans (F2 March-

BDG 742) and Jamie Brashaw (F5000 March-Chevrolet 73A) may need to raise their games.

A record number of family driver teams are competing, including no fewer than five father-daughter combos. Bob Brooks shares Sports Racing and GT cars with Vicky and Kristy in the Guards Trophy mini-enduro, Graham and Jennifer Ridgway now have a pair of FF2000 Reynards, Andy and Ali Langridge run in CF3 and FF1600 respectively (with son/brother Adrian also in CF3), while multiple Classic Clubmans champion Clive Wood has debutant Philippa Tanner-Wood for company.

Tin-top fans have a treat in store with renowned Ford V8 tamer of the 1960s Terry Drury in a Falcon taking on the similar car of Mike Gardiner and the latter's old adversary Warren Briggs in the quickest of three Mustangs.

Hugely promising Suffolk teenager James Clarke's 'new' FIA-spec Lotus Cortina is not ready, thus his HRSR version will be used. Ben Winrow, the 2008 Renault UK Clio Cup champion, also saddles a Lotus Cortina.

A record six Lotus Europas are out in the HSCC's 1970s Road Sports round, with young Will Leverett switching from dad Mark's Porsche 911SC in a bid to beat returning former champion Jim Dean, master of the mid-engined cars. The evergreen Charles Barter could overpower them in his Datsun 240Z though.

In Historic Road Sports, Will Plant's rumbling Morgan +8 may have the answer to the ever-popular Elans, in which Peter Shaw and John Davison are performance yardsticks.

The HSCC's following is strong, the wait is almost over. 🏁



## T-CAR MAN IMPRESSIVE ON RETURN

Formula BMW race winner Simon Walker-Hansell scored a brace of second places in Saturday's 750MC M3 Cup championship openers at Oulton Park. The 2003 T-Cars champion is promoting his business on an unmissable green E46, debuted in the recent Club Enduro at Donington.

## GLYN SWIFT 1943-2017

The Mini world is awash with tributes to BMC A-series engine-tuning wizard Glyn Swift, who died over the weekend, aged 73, following a short illness. For half a century perfectionist Swift and the Swiftune Engineering concern he founded in 1965 had been at the forefront of the power unit's development. Countless race and rally victories worldwide are glowing testament to the peerless work he pioneered and son Nick continued when he took over the helm. A fierce competitor in Minis, broad-smiling Swift Sr was a friend to all, ever-ready to help customers and rivals with engine and gearbox problems. He enjoyed racing at Goodwood in recent years. To Swift's family and friends, Autosport salutes an inspirational patriarch.



## KART ACE MAKES STRONG CAR DEBUT

Breaking a three-year layoff, 250cc Superkart ace Louis Wall, 28, made a victorious car debut at Oulton Park on Saturday, dominating the wet Locost championship opener in Dave Boucher's car, which they will share this season. The 2012 British Superkart GP winner finished eighth in race two, a last-lap spin having cost him third.



RENAULT UK CLIO CUP APRIL 1-2

# Young guns battle Clio veterans

GLANCE AT WHO FINISHED ON THE podium in the opening Renault UK Clio Cup rounds and there are some familiar names. Mike Bushell – the 2014 champion – three-time title-winner Paul Rivett, and former runner-up Lee Pattison locked out the podium in both races. The interesting story, however, was the stunning debuts of two youngsters.

While a sluggish start for Bushell handed Pattison an unassailable lead in the sodden opener, the focus was further down the order.

James Dorlin blitzed the Michelin Clio Cup field in the older generation hatchback last year but started his first weekend in the TOCA series on the back foot. A qualifying crash at Graham Hill Bend left him 16th on the grid and gave his Westbourne team a repair job.

But that certainly didn't dent his confidence. He made a storming start and was seventh after the first sequence of corners. He then picked off Max Coates further round the opening tour to end his first Clio Cup lap in sixth. That became fifth when Shayne Deegan (another star of the weekend who was unable to translate good pace into strong results, but did break the lap record in race two) ran wide at Paddock Hill Bend. Dorlin quickly passed Jack McCarthy, too, and his next target was Rivett. But he was resolute in defence and denied the



HAWKINS

17-year-old a podium in his first race. "That was amazing," beamed Dorlin. "I just managed to get off the line with no wheelspin and went around the outside."

In the dry race two, Bushell was able to get a good start from pole and went on to take his first Clio win at Brands Hatch after 17 previous attempts.

But in the early stages he was threatened by Pyro team-mate McCarthy – the other star of the weekend.

This was the 16-year-old's first car race meeting, not that you could tell. He was an impressive third and second in qualifying and was fifth in the opener.

He then put Bushell under pressure in race two but an attempted move into Paddock Hill Bend on lap 15 of the 22-lap contest backfired as it allowed Pattison and Rivett to squeeze ahead at Druids.

But fourth was still a brilliant result for the youngster, who finished ahead of

**Bushell leads McCarthy, who was one of the youngsters to impress in Kent**

the much more experienced James Colburn and Coates.

"I definitely wasn't expecting that," said McCarthy. "I was coming here expecting a top 15 or top 10!"

With performances like that, it is unlikely to be long before Dorlin and McCarthy are joining Bushell, Pattison and Rivett on the podium.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

## RESULTS

**RACE 1 (20 LAPS) 1 Lee Pattison;** 2 Mike Bushell +0.423s; 3 Paul Rivett; 4 James Dorlin; 5 Jack McCarthy; 6 Max Coates. **Fastest lap** Dorlin 58.545s (74.27mph).

**Pole** Bushell. **Starters** 22.

**RACE 2 (22 LAPS) 1 Bushell;** 2 Pattison +0.785s; 3 Rivett; 4 McCarthy; 5 James Colburn; 6 Coates.

**FL** Shayne Deegan 52.223s (83.26mph). **P** Bushell. **S** 22.

**POINTS 1 Pattison 60;** 2 Bushell 60; 3 Rivett 50; 4 McCarthy 42; 5 Coates 36; 6 Dan Zelos 30.

GINETTA JUNIOR APRIL 1-2

# Priaulx bounces back in the dry

"IT WAS AN EASY RACE," BEAMED championship favourite Sebastian Priaulx after a dominant victory in the second race. He started the weekend with a supreme qualifying effort, 0.298 seconds clear of the field but didn't leave race one smiling.

Heavy rain made for an incident-filled season-opener, with two safety cars, as drivers tried to keep their G40s on track. Tom Gamble overtook Priaulx at Druids three laps in and led until a last-lap attempt by Priaulx to reclaim the lead. As the rain fell again, the pair made contact at Clearways.

"I had the right of way on the outside. He just ploughed into my side and spun me," said Priaulx after the

race. Gamble added: "I decided to defend my line, washed out a bit wide and had contact. I think it was a racing incident."

JHR rookie Harry Dyson took full advantage of his team-mates' skirmish. He recovered to fourth after a bad start and held off Elite Motorsport's Harry King to take double maiden wins, race and rookie. The winter series rookie champion made it two rookie victories in a row in race two, fending off an intense midfield battle.

Dry conditions for race two put Priaulx in his element. He quickly retook the lead from Gamble, having lost it at Paddock Hill Bend after a bad start, and drove away at a pace that was unmatched by his rivals.

**FATEMA CHOWDHURY**



EBREV/LAT

**Priaulx's weekend was almost derailed by race one contact**

## RESULTS

**RACE 1 (BOTH 18 LAPS) 1 Harry Dyson;** 2 Harry King +0.999s; 3 Tom Wood; 4 Sebastian Priaulx; 5 Connor Grady; 6 Adam Smalley. **FL** Dyson 1m00.679s (71.66mph). **P** Priaulx. **S** 20.

**RACE 2 1 Priaulx;** 2 Tom Gamble +3.771s; 3 Daniel Harper; 4 King; 5 Grady; 6 Dyson.

**FL** Priaulx 56.771s (76.59mph). **P** Priaulx. **S** 20.

**POINTS 1 Priaulx 59;** 2 Dyson 54; 3 King 52; 4 Wood; 5 Harper 40; 6 Grady 40.



## Title favourite Caroline stars

JAMIE CAROLINE WAS THE ONLY name on the lips of the British F4 paddock ahead of the season opener at Brands Hatch, and he underlined his title credentials with two wins a fifth place.

The Carlin man is the only British F4 race winner to return for a full season, highlighting him as a hot favourite.

"We've had a great start to the year, but it'd be wrong to get excited now. We're hardly into the season," he said.

It wasn't all smooth sailing in the opener, as Caroline's Carlin car had dramatic tyre degradation towards the end, just edging Arden's Alex Quinn.

"We had good race pace and managed our tyres," said Quinn. "I think another few laps and I could have had him."

It was a similar story in race three as Caroline had to fend off an Arden car to seal the victory. This time it was Australian Oscar Piastrri who kept the race one winner honest from the start. Piastrri was denied a late fight with Caroline, though, with team-mate Quinn emerging to battle for second place. The two Ardens jostled, a battle Piastrri

won, aiding Caroline's victory up ahead.

"We didn't suffer from tyre deg this time. We made a few changes to the set-up after race two," said Caroline.

Race two was won by an emotional Ayrton Simmons who said his first win in British F4 was "absolutely amazing and such a relief". The Arden driver took a win fitting of his first name, beating Carlin's Patrik Pasma by five seconds.

**DOM D'ANGELILLO**

### RESULTS

**RACE 1 (24 LAPS) 1 Jamie Caroline;** 2 Alex Quinn +0.290s; 3 Oscar Piastrri; 4 Logan Sargeant; 5 Patrik Pasma; 6 Billy Monger. **Class winner** Monger. **FL** Quinn 46.325s (93.87mph). **P** Caroline. **S** 17.

**RACE 2 (26 LAPS) 1 Ayrton Simmons;** 2 Pasma +4.960s; 3 Monger; 4 Sargeant; 5 Caroline; 6 Piastrri. **CW** Monger. **FL** Pasma 46.663s (93.19mph). **P** Simmons. **S** 17.

**RACE 3 (23 LAPS) 1 Caroline;** 2 Piastrri +1.691s; 3 Quinn; 4 Pasma; 5 Simmons; 6 Sargeant. **CW** Monger. **FL** Quinn 46.690s (93.13mph). **P** Caroline. **S** 17.

**POINTS 1 Caroline 60;** 2 Simmons 41; 3 Piastrri 41; 4 Pasma 40; 5 Quinn 39; 6 Sargeant 32.



Caroline was the class of the field

EBREY/LAT

## Gamble makes winning return

"A DREAM START," SAID GEORGE Gamble after a GT4 Supercup race one win on his return to racing after a three-year hiatus.

But that dream quickly became a nightmare for Gamble in a wet race two.

While the JHR Developments driver managed an unchallenged start, an empty second grid slot – vacated by Ben Green's car, which suffered loss of drive – left the door open for Laser Tools Racing's Jack Mitchell, who caught him after a quick start from fourth.

The pair spent a number of laps nose to tail before Gamble spun. "He tapped me while turning onto the straight and it just went," Gamble said. It was deemed a racing incident and Mitchell took victory ahead of Callum Pointon and Carl Boardley. Gamble was 10th.

The nightmare didn't last long for Gamble, who capitalised on several accidents in race three to claim his second win from eighth on the grid.

**DOM D'ANGELILLO**

### RESULTS

**RACE 1 (16 LAPS) 1 George Gamble;** 2 Ben Green +2.843s; 3 Carl Boardley; 4 Jack Mitchell; 5 Callum Pointon; 6 Sebastian Perez. **FL** Gamble 47.977s (90.63mph). **P** Gamble. **S** 19. **RACE 2 (17 LAPS)**

**1 Mitchell;** 2 Pointon +2.468s; 3 Boardley; 4 Tom Hibbert; 5 Colin White; 6 Reece Somerfield. **FL** Mitchell 53.667s (81.02mph). **P** Gamble. **S** 19.

**RACE 3 (27 LAPS) 1 Gamble;** 2 Pointon +2.493s; 3 Charles Ladell; 4 Declan Jones; 5 Perez; 6 Somerfield. **FL** Mitchell 48.472s (89.71mph). **P** Somerfield. **S** 18.

**POINTS 1 Gamble 86;** 2 Pointon 80; 3 Mitchell 75; 4 Ladell 55; 5 Perez 54; 6 Boardley 52.

## Eastwood pushes Cammish to brace

ON THE SURFACE, IT WAS ANOTHER lights-to-flag double as Dan Cammish began his search for a third Carrera Cup title in winning style. There was, however, a bit more to it than that, as Cammish was challenged all the way by his ever-improving team-mate Charlie Eastwood.

Qualifying suggested that Cammish would have a fight on his hands, with the top four separated by just 0.09s at the session's end. Sure enough, Porsche Scholar Eastwood relentlessly hounded the double champion in the opening stages of race one.

But Cammish didn't make any mistakes and handled two safety car restarts well – the first for a three-car pile-up on Hailwoods Hill on the opening lap – to take the win ahead of the looming Eastwood.

"It was really tough," Cammish admitted. "Charlie was all over me at the start – I think we had a little bit left if we really needed it but not much."

Eastwood added: "With Dan, it's not the case of who makes the most mistakes but who does the most perfect laps."

The second race wasn't quite as close as the first. Eastwood had to contend with 2016 runner-up Dino Zamparelli appearing right on his tail until backmarkers cost the JTR driver around two seconds and relieved the pressure on the Redline Racing driver.

It had been a difficult weekend for Zamparelli, his first since joining JTR. He ran wide at Paddock Hill Bend in the opener while chasing third-placed Lewis Plato and had to settle for fifth at the flag.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

### RESULTS

**RACE 1 (BOTH 34 LAPS) 1 Dan Cammish;** 2 Charlie Eastwood +0.502s; 3 Lewis Plato; 4 Tom Oliphant; 5 Dino Zamparelli; 6 Euan McKay. **P** Cammish. **S** 22. **FL** Cammish 46.729s (93.06mph). **RACE 2 1 Cammish;** 2 Eastwood +0.841s; 3 Zamparelli; 4 Oliphant; 5 Tio Ellinas; 6 McKay.

**P** Cammish. **S** 20. **FL** Zamparelli 46.942s (92.63mph).

**POINTS 1 Cammish 40;** 2 Eastwood 36; 3 Zamparelli 28; 4 Oliphant 20; 5 McKay 19; 6 Ellinas 18.



Eastwood was Cammish's main threat

EBREY/LAT



**SILVERSTONE**  
CREVENTIC APRIL 1-2

## Bleekemolen banishes 2016 woes with win

IT WAS CELEBRATIONS ALL ROUND for Team Bleekemolen, having been robbed of victory in last year's Silverstone 24 Hours by a blown engine. Led by Sebastiaan Bleekemolen, with Melvin de Groot, Rene Steenmetz and guesting Brit Rob Smith, they dominated the night session in their SEAT Leon TCR to build a comfortable lead, and took victory by five laps.

The TCR class settled at the head of the field and there was an early duel for the lead between Modena Motorsports' Benny Simonsen (in the #216 car) and Monlau Competicion's Jose Manuel Perez Aicart, before the order began to calm and the sun started to set. Later, though, the Red Camel Jordans SEAT began another duel with the Modena car.

Bleekemolen managed a stop to change both brakes and pads around 4.20am, but making the stop under Code 60 helped them retain a strong position. Francis Tjia became the new leader for Modena, but he then stopped with suspension problems, immediately handing the lead back to Bleekemolen.

The team's crew had been at a steady pace but began to take charge in the fourth hour. Smith did two night stints and they continued to lead until 8am, when a broken damper cost them 14 minutes.

Third-placed Rik Breukers was also in trouble as the Red Camel SEAT had a turbo problem. "Our strategy had been working until this," he said. They had stopped five hours earlier, too, with a broken steering arm.

The Bleekemolen lead grew as their rivals hit trouble and, by 10am, they had four laps in hand over the Pit Lane Competizioni Audi RS3 TCR. "I really thought it was all over for us, then all



this happened and we not only had the lead but a big lead," said Bleekemolen.

Smith had his first daylight session in the lead car, before handing to Bleekemolen and finally Steenmetz to take the flag and victory.

The TCR Audi took second place after the first Modena car had a bolt failure in the rear suspension and dropped to seventh. "We couldn't believe our own pace," said Audi driver Roberto Ferri.

There was a Modena car on the podium, as the team's second car gained from its sister car's demise, as Philippe Descombes crossed the line. Wimmer Werk Motorsport's SEAT was fourth, with Stanco & Tanner and Monlau Competicion completing the top six, after Wayne Shen's Modena car collided with the Endurance Autosport Lotus at Farm and rolled.

**Bleekemolen had a blown engine in 2016, but returned to win overall**

The other classes were unable to make an impression at the top of the leaderboard due to enforced lap times restrictions. Richard Neary led the first three hours in GT4 in the Team Abba Racing with Rollcentre BMW until a crank seal failed. Colin White then took over the Ginetta G55 he shared with Martin Thomas/Philippe Salini/Patrik Mathiesen.

Despite breaking driveshafts and incurring penalties, they held on until the 19th hour when the Moss Motorsport BMW of Mike Moss/Chris Murphy/Scott Adam/Barry McMahon was moved from class A3 to GT4. The White car still retained second, while Kevin Clarke/Adam Hayes/Paul Black/Ryan Lindsay were third in the Intersport BMW.

The QSR BMW of Jimmy de Breuker/Mario Timmers/Rodrigue Gillion/Jeffrey van Hooydonk led the Cup class from the



**Class switch aided Moss Motorsport**



**Synchro squad had eventful race to bag A3 honours**





READ

fifth hour, after Leyton Clarke's RMA Track Days BMW had set the pace. "We had wheel bearings go, lost ABS, it came out of gear, got hit, but amazingly we finished," said Clarke, after losing second to the Sorg Rennsport BMW of Paul Abercrombie/Kye Wheatley/Rob Ellice/William Lucas/Sam Tordoff late on.

The Moss BMW had battled with Cor Euser's similar car in Class A3. The Euser car had started to secure the advantage from 10pm and they continued to share the lead until the Moss car was moved to GT4. Farano lost a wheel in the Euser car at 5am before diff problems three hours from home stopped them taking the flag, but they still retained third in class.

Synchro Motorsport's Honda Civic Type R made a recovery to take the class spoils, with Alyn James/Dan Wheeler/Martin Byford, despite having an engine change. James also caused a late scare by pitting for a toilet stop. The Vanquish Motorsport SEAT was second in class after numerous woes, which started when Chris Yarwood had the suspension break in the first hour.

Only two cars contested A2, but both led before Team Sally Racing's Renault Clio eased clear of Area MS/Owens Endurance's Honda Civic.

Danny Killeen and Paul Thacker won the two supporting Caterham races. The first was red flagged when Jack Brown and Phil Jenkins crashed at Club.

**PETER SCHERER**

➔ **P79** FULL RESULTS



## Harridge ends winless Vee streak

JAMES HARRIDGE'S FOUR-YEAR QUEST to win a 750 Motor Club Formula Vee championship round in the Maverick, built with dad Dave, was rewarded on the International Circuit. Close before in tough going, 2016's Festival champion beat Ben Miloudi's aptly named Storm in the wet, restarted after front-row man Adam Macaulay crashed at Old Hall and others fell with him.

"What a way to start the year! The car handles brilliantly in the wet," said Harridge. He could only watch the dry sequel's lead squabble from Clearways, his engine having failed. The Bears GACs of David Hughes, Paul Taylor and Craig Pollard all led, with Miloudi close, but Pollard – ending a year's layoff – prevailed to take his first chequer. Points leader Miloudi followed, with Taylor and Tim Probert (Storm) close.

Split into three tranches by rotation after practice (each to run twice), 43 competitors kicked off Locost racing's 17th year. Superkart convert Louis Wall made an unforgettable car debut as he won the first heat, with fingertip control in treacherous conditions taking him clear of Lee Emm and defending champion Ian Allee. "Just ridiculous," said Wall. "After karts that was massively difficult and technical."

On a drier track, top qualifier Ben Powney opened his third campaign in the 1300cc Ford-engined class with his first win over Tim Neat – from 13th on the grid – and

Emm. Race three featured the top 11 jostling by half-way. Martin West took the lead from Allee with a dive into Hislops on the last lap, but was denied a breakthrough gold by his rival's retaliation. "I thought I was there but it's always the same with 'Slippy'. He never gives up," said West.

Mark Balmer became the first Clio 182 combatant other than James Bark or Patrick Fletcher, champions of the past two years, to win since Andrew Tibbs at Silverstone in August 2015 after going from 15th to ninth when the morning's round was stopped after Charlie Turner smote the barriers atop Clay Hill. Fletcher and brothers Arron and Scott Sharp chased him home. Scott pursued winner Fletcher in the afternoon. Initially penalised for contact, Ryan Gillespie's third was returned when his protest was upheld.

Martin James won the Civic Cup opener from Mark Higginson, although Daniel Reason had audaciously snatched the lead round the outside over the crest of Clay Hill. After a year's break, Lee Deegan was trying to demote Higginson from second when he spun and hit the Old Hall belting on lap three. Unbelievably, he resumed and shot back from ninth to fourth. Starting race two (the top 10 were reversed) seventh, Deegan led within a lap, heading Mark Grice home.

Last year's top M3 Cup racer Adam Shepherd continued his winning form, landing a double as the BMW E46 competition began its championship status. Simon Walker-Hansell, 2003 T-Cars champion, was quicker away in race two, and kept Shepherd on his toes. Despite rev limiter issues Carl Shield ousted Luke Sedzikowski from third second time out, reversing their earlier order.

On Davanti tyres for the first time, a small 5Club MX-5 posse disputed the championship openers. Ben Short won both times, trading places with Ali Bray as they outran the rest, narrowly apart in the afternoon's finale. Top qualifier Paul Bateman and Sebastian Fisher chased hard.

**MARCUS PYE**

➔ **P79** FULL RESULTS





**SNETTERTON**  
CSCC APRIL 1-2

## Sevens star in anniversary year opener

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVENS produced a gem of a race to begin the diamond anniversary celebrations of the Lotus Seven, progenitor of the current Caterham Seven.

Two of the Colin Chapman-inspired cars tangled at Oggies, causing an early safety car period, but that didn't disrupt Gary Bate. Christian Pittard's attempt to challenge Bate faltered when he stalled during his stop, leaving him with too much to do. Simon Smith had a wheel change during his stop, using it to good effect to claim the final podium place from Jonathan Mitchell, despite a late scare when his car briefly went into limp mode.

Smith took revenge on Bate in the Sprint race, helped by the latter spinning at Hamilton while giving chase.

Sevens also dominated the Open Series race. An early trip over the Esses grass made Smith's task harder, having to first pass Bate and then, following the pitstops, Mitchell to take victory. Behind the trio of Caterhams, Peter Challis led the GT cars home in his Porsche 997.

A mid-race safety car disrupted the Classic K event, allowing Tim and Mark Cousins (Lotus Elan) to benefit, pitting ahead of schedule to steal a march over the field. Early leaders Mark Halstead/Stuart McPherson ended up almost a lap adrift, having been caught in the pitlane. McPherson fought back to grab the final podium place but ran out of time in the race to dislodge David Holroyd from second position in an all-Elan podium.

Keith Ahlers again ruled the Morgan Challenge, while Philip Goddard outpaced Elliot Paterson. Fourth-placed Andrew Thompson was thankful to see the chequered flag with Roger Whiteside looming ever larger in his



mirrors during the closing laps.

Ahlers needed to put the fast-starting Goddard in his place in race two, powering by on Senna Straight. Paterson came home third again, while a recovering Whiteside narrowly failed to unseat Thompson from fourth place.

A recalcitrant engine at his pitstop initially cost Ian Everett the advantage over Tim Cairns in the Swinging Sixties Group 1 race, but once his BMW lump fired up, he was able to chase down the race leader to claim his maiden series victory. Charles Marriott had to keep the challenging Ian Staines covered to complete the podium positions.

In the Group 2 Swinging Sixties race, a slick pitstop gave Nick Fleming the early advantage over the Ginetta G4 of Mark Halstead/Stuart McPherson, but Fleming's half-spin at Riches on the final lap handed victory to the Ginetta crew. An early pitstop paid dividends for Mark Campbell. He secured third place, outrunning the rumbling TVR of Jon Wolfe/David Thompson.

There was little to choose between James Ramm and a flame-spitting Colin Philpott in the opening Jaguar Saloon and GT race, so Ramm's first-lap pass at Nelson proved decisive. Rodney Frost

**Gary Bate took two podiums as the Sevens began 60th anniversary celebrations**

was a lonely third, while David Bye held off Guy Connew for fourth.

Ramm made it a double in Sunday's sequel but Philpott made it much harder, leading the middle part of the race until Ramm found a way past at Riches. Patrick Doyle started 14th but worked hard to take a third-place finish at the expense of Bye.

Runaway Tin Tops race leader Richard Wheeler (Ford Fiesta) caused the first use of the Code 60 flag at Snetterton after parking at Agostino – to the delight of Steven Simpson, whose pass on Nigel Tongue down Bentley Straight secured victory. Andrew Windmill kept the leaders in sight, while Lewis Denslow reached fourth place from 14th on the grid.

An early Code 60 was also needed in the Modern Classics. Several leading runners took their pitstops early, playing into the hands of Nicholas Olson and Thomas Houlbrook, the latter powering the BMW he shares with Edward Leigh to the front. Early leader Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan) ended his race parked out at Agostini.

A quick exchange between Aston and Tony Blake allowed them to take the lead of the Future Classics in their Porsche 911, chased by the faster Miles Masarati (911) and Matthew Wurr (Morgan Plus 8). Setting the fastest lap, Wurr scythed past Masarati, going on to pressurise the leader into an error at Oggies on the final lap and take a stunning victory.

Peter Challis (Porsche 997) was awarded victory in the New Millennium race, stopped early after Oliver Petch rolled at Murrays. Rob Fenn could feel slightly aggrieved since he had pitted early and it looked as if it would pay him dividends until the stoppage put an end to any such hopes.

**LEWIS BEALES**



Philpott and Ramm were the Jaguar aces

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# RESULTS ROUND-UP

## SILVERSTONE CREVENTIC

### HANKOOK 24 HOURS (549 LAPS)

**1 Team Bleekemolen (Sebastiaan Bleekemolen/Melvin de Groot/Rob Smith/Rene Steenmetz) SEAT Leon TCR;** 2 Pit Lane Competizioni

(Alberto Vescovi/Roberto Ferri/Zach Arnold/Enrico Bettera/John Filippi) Audi RS3 LMS TCR -5 laps; 3 Modena Motorsport (Marcel Tjia/Christian Chia/Michael Soeryadajaya/Philippe Descombes/Benny Simonsen)

SEAT Leon TCR; 4 Wimmer Werk Motorsport (Felix Wimmer/Christian Windischberger/Martin Gasser/Gunther Wiesmeier/Matthias Kaiser) SEAT Leon TCR; 5 Stanco

& Tanner Motorsport (Michel Schaap/Christian Dijkhof/Maxim Aronov/Lev Fridman/Maarten Mus) SEAT Leon TCR; 6 Monlau

Competicion (Jurgen Smet/Jose Manuel Perez Aicart/Alba Cano Ramirez/Alvaro Bajo) SEAT Leon TCR.

**Class winners** QSR (Jimmy de Breuker/Mario Timmers/Rodrigue Gillion/Jeffrey van Hooydonck) BMW 235i; Team Sally Racing (Martin Sally Pedersen/Peter Obel/Mads Christensen/Steffan Jusjong)

Renault Clio Cup; Moss Motorsport UK (Mike Moss/Chris Murphy/Scot Adam/Barry McMahon) BMW E46 M3; Synchro Motorsport (Alyn James/Dan Wheeler/Martin Byford) Honda Civic Type R). **Fastest lap**

Benny Simonsen (Modena Motorports) SEAT Leon TCR 2m14.614s (97.56mph). **Pole** Monlau Competition. **Starters** 30.

**CATERHAM SEVEN (10 LAPS)** **1 Danny Killeen (R300);** 2 Clive Richards (R300) +0.601s; 3 Eduardo Leitao (R300); 4 Hugo Araujo (R300); 5 Jose Carlos Pires (R300); 6 Justin Armstrong (R300). **CW** Mark Stansfield (Supersport). **FL** Phil Jenkins (R300) 1m21.219s. **P** Leitao. **S** 47.

**RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Paul Thacker (R300);** 2 Anthony Barnes (R300) +3.312s; 3 Richard Ainscough (R300); 4 Steve Day (R300); 5 Killeen; 6 Richards. **CW** Jose Joao Magalhaes (Supersport). **FL** Richards 2m21.743s. **P** Richards. **S** 44.

**RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Deegan;** 2 Grice +4.83s; 3 James Griffith; 4 Higginson; 5 James; 6 Robert Harrison. **FL** Deegan 1m57.11s (82.75mph). **P** Harrison. **S** 29.

**M3 CUP (9 LAPS) 1 Adam Shepherd;** 2 Simon Walker-Hansell +4.44s; 3 Luke Sedzikowski; 4 Carl Shield; 5 Robert Keogh; 6 Kevin Dengate. **FL** Shepherd 1m54.84s (84.39mph). **P** Shepherd. **S** 15.

**RACE 2 (11 LAPS) 1 Shepherd;** 2 Walker-Hansell +10.60s; 3 Shield; 4 Sedzikowski; 5 Dengate; 6 Keogh. **FL** Shepherd 1m52.76s (85.95mph). **P** Shepherd. **S** 14.

**MX-5 CUP (7 LAPS) 1 Ben Short;** 2 Ali Bray +2.10s; 3 Paul Bateman; 4 Sebastian Fisher; 5 Marco Aghem; 6 Ian Tomlinson. **FL** Short 2m06.16s (76.82mph). **P** Bateman. **S** 15.

**RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Short;** 2 Bray +0.29s; 3 Fisher; 4 Bateman; 5 Tomlinson; 6 Aghem. **FL** Short 2m06.17s (76.81mph). **P** Short. **S** 15.

**NETTERTON CSCC**

**MAGNIFICENT SEVENS (17 LAPS) 1 Gary Bate (CRS);** 2 Christian Pittard (CRS) +3.723s; 3 Simon Smith (CRS); 4 Jonathan Mitchell (CRS); 5 Jonathan Pittard (7 S3); 6 Richard Cater (R300). **CW** J Pittard; Tom Edden (R300); Nick Starkey (Superlight);

Harrison (Sheane Jordan). **FL** Miloudi 1m57.72s (82.32mph). **P** Adam Macaulay (Sheane). **S** 22.

**LOCOST, GROUPS B&C (7 LAPS) 1 Louis Wall;** 2 Lee Emm +7.71s; 3 Ian Allee; 4 Tim Neat; 5 James Millman; 6 Steve Paddock. **FL** Wall 2m21.91s (68.29mph). **P** Millman. **S** 27.

**GROUPS C&A (6 LAPS) 1 Ben Powney;** 2 Neat +0.84s; 3 Lee Emm; 4 Jack Coveney; 5 Martin West; 6 David Winter. **FL** Neat 2m06.67s (76.51mph). **P** Wall. **S** 26.

**GROUPS A&B (7 LAPS) 1 Allee;** 2 West +0.30; 3 Millman; 4 Powney; 5 Tom Robinson; 6 Coveney. **FL** Robinson 2m06.91s (76.36mph). **P** Powney. **S** 28.

**CLIO 182 (4 LAPS) 1 Mark Balmer;** 2 Patrick Fletcher +2.92s; 3 Arron Sharp; 4 Scott Sharp; 5 David Hitchin; 6 Ryan Gillespie. **FL** S Sharp 2m09.25s (74.98mph). **P** Don de Graaff. **S** 25.

**RACE 2 (6 LAPS) 1 Fletcher;** 2 S Sharp +1.04s; 3 Gillespie; 4 Trevor Gregory; 5 Nick Garner; 6 Balmer. **FL** de Graaff 2m02.02s (79.42mph). **P** Ryan Polley. **S** 24.

**CIVIC CUP (9 LAPS) 1 Martin James;** 2 Mark Higginson +2.07s; 3 Daniel Reason; 4 Lee Deegan; 5 Jon Peerless; 6 Mark Grice. **FL** Reason 2m10.77s (74.11mph). **P** Higginson. **S** 30.

Harrison (Sheane Jordan).

**FL** Miloudi 1m57.72s (82.32mph).

**P** Adam Macaulay (Sheane). **S** 22.

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**CIVIC CUP (9 LAPS) 1 Martin**

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3 Daniel Reason; 4 Lee Deegan;

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**FL** Reason 2m10.77s (74.11mph).

**P** Higginson. **S** 30.

**RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Deegan;**

2 Grice +4.83s; 3 James Griffith;

4 Higginson; 5 James; 6 Robert

Harrison. **FL** Deegan 1m57.11s

(82.75mph). **P** Harrison. **S** 29.

**M3 CUP (9 LAPS) 1 Adam**

**Shepherd;** 2 Simon Walker-Hansell

+4.44s; 3 Luke Sedzikowski; 4 Carl

Shield; 5 Robert Keogh; 6 Kevin

Dengate. **FL** Shepherd 1m54.84s

(84.39mph). **P** Shepherd. **S** 15.

**RACE 2 (11 LAPS) 1 Shepherd;**

2 Walker-Hansell +10.60s; 3 Shield;

4 Sedzikowski; 5 Dengate; 6 Keogh.

**FL** Shepherd 1m52.76s (85.95mph).

**P** Shepherd. **S** 14.

**MX-5 CUP (7 LAPS) 1 Ben Short;**

2 Ali Bray +2.10s; 3 Paul Bateman;

4 Sebastian Fisher; 5 Marco Aghem;

6 Ian Tomlinson. **FL** Short 2m06.16s

(76.82mph). **P** Bateman. **S** 15.

**RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Short;** 2 Bray

+0.29s; 3 Fisher; 4 Bateman;

5 Tomlinson; 6 Aghem. **FL** Short

2m06.17s (76.81mph). **P** Short. **S** 15.

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**1 Gary Bate (CRS);** 2 Christian

Pittard (CRS) +3.723s; 3 Simon Smith

(CRS); 4 Jonathan Mitchell (CRS);

5 Jonathan Pittard (7 S3); 6 Richard

Cater (R300). **CW** J Pittard; Tom Edden

(R300); Nick Starkey (Superlight);

Harrison (Sheane Jordan).

**FL** Miloudi 1m57.72s (82.32mph).

**P** Adam Macaulay (Sheane). **S** 22.

**LOCOST, GROUPS B&C (7 LAPS)**

**1 Louis Wall;** 2 Lee Emm +7.71s;

3 Ian Allee; 4 Tim Neat; 5 James

Millman; 6 Steve Paddock.



Steve Owen (Blackbird); Hugh Coulter (C400); Ashley Boyles/Steven Boyles (R300); Stephen Storey/Andrew Tidy (Blackbird); Robert Cooper (Supersport); Alex Harbour (Supersport); Matthew Gibbon (Tracksport). **FL** Smith 1m59.449s (89.47mph). **P** Bate. **S** 34.

**RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Smith;** 2 Bate +0.614s; 3 Mitchell; 4 Carter; 5 Tim Davis (C400); 6 Lewis Tootell (R300). **CW** Carter; Tootell; Ashley Boyles (R300); Storey; Sam Kendle (Supersport); Harbour. **FL** Bate 1m58.813s (89.95mph). **P** Bate. **S** 16.

**OPEN SERIES (14 LAPS) 1 Simon Smith (Caterham CRS);** 2 Jonathan Mitchell (CRS) +9.624s; 3 Gary Bate (CRS); 4 Peter Challis (Porsche 997); 5 Thomas Houlbrook (BMW M3); 6 Ross Murray (Caterham C400). **CW** Challis; Murray; Philip Horne (Caterham Blackbird); Tony Blake/Aston Blake (Porsche 911 RSR); Ian Haire/Andrew Greenwood (Caterham Supersport); Kenny Coleman (Honda Civic Type R); Stephen Slawson (Civic). **FL** Smith 2m00.162s (88.94mph). **P** Smith. **S** 34.

**CLASSIC K (24 LAPS) 1 Tim Cousins/Mark Cousins (Lotus Elan);** 2 David Holroyd (Elan) +1m14.955s; 3 Mark Halstead/Stuart McPherson (Elan); 4 Alan Tice/Chris Conoley (Marcos 1800GT); 5 Michael Gray/Kallum Gray (Jaguar E-type); 6 Will Linley (Austin Healey 3000). **CW** Gray/Gray; Linley; Joe Ward/Richard Bull (TVR Grantura MkIII); Mark Hope (MGB); Luke Wos (Reliant Sabre 6); Steven Bailey/Jerry Byrne (Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint); Richard Longdon/Rory Longdon (Austin Mini Cooper S). **FL** Halstead 2m14.341s (79.55mph). **P** Halstead. **S** 26.

**MORGAN CHALLENGE (BOTH 10 LAPS) 1 Keith Ahlers (Plus 8);** 2 Philip Goddard (Plus 8) +26.716s; 3 Elliot Paterson (ARV8); 4 Andrew Thompson (ARV8); 5 Roger Whiteside (Plus 8); 6 Andy Green (Plus 8). **CW** Paterson; Tim Parsons (4/4);

Charlie Goddard (Plus 8); Brett Syndercombe (4/4); Michael Bailey (Plus 4). **FL** Ahlers 2m06.202s (84.89mph). **P** Ahlers. **S** 25.

**RACE 2 1 Ahlers;** 2 Goddard +14.159s; 3 Paterson; 4 Thompson; 5 Whiteside; 6 Green. **CW** Paterson; Parsons; Steven McDonald (Plus 8); Syndercombe; Thomas Dailey (Plus 8). **FL** Ahlers 2m06.122s (84.74mph). **P** Ahlers. **S** 23.

**SWINGING SIXTIES GROUP 1 (17 LAPS) 1 Ian Everett (BMW 1502);** 2 Tim Cairns (Austin Healey Frogeye Sprite) +0.917s; 3 Charles Marriott (Turner Mk2); 4 Ian Staines (MG Midget); 5 Matt Domin (MGB GT); 6 Timothy Kemp/Sam Loughnan (Sunbeam Alpine). **CW** Cairns; Paul Wybrow (MGB); Steven Bailey/Jerry Byrne (Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint). **FL** Cairns 2m20.826s (75.89mph). **P** Cairns. **S** 26.

**GROUP 2 (18 LAPS) 1 Mark Halstead/Stuart McPherson (Ginetta G4);** 2 Nick Fleming (Lotus Elan) +11.921s; 3 Mark Campbell (Triumph TR5); 4 Jon Wolfe/David Thompson (TVR Tuscan V8); 5 Malcolm Johnson (Lotus Europa); 6 Paul Keevill/James Keevill (Lotus). **CW** Campbell; Wolfe/Thompson; Roger Bowman (Jaguar Mk1); Jonathan Navon (Jaguar E-type). **FL** McPherson 2m08.875s (82.93mph). **P** Halstead. **S** 25.

**JAGUAR SALOON & GT (BOTH 9 LAPS) 1 James Ramm (XJS);** 2 Colin Philpott (XJS) +0.382s; 3 Rodney Frost (XJS); 4 David Bye (XJ6C); 5 Guy Connew (XJS); 6 Chris Pizzala (XJS). **CW** Frost; Adam Powderham (XJR); Simon Blunt (XJS). **FL** Ramm 2m 16.304s (78.41mph). **P** Philpott. **S** 18.

**RACE 2 1 Ramm;** 2 Philpott + 0.308s; 3 Patrick Doyle (XJS); 4 Bye; 5 Pizzala; 6 Powderham. **CW** Doyle; Frost; Blunt. **FL** Ramm 2m15.077s (79.12mph). **P** Ramm. **S** 17.

**TIN TOPS AND ENDURO FOR FORD CARS (15 LAPS) 1 Colin Simpson/Steven Simpson (Peugeot 206);** 2 Nigel Tongue (Peugeot 306) +3.578s; 3 Andrew Windmill (Honda Civic Type R); 4 Lewis Denslow (Ford Fiesta); 5 Carl Chambers (Peugeot 306); 6 Mark Livens (Civic Type R). **CW** Denslow; Mathieu Fowler (Civic); Steve Papworth (Fiesta ST); Stephen Reynolds/John Ridgeon (Renault Clio); Colin Newbold (Fiesta Si). **FL** Richard Wheeler (Fiesta ST) 2m12.461s (80.68mph). **P** C Simpson. **S** 41.

**MODERN CLASSICS AND PUMA CUP (16 LAPS) 1 Edward Leigh/Thomas Houlbrook (BMW M3);** 2 Nicholas Olson (Lotus Esprit S3) +5.262s; 3 Laurie Crane (M3); 4 Peter Morris (Porsche 996); 5 Richard Hayes (Toyota Celica GT4); 6 Chris Whittle/Ross Morris (Porsche Boxster). **CW** Olson; Whittle/Morris; Tina Cooper/David Sharp (Lotus Elise S1); Luke Johnson (Ford Puma). **FL** Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan) 2m09.909s (82.27mph). **P** Daburn. **S** 37.

**FUTURE CLASSICS (18 LAPS) 1 Matthew Wurr (Morgan Plus 8);** 2 Miles Masarati (Porsche 911 Turbo) +0.871s; 3 Aston Blake/Tony Blake (911 RSR); 4 Matthew Lewis (Marcos Mantula); 5 Martyn Adams (Triumph TR7 V8); 6 Geoff Beale (Sunbeam Lotus). **CW** Masarati; Blake/Blake; Mark Luccock (Ford Escort Mk1); David Bryant (Toyota MR2); Sam Smith (Mazda MX-5); Steven Wilson (Porsche 944 S2); Neil Pulford/William King (Porsche 944 S2). **FL** Wurr 2m10.279s (82.03mph). **P** Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan). **S** 23.

**NEW MILLENNIUM (9 LAPS) 1 Peter Challis (Porsche 911);** 2 Owen Fitzgerald/Rory Hinde (M3) +4.439s; 3 Jerry Bailey/Steven Byrne (Aston Martin Vantage); 4 Barry O'Neill/Andrew Szymanski (M3); 5 Rob Fenn (Honda NSX); 6 Thomas Houlbrook (M3). **CW** Fitzgerald/Hinde; Fenn; George White (SEAT Leon); Keith Issatt (Mini Cooper S); Simon Hands (Lotus Exige S1); Robert Hosier (Leon). **FL** Houlbrook 2m05.379s (85.24mph). **P** Fenn. **S** 17.



# “It’s got to be one of *the* most affordable motorsport series on the planet”

The Classic Stock Hatch championship is a favourite of UK club racing, so we thought it was time for ex-British Touring Car star Anthony Reid to get a taste and give us his views

By Kevin Turner, Editor

[@KRT917](#)







Reid's autograph on your car can help shave a tenth off your lap time...

**W**hen Autosport was putting together its list of races for the perfect club meeting in the December 29 issue, the 750 Motor Club's Classic Stock Hatch category was one of the first candidates. Close, multi-make tin-top racing on sensible budgets

make it an appealing prospect, plus there is gradually growing nostalgia for some of the shapes of the 1980s.

What we didn't have was any direct experience of the machinery, so the 750MC helped us organise a four-car test on the Silverstone National circuit. Anthony Reid, 15-time BTCC race winner and Le Mans podium finisher, was keen the moment we mentioned it. So it was that he and Autosport headed to a damp Northamptonshire in February.

The track was wet when we arrived, so the decision was made to wait until things dried out. In quick succession – which gave little time for feedback between runs – Reid drove Martin Cayzer's Ford Fiesta XR2i (seventh in the 2016 standings) and Derek Rozier's Peugeot 205 GTi (ninth) in the dry before lunch, and Rick Groom's Fiesta XR2 (26th) and the Vauxhall Nova GTE of Stock Hatch frontrunner Pip Hammond after lunch and (unfortunately) a rain shower.

Reid has raced many historics, as well as contemporary touring cars and GTs, so he was fascinated to see how the Classic Stock Hatches stacked up. The rules cater for 1400cc multi-valve and 1600cc two-valve hatchbacks available for sale in the UK before January 1992, but all the test cars were 1600cc.

"I didn't know much about the series, but I had heard of it," says Reid as he begins his feedback. "When you jump into these cars they do show their age – they've all got disc brakes at the front and drums at the rear. One of the most important things in touring car races is to have an accurate brake balance. Because of their configuration, all of these cars had too much front braking, too much front bias. They have a very crude means of adjusting the balance. Instead of a balance bar, you have a pressure valve with a ratcheted lever."

Reid was also taken aback at how hard the first car was to drive: "The XR2i had a new engine and it was very tight – it didn't really have any get up and go. Surprisingly it was not a forgiving car – it either understeered or switched suddenly to oversteer, so it was quite tricky to drive. One or two of the other drivers said it doesn't handle as well as the older Fiesta.

"When you get into a modern touring car everything is spot on. So much of this is road-car components. They are very restricted on what they can do and how much they can adjust things." >>





Rozier's son Matt is reigning double champion in his 205 so, perhaps unsurprisingly, Reid immediately preferred the Peugeot. "That to my mind is the best car here," he says. "It had a sweet, free-revving motor and a very compliant, progressive balance, so you could wring the car's neck. And it had the best brake balance. The brakes are the most important thing in a race car – if you've got good brakes, you can brake with confidence and that affects how you take the whole corner.

"The Peugeot was a great little car. It would be my first choice."

The wetter afternoon conditions made assessing the 1985 Fiesta XR2 (with carburettor rather than fuel injection) and the 1990 Nova GTE more tricky. Nevertheless, Reid liked the XR2 immediately, perhaps a little surprising given that it's rarely a podium challenger.

"That had a much better balance than the newer Fiesta, not as good as the Peugeot, but much more confidence than the XR2i to go quick straight away," reckons Reid. "And that had a strong engine, even though it was a carburettor."

The Nova is a proven race winner in the hands of Hammond, who now has Reid's respect after he tried the car: "Pip must be a bloody good driver because the set-up was appalling! It's very stiffly sprung – the shock absorbers are too stiff – and

it bounces on its tyres. It's got terrible traction – the moment you touch the throttle it starts wheelspinning, which is an insult to a car with such little power. It was spinning the inside wheel because there is no locked diff. I gave him some pointers as to what he should be looking at.

"The steering was heavy too, but it did have a good engine."

Despite such differences, the leading cars are incredibly well-matched. "It's remarkable the racing is close at the front," adds Reid. "Having driven all these cars, they all have large differences in terms of handling characteristics and the engines are not equal, but it ends up with close racing.

"I think they just get on with driving the cars. They drive around issues, so they are very adaptable – get in and drive anything. It's clear that the frontrunning drivers are quick."

Rozier Jr, who has experience of several of the cars as

Reid found the XR2i harder to drive than expected, once ensconced in the simple cabin



Free-revving engine and nicely sorted chassis made Peugeot 205 Reid's favourite at Silverstone



well as having finished in the top three every year since Classic Stock Hatch became a championship, believes keeping the cars matched and yet different is key to the category's success.

"The cars have been running a long time; it's not just a case of power-to-weight ratios, it's real-world experience," he says. "We've had long conversations to fine-tune it over many years, so you can have different cars [at the front]."

"For example, people can have over-sized pistons and ECU remaps, but that means they get weight penalties, so other drivers who can't or don't want to make the changes don't become uncompetitive."

The stats suggest the process works. In 2015 the average winning margin was 3.2 seconds, which fell to just 1.8s last year. Similarly, the average pole margin went from 0.52s in 2015 to 0.27s (0.11s if Rozier Jr's standout Snetterton pole is excluded). Of the 28 races over those two years, Peugeots took 12 wins, the Fords and Citroen AX GTi six each, while four fell to Hammond's Nova.

The cars are also strong at different things, so the pendulum often swings from one to another depending on the venue.

"The Nova has good low-down torque and low ratios, so out of the slow corners they can pull away," says Rozier Jr. "The XR2i

#### CLASSIC STOCK HATCH CHAMPIONS

**2012**  
**Damian Cottrell**  
Vauxhall Nova GTE

**2013**  
**Lee Scott**  
Ford Fiesta XR2i

**2014**  
**Lee Scott**  
Ford Fiesta XR2i

**2015**  
**Matt Rozier**  
Peugeot 205 GTi

**2016**  
**Matt Rozier**  
Peugeot 205 GTi

doesn't rev quite so freely as the Peugeots, but performs well all-round. The 205's real strength is in high-speed corners and long straights. It struggles with the slow corners because the power is high up the rev range and it has quite long ratios."

The key frontrunner Reid wasn't able to test is Andrew Thorpe's Citroen AX GTi, which beat Rozier Jr by 0.5s to win the opening round of 2017 at Donington Park last month. "It's the lightest car on the grid, but he runs out of puff on the straights," says Rozier. "He flies through the twisty stuff.

"Consistency and reliability are probably the most important things in terms of winning the championship. But I always go for a win if it's there."

Rozier estimates he spent £4500 on his successful 2016 campaign and many drivers spend less. Cars can be bought from around £2000 up to £6500 for a title contender. Those are small figures by circuit-racing standards, helped by the fact that there are no professional teams. Drivers tend to run themselves, sometimes helped by family members or the odd mechanic.

So would Reid like to have a go in a race?

"Absolutely, I'd just hope I don't embarrass myself," he says.

"The whole day I found really interesting. Many of the classic cars I test and race for people have similar issues – quite >>>





EBREY

Reid enjoyed the older Fiesta, the XR2, even though the machine is rarely a contender for podium finishes



EBREY

rudimentary – and I like to interact with owners and give them advice on how they can cheaply and simply improve the performance of the car and increase their driving enjoyment.

“The Classic Stock Hatch racers were fascinated because they’ve never really had anyone come round and advise them, and drive their cars. They were all very receptive.

“I think modern professional drivers get very spoilt because you get into very sophisticated bits of equipment where everything is adjustable. You work with data and engineers and, with the adjustability, you can get the car the way you want it. This is not the case with these. You’ve got to race it the way it is.”

The two-time BTCC runner-up believes the series would be a great place for someone to start out in motorsport, but also has a warning: “You’d learn how to drive what you’ve got quickly, but I think if you spent too long there with a view to becoming a professional racing driver, you would get into some bad habits and not learn how to develop a car or work with an engineer. You’ve got to learn how to communicate and speak their language and make the car quicker. But as a starting point, if you haven’t got a big budget, I’d definitely have a look.

“It’s got to be one of the most affordable motorsport racing series on the planet.” ❄️



Saxo domination eventually hurt Stock Hatch series

JONES





Nova has a strong engine, but Reid gave Hammond some advice on chassis set-up



## The rise, fall and rise of Stock Hatch

FOR MANY YEARS, THE 750 Motor Club's Stock Hatch series was one of the most successful club-racing categories in the country.

Started in 1997, it reached a peak of around 180 registrations per season. Heats were required and Stock Hatch became a tough championship to win.

When the Citroen Saxo and closely related Peugeot 106 came in, they quickly took over at the front. Entries initially remained high and the racing was still strong,

but the series lost its multi-marque ethos and competitor support started to drop.

"Over time Stock Hatch became all Saxos, and the old cars became less competitive," concedes club competitions manager Giles Groombridge.

"We came up with Class B to recognise them, but it didn't really do the job – not being able to race for the overall win and having virtually no chance of making the finals meant we needed to rebrand it to give it a chance."

The standalone Classic Stock Hatch thus got its own championship for 2012 and started growing. "It was the right time – the perception of the cars was changing," adds Groombridge.

"They've become more sought-after and collectible – there's a following for the 1980s hot hatches. Suddenly they started coming back."

As Classic Stock Hatch has flourished, Stock Hatch has faded so that it's now a class within Hot Hatch, which was relaunched last year.

"The Saxo was king and car manufacturers stopped making 1600cc eight-valve cars [that the series was

**"We know we're going to get 25-28 cars every event"**

based around] so there was no natural replacement," explains Groombridge. "It became a one-make series

and, as we've seen many times, they have a natural life. People drifted away, but we didn't want to put them back in with Classic Stock Hatch because that could have hurt something that I think will have a very long life.

"From an organising point of view, Classic Stock Hatch is great for two reasons: it's a very happy paddock and they're very committed. We know we're going to get 25 to 28 cars for a weekend, wherever we go. And interest is growing."



# WHAT'S ON



## A new look at a Ferrari legend

GIVEN THE FABERGE EGG STATUS the Ferrari 250 GTO enjoys, there have been surprisingly few books written exclusively about this model, especially in proportion to the number of Ferrari titles. But the seventh edition of the Porters Press 'Great Cars' series is all about 250 GTO chassis 4153.

Chassis 4153 was one of the most successfully campaigned 250 GTOs, and is consequently well documented, but this book provides new details.

Keith Blumel is a suitably qualified author, having written for Ferrari magazines *Cavallino* and *Prancing Horse*, and manages to strike a happy balance between GTO history in general, key drivers and a comprehensive analysis of 4153's racing career. This runs right from its sale on December 28 1962 to the crowning glory of victory in the 1964 Tour de France – no mean achievement given that only 39 out of the 117 starters finished, racing over 10 days and 7500km (4600 miles).

The book then details the downfall of 4153. By 1965, it was becoming outclassed in the World Sportscar championship owing to the onslaught

of mid-engined competitors. It was sold in 1966 to a Spaniard for her son to campaign in local hillclimbs, circuit racing and rallies, and by 1970 it was in the hands of a post-office employee with a keen eye for Ferraris, who cashed in his investment by 1986. Its new owner Henri Chambon then carried out a (by then) much-needed full restoration.

Final chapters cover its subsequent use in historic racing and an intriguing turn of events in 2011 that reunited 4153 with its original engine, 682/62.

The book's only omission is a comprehensive list of the 39 chassis (in contrast to the 50 that were required of Ferrari for homologation), although this may have proved too contentious to include.

High production values are reflected in accurate and well-researched copy, unobtrusive good design, period photos reproduced on quality paper stock, with white space allowing copy to breathe. Captions that add to the copy rather than being extracted from it make the initial flick-through as enthralling as the full-on read. Breakout panels on key drivers, races, and the three 1964 Pininfarina-

**Ferrari 250 GTOs**  
starred at Le Mans in  
1963, finishing second  
and fourth

designed cars plus the 250LM, all help to pull the reader in and prevent the book from becoming a dry read.

Period 1960s Kodachrome adds to the visual feast – the book includes over 300 period photos, many in colour. The full spread of a Le Mans-style start at the Nurburgring is a particular favourite, and most of the images invite closer scrutiny, with evocative drop-ins of period racing posters, slick maps of circuits, and race result tables.

There is also a specially commissioned gallery, which is less appealing – far better to relish 250 GTOs with dirt, dents and dicing than the boiled sweets that the majority of the 39 have become. Period racing and paddock shots add to the drama and remind us of a time when racing was a lot less precious.

But overall the 'Great Cars' series is proving to be a winning formula in automotive publishing and this latest edition provides a welcome breadth of fresh information.

*Ferrari 250 GTO: The autobiography of 4153 GT* by Keith Blumel. RRP £60.00.  
ISBN 978-1-907085-27-7

**NICK KISCH**



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## HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube OPPOSITE ATTRACTS FOR BRIT GP

**Search for:** Silverstone makes a big change for the 2017 Formula 1 British Grand Prix

Grand Prix Innovation Committee chairman Jason Plato outlines Silverstone's radical plan – announced on Saturday – for this summer's British GP. Jolyon Palmer, Rob Smedley and David Coulthard join in the April japery.

## INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

### CHINESE GRAND PRIX FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 2/20

Shanghai, China

April 9

WATCH ON TV

Live Sky Sports F1, Sunday 0630

Radio BBC Radio 5 Live,

Sunday 0630

Highlights Channel 4,

Sunday 1430

### TOUR OF CORSICA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 4/13

Ajaccio, France

April 6-9

WATCH ON TV

Live BT Sport ESPN, Saturday

1500. BT Sport 1, Sunday 1100.

Red Bull TV, Saturday 1050

Highlights Motorsport.tv, Friday

2235, Saturday 2305, Sunday

2235. Channel 5, Tuesday 1900

### INDYCAR SERIES

Rd 2/16

Long Beach, California, USA

April 9

WATCH ON TV

Live BT Sport ESPN, Sunday

2130

### 24 HOUR SERIES

Rd 3/7

Red Bull Ring 12 Hours, Austria

April 7-8

### IMSA SPORTSCAR

Rd 3/12

Long Beach, California, USA

April 8

WATCH ON TV

Live Motorsport.tv, Saturday 2100

### WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 1/10

Marrakech, Morocco

April 9

WATCH ON TV

Live Eurosport 2, Sunday 1630

### AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

Rd 2/14

Symmons Plains, Tasmania,

Australia

April 8-9

### SUPER GT

Rd 1/8

Okayama, Japan

April 9

### NASCAR CUP

Rd 7/36

Texas Motor Speedway, USA

April 9

WATCH ON TV

Live Premier Sports,

Sunday 1800

### MOTOGP

Rd 2/18

Rio Hondo, Argentina

April 9

WATCH ON TV

Live BT Sport 2, Sunday 1945

**TV PICK OF THE WEEK**

**CHINESE GRAND PRIX**  
SKY SPORTS F1  
Sunday 0630

After Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari's victory in the Melbourne opener, can they back that up with another triumph? Or will Mercedes fight back at Shanghai? Will Red Bull produce a China shock? Can McLaren score a point? There are so many questions ahead of the second round of the Formula 1 season, so be sure to tune in on Sunday morning to find out the answers

## UK MOTORSPORT

### DONINGTON PARK HSCC

April 8

Historic FF1600, Historic FF2000, Derek Bell Trophy, Classic F3, Classic Clubmans, Historic Road Sports, 70s Road Sports, Historic Touring Cars, Guards Trophy

### SNETTERTON BRSCC

April 8-9

Caterham 420R, Caterham

310R, Caterham 270R,

Caterham Supersport,

Caterham Roadsport, Modified Saloons/ Intermarque, Open Sports

### SILVERSTONE BRSCC

April 8-9

Porsches, Sports 2000, Britcar Endurance, BMW Compact, Alfa Romeos, Fun Cup

### BRANDS HATCH BRSCC

April 8-9

FF1600, Formula Jedi, Mazda MX-5s, Ford Fiestas, Fiesta Juniors, Touring Greats, HRDC Academy, HRDC A Series

### ROCKINGHAM BARC

April 8-9

Pickups, Junior Saloons, Kumho BMWs, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre-1993 Touring Cars, Pre-2003 Touring Cars,

Pre-2005 Production Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Thunder Saloons, Pre-2003 Classic VWs, Honda VTECs, Smart Cars 4Two

### MONDELLO PARK IMRC

April 8-9

Supercars, BOSS Formula Libre, Touring Cars, SEATs, Historic Racing Cars, Ginetta Juniors

### DONINGTON PARK MGCC

April 9

MG Cup, MG Metro Cup, Midgets and Sprites, BCV8, Thoroughbred Sportscars, Cockshoot Cup, MG Trophy, Equipe GTS

### KNOCKHILL SMRC

April 9

Mini Coopers, Fiestas, FF1600, Classic Sports and Saloons, Legends Cars, Sports and Saloons, BMWs

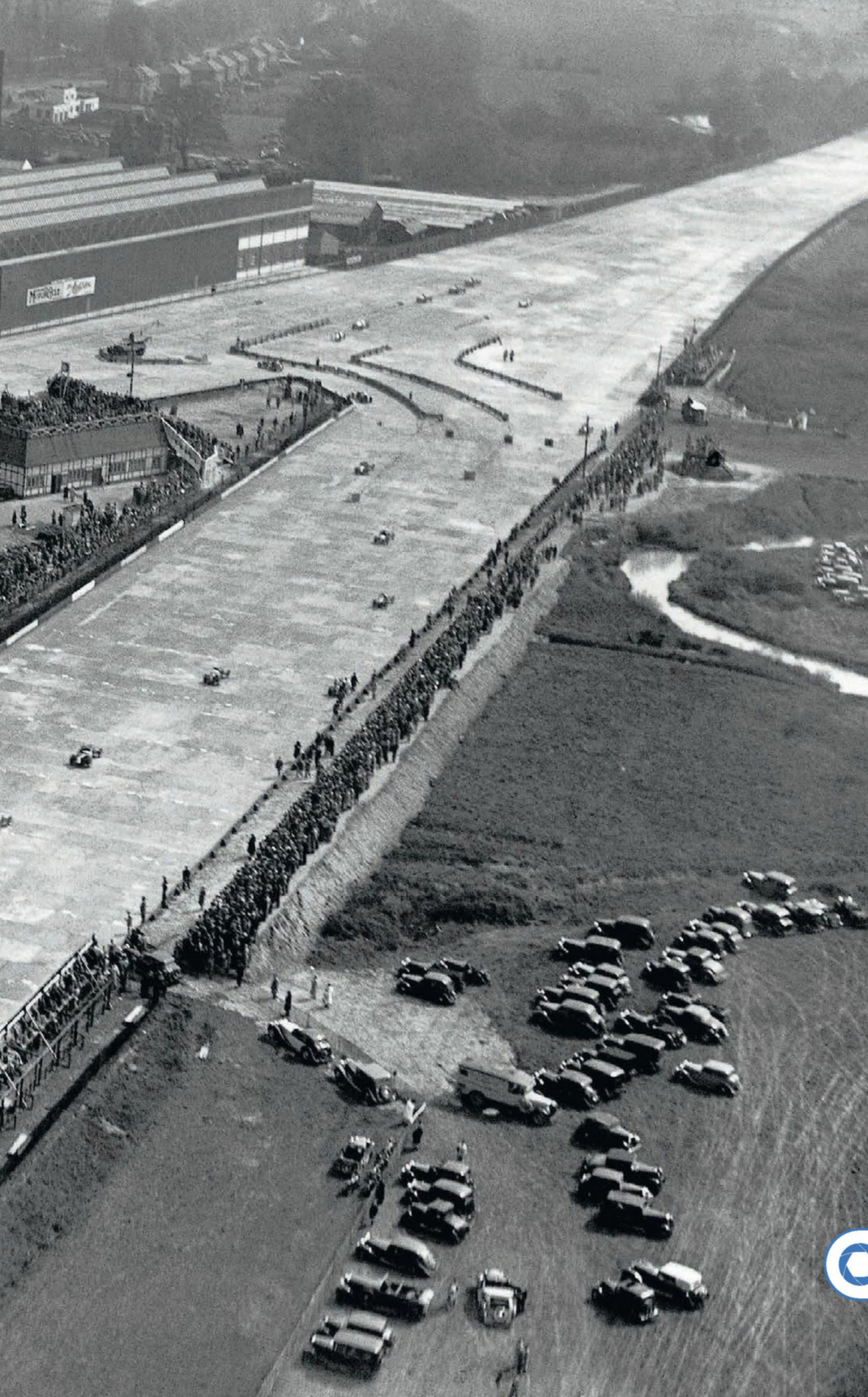




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## FROM THE ARCHIVE

An extraordinary aerial view of the Brooklands circuit shows competitors negotiating temporary chicanes installed for the 1936 JCC International Trophy. The race, which attracted 42 entries and ran for 2h52m, was won at the last gasp by Prince Bira (ERA) from the similar car of Raymond Mays at an average speed of 91mph.



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# INTRODUCING



# YANN EHRLACHER

**T**WO FAMOUS PARENTS – FORMER professional footballer Yves Ehlacher and ex-single-seater racer Cathy Muller – would qualify as enough pedigree in a family bloodstream for most people, but chuck in four-time World Touring Car champion Yvan Muller as your uncle and you’ve got a serious amount of sporting ability in Yann Ehlacher’s immediate surroundings.

“I followed Yvan’s racing from when I was born, even when he was racing in British Touring Cars,” says Ehlacher. “The spirit of racing is something I’ve known for a long time.”

It may surprise you to find out, therefore, that the Frenchman doesn’t come with a great deal of racing experience. At 20 years old, Ehlacher will enter only his fifth year of competition in 2017, having skipped karting altogether before racing cars. After progressive steps from national racing into the DTM-supporting Volkswagen Scirocco R-Cup, 2016 was a step up when he moved into the European Le Mans Series with his uncle’s YMR team.

But 2017 will be the most significant season of Ehlacher’s career to date, as he graduates to the World Touring Car Championship at the wheel of an independent Lada Vesta with RC Motorsport, based at Magny-Cours.

Granted, Ehlacher had previously tested TC1 machinery, for an unnamed manufacturer, but the youngster has adapted quickly to new surroundings, particularly given the lateness of his deal for 2017 and the impact that’s had on preparations. “Two weeks ago, the project from Lada came up,” he says. “It’s a small time to test and there is a lot of new information for me to know. The years before, I was ready in my head a bit earlier in the year. Now it’s a bit more trouble, but it will work out.”

Form has been strong – he was third fastest on day one of pre-season testing at Monza as he charted 85 laps – and, with a proven package underneath him, Ehlacher has the chance to prove his credentials on the world stage. He’s also aware of just how much faith the new operation has put in his abilities.

“It was quite a hard decision from Lada to take the risk on me because I have little experience of front-wheel drive and I don’t know any of the tracks,” he says. “They have taken the risk and I have to prove to them I can do it.”

JACK COZENS



## CV

<b>Age</b>	20
<b>2017</b>	WTCC in RC Motorsport Lada
<b>2016</b>	8th in European Le Mans Series with YMR Ligier, LMP3, 1 win
<b>2015</b>	1st in Mitjet Supertourisme championship, 12 wins
<b>2014</b>	8th in VW Scirocco R-Cup; 1st in Mitjet Deux Litre Championship, 6 wins
<b>2013</b>	14th in VW Scirocco R-Cup



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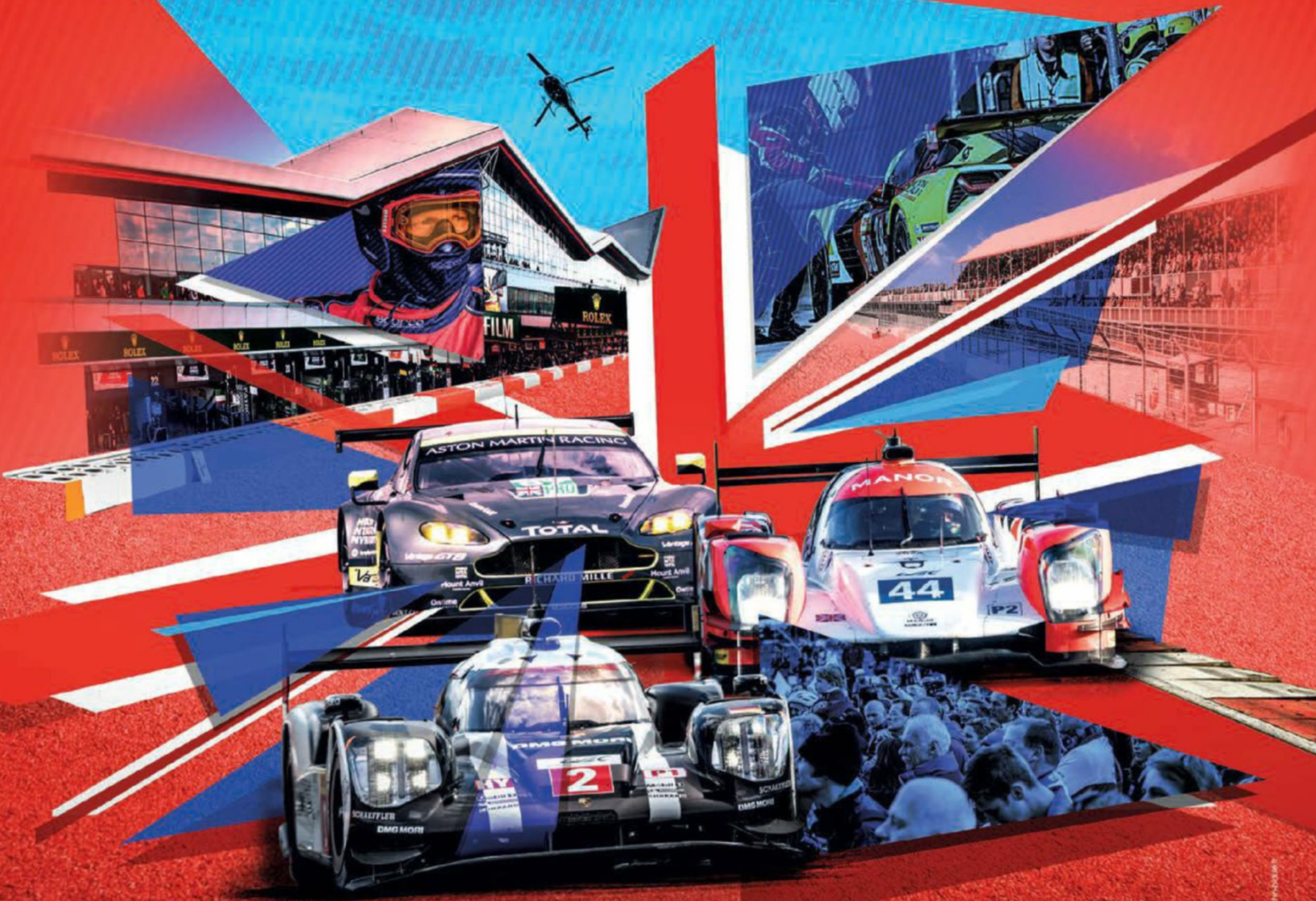


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