

F1 British Grand Prix preview issue

AUTOSPORT

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30 JULY 2020

GUEST EDITOR DAVID COULTHARD

How Silverstone helped save F1 2020

...and how you can enjoy all the action from home



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New tracks join the F1 calendar

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THE RACER



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Get ready for two F1 battles at Silverstone

Silverstone is where the Formula 1 world championship began 70 years ago and, in these strange times, it's great that the famous circuit will host two races in 2020.

The British Grand Prix is one of only two races – the other being the Italian GP – that has been a part of every F1 season since 1950, and so much of the F1 circus is based in the United Kingdom.

As circuit boss Stuart Pringle tells us on page 16, Silverstone has played a key part in making sure we have an F1 contest to savour this year, which is fantastic. It's a shame that fans can't come and enjoy the GP, but it's the only way the event can work in the current circumstances. And you can still tune in to Channel 4 and visit Autosport.com to make sure you know all the important things that are going on!

The pace of the Mercedes W11 has been very impressive this year. Just when it looked as though Ferrari and Red Bull were beginning to apply pressure, this incredible team managed to find another gear. Mercedes now looks set to surpass the record of six straight constructors' titles it currently shares with Ferrari, scored during the Jean Todt/Ross Brawn/Michael Schumacher era.

I was fortunate (or should that be unfortunate?!) enough to race against that Ferrari superteam. It meant that wins were tough to get, but beating the best was a strong motivation – and made victories all the sweeter.

Autosport asked me to help select my 10 best races (p26), which is not something I usually do as I like to look forwards. But it was good fun and reminded me how brilliant it was to be involved in such a fine era – and I'm sure it will be the same when the current drivers look back at their time trying to topple Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes.



David Coulthard
Guest Editor

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NEXT WEEK
6 AUGUST

BRITISH GP REPORT
All the action and analysis from the first Silverstone race



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JEP/Etherington/Motorsport Images

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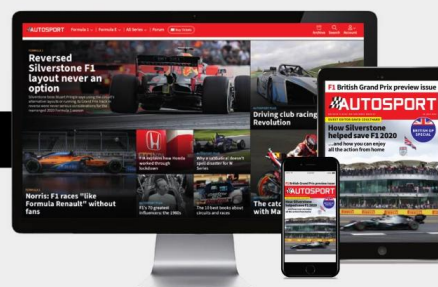
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Michael Schumacher leads en route to winning the most recent GP at Imola in 2006

CLASSIC CIRCUITS BOLSTER F1 CALENDAR

FORMULA 1

The 2020 Formula 1 calendar is nearing completion after three new races were announced last week, comprising two classic venues and one new circuit.

F1 will return to both Imola and the Nurburgring later this year, while Portugal will also play host to its first grand prix since 1996 when the Algarve International Circuit in Portimao stages its maiden grand prix. Portimao has previously hosted F1 testing and staged a standalone GP2 Series round in 2009.

The Nurburgring will host the Eifel Grand Prix on 11 October – two weeks after the Russian Grand Prix in Sochi – before the Portuguese Grand Prix takes place on 25 October.

The race near Portimao will form back-to-back rounds with the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix at Imola on 1 November. It will be F1's first visit to Imola since 2006, but there is no revival of the San Marino Grand Prix moniker previously used at the circuit.

In a move to give teams greater leeway to make the 1500-mile trip from Portimao, the Imola race weekend will be run as a two-day event. The format is still to be confirmed, but this is a first step towards a possible shake-up that has been mooted in recent times.

Imola boss Uberto Selvatico Estense told Autosport that he hoped the venue's return would create "an opportunity" for the track to remain on the calendar for 2021, saying: "F1 needs to come back to the historical tracks, back to the real passion of F1 fans."

The Nurburgring has not hosted an F1 race since 2013 – when its deal with Hockenheim to share the German Grand Prix came to an end – and could be impacted in

October by the inclement weather typical of the region.

It is hoped that fans will be able to attend all three events. A limited number of spectators are anticipated to be allowed to attend from either Monza or Mugello onwards, but F1 is understood to be hopeful of selling tens of thousands of tickets for the Portuguese race.

With three more events added to the 2020 calendar, F1 is now up to a 13-race schedule for the season. However, it has been forced to scrap all of its races in the Americas for this year.

F1 had initially postponed the Canadian Grand Prix that was scheduled for 14 June, but plans

"WHEN YOU READ THIS CANCELLATION NOTICE WE GOT, IT JUST DOESN'T STAND UP"

remained in place for the three events in Mexico, the United States and Brazil prior to all four races being formally cancelled last week.

F1 said the cancellations were "due to the fluid nature of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, local restrictions and the importance of keeping communities and our colleagues safe".

The Circuit of The Americas had been on course for record ticket sales for the United States GP prior to the race being cancelled, enjoying an upswing in interest over the past 18 months partly thanks to the Netflix *Drive to Survive* series.

Interlagos promoter Tamas Rohonyi expressed his disappointment over Brazil's cancellation,

2020 FORMULA 1 CALENDAR		
ROUND	VENUE	DATE
1	Red Bull Ring (AUT)	5 July
2	Red Bull Ring (AUT)	12 July
3	Hungaroring (HUN)	19 July
4	Silverstone (GBR)	2 August
5	Silverstone (GBR)	9 August
6	Barcelona (ESP)	16 August
7	Spa (BEL)	30 August
8	Monza (ITA)	6 September
9	Mugello (ITA)	13 September
10	Sochi (RUS)	27 September
11	Nurburgring (DEU)	11 October
12	Algarve (PRT)	25 October
13	Imola (ITA)	1 November



Ex-Ferrari chief designer Byrne will enjoy a larger role

Ferrari shakes up tech team to fix poor start

FORMULA 1

Ferrari has shaken up its Formula 1 technical department in response to its poor start to the 2020 season, with former chief designer Rory Byrne set to move into an increased role.

Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto has previously ruled out mass sackings after the slump in form, but moved to create a new technical department that was announced last week.

The performance development department will be “the cornerstone of the car’s

development”, and will be overseen by Enrico Cardile, who has served as Ferrari’s head of aerodynamics.

Byrne was part of Ferrari’s dominant team in the early 2000s as chief designer, and has served in a consultancy role at Maranello in recent years, but is now set to join Cardile’s team.

“We must react to these shortcomings with strength and determination to get back to being at the very top of this sport as soon as possible,” said Binotto.

LUKE SMITH

saying the organisers “cannot accept” the reasons for the race being called off.

“When you read this cancellation notice we got from the FOM yesterday, it just doesn’t stand up,” said Rohonyi. “It’s sort of an almost invented reasoning to cancel the race.”

Doubts continue to linger over the viability of the Spanish Grand Prix, scheduled for 16 August, amid a tightening of restrictions in Catalonia following a rise in COVID-19 cases in the area.

Plans to race at the Barcelona circuit remained in place as Autosport closed for press, but F1 is continuing to monitor the situation in case of a spike that could put the running of the grand prix at risk. The track is located around 45 minutes outside of Barcelona, and is within reach of Girona airport to the north, creating the possibility for teams to attend the race without entering the city.

An idea of staging a third grand prix at Silverstone to replace the Barcelona event had been suggested as a solution to any cancellation, but is yet to be discussed formally between F1 and the circuit chiefs.

With 13 events now provisionally scheduled, F1 looks on course to meet its target of 15 to 18 races in 2020, with at least two more races in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi set to be added with December dates.

F1 is continuing to evaluate the possibility of some Asian races in November, remaining in talks with Vietnam and Malaysia – the latter last hosting a grand prix in 2017.

LUKE SMITH

P11 OPINION

Russell still a part of Merc’s plans, but not yet

FORMULA 1

George Russell remains part of Mercedes’ long-term plans in Formula 1, despite missing out on a 2021 seat with the team.

Russell confirmed earlier this month that he would remain at Williams for a third season next year after the team said it had no plans to release him early from his contract.

The Briton has been part of Mercedes’ junior programme since 2017, and was linked with Valtteri Bottas’s seat for 2021. Bottas has now signed a

further one-year deal to remain at the Brackley squad – although talks are ongoing with Lewis Hamilton – but Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff stressed that Russell remained a key part of its plans. “Williams gave George the opportunity to come into F1 and this is why the decision that Williams takes, we respect it very much,” Wolff said.

“We are always looking at the long-time picture. George is certainly part of the plans for the long term, but not 2021.”

LUKE SMITH

Marquez attempts valiant comeback, days after surgery on broken arm



GOLD AND GOOSE
motorsport
IMAGES

MOTOGP

Reigning MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez made a sensational return to action at the Andalusian Grand Prix at Jerez just four days after surgery on a broken right arm he sustained in the Spanish GP.

Marquez was originally meant to sit out the second Jerez race last weekend, but made the shock announcement that he would try to ride and was passed fit on Thursday by MotoGP's medical team.

Sitting out Friday's running as a precaution and as part of a compromise issued by Honda, Marquez completed 28 laps in Saturday's FP3 and FP4 sessions. But swelling in his right arm in FP4 led to a loss in strength and, after just an out-lap in Q1, he pulled out of the rest of the weekend, having promised Honda he'd do so if he didn't feel it was safe to continue.

For the first time since stepping up to MotoGP in 2013, Marquez was absent from a race. He will trail Fabio Quartararo by 50 points, should he make his expected comeback at the next round, the Czech GP, on 9 August, after the French rider won both the Spanish and Andalusian GPs.

Despite this, Quartararo refused to rule Marquez out of the fight, stating on Saturday: "Of course he is a title contender."

While some questioned Honda's decision to allow Marquez to ride, owing to the seriousness of the injury, team boss Alberto Puig believes both parties acted correctly.

"Marc is very strong," Puig said. "He wanted to try and we wanted to give him the opportunity to do it. We have supported him at all times. And I think we have made the right decision at all times.

"A champion cannot stay at home if he thinks he has the option or a slight chance."

The leading Honda rider is currently Takaaki Nakagami, who is fourth in the table.

LEWIS DUNCAN

P13 OPINION

Zanardi's condition 'stable' after latest operation

ALEX ZANARDI

Alex Zanardi has undergone another neurological operation in a Milan hospital following his June handbike collision with a truck while taking part in a demonstration event near Siena. His condition is now said to be "stable".

The ex-Formula 1 driver and double CART champion had been transferred to the San Raffaele Hospital in

Milan last week after his condition worsened while he was in recovery at a nearby rehabilitation clinic.

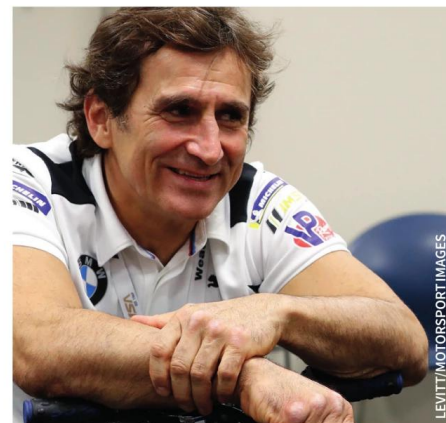
Having already spent nearly a month in hospital in Siena after the incident that left him with serious head injuries, Zanardi remains in intensive care.

A statement issued by the San Raffaele Hospital said that Zanardi had been operated on by Prof Pietro Mortini, and that

the procedure had been declared a success.

"The clinical and radiological tests confirm the successful outcome of the above mentioned treatments, and the current clinical condition of the patient, who is still hospitalised in the neurosurgical intensive care unit, appears to be stable," said the hospital.

**FRANCESCO CORGHI AND
JONATHAN NOBLE**



LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



BRUNDLE ECHOES RINDT Filming a segment for a future Sky Sports F1 broadcast, Martin Brundle drove an ex-Jochen Rindt Lotus 72C on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit earlier this month. This year marks both the 50th anniversary of Rindt's posthumous world championship and the debut of the Lotus 72. Autosport will also celebrate the pioneering machine in a special issue later in 2020. **Photograph by Gary Hawkins**

IN THE HEADLINES

CHESTER JOINS MERC IN FE

Former Renault Formula 1 technical chief Nick Chester has joined the Mercedes Formula E team as its technical director. The 51-year-old spent close to 30 years working in F1, 19 of which were spent at Enstone across its Benetton, Renault and Lotus guises. He replaced James Allison as the team's technical director in 2013, but left Renault last December as part of a restructure. Also, Dragon has promoted test driver Sergio Sette Camara to the race team to replace Brendon Hartley.

GULF COLOURS BACK IN F1

McLaren has formed a sponsorship partnership with Gulf Oil, which will bring the company's iconic colours back to Formula 1. The logos will appear on the car's engine cover and mirrors, as well as featuring on the drivers' and pitcrew overalls. McLaren and Gulf first tied up in 1968, and enjoyed a partnership across F1 and sportscars that lasted until 1973.

YAMAHA'S ENGINE CHECK

Yamaha withdrew an engine from Valentino Rossi and Maverick Vinales' allocation for inspection in Japan after the former's Spanish Grand Prix issue. Vinales has unsealed all five of his allocation, while Rossi, Franco Morbidelli and Fabio Quartararo have used up four. The rest of the grid have used two. Yamaha is yet to release details on what the issues were.

PORTLAND, LAGUNA BINNED

The IndyCar Series will not compete at Portland or Laguna Seca in 2020, and will instead run double-headers at Mid-Ohio, Gateway and the Indianapolis road course. The Grand Prix of Portland has fallen victim to Oregon's increasing crowd-gathering restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, while the surging number of active coronavirus cases in California, and expected quarantine measures, have ended hope of the Laguna Seca event.

No fans for the Nurburgring 24

NURBURGRING 24 HOURS

The baying crowds that usually line the Nordschleife for the Nurburgring 24 Hours will be absent from this year's rescheduled race. The enduro, set for 26-27 September, will go ahead behind closed doors.

The race organiser, ADAC Nordrhein, has been unable to allow spectators to attend as a result of a ban on mass gatherings of more than 5000 people in Germany, which will last until 24 October. The directive was announced in mid-June, but the club has now been able to put in place a financial package that will allow the 48th running of the event to take place.

Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Porsche and Glickenhaus, along with tyre suppliers Michelin and Falken and track operating company Nurburgring 1927 GmbH & Co, have stepped in to ensure the viability of the event.

Mirco Hansen, head of organisation at the ADAC Nordrhein, said: "Due to the lack of spectator revenues and the extra costs caused by the pandemic situation, we had to cope with a major short-term financial effort.

"The 24 Hours will represent a massive financial expense for us. The partners involved in this fund make an extremely important contribution when it comes to cushioning a part of this expense and ensuring the realisation of the race."

GARY WATKINS



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AUTOSPORT PLUS

Sun sets on Acura and Penske tie-up

IMSA SPORTSCAR

Acura and Penske claimed a drivers', manufacturers' and teams' title triple in last year's IMSA SportsCar Championship. But their relationship in the Daytona Prototype international ranks will come to an end at the conclusion of this season.

Penske returned to the sportscar arena with the Honda brand in 2018 after an eight-year absence. That arrangement, which yielded the title for Juan Pablo Montoya and Dane Cameron in 2019, has not been extended by what Acura described as "mutual agreement".

The exact reasons for the failure of the two parties to extend the deal to continue racing the ORECA-based Acura ARX-05s are not clear. But Penske team president Tim Cindric said they "simply couldn't align on how we should go racing in the future".



GALSTAD
motorsport
IMAGES

Acura only said that it wanted "to thank Team Penske for their incredible efforts and impressive results" and that it was "a privilege" to have the team as part of the Acura family.

The official line is that all Acura's programmes are under review as a result of COVID-19, but sources indicate it has no plans to pull out of the DPi class. It is expected to forge a relationship with another team or teams for a continued

factory assault into 2021 that could lead into the new LMDh prototype era in 2022.

Penske, meanwhile, has reaffirmed its interest in sportscar racing and going to the Le Mans 24 Hours, said Cindric, "with the right partner". That has inevitably led to speculation that it could renew its relationship with Porsche, which has already admitted its interest in the LMDh category.

GARY WATKINS

Neil Crang 1949-2020

OBITUARY

Australian driver Neil Crang, a regular on the UK national scene and frequent World Endurance Championship competitor, has died at the age of 70.

A native of Melbourne, Crang competed in autocross and rallycross before moving to Europe. While working as a commodities trader in Geneva, he earned the funds to kickstart a racing career in the UK.

After completing a Jim Russell course, he made his name in Sports 2000 while

running alongside team-mate Ian Taylor in 1979-80. In 1982 and 1983, he contested the British Formula Atlantic series, finishing fourth at Macau in the first year.

But his first love was endurance racing. He ran in four major events with a Porsche 934 in 1981 and made the first of five Le Mans starts the year after. He was closely associated with Tim Schenken and Howden Ganley's Tiga marque, and became a partner in the business.

In 1983 he instigated a Tiga Group C1 programme that



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

would morph into the Spice Engineering C2 team. After splitting with Gordon Spice, he raced in Thundersports as well as running his own Tiga

in C2. His last major outing was with Tim Lee-Davey's Porsche 962 at the 1988 Sandown Park WEC race.

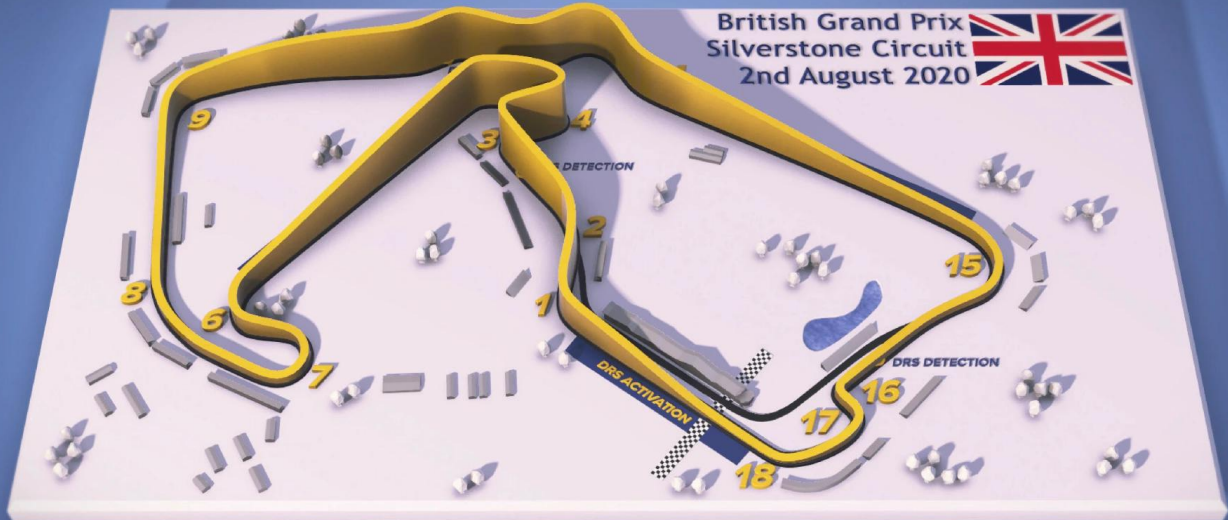
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LENGTH 3.661 miles NUMBER OF LAPS 52



2019 POLE POSITION
Valtteri Bottas 1m25.093s

POLE LAP RECORD
Valtteri Bottas 1m25.093s (2019)

RACE LAP RECORD
Lewis Hamilton 1m27.369s (2019)

UK START TIMES

Friday 31 July

FP1 1100
FP2 1500

Saturday 1 August

FP3 1100
QUALIFYING 1400

Sunday 2 August

RACE 1410

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SKY SPORTS F1
CHANNEL 4

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP

Drivers

1	Hamilton	63
2	Bottas	58
3	Verstappen	33
4	Norris	26
5	Albon	22

Constructors

1	Mercedes	121
2	Red Bull	55
3	McLaren	41
4	Racing Point	40
5	Ferrari	27



RACE STATS

P16 BRITISH GP PREVIEW PACKAGE

Previous winners

2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2013	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2012	Mark Webber	Red Bull
2011	Fernando Alonso	Ferrari
2010	Mark Webber	Red Bull



Mansell took beautiful Lotus 94T to superb fourth in 1983, his first British GP points

Silverstone masters

Top 10 points scorers for grands prix at Silverstone. All races converted to current points system.

L Hamilton	233
M Schumacher	188
K Raikkonen	186
R Barrichello	153
F Alonso	143
A Prost	142
N Mansell	128
S Vettel	124
D Coulthard	114
M Webber	107

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The changes that hurt Red Bull

The ongoing pandemic-prompted shake-up of the Formula 1 calendar looks likely to punish Mercedes' closest rival. Which isn't great for the sporting spectacle

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

“We want to pay tribute to our incredible partners in the Americas and look forward to being back with them next season when they will once again be able to thrill millions of fans around the world.”

Chase Carey's words acknowledged that, in 2020, Formula 1 will not be visiting the Americas. The United States, Mexican and Brazilian races are cancelled because of the ongoing and unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the decision seems understandable given the challenges the coronavirus continues to create, it will have come as a bitter blow to F1 fans in those countries, as well as viewers who enjoyed the racing at those three fine tracks. And there will surely too be one team that is now hurting from their absence: Red Bull.

In the past three years, Red Bull has enjoyed considerable success in the Americas, with Max Verstappen winning in Mexico in 2017 and 2018, and last year in Brazil, where he lost another likely triumph the previous season in *that* clash with Esteban Ocon. The altitude of the Autodromo Hermanos Rodríguez and Interlagos – particularly the former at 2250 metres – is clearly a factor, with the suspected smaller Honda turbo thought to be of particular help.

It was already known that Monaco and Singapore would not be appearing in this most-unusual of seasons, but that knowledge won't be of comfort to Red Bull. These were tracks where it *should* have been able to get closer to Mercedes, as it *should* have been able

“Red Bull must get on top of the RB16's aero 'anomalies', and show progress at Silverstone”

to do last time out in Hungary before it unexpectedly fell short.

The field's historical form at tracks on the rest of the 2020 calendar, as it stands now, makes for grim reading for any team other than Mercedes. At the venue for the next two rounds, Silverstone, Mercedes has only lost once in the hybrid era – in 2018 when Sebastian Vettel triumphed ahead of Lewis Hamilton (who was forced to battle back after a clumsy clattering courtesy of Kimi Raikkonen). At Barcelona – now surely under threat given the rise in coronavirus cases in Catalonia, even if F1 insists otherwise – the only non-Mercedes win since 2014 is Verstappen's maiden F1 win in 2016, which came after the Hamilton-Nico Rosberg lap-one shunt.

Spa makes for better reading, but the deciding factor in the past two years – Ferrari's engine prowess – is now gone (Red Bull did win in Belgium, currently discussing its own potential new

pandemic restrictions, in 2014 – again, after a Hamilton-Rosberg clash). The same engine factor was behind Ferrari giving Mercedes its only V6 turbo era defeat at Monza last year, and while the Scuderia *should* have inflicted the first Mercedes defeat at the Russian GP last year, Ferrari managed to lose a race it had been leading 1-2. In any case, Ferrari is unlikely to be the same threat it was in 2019 given the limitations of the SF1000.

So, Red Bull cannot take heart from recent history, but the new venues on the calendar – Mugello, the Nurburgring, the Algarve and Imola – have a freshness factor that may give Mercedes an issue. The trouble is, the team looks so dominant right now that that may not be enough...

When the 2020 season finally got under way, it was hoped that Red Bull would take the fight to Mercedes. The team was confident Verstappen could have exploited Mercedes' gearbox sensor gremlins with his alternative strategy had he not retired early in the Austrian GP, but in the two races since the team has been found wanting.

Red Bull must get on top of the RB16's aerodynamic “anomalies” team boss Christian Horner admitted to after the Hungarian race. And it must show progress at Silverstone. If it doesn't, F1 2020 is at risk of being a Mercedes walkover, which hasn't *completely* happened since the start of 2017 and the change of the aerodynamic rules. Mercedes has lost at least two races in the past six seasons (with just two losses its best return, in 2016), but on current form it's hard to see where those defeats are coming from this year.

Other than the reliability drama in the season opener, Mercedes hasn't looked like it will be giving away any freebies. And with the tracks where it has been historically ‘weak’ gone, Mercedes' path to the titles just got that much easier and Red Bull's got harder.

For the sake of a close fight for the 2020 drivers' crown, F1 needs Valtteri Bottas to hit back at Hamilton this weekend. The worry on this front is the manner of his defeat in Hungary, where a familiar weakness comparative to Hamilton on tyre management cost him even after his start faux pas.

Back to Red Bull. It surely has F1's second fastest car, as evidenced by Verstappen keeping Bottas at bay, well clear of Lance Stroll's Racing Point, in the last race. But it must close the gap fast or it could be that everything to be feared about the current chances of Mercedes domination rolls over along with the current cars into 2021.

No matter how the calendar shakes out – and predicting what it will look like is pointless without progress on ending the pandemic – Mercedes will more than likely carry its form into another season. And if there is still no opposition, then it will be free to turn more of its attention to the rule changes now coming for 2022... ✨

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'Illegitimate' title claims are bogus

Saying that Marc Marquez's absence through injury would devalue this year's MotoGP championship should be seen more as spin than a valid observation

LEWIS DUNCAN

Marc Marquez's title defence took a serious knock when he broke his right arm in a heavy accident in the Spanish Grand Prix at Jerez earlier this month. It was his first retirement since the Austin round in April 2019 and the six-time champion then missed last weekend's Andalusian GP, while Fabio Quartararo romped to back-to-back wins.

Honda team boss Alberto Puig caused controversy when he claimed Marquez's absence would devalue the MotoGP title won by another rider, telling Spanish TV: "Obviously it gets complicated, but honestly, no matter what happens, if Marc can't win the championship, I don't think whoever wins it can feel completely satisfied, or shouldn't feel completely satisfied, knowing that the number one rider has not been fully present."

This flies in the face of the history of grand prix motorcycle racing and the effort each rider puts into their chosen sport. Pramac's Jack Miller called this notion "a complete crock", stating: "We all started 100% fit. One guy gets injured, doesn't matter. We all get injured. I mean they keep bringing it up, that's not valid. We all have the opportunity to get injured and it's the risk you take."

Marquez himself noted: "If somebody gets injured, it's not your fault and the value [of the title] is the same [regardless]."

The simple truth is that Marquez put himself in that position by having *that* front end moment at Turn 4 while leading on lap

"We all started 100% fit. One guy gets injured, doesn't matter. We all get injured"

five on 19 July. None of the other riders made that mistake. Marquez had the warning at Turn 4, and several times again as he rose through the field. And ultimately he pushed too hard on lap 21 at Turn 3, the rear stepping out as a result.

Remember, he lost the 2015 title because he pushed all-out on every lap when the bike wasn't up for the abuse and crashed several times early in the season as a consequence. To his credit, he learned from the error of his ways in the seasons since, but the killer instinct that makes Marquez so devastatingly brilliant has, on occasion, clouded his judgement.

In every championship battle, injury is the omnipresent threat. In 1992, Mick Doohan dominated the opening phase with five wins and two seconds from the first seven races. A horrible leg injury at the eighth round at Assen almost ended the Honda legend's career

and foiled his title hopes. This left the door open for Wayne Rainey – who also missed the Assen race through injury – to grab his third premier-class title, not that it made the job any easier.

Rainey, perhaps more than most, is best placed to comment on the validity of a championship. Locked in battle with Kevin Schwantz in 1993, both he and Rainey had won four races apiece by the Misano race, round 12 of 14. Tragically, Rainey's career ended in a crash in the race that left him paralysed from the waist down. Schwantz would go on to win his one and only 500cc crown – a legitimate one, as far as Rainey is concerned.

"What you said about Mick and myself in 1992, I mean, which rider in which season can't say, where there is a situation like that, that it hasn't happened to each and every one of us?" grand prix hero Rainey told Autosport.

"You could say the same thing about Kevin and me in 1993. I was leading the championship, I had my accident, it took me out, Kevin went on to win the championship. I in no way look at that and say, 'Well, that's been diminished because I wasn't there. I made the mistake, Kevin didn't and he was the world champion. That's what it's all about. The only way you can be champion is [by being] the guy with the most points at the end of the championship."

Puig tried to clarify his comments, citing experience of his sole 500cc win at Jerez in 1995 when he secured victory after Doohan had crashed out.

"Obviously, whoever wins the championship will be the just winner and deserve it," Puig stated. "But my opinion, and I know what I'm talking about, is that when you win but the champion is not on the track you always have something left inside. I will set my example: I won a race here in 1995, and I've always wondered if I would have won it if Mick Doohan hadn't fallen. The same would not have happened. That is what I meant. Because the champion, without Marc, will always have that [doubt] in his head."

Only Puig knows what's in Puig's mind, but he doesn't look terribly cut up about his 'illegitimate' Jerez win if you watch the race online. Puig is also a master of spin, and I'm convinced his original comment – more than anything – was meant to disarm any of Marquez's potential usurpers.

As Ducati's Andrea Dovizioso points out, "this championship is a bit different and the rules are the same for everybody". Everyone has only 11 rounds left to contend with – even Marquez – and they will have to try to win a championship amid what looks to be MotoGP's most competitive grid ever.

Unless the winner cheated, there is no such thing as an illegitimate champion. And if Wayne Rainey and Marc Marquez think those claims are wrong, who are we to argue? 🏁

P50 MOTOGP REPORT

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YOUR SAY

The F2 and F3 fields clearly have a plethora of talent and there are several drivers who surely deserve a chance in F1, but it is difficult to see where opportunities will arise

ALAN CLARKE

Give young talent a chance

Although the recent musical chairs in Formula 1 are interesting, and it is exciting that Fernando Alonso will be back in 2021, it does beg the question: what exactly is the value of the team driver academies?

The current Formula 2 (right) and Formula 3 fields clearly have a plethora of real talent and there are several drivers who surely deserve a chance in F1, but it is difficult to see where opportunities will arise. Ferrari particularly has an embarrassment of riches! So I wonder if a different approach needs to be taken.

Notwithstanding the upcoming budget caps, why couldn't the top teams be made to run a third car? There is space on the grid, as there are currently only 20 cars, so how about the top six constructors each season having to race a third car, which must contain a rookie? At the end of the season the rookie can move into the 'main' team, or to another team (or drop out). The following season the team has to put in a new rookie.

For sure many of these rookies won't move on to a full-time drive, but at least they will have had the chance to show what they can do, rather than millions being spent to get them to the verge of F1, and then being unable to make the final step.

Alan Clarke
By email

New races' names fall flat

After speculation became reality regarding Formula 1 running races at the Nurburgring, Portimao and Imola, it's great to see two classic tracks returning and one new one added.

While the circuits are great choices in terms of venues to host the strangest of strange F1 seasons, the names given to the Nurburgring and Imola races are, to put it politely, shockingly poor! Eifel Grand Prix? [or *Eifelrennen*? - ed] Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix?

Why not the German GP, or if naming rights are an



issue, then why not revive the Luxembourg GP? As for Imola, why not give it its proper title of the San Marino GP, like it was for a generation?

I may be in my early thirties, but I am aware of the history of our great sport, so sort out the naming of the grands prix and give them a more historical title. I am glad, however, that Portimao will indeed be the Portuguese Grand Prix, rather than being named after the region (Algarve).

Stephen Yates
By email

Diversity should be enshrined

How about enshrining agreed, measurable, progress on staff and driver diversity in the upcoming Concorde agreement, for all stakeholders and participants, with annual stepping stones and penalties for non-compliance?

Maybe worth mentioning to the brand leaders, Lewis Hamilton, Toto Wolff and Chase Carey? Tokenism would be history.

Steve Singleton
By email

HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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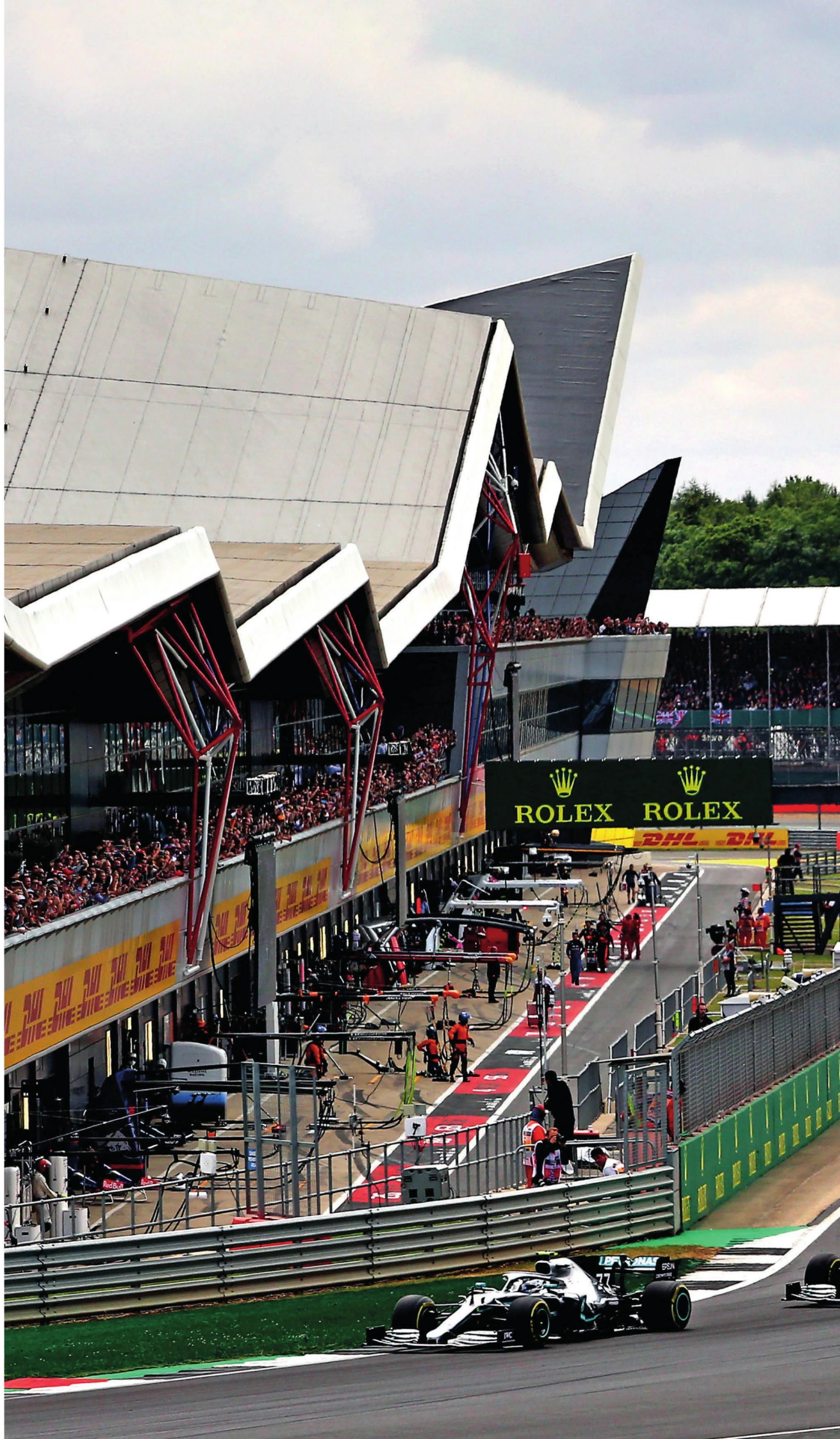

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HOW SILVERSTONE HELPED SAVE F1 2020

*When this year's grand prix season was being pieced back together,
the home of British motorsport was perfectly placed to step up*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES



JEP

“THE BRITISH GRAND PRIX is the best grand prix, particularly because of the fans – the thousands that turn up and really create the spectacle,” says Lewis Hamilton. “So, it’s going to be super-weird. We had a test day there before the first race, and it’s going to feel just like that – empty.”

Hamilton knows how to succeed at Silverstone – he’s won there a record six times in Formula 1. And he knows the part the home supporters play, the energy they provide, the pressure of their expectation, in which he revels. But he also knows that crucial element will be missing this year, and for good reason.

This weekend’s British GP will be followed a week later by the 70th Anniversary GP, with Silverstone becoming the second F1 venue to host a follow-up race after the Red Bull Ring’s Austrian and Styrian events earlier this month. Between those two venues alone, F1 has found half the races the FIA requires to call a championship.

The length of the 2020 season has become a critical element for F1. The COVID-19 pandemic swept away what should have been a 22-race calendar – the longest in the championship’s history. And as well as the health risks the virus has brought to all involved, its economic impact hangs over the campaign. In short, F1 needs to organise as many races as possible to fulfil the lucrative TV contracts it holds, and reduce the refunds to broadcasters who will not be getting as many races as they had paid for, even if the championship hits the 15-18-round 2020 target set by CEO Chase Carey.

It is getting there. The addition of rounds at the Algarve circuit, the Nurburgring and Imola pushes F1 to a new 13-race calendar, with further events in the Middle East set to be added in the coming months. This will tip things into the territory of Carey’s target. The problem is, nobody knows how the next stages of the pandemic are going to play out, with doubts about the viability of Barcelona’s race on 16 August now being raised after advice to stay at home wherever possible was recently issued for the city.

This again highlights F1’s need to get in every racing lap it can, when it can, in 2020. After all, there was a very real possibility that the whole season would be lost in the wake of the lockdowns following the aborted Australian GP in March.

“Those first few weeks, the big sporting events were falling like ninepins,” says Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle. “We were always led by our lead time to set the venue up with temporary infrastructure that’s all really related around the public. Once we’d called the public event off, then there was a serious chance that there wouldn’t be any racing at Silverstone.”

For F1, the following weeks through the height of the initial lockdowns became all about damage control on costs. The new car rules were pushed back to 2022 and the current designs rolled over to 2021, while funds were moved around at Liberty Media and some teams were given early prize payments to ease their financial issues. As the pandemic progressed, it became possible to see how the calendar might be reformed, with the low infection rate in Austria a crucial part of getting the season under way there.

But Silverstone had a significant advantage when it came to its chances of getting a rescheduled race – the presence of seven out of 10 F1 teams in the UK, most of them essentially based on the track’s doorstep. >>

“ONCE WE’D CALLED THE PUBLIC EVENT OFF, THERE WAS A SERIOUS CHANCE THERE’D BE NO RACING”



GOLD AND GOOSE

Pringle says virus turned up two years too early for Silverstone's diversification plan



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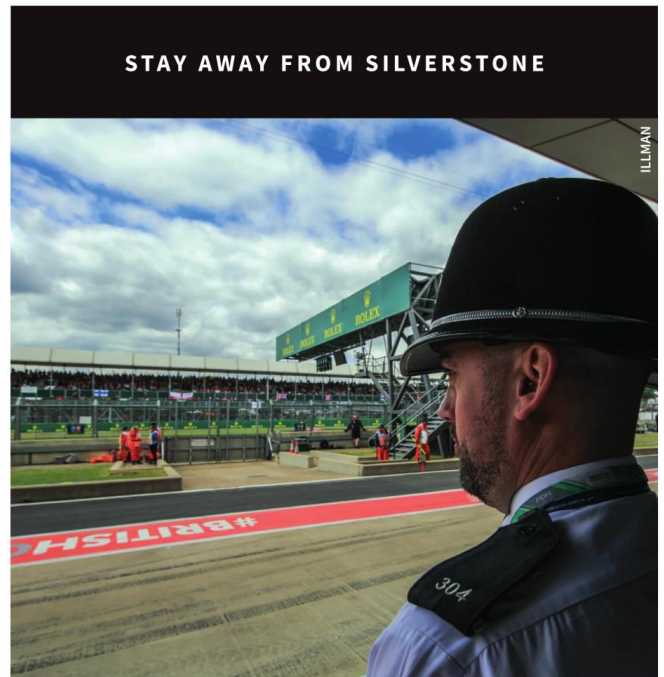


Masks have become
a familiar part of
a driver's garb

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Empty grandstands during
Silverstone tests will be
repeated come race day



ILLMAN

WHY FANS MUST AVOID THE 2020 BRITISH GPs

'Elite sport' is an important definition when it now comes to hosting events such as the British and 70th Anniversary grands prix in the UK. There are certain dispensations that have been applied for professional sports to take place as the pandemic has progressed, but events must be held under strict conditions.

The work completed within Silverstone's walls is governed by the FIA's Return to Motor Sport guidelines, but everything outside the track's immediate perimeter must be tightly controlled by organisers or the events will be under threat of cancellation. That is why the track and Northamptonshire Police have been so stark in their warnings.

"The government requirement is that you can run this event if people are not present," explains Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle. "It therefore flies in the face of that completely if we allow people to be present – and that includes congregating at the front gate to see whether they can catch a glimpse of drivers coming in and out. You won't because they're staying on-site in motorhomes, the vast majority of them."

**“POLICE WILL
CREATE AN
EXCLUSION
ZONE AROUND
THE SITE”**

To try to ensure nobody without permission can get near the Silverstone events, Northamptonshire Police will create an exclusion zone around the site. Any potential for viewing into the circuit from perimeter roads will be shut down, while local traffic control measures will be put in place at both ends of the Dadford Road, which leads to the main Silverstone entrance. Nearby laybys will be closed to discourage anyone planning on abandoning their cars and trying to walk close to the track, the footpaths at the rear of the site will also be closed and any cars parked in laybys will be removed. The airspace over the track is also closed to anyone attempting to fly drones.

"I can understand that people will want to go and watch from a distance, just to get the sound of the car or to get a sneak peek of the car," says Lewis Hamilton. "But if that means that you're in a crowd of other people, that's definitely not a good thing, and I wouldn't advise that."

THE HOME HEROES



SUTTON

WHAT SUCCESSFUL BRITISH F1 DRIVERS MEAN TO SILVERSTONE

When the British Grand Prix gets under way, Lewis Hamilton, George Russell and Lando Norris (and Anglo-Thai Alexander Albon) will become the first Formula 1 drivers to race at their home tracks this season, but they will do so – necessarily – without the benefit of a home crowd.

Hamilton is chasing a record-extending seventh British GP victory this weekend, and if he's victorious in the following 70th Anniversary race he will have eight wins at Silverstone – the record for wins at the same venue, which he already shares with Michael Schumacher's eight victories at Magny-Cours thanks to his own eight triumphs at the Hungaroring.

But as has been much discussed regarding his Mercedes contract extension beyond 2020, Hamilton is surely nearing the end of his career. And a successful British F1 driver is valuable to the home of the British GP.

"You cannot overstate it or underestimate it," says Silverstone boss Stuart Pringle. "The turnstiles spin that much quicker in any sport when you've got a home hero.

"When you look back down the years at when we've had bumper crowds, and you look back when we've had poor crowds, the bumper ones are on the back of British drivers doing well.

"WE HAVE A DEEPLY ROOTED FANBASE FOR MOTORSPORT"

"We're lucky, we have a deep-rooted fanbase for motor racing in this country. So, we're never on our uppers. Crikey, even our lowest-ever crowds have been things that most other promoters would give their right arm for."

Both Russell and Norris – winners of the 2014 and 2016 McLaren Autosport BRDC Awards respectively – have attracted much praise for their performances in the opening rounds of the pandemic-delayed season. Their development and continued rise is "hugely important" to Silverstone's future, says Pringle, especially after the economic harm the coronavirus lockdown has caused.

"That's why the British Racing Drivers' Club supports young driver talent," he explains. "Because, actually, it's the right thing to do for the guardians of British motorsport – to make sure the sport is healthy in this country, but it's also the right thing to do if you own the gate at the major events. Because homegrown talent makes the turnstiles spin that much faster."

(Crowd)surf's up: Hamilton celebrates 2019 British Grand Prix victory with the fans





“If F1 could get a championship away from one location,” says Pringle, “at one stage it looked like nothing could happen and the answer was, ‘ship in the Italian teams and Swiss team, and the Pirelli guys, and park them at Silverstone for a couple of months and run 12 races and make television if that’s what you need’. The view was taken pretty quickly that that would be a bit dull, but they came back and said, ‘actually, two would be quite helpful.’”

Negotiations between the track and F1 concluded swiftly as the plans to redraft the season kicked into action and the two sides reached an agreement for the pair of races that Pringle says each was “very pleased with”. It was clear that without ticket-sale revenue the usual race hosting fees would not be possible for many tracks and Autosport reported at the time of the rearranged Silverstone events being announced that the fee will be replaced by a deal in which F1 itself pays the event costs.

“We’ve got a great world class track that’s available, with teams around the corner, and we’re a very tried and tested team in terms of delivery,” explains Pringle. “So, Formula 1 was keen to make it happen. They came to us, we reached a commercial accommodation. Both parties giving ground is a deal. That’s what happens. And we got a couple of races.”

The British GP will be one of the few British summertime sporting spectacles that can still take place. Other sports – including football and cricket – have got going under special dispensation from the UK government, and again the spectre of TV money has been a driving factor.

Although the England v West Indies test match series has involved flying in a team to take part in three games, F1 is the first global competition to get going since the pandemic began. The championship’s travelling nature increased the logistical difficulties of a Silverstone race, as the 14-day quarantine rules introduced in England on 8 June presented a new hurdle – which would have been the case even if the track had actually staged the season opener given Ferrari, AlphaTauri, Alfa Romeo and Pirelli are not based in the UK.

But the Silverstone race has enjoyed considerable support from the UK government, with one report in *The Times* suggesting that went all the way to the top and prime minister Boris Johnson. In any case, the quarantine rules have been relaxed for arrivals from many countries.

“One, the government recognises that the motorsport industry is important to UK PLC and it is not lost on them what Formula 1 itself brings to the economy of Great Britain and in particular this part of the country,” says Pringle. “And secondly, from an elite sporting event point of view, with so many of the big summer crown jewels cancelled there was a very clear will in the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) to see the British Grand Prix run, or grands prix run. They wanted a major UK international sporting event, 100million eyeballs around the world, etc.”

And so, the ‘new normal’ F1 circus will arrive at Silverstone this week, with the testing regime of COVID-19 swabs, temperature checks and mandatory face masks set up at the track. Silverstone’s vast ex-airfield nature helps here too, as the Formula 2, Formula 3 and Porsche Supercup support teams can be accommodated in the National pits. And one of the car parks at the track’s main entrance has been dedicated to the coronavirus testing area.

“WITH SO MANY CROWN JEWELS CANCELLED, THE GOVERNMENT WANTED A BIG SPORTING EVENT”

Although Pringle mischievously didn’t initially shut down suggestions that the second F1 race could use one of Silverstone’s alternative layouts – or even reverse the GP track entirely – such talk was never a serious consideration. Both the British and 70th Anniversary races will be running on the same 3.661-mile layout that has been in operation since 2011 (a year after the track’s modern layout was first used at 3.667 miles).

Costs are under extra consideration for all F1 stakeholders right now, and the timing of the lockdown – as with any business relying heavily on seasonal trade – was terrible for Silverstone. The track had just gone through the quiet winter and early spring months when everything was forced to shut down and, although restrictions have since eased – and it used the time to make 24 improvements to surface drainage – there will be an inevitable hit on income in 2020.

“I can say that Silverstone is not at risk, but it’s not pretty,” says >>

Pringle. “We are having a torrid time. We have a business which is working very deliberately towards trying to diversify itself so it has much less of a reliance on a real peak in the middle of the summer. But we’re not there yet. This virus turned up about two years too early for us as far as our diversification plan goes, and we’re still way too reliant on big public events in summer. And we have been denied those.

“It’s like a big game of snakes and ladders. We’ve been crawling up a very long ladder – and it’s been getting very tiring – but we’re now going all the way back down the snake. And it’s going to set our business back about five years in terms of balance-sheet positions.

“But we’re still in the game. The bank understands it and supports us and bought into our strategy and vision. And the membership of the British Racing Drivers’ Club [which owns Silverstone] is similarly supportive, albeit desperately sad that the progress they’ve seen made with their prized possession has taken a

“WE’VE BEEN CRAWLING UP A LONG LADDER. NOW WE’RE GOING ALL THE WAY BACK DOWN THE SNAKE”

turn for the worse for no reason of its own making.”

The plan remains the same for the track’s long-term health – to make Silverstone a leisure and business destination inspired by motorsport. A hotel opposite the International paddock pits is under construction to increase the value of the Wing as a conference and exhibition space, Aston Martin now has its test and development centre at the track and, as is explained on page 24, the Silverstone Experience is open for visitors even while the racing is currently closed to spectators (although only for those with pre-booked tickets given the restrictions in place around the track during F1’s elongated stay).

F1 of course remains a central part of the plan, with Silverstone having a deal that runs until the end of 2024. And a crucial part of the track’s immediate future concerns the tickets it had sold for the originally planned 2020 event and the hoped-for return to normality in 2021. The track says 70% of people who bought a ticket for this year’s event have asked for it to be rolled over to next year, which translates as 40% of Silverstone’s capacity for 2021. But what delighted Silverstone even further was a surge in interest when tickets for next year’s expected race were put back on sale on 9 July, which resulted in what Pringle says was “the third highest volume of tickets on the opening day that we’ve ever sold”.

“We went through a process of offering everybody the chance to have a refund if that is what they preferred,” he says of the 2020 ticket holders. “I’m delighted to say just how grateful we are for the support of the fans who have rolled their bookings over. It makes a huge difference to our business because it means that we don’t have to take the cash out to refund them at a time where we’ve got no revenue coming through the business. It’s very helpful not to have to reduce the balance further.”

A surge in interest for 2021 tickets is noteworthy, because Pringle acknowledges the 70% are the “hardcore” fans. So, it seems the cabin fever induced by lockdown, as well as the ongoing but necessary restrictions on normal social life, may not be quelling the desire to see live sporting action as some – including FIA president Jean Todt – initially feared.

How that plays out remains to be seen, and indeed the world needs to be vastly different if a 2021 British GP can take place in ‘normal’ circumstances. But that remains the hope and target for F1, the track, and the drivers that benefit from fan support.

“Once the helmet is on nothing really changes,” says Williams driver George Russell of this year’s fan-less Silverstone events. But what he misses next is exactly what F1 must remember and look forward to returning.

“You’ve always got a bit of an extra gear when you go to your home race because you’ve got that home support. It’s such an amazing feeling, driving into the paddock, seeing everybody cheering your name.” ❄



Hamilton reckons the home fans help make the British race “the best grand prix”



NEXT WEEK

BRITISH GRAND PRIX REPORT
6 AUGUST ISSUE

Who can stop Lewis Hamilton taking a seventh victory at Silverstone?



MAUGER

As was the case at 2020's previous GPs, Silverstone's podium ceremony will be a lot more low key



IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT FORMULA 1

JEP

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS IMPACTED THE REST OF SILVERSTONE'S CALENDAR

In a normal year, Silverstone would be hosting a varied calendar of events – from the headline British Grand Prix, to British Touring Cars, the World Endurance Championship and the Silverstone Classic, as well as many club events.

While smaller national races can be rearranged within Motorsport UK's restart plans – behind closed doors for the time being – rescheduling the larger championships is more difficult. Two of the circuit's highest-profile events – the WEC round that had been due to start the 2020-21 season and the 2020 Silverstone round of MotoGP – have been cancelled. But British Superbikes, British GT and the BTCC will be having races at the track this year, although in the case of the latter series – which is now missing the scheduled second visit to Silverstone to use the International layout – the possibility of some spectators attending remains tentative.

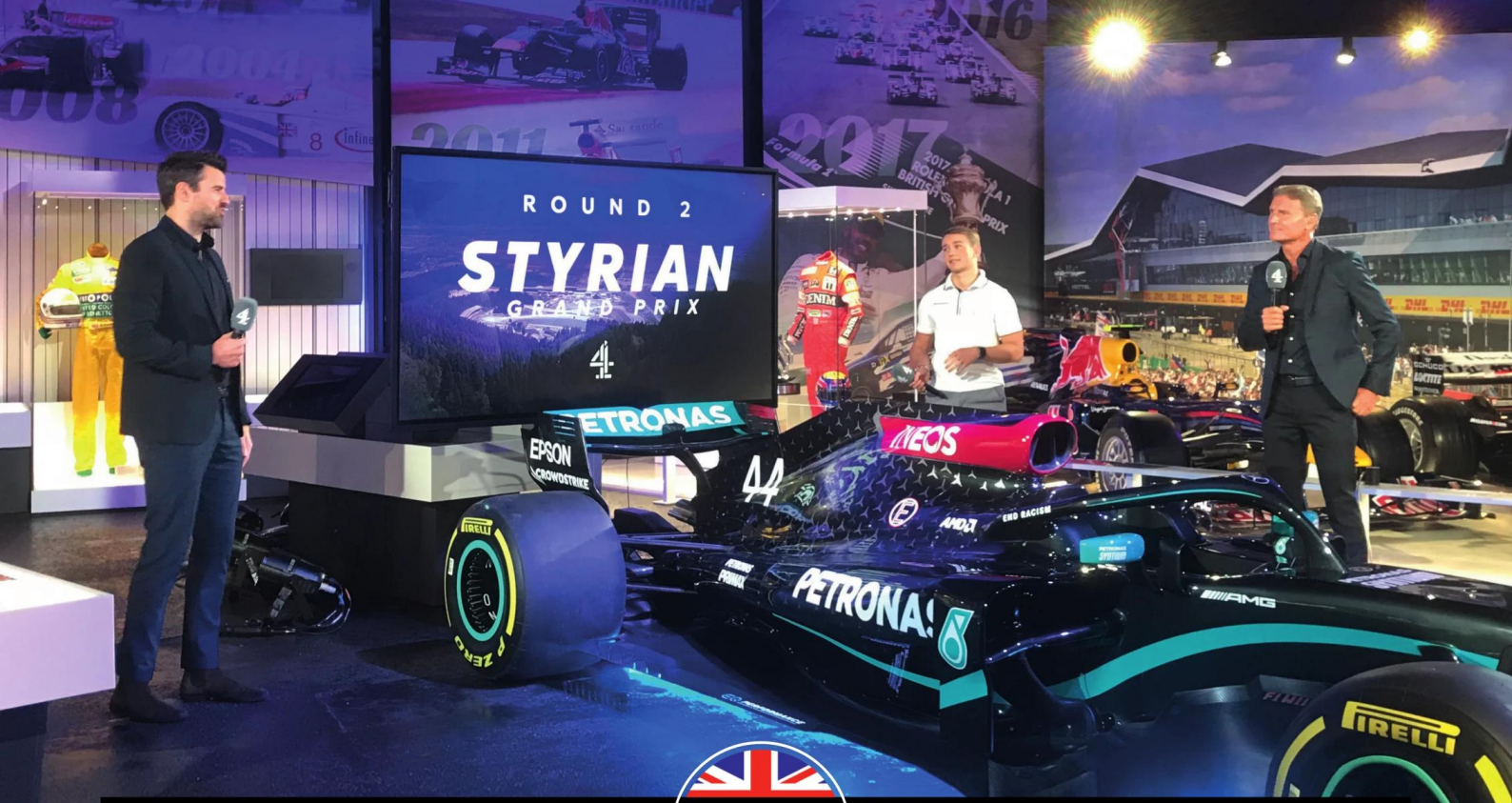
“At the moment, fans cannot be present [for any events],” says Silverstone's Stuart Pringle. “But we can run behind closed doors and frankly, the club scene is effectively behind closed doors anyway in this country. But those can still take place and Motorsport UK are to be commended in the way that they've brought the sport back to life quickly.

“But touring cars we're keeping under review – that's a possibility. Of course, if we can, we can do it – but we have to look at not just the cost of opening for the weekend or for one race, but what standing the venue up for one weekend means for the year as a whole. We cannot afford to compound our situation for the sake of one weekend, however much our hearts would like to see that.”

On MotoGP, Pringle explains, “What worked very much in our favour with F1” – having most of the teams based nearby – “was the equal and opposite with MotoGP”.

“Dorna [commercial rights holder for MotoGP] was just trying to get together a calendar that they could deliver, and we couldn't offer at the time what they needed to make their decisions,” he adds. “There was absolutely no way we could give them any certainty we'd be in a position to deliver it [when the decision was taken in May].”

“WHAT WORKED IN OUR FAVOUR FOR F1 DIDN'T FOR MOTOGP”



HOW YOU CAN NOW ENJOY THE SILVERSTONE EXPERIENCE

It was closed almost as soon as it opened, but now the impressive facility that has been a useful TV backdrop in recent weeks is once again open for business

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY SILVERSTONE EXPERIENCE

For viewers of Channel 4's Formula 1 coverage of the opening three 2020 grands prix, the Silverstone Experience will be quite familiar. Or, at least, part of it will. The impressive venue, right next to the famous circuit that hosted the first world championship GP in 1950, has been the backdrop for the team's F1 analysis. At that stage it was closed to the public, but it's now open once more.

Sally Reynolds and her team managed to overcome the considerable challenges of raising funds and the failure of the original main construction contractor to officially open earlier this year, only for the coronavirus pandemic to shut it down again. Happily, the Experience reopened on 20 July, with necessary safety measures now in place.

Reynolds is chief executive of the Silverstone Heritage Ltd charity that runs the Experience. It is entirely separate from the circuit's business entities and aims to preserve the history of motorsport and inspire the next generation of engineers.

A visit there is not a replacement for racing, but it offers a lot more than you might think, and there's plenty to keep both the committed enthusiast and casual fan entertained. Both types of visitor can learn a great deal.

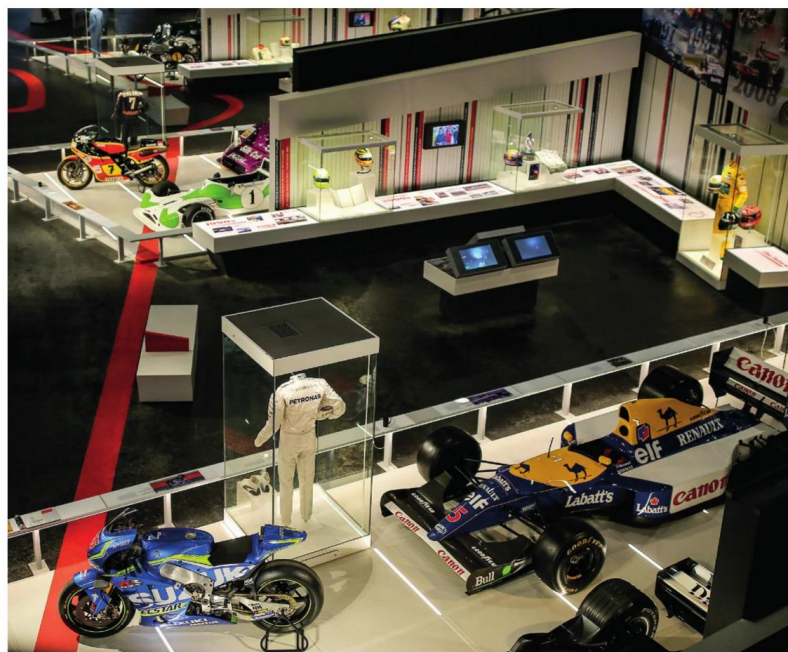
WHY YOU SHOULD VISIT

The Silverstone Experience is much more than a museum. There is a fascinating history of the site and there are plenty of exhibits for the hardcore – machinery from seven decades of motorsport on two and four wheels are presented in the era stations, which also have many different types of memorabilia. But there are lots of other, interactive elements.

Perhaps the most important is the Tech Lab, which is where the focus on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) is obvious. Former Lola and McLaren designer Mark Williams has helped put this part of the Experience together and it shows, among other things, how tyres, brakes, gearboxes, engines and suspension work. It's all accessible and participation is encouraged – you can compare motorsport and aircraft wings in a mini windtunnel, for example. The idea is that kids will find it fun as well as educational.

Then there's the 'Ultimate Lap', an immersive cinema show that simultaneously takes you around Silverstone and lets you see some of the circuit's famous moments. The exhibition manages to look forwards as well as back, so it's not a surprise that there is also a Future of Motorsport section.

The racing exhibits will change over months and years, so you're unlikely to see all the same things twice. The Experience



Expectations for the Experience are high and the initial signs as the lockdown has receded are promising. “During lockdown we hosted Channel 4 F1 for their coverage of the first three grands prix and this has generated lots of interest in the exhibition,” says Reynolds. “Presenter Steve Jones called us ‘achingly cool’ and the reactions we’ve had from visitors in our first days of reopening show that people have really missed getting their motorsport fix. We’ve had loads of great feedback on our social channels so we’re happy that our measures are working.”

HOW YOU CAN VISIT NOW

Given the circumstances of COVID-19, the Silverstone Experience has implemented many measures to allow it to operate safely. It already has one advantage in that, as it’s housed in a restored Second World War hangar, it is a huge indoor space, allowing for easy social distancing.

Pre-booked timed tickets help limit daily numbers and there is an enhanced cleaning regime. Temperature checks are conducted on entry and visitors are encouraged not to arrive more than 10 minutes before their slot. Hand sanitiser stations are located around the site and a nice touch (if you can excuse the pun) is complimentary stylus pens for the touchscreens.

A one-way system should help maintain social distancing and household bubbles, there is a queuing system for popular exhibits, and visits to the shop and cafe (with contactless payments) are encouraged *after* the main event.

“We are really excited that we could reopen as the summer holidays began,” adds Reynolds. “It was only a week after Lewis Hamilton and the Duke of Sussex officially opened our museum in March that lockdown began. We have worked tirelessly to ensure all our visitors can enjoy a safe and exciting visit.

“We know that lots of families will be looking for an exciting day out away from the crowds and, with our rural location, huge indoor space and limited daily visitors, we are the perfect choice. With our amazing interactives and brilliant collection of motorsport artefacts – from a car that competed in the first Formula 1 race 70 years ago, to the helmet Lewis Hamilton won his sixth world title with last year – we know that racing fans who are missing the action will have a fantastic day out, too.”

currently has a 2020 Mercedes F1 show car, which will be on display until 10 August.

Normally, visitors will be able to stand at the Luffield Terrace and watch whatever is happening on track but, unsurprisingly given the importance of the 2020 British Grand Prix being a closed event, there will be no outdoor access this weekend and the blinds will be closed so visitors won’t be able to see any of the action.

The Silverstone Experience is the one part of the Northamptonshire venue that Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle is encouraging people to visit. “There is a way that fans can come to Silverstone and get inside the venue and walk around when the rest of it is closed and that is by booking a ticket to the Experience,” he says. “When people are having their UK ‘staycation’ and looking for things to do, and want to perhaps give their family something that has got an educational element, it’s a great day out.

“It’s also about introducing people to the sport that don’t know about it. There are too many people in this country whose communities don’t have a natural affiliation with our sport because they haven’t had any exposure to it. And yet a two-hour drive from one third of the UK’s population is something that will introduce people to it and give a full day’s worth of fun.”

The museum is open daily from 1000-1800, with timed tickets available on a pre-booked basis from [silverstone-experience.co.uk](https://www.silverstone-experience.co.uk). A full list of COVID-19 safety measures is available to view on the website.



DAVID COULTHARD'S TOP 10 F1 DRIVES

Twenty years ago, David Coulthard scored his second British Grand Prix victory. Ahead of Formula 1's return to Silverstone this weekend for the first of two successive events, he helps us pick out his best races

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**

1995 PORTUGUESE GP ESTORIL WILLIAMS FW17 (1ST)

10

“Braveheart Coulthard leaves Damon's title bid in tatters,” reckoned Autosport after the 1995 Portuguese Grand Prix, but the man himself

doesn't recall any debate about helping his championship-fighting Williams team-mate Hill. “It was just, get out and race,” he says.

And he did that to devastating effect. Coulthard took his third pole of 1995, set fastest lap and took his first F1 victory by 7.2 seconds from Michael Schumacher.

Schumacher chased hard early on, both Coulthard and the Benetton being on three-stop strategies to Hill's two: “Michael was behind me and I thought, ‘If he doesn't slow down, I can't keep this pace’ – it was exhausting.”

But Schumacher couldn't keep up and DC started to “breathe normally and find my comfort zone”.

Hill found himself in second after Schumacher made his third stop. Coulthard never got the call to allow his team-mate through, which was just as well as Schumacher found a way past Hill on lap 62 of 71. DC was long gone.



2000 SPANISH GP BARCELONA McLAREN MP4-15 (2ND)

9

This entry is less about the race itself and more about the context in which Coulthard finished second to team-mate Mika Hakkinen. Just days

before the race, he had survived a plane crash in which both pilots had been killed.

“The tragedy of the pilots losing their lives was the overriding discussion and thought leading up to the GP, with some people questioning whether I should race,”

recalls Coulthard. “But I spoke to one of the pilots' fathers and he was absolutely clear that the show goes on – and that is what his son would have wanted.”

Despite the trauma and injured ribs, Coulthard overcame the Schumacher brothers to complete a McLaren 1-2.

“The McLaren support system didn't always show its cuddly side on the outside, but Ron Dennis was very supportive of his team when there's adversity,” adds Coulthard. “That kicked in to allow me to focus on driving.”





1997
ITALIAN GP
MONZA
MCLAREN MP4-12 (1ST)

SUTTON

8

Coulthard was one of the best starters in the business and his getaway at Monza in 1997 was crucial, as he shot from sixth to third.

"I always felt confident on starts," says the 49-year-old. "A lot of people have various theories as how to start a race car. I worked on the simple basis of limiting the number of devices you're trying to control at any given time. I'd get the vehicle going, get the clutch out and then control the wheelspin if there was any."

Jean Alesi's Benetton, the Williams of Heinz-Harald Frentzen and Coulthard formed a high-speed train. Frentzen pitted first and Coulthard almost crashed at the Ascari chicane as he and Alesi pushed hard before their pitstops.

"I remember it well because in 1995 I did something similar going to the grid, but in that case I didn't catch it!" he says. "You're on the edge of adhesion – that was as big an opposite lock as you are going to get in a grand prix car before binning it."

Having survived the moment, he followed Alesi in on lap 32 of 53, and McLaren turned Coulthard

around quicker than Benetton serviced Alesi. "Jean is a lovely man and I've always felt a bit guilty about taking a great win away from him, but it was a great display of teamwork," says Coulthard.

Both emerged ahead of Frentzen, and Coulthard duly scored his third GP win by 1.9s.

The race had been close and, even though Autosport lamented the lack of overtaking, it stands out in Coulthard's mind: "On low downforce the car was dancing, and it takes quite a lot of energy to drive a high-speed circuit like that – it's the closest we get to an oval."

2000
BRAZILIAN GP
INTERLAGOS
MCLAREN MP4-15 (DSQ)

7

Coulthard's experience and savvy played their part in a fine drive in adversity at Interlagos, which ultimately went unrewarded.

A strong start by Michael Schumacher got him ahead of Coulthard, and the Ferraris were rapid early on. Schumacher overtook Mika Hakkinen for the lead into the first corner at the start of lap two, with Rubens Barrichello going by Coulthard a few seconds later.

Barrichello soon moved into second, and the speed of the Ferraris hinted that they were on two-stop strategies, while the McLarens were only planning to stop once.

Schumacher rejoined between Hakkinen and Coulthard after his first stop, with Barrichello



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dropping to fourth, but the strategies never played out. Hakkinen retired with an engine problem before half-distance, just after Barrichello had suffered a hydraulics failure, while Coulthard found himself grappling with a gearbox issue.

"I think I'd lost an in-between gear – third, so to get to second I had to go through the gear that was not working, so I made the decision not to run the

risk of going through the damaged gear," explains Coulthard. "Those sorts of races are ones where you have the right level of experience to work out what you need to do."

He managed to drive around the problem and nursed the McLaren to second place behind Schumacher, only to be disqualified for a front-wing infringement.



**1998
AUSTRIAN GP**
A1-RING
McLAREN MP4-13 (2ND)

6

Quirky weather conditions mixed up the starting grid for the 1998 Austrian GP, and Coulthard found himself starting from row seven. And things got

worse before they got better – contact from Pedro Diniz and Mika Salo on the opening lap resulted in the McLaren losing its nose.

A safety car was called as Coulthard headed for the pits, and he was 17th when the racing resumed at the start of lap four. He immediately started carving through the field and was up to ninth by the end of lap 10. He was up to sixth when Michael Schumacher went off on lap 17

and had to come in for a new nose.

That put Coulthard into fifth, and he then overtook Jean Alesi's Sauber on lap 19 of 71. He stayed out longer than the other frontrunners before making his scheduled pitstop, actually leading for two laps, and emerged in second, helped by a clash that eliminated Alesi and polesitter Giancarlo Fisichella's Benetton.

There was no hope of catching team-mate Mika Hakkinen, but Coulthard scored a fine second, and set a fastest lap more than half a second quicker than the winning McLaren.

"Hakkinen drove beautifully, but the performance of the race came from Coulthard," reckoned Autosport's Nigel Roebuck.



**1999
BELGIAN GP**
SPA
McLAREN MP4-14 (1ST)

5

After an unfortunate series of events, reigning world champion Mika Hakkinen arrived at Spa for the 1999 Belgian GP trailing Ferrari's Eddie Irvine by two points

in the drivers' table, with Coulthard another 18 points back. There were still five races to go, but these were the days when a victory only yielded 10 points.

The weekend started well for McLaren, Hakkinen leading Coulthard to a 1-2 in qualifying, a second clear of the rest. But Coulthard made the better start and charged



SUTTON



**2000
BRITISH GP**
SILVERSTONE

McLAREN MP4-15 (1ST)

4

"I never really felt strong at Silverstone," admits Coulthard, despite twice winning the British GP at the Northamptonshire

venue. The 1999 success had owed something to good fortune, but the victory the following year was well taken.

Coulthard jumped Mika Hakkinen at the start to chase Rubens Barrichello and Heinz-Harald Frentzen's Jordan and form part of a six-car breakaway. Frentzen was the first to pit, allowing Coulthard to pressure the leading Ferrari, with Hakkinen close behind.

At half-distance Barrichello got slightly off line through Becketts and Chapel, giving Coulthard a run on the Ferrari down Hangar Straight. He moved to the left and swept brilliantly around the outside into the high-speed Stowe right-hander.

"Having raced against Rubens in Opel Lotus, Formula 3 and F3000, I would say his strength was his speed rather than his racing," says Coulthard. "I always felt pretty comfortable that, if I put him under a bit of pressure, he'd back out of it."

Coulthard immediately set a new fastest lap and his pace was such that, when the pitstops cycled through, he was still at the front of the one-stoppers – and regained the lead when Frentzen made his second scheduled pit visit.

Despite a late charge from Hakkinen, which brought the second McLaren within 1.5s, Coulthard held on to take his second consecutive home win, with Schumacher third.

"When you stand on the podium with your team-mate beside you – and I always had good team-mates – and Michael, you know you've had a good day in the office," he says.



COLOMBO

around the outside into the first corner. It was tight and the two McLarens briefly touched, but both survived, with Coulthard in the lead.

And then he simply drove into the distance, a fuming and distracted Hakkinen never getting close. DC led every lap at the famous Belgian venue and came home 10.5s clear.

"I just felt in a zone," says Coulthard. "I don't recall any mistakes. I'd been unwell before the race and slept very poorly because of a cough, to the point where I was coughing up a little bit of blood during the night, so it was a great experience for me in terms of realising you don't always need to be in the best physical shape to

give one of the best performances. The mind controls the body, not the other way."

Hakkinen's side of the garage felt an opportunity for team orders had been missed, and the victory moved Coulthard to 14 points off the top of the table.

"Mika clearly wasn't very happy and his engineer Mark Slade said to me that if they lost the world championship it would be my fault," adds Coulthard. "I remember thinking my sole purpose wasn't to support Mika's championship – part of winning a championship is beating your team-mate. I was particularly proud of that victory."

“THE TRACK IS MY CANVAS, THE CAR IS MY BRUSH”

GRAHAM HILL



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2002 MONACO GP

MONTE CARLO

McLAREN MP4-17 (1ST)

3

On the face of it, Coulthard's 2002 Monaco GP was straightforward – if any success around the punishing streets can be considered as such. He qualified second, grabbed the lead at the start and led every lap on his way to victory. But the win owed much to his work ethic and experience.

"That race was won in testing at Paul Ricard," explains Coulthard. "I figured out with my engineers that if I could get a tyre that lasted as far as the horseshoe at Paul Ricard – a lot of drivers were looking at lap time to decide on the tyre – it doesn't matter what lap time we're doing. If we were quicker by the horseshoe then that was the tyre I wanted to take to Monaco for qualifying."

Coulthard was disappointed to miss out on pole to fellow Michelin runner Juan Pablo Montoya's Williams, but was ready to grab the initiative at the start: "I was pretty confident I could outlaunch him.

"A lot of the start was automated but you still had to finesse and work with it to get as good a launch as the system would allow you. On the steering wheel button I wanted to reduce the amount of movement from engagement to disengagement, so we moved the position of the button so it was *just* engaging when my thumb covered it. The millisecond I released the pressure the system launched and I was off. It was looking for every single little detail of how to get a perfect start."

Once into the lead, Coulthard managed the race and "brutal" tyre graining, despite the attentions of Montoya, Michael Schumacher's Ferrari and the Williams of Ralf Schumacher.

His car even started to smoke at one stage – an issue fixed by McLaren from the pits via telemetry – but Coulthard built enough of an advantage to retain the lead once the pitstops were completed.

Michael Schumacher kept the pressure on for the final 26 laps, the gap never rising above 1.3s, but Coulthard held on to take his second Monaco GP victory.

He had won despite setting a fastest lap more than a second slower than the best, and had dealt Ferrari its second and final defeat of the 17-race 2002 season.



ETHERINGTON

2001 BRAZILIAN GP

INTERLAGOS

McLAREN MP4-16 (1ST)

2

This race is largely remembered for Juan Pablo Montoya's aggressive move to snatch the lead from Michael Schumacher – and the Williams later

being rear-ended by Jos Verstappen's Arrows. But it was also a rare day on which someone overtook Schumacher in the wet. And that someone was Coulthard.

Mika Hakkinen's McLaren failed at the start, helping Coulthard to vault from fifth to third before the safety car was called. It was at the restart that Montoya made his bold move to take the lead. The heavily fuelled one-stopping Williams, the two-stopping Schumacher and one-stopping Coulthard then pulled away from the rest in the dry.

When Schumacher pitted on lap 25 of 71, Coulthard was left chasing Montoya. The Williams had the advantage in the dry,



but McLaren had opted for a semi-wet set-up in anticipation of rain. Coulthard's Bridgestones were also expected to work better than Montoya's Michelins in the wet, should the time come.

But the precipitation came *after* Montoya's retirement and Coulthard's scheduled pitstop. He had rejoined just ahead of Schumacher but hesitated when the rain arrived on lap 46. Schumacher immediately pitted for intermediates and took the lead when DC came in a lap later.

But Schumacher wasn't happy with his F2001's

balance. A moment at the first corner allowed Coulthard to close, and going on to lap 50 the McLaren was well placed. Coming up to lap the Minardi of Tarso Marques, Coulthard went for the inside into the Senna S, Schumacher the outside, and the McLaren took the lead. Coulthard pulled clear, taking the flag 16.2s ahead of the Ferrari.

"This was David's victory because I am not sure we had the best car today," said Mercedes motorsport chief Norbert Haug. "He was the best driver and he handled the circumstances the best."

"It was tricky conditions and normally you would earmark those for Michael, but I think I drove well and the situation came to me," remembers Coulthard. "I wasn't the best racing driver and not as complete a driver as Michael and Mika, but when I was on form and had the opportunity I could compete with those guys. Those are the moments of life achievement for me."



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**2000
FRENCH GP**
MAGNY-COURS
MCLAREN MP4-15 (1ST)

STATS
STARTS 246
WINS 13
POLES 12
FASTEST LAPS 18

SUTTON

1

The hand gestures that Coulthard gave Michael Schumacher are perhaps what first spring to mind about the 2000 French GP, and the drive was arguably

Coulthard at his most feisty.

He and Mika Hakkinen suffered problems in qualifying and had to jump in and out of different chassis, but Coulthard still qualified second to Schumacher and felt good on race morning.

"I felt ownership of Magny-Cours and was convinced I was going to win," recalls Coulthard, perhaps explaining why he was so irritated by the Schumacher chop at the start that allowed Rubens Barrichello into second.

As Schumacher edged away, Coulthard and Hakkinen harassed the second Ferrari. On lap 22 of 72 Coulthard forced Barrichello onto a defensive line into the Adelaide hairpin, moved wide and outdragged the Ferrari on the exit.

The top four soon pitted, with Coulthard resuming 5.3s behind Schumacher, and Hakkinen jumping ahead of Barrichello. The McLaren quickly carved into Schumacher's lead and was with him by the end of lap 32.

Coulthard then attacked around the outside at the Adelaide hairpin, Schumacher predictably running him out wide, provoking the gestures. But he was soon back all over the Ferrari's gearbox. "It was pure emotion coming through," he says. "Michael was a tough competitor and I felt he was unreasonably robust on the way to the first corner."



SUTTON

On lap 40, with Hakkinen now right behind, Coulthard launched a surprise attack. He was still quite a way behind the Ferrari when he dived down the inside into the hairpin. They banged wheels but Coulthard was through.

"When I eventually did pass him, if he'd turned in we probably would have both crashed," admits Coulthard. "It was one of those scenarios where you needed a compliant person and Michael wouldn't always be compliant, but obviously I'd harangued him enough!"

Coulthard then edged away and made his final pitstop after his rivals, rejoining comfortably ahead of Schumacher before pulling away.

Hakkinen couldn't find a way into second until Schumacher hit engine problems, and finished 14.7s behind Coulthard.

"It was a great victory because I had to show fighting spirit against one of the hardest fighters in the sport," says Coulthard, who believes it was the race of his life.



To hear more from Coulthard on his career, go to [autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast) and look for David Coulthard Presents: My Greatest Races.



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WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN BTCC 2020

The season is late starting and some of the leading contenders are missing. But BTCC pundit Tim Harvey reckons there's plenty to get excited about

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport
IMAGES



It's four months overdue, but the start of the British Touring Car Championship is here, and a slightly depleted field will take to the track at Donington Park this weekend for the first of what is scheduled to be nine triple-headers squeezed in between now and mid-November.

As reigning champions, Colin Turkington and the West Surrey Racing-run BMW squad have to start as favourites, but there is a high number of unknowns – different driver/car combinations, new machines making their debuts, post-coronavirus rule changes... and people wearing masks. We therefore sat down over a socially distanced telephone line with 1992 BTCC champion and ITV4 expert pundit Tim Harvey to predict what might happen.

CAN ANYONE BEAT COLIN TURKINGTON?

"The answer is: yes they can," asserts Harvey. "Particularly in a truncated season where the races are coming thick and fast, and we've got three less races so the element of luck could play a bigger part than before. In terms of people who can stop him, there are huge unknowns. We don't know how competitive Ash Sutton in the Infiniti could be – potentially that car could be a BMW beater, and we know that Ash is a special talent. It wouldn't take much more for Dan Cammish to be there in the Honda, and Tom Ingram in the Toyota could be due for a stellar season. Everything is shaping up nicely, and we also have some real outsiders like Jake Hill in a Honda."

Harvey, of course, has played the role of mentor to Cammish in his career from his title-winning Porsche Carrera Cup GB days. "The Civic [in FK8 form] is a quick car," he points out, "but it hasn't been the perfect car in terms of adaptability to different conditions or its suitability to all circuits. It's what the Mercedes F1 team would have called 'a diva car' a couple of years ago. Whether they've made the improvements they need to challenge consistently at every track I don't know, but Dan has learned the art of touring car racing. Now it depends on luck and whether the car is better at all circuits and in all conditions."

WILL WE MISS HAVING ANDREW JORDAN AND JASON PLATO ON THE GRID?

Jordan and Plato are the highest-profile victims of the financial fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. Jordan had to quit his WSR BMW drive, while the Power Maxed Racing-run Vauxhall squad, which should have run Plato and the returning Mat Jackson, has opted to sit out 2020 to conserve resources for 2021.

"We won't miss them while we're being enthralled by the action in front of our eyes," states Harvey. "But will I personally miss them? Yes I will. Would they add something on the track? Yes they would."

"AJ only just came up short in 2019 and he would definitely have been a challenger, and Jason is always good for the BTCC whether that's on the track or on the microphone. And he could be denied his 100th win. He'll be back next year, but he'll be another year older... And I was looking forward to Mat's return immensely."



Plato and Jordan are big names missing this year

HOW WILL THE NEW CARS PERFORM?

It's nothing new to have a Motorbase Performance-built-and-run Ford Focus ST on the grid, but the fourth-generation machine looks to be a cracker from early testing pace. And the Hyundai i30 of Excelr8 Motorsport, which replaces the team's elderly MG6s, seems promising (see p38).

"It's great to see an evolution of the BTCC in the form of new cars in the championship," enthuses Harvey. "They were designed pre-COVID, and I'm not sure we'd see people taking a risk on doing that now. Both look like really good cars. The drivers at

"THE CIVIC IS WHAT THE MERCEDES F1 TEAM WOULD HAVE CALLED 'A DIVA CAR' A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO"

Motorbase say the new car is night-and-day better than the old car – you always expect them to say that, but it's got a lower centre of gravity, a new shell, and a more responsive chassis. Rory Butcher [who has joined from AmD Racing] will invigorate the team and I expect great things.

"The Hyundai looks an absolutely perfect car in terms of size and weight distribution. Both the drivers are race winners, the team look to be well organised, and there's no reason why they wouldn't be able to shine. All the cars have the same underpinnings, but you still have to engineer them to get performance out of them."

HOW CAN ASH SUTTON GET ON IN THE RESURRECTED INFINITI Q50?

There's a lot more to this one that meets the eye. Laser Tools Racing saw the potential in the Infiniti used back in 2015 by the Support Our Paras team, and Aiden Moffat made a mid-season switch in 2019 to the rear-wheel-drive machine from his >>



“Exceptional” Sutton has a proper weapon in completely reworked Q50

Mercedes A-Class. Former champion Sutton has now joined, along with a portion of the Team BMR squad that ran him to glory in the Subaru.

“You have to be very careful, because we’re not talking about the same cars as appeared for Support Our Paras a few years ago,” points out Harvey. “These are new-build cars, and if you look at them next to the BMW there’s not a lot of difference. They’re newly engineered, newly inspired, with new aero. It’s a completely new car.”

A proper weapon in Sutton’s hands? “The guy is exceptional behind the wheel, in qualifying, with his racecraft, with his overtaking in wet and dry conditions. If you asked every team manager for their top three drivers, he’d be in everybody’s top three.” That’ll be a yes, then...

WHAT ABOUT THE NEW TEAM/DRIVER COMBINATIONS?

There are a few of those dotted around the BTCC in 2020, but there are three in particular that should pose a threat at the front. Veteran Tom Chilton hops over from the Motorbase Ford line-up to join Josh Cook in the BTC Racing Honda Civic FK8s, Butcher takes Chilton’s place in the Motorbase attack, and Hill shuffles across from the Trade Price Cars Racing Audi (run as a satellite of AmD) to the AmD-run MB Motorsport Civic FK2.

“All of them are now experienced drivers,” says Harvey. “On Tom’s day he can be blisteringly quick, but whether BTC can consistently find the right set-up on what I’ve already called that diva car I don’t know. He will have a winning package and should be able to extract the most out of it, but he’ll probably be upset if he sees his old team beating him! Rory [Butcher] is a very quick driver, and back with Motorbase I expect that to click very early. The early testing pace has been very good.

“With Jake Hill, that FK2 Civic is still a very fast car – one of the best in the BTCC – and this is the best opportunity he has ever had. The team know how to go about racing, and now that Mark Blundell is behind the team he’s got less stress on the commercial side. For someone who won a race in the Audi S3, something no one else could do, to get into the FK2 Honda is a great opportunity.”

WILL THE NEW TYRE REGULATIONS AFFECT THE RACING?

BTCC tradition over the past few years has been for two compounds of Dunlop tyre to be available for race day, with each driver obliged to choose a ‘joker’ race to run the option rubber. For 2020 and the switch to Dunlop sister company Goodyear, that initially meant a choice between the soft and medium compound at six of the 10 rounds, with the hard mandatory for all three races at the tyre-killing Thruxton, the medium for all three at Donington, and a further twist for Croft and Snetterton, with drivers obliged to



Rider (left) and Harvey’s punditry will have to be delivered behind a mask



Fourth-gen Focus looks to be a cracker, and Butcher will invigorate Motorbase squad

run each of the soft, medium and hard compounds in one race at each event. After a teams' meeting with series organiser TOCA in May, it was decided that the medium will be used throughout eight of the nine rounds, with the hard at Thruxton, due to the pressures of back-to-back events and reduced staffing for the teams as racing recovers following its coronavirus pause.

"The situation we've had before is that, depending on the time of the year, some tyres didn't work when it was cold," says Harvey. "Degradation was never a huge effect. I'm actually looking forward to having less variation. We already have reversed grids and success ballast, and I think that's enough. The tyre choice was an interesting aside, but I'm looking forward to seeing every car race on the same tyres, and you only have to consider the weight and the reversed grids in terms of equality. I don't think it will detract from the racing."

WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE LIKE RACING INTO NOVEMBER?

The BTCC doesn't traditionally go beyond early October for its championship finale at Brands Hatch. This time, the post-COVID calendar takes the circus from an early October date in the garden of England to the wilds of the north up at Croft. Then there's a late October visit to Snetterton, where the wind can really rip across the flat East Anglian countryside and when the clocks will be going back between qualifying and race day. It all finishes on the Brands Indy Circuit on 15 November.

"If for any unforeseen reason we end up with racing in the dark, it could be a problem, but Alan Gow [series boss] and TOCA are all over the situation," says Harvey, "and with the additional support races on the Saturday that should free up time on the Sundays."

Will the likely cold weather make a difference? "It should all be OK if they're on the standard tyre. I don't see that being a problem – I don't think the weather will be an influencing issue."

REVISED BTCC CALENDAR

DATE	VENUE
1-2 August	Donington Park
8-9 August	Brands Hatch GP
22-23 August	Oulton Park
29-30 August	Knockhill
19-20 September	Thruxton
26-27 September	Silverstone Nat
10-11 October	Croft
24-25 October	Snetterton
14-15 November	Brands Hatch Indy

WILL IT BE STRANGE WITHOUT THE FAN ENGAGEMENT?

As things stand, MotorSport Vision, which operates Donington, Brands and Oulton Park, respective host venues of the opening three rounds, is allowing spectators to buy tickets online but there will be no paddock or pitlane admission. The following event is at Knockhill in Scotland, which is subject to different government guidelines. Looking further ahead, the goalposts are likely to move, although at present spectators could be admitted to all rounds.

"I'm genuinely sad for the fans because the whole point of the BTCC has always been the access and the fan engagement,"

laments Harvey. "And it's not just the fans that are losing out. The sponsors are there for the TV coverage and the hospitality, and if you take the hospitality away you've lost 50% of what you get out of it. The racing on the TV will look very much the same, it'll just be different for those who are at the event."

"I first raced in touring cars in 1987, and to not have fans around the paddock will be strange. Working there will be different too."

HOW ODD WILL IT BE TO SEE STEVE RIDER IN A MASK?

The ever-smooth, suave Rider is the maestro-of-quippery anchor of ITV4's coverage, switching in an instant from acerbic remarks about the BTCC elite to coming across like the Ginetta Junior youngsters' favourite, indulgent schoolteacher. He's got a job do, and he'll do it – but you won't see half his face.

"It will probably be weirder for Steve because he'll have a lot of things to get used to," laughs Harvey. "None of us will be able to see anybody's facial expressions. Steve says a lot of things tongue in cheek, and if we can't see his face we'll not be able to tell if he's being sarcastic..."

"We're just going to have to find ways of bringing the action to the fans in the best way we can." ❄️

SPECULATE, ACCUMULATE... EXCELR8

It was at the back of the 2019 grid with its MG6s, but this weekend Excelr8 Motorsport starts its second BTCC season by bringing Hyundai to the series

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport
IMAGES

“W e didn’t know what to expect and I thought we looked really good, like we were good at what we did, that we knew what we were doing. With the team performed, we deserved to get better results. I was so proud it brought a tear to my eye.”

The words belong to Justina Williams, whose team in 2019 became the newest addition to the British Touring Car Championship grid. Now the squad she owns, Excelr8 Motorsport, has traded in the venerable MG6 machinery with which it began its BTCC adventure and become a producer of its own weapon: the Hyundai i30 Fastback N. In doing so, the East Anglian team brings a new car maker to the BTCC, it has significantly bolstered its arsenal in terms of management and technical expertise, and has attracted two drivers who already have a race win apiece to their credit: Chris Smiley and Senna Proctor. Clearly this is an ambitious set-up.

The decision to go with the Hyundai was, let’s say, a long-sighted marketing view in case the South Korean manufacturer takes an interest in the BTCC. Excelr8’s background is in the Mini Challenge (see panel, right), and its tie-up with Mini has been beneficial to both sides, but plans to build a BTCC version of the Clubman estate were foiled because it wasn’t quite long enough to fit the regulations. It’s probably fair to view the 2019 MG campaign as a stopgap, facilitated when series loyalist AmD Tuning took over the brace of Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type Rs plus Eurotech’s



Rookie driver line-up and ageing MG6 meant last year was a stopgap



entrant’s licences, and passed its own licences and MG hardware to Excelr8. With two BTCC rookies behind the wheel in the forms of Rob Smith and Sam Osborne, it was always going to be an uphill struggle, and each driver brought home a best result of 14th.

Now, with a couple of established pedallers on board, Williams believes interest can be piqued from Hyundai. “There’s no better platform than touring cars to sell your wares,” she asserts. “Everybody needs to sell cars in the UK, and if we can be on board with them, with exciting racing, a fantastic-looking car, it will encourage people to buy cars. If we could work with them as we did with Mini, that would be fantastic.”

The recruitment at Excelr8 has included gold-star BTCC engineer Kevin Berry, who rose to become technical director at long-time series dominator Triple Eight, and has had stints at West Surrey Racing designing the BMW 1 Series and new-for-2019 3 Series, engineering Colin Turkington to titles, as well as a spell in between working on the Volkswagen CC and Subaru Levorg at Team BMR.

Berry’s primary season programme in 2020, as it was last year, is in the World Touring Car Cup with the Lynk & Co squad, where he is engineering Yann Ehrlacher, but he will run Proctor in non-clashing BTCC rounds and also played a part in the development of the new Hyundai. “I wouldn’t say I’m responsible for the design of the car,” says Berry. “I gave them some input on a consultancy level over the winter and earlier this year.

“The way the teams build the cars these days, with a programme like the BMW we had a team of up to four people working in CAD doing all the detailed design from scratch and it’s all manufactured from CAD. What smaller teams [such as Excelr8] do now is take a shell to the shell builder [Willie Poole Motorsport, which has many BTCC teams as clients], who will put the rollcage in and work out how to do the shell themselves, and a guy who mocks up the bodywork. There’s not much actual physical design from scratch.”

Danny King, who remains at Excelr8 to engineer Smiley, adds:

Hyundai i30
Fastback's low-drag
shape gives potential
straightline
advantage



THE SMALL TEAM THAT'S BIG

“THEY’VE DONE AN INCREDIBLE JOB. THEY’VE BEEN WORKING 24-SEVEN. THAT’S REAL COMMITMENT”

“Kevin had influence on the structural side and where we were going to put the extra weight to get it to the weight limit, and Ollie [Shepherd, long-time Excelr8 team principal] project-managed the whole thing and had some influence on design things. It was kind of a team effort – if it was more design-led it would be Kevin, if it was simple design stuff I would do that, and Ollie would bring the whole thing together at the end.”

Berry adds that the i30 Fastback “car shape suits the regulations in a way. It’s a little bit short in wheelbase maybe, but the low drag is a positive. That’s its biggest strength, so potentially it’s got quite a good straightline advantage.”

The cars were ready in time for a maiden test at Snetterton in March, with Williams astonished at her team’s attention to detail. “They’ve done an incredible job,” she enthuses. “They didn’t want to paint around the fixings, so they went from building it, stripping the interior to paint it, to building it up again in a few weeks. They’ve been working 24-seven. That’s real commitment.”

“You know that all the NGTC cars are supposedly the same, but all I can say is it’s really nice to have one with a brand-new shell that’s definitely bang on the weight limit, because that wasn’t the case with the MG for sure!” adds King, whose extensive single-seater background means that the only front-wheel-drive car he has race-engineered to date is the outgoing old warhorse with the octagonal badge. His first BTCC season was at AmD with Rory >>

ALONGSIDE TWO HYUND AIS, IT’S A SQUADRON OF MINIS

Excelr8 Motorsport will be running more cars than any other team in the British Touring Car Championship at the series’ TOCA events this season. That’s because its background is in the Mini Challenge, which joins the TOCA package full-time for the first time at this weekend’s Donington Park opening round.

Excelr8 produces the cars used in the Minis’ flagship JCW class, and was commissioned to build further batches for equivalent series in Japan and China. It also runs a sizeable team in the UK championship. “It’s going to be a lot of pressure on me,” says team owner Justina Williams of bringing the Mini Challenge onto BTCC weekends. “If I’m allowed to [amid the prevailing coronavirus protocols], I’ll be going between two paddocks – we’ll have seven JCWs for the first round and eight for later events.”

That’s nothing though.

Including the Mini Challenge’s smaller classes, Williams says “we’ve run as many as 22 cars across one race weekend before”.

Excelr8, you could say, is the maxi size operation of Minis, even if it hasn’t yet escaped the status of BTCC small fry. Williams estimates the headcount to be “in total about 60 staff”, in the mid-20s for both BTCC and the JCW class of Minis, plus around 10 for the Coopers, with some crossover between teams.

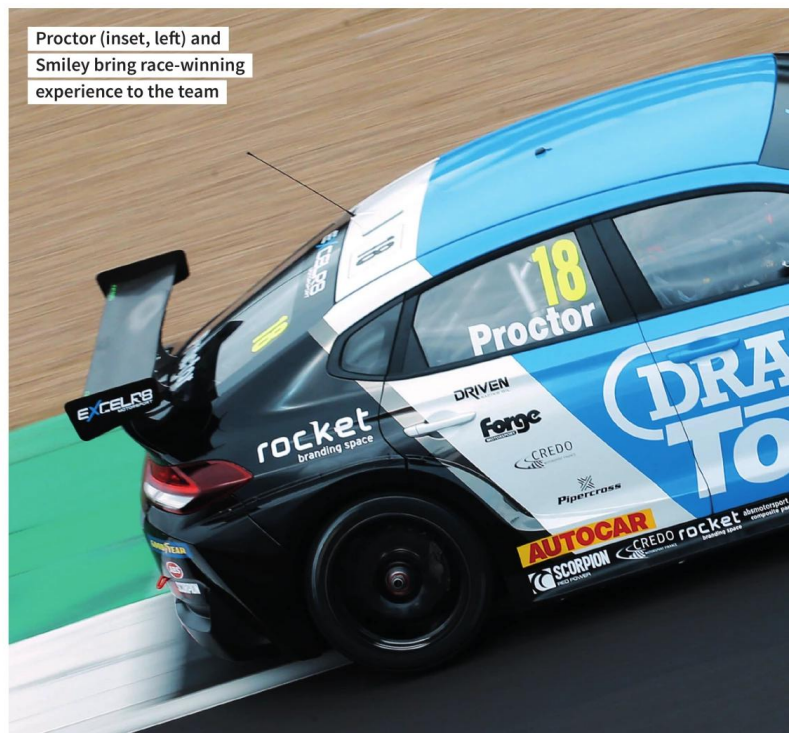
It also won’t escape anyone’s attention that, over the coming years, that also puts Excelr8 in a good position for unearthing future touring car talent, especially with the Clio Cup now gone from the TOCA package. Chris Smiley is a good example – although he never drove with Excelr8, he did compete in Minis and that gave the Irishman an introduction to the team.

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Proctor (inset, left) and Smiley bring race-winning experience to the team

Butcher in 2018, before he joined the Excels8 ranks last term.

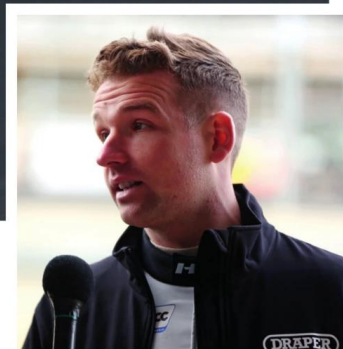
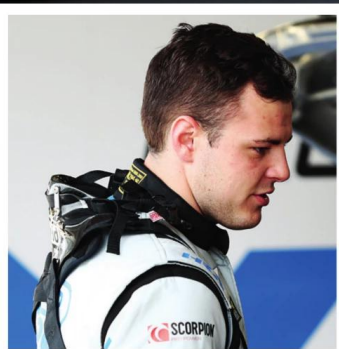
“Rory managed to wrestle some fantastic race results out of it, but we really used to struggle to qualify,” says King. “We just couldn’t switch the thing on in qualifying, but if it started to rain we were absolutely there. Then last year with Excels8 it was a learning year for them, but I think they functioned so much better as a team than people would necessarily appreciate. The structure in the garage, the team briefing in the morning, the way we look in the pitlane was I thought exemplary. From that point of view Ollie had done a fantastic job to get the team into a position where we were learning all those things. I was at pains to tell them that even though the results weren’t coming, the way they were functioning as a team was fantastic. When you’re not getting the results, to stay as closely knit as we did indicates how good the team is.”

Shepherd has stood down from Excels8 since the early spring tests to take a break from the sport, but leaves the operation in the capable hands of inveterate team manager Marvin Humphries, who has worked with Berry at Triple Eight and WSR as well as running his own Tech-Speed squad, while the team also has up-and-coming engineering talent in the form of its homegrown-from-Minis Daniel Bishop. “Marvin is absolutely fundamental,” says King. “His experience within the paddock is invaluable. And also his wife Sandra does all the logistics – we’ve got a team manager and a team mum! They come as a package, it’s really nice.”

Regarding the driver line-up, Excels8 was never going to be in a position to attract any heavy hitters just now, but Proctor and Smiley have both shown they can mix it at the front and, crucially, have experience of what a good BTCC car should feel like, with Proctor switching from the BMR Subaru line-up and Smiley from the BTC Racing Honda squad.

“Sam and Rob last year were just inexperienced,” says King. “It was difficult for them to gauge how out of control they should feel, because if you’re too much out of control you go over the other side of the kerb and you’re not as quick, and if you’re not out of control enough you haven’t reached the summit. But where we’re finding so much benefit with Senna and Chris is that they know exactly how a car should feel and direct you to exactly what you need to do. That’s how you develop, because they’ve got that big portfolio of experience that they can draw from.”

“It’s quite a big step up for them in terms of driver line-up and from that they’ll move their engineering ability along to support



that and hopefully develop both sides together," adds Berry.

"It's really good they came to us," says Williams. "Hopefully they'll stick with the team as we move forward. To have that kind of class in our cars is amazing."

King, certainly, is enthusiastic that the team can fight with its new Hyundai machinery and driver line-up: "When I heard that we were going to get Senna I thought that's brilliant, because we've broken the market and we've got an up-and-coming driver who I really rate. I was then quite surprised and a little bit nervous to hear that we'd got Chris because I've got a huge amount of respect for him. My year with Rory Butcher, we spent most of the year trying to get past Chris."

"It put us in the situation where not only have we got a new car to learn about, but we've really got to deliver now, we've got two proper drivers. But the more you think about it, that's why we do motorsport. Chris reminds me of Jaime Alguersuari, the guy that I ran in Formula E, because he's intense, he's on the phone quite a lot, we talk a lot about the car, his feedback's fantastic, and the other thing where he's like Jaime is he really hits you hard on the arm when he's making a point, so I'm going to have to remember to put some sort of padding on, because he'll give me another wallop when he's thought of something really important!"

"He's a really intense individual. When you look at some of his onboard, there might as well be teeth marks in the steering wheel when he gets out because he is properly committed. His feedback has been invaluable to us to be able to develop the car."

Berry, perhaps inevitably for such a grizzled BTCC veteran, is more circumspect. "I tend to be a pessimist," he says, instantly identifying himself with 99% of the UK's motorsport engineering brains. "I think they've got the ability to get in the top 10, but with the level of the team and the drivers it would be unrealistic to expect them to be regularly in the top five because that's so hard to do. They should be able to compete at a decent level and look for some top-end spots when the opportunities arise."

But even that would be a great step forward for this ambitious new contender in the BTCC. Look out for more tears from Williams should there be such a breakthrough. ❄



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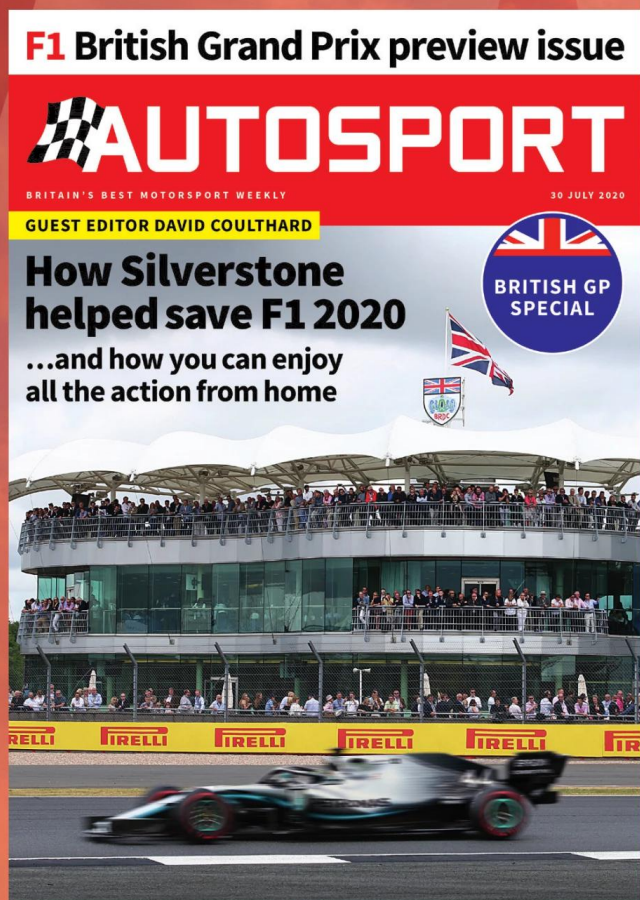
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**BTCC
SEASON
PREVIEW**



FIVE THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE BTCC SUPPORTS

There is always plenty of action among the other series that make up the BTCC bill, and the delayed 2020 season is set deliver even more. Whether it's new series, old partnerships reuniting or competitive line-ups, there is no shortage of plotlines to keep an eye on this year.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

5 QUALITY BRITISH F4 LINE-UP

Arguably, not since the first season of FIA Formula 4 in the UK in 2015 has there been quite such a talented line-up in the series as this year. Ginetta Junior graduates Casper Stevenson, James Hedley and Zak O'Sullivan topped the recent official test, but expect second-year drivers Luke Browning, Alex Connor (below) and Roberto Faria to be among those challenging too.



4 THE WHORTON-EALES AND JAMSPORT WINNING COMBO

Ant Whorton-Eales and Jamsport have a successful history, the team powering him to the 2016 Renault UK Clio Cup and 2018 Mini Challenge crowns. That partnership has been rekindled for this year as the Mini series moves to the BTCC bill. They will be tough to be beat as 2019 runner-up Nathan Harrison and Clio contender Max Coates attempt to stop the combination winning again.



3 WEBSTER AIMING FOR TITLE NUMBER TWO

Despite missing last year's opener, Josh Webster was still the Porsche Carrera Cup GB runner-up. Now, Webster – who worked as a Tesco delivery driver during the lockdown – is looking to go one better and add to his 2014 crown. Also watch out for the battle between new GB Junior Harry King and finalist Lorcan Hanafin, along with the racing return of ex-F3 driver Sam MacLeod.



2 EVEN MORE GINETTA JUNIOR UNPREDICTABILITY

It can be very difficult to predict who will triumph in Ginetta Junior. But this year it's even tougher than usual as none of the drivers have taken a podium before. There are only four racers who have completed a full season in the series, but these are not proven frontrunners, and then there's a whole bunch of rookies fighting for honours. The champion is anyone's guess.



1 DIVERSE RANGE OF SUPPORT SERIES

As well as the JCW Mini series, the feeder Cooper class will feature at three BTCC rounds. Another new series will be the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB, as the Cayman contest joins the bill at Croft. The popular Mini Se7ens (below) and Miglias also make a comeback at the first Brands Hatch meeting, and three Ginetta GT5 Challenge fixtures make for a range of categories to watch.





Ashmore (right) with Team Green chief engineer Tony Cicale and Jacques Villeneuve, Laguna Seca 1994

THE KEY SIGNING WHO TOOK REYNARD TO ANOTHER LEVEL

Staff transfers between customer racing car manufacturers were rare at the height of their 1990s pomp, especially at a senior technical level. But Bruce Ashmore's move from Lola to Reynard bucked the trend and set in motion a shift in the balance of power in US open-wheel racing

BY JAMES NEWBOLD

Reynard 941 was a winner straight out of the box with Michael Andretti

Reynard's reputation for conquering new series went before it. Having won its first race in Formula 3 with Andy Wallace at Silverstone in 1985 and repeated the trick in Formula 3000 with Johnny Herbert at Jerez in 1988, the pressure was on as it geared up for its Indycar debut at Surfers Paradise in 1994.

Chief designer Malcolm Oastler was company founder Adrian Reynard's golden boy and armed with the drawings for what would have been the 1993 Galmer – an evolution of Andy Brown and Alan Mertens' 1992 Indianapolis 500-winning design – but crucially lacking first-hand experience of Indycar. However, Reynard knew just the man who could provide it: Bruce Ashmore.

Ashmore had joined Lola as an apprentice in 1976 while studying mechanical engineering at nearby Cambridge University and had worked his way up to chief designer

by 1987, filling the shoes of Penske-bound Nigel Bennett. During that time, he turned his hand to the awesome Nissan R90CK that took pole for the 1990 Le Mans 24 Hours, while his Lolas won four straight Indycar titles between 1990 and 1993, including the 1990 Indianapolis 500 with Arie Luyendyk.

Ashmore singles out the Lola T91/00 that Michael Andretti used to win the 1991 title as his favourite-ever car design: "It was based a lot on the 1990 car, but it just needed a tweak," he says. "I improved the aerodynamics a bit and the geometries were too locked in on the 1990 car, so I just gave it a bit more adjustability."

But by 1993, Bennett's Penske designs had started to fight back, and an overworked Ashmore asked Lola boss Eric Broadley to consider expanding its operations to include a US-based design office to cut down on travel from the UK. But he was firmly

rebuffed, with Broadley preferring to keep everything based in Huntingdon.

At a career crossroads, having achieved "pretty much everything that I wanted to do" in his 17 years at Lola, Ashmore was impressed by Reynard's infectious enthusiasm during a chance meeting at Indianapolis and took the plunge in July 1993 of becoming technical director at Reynard, where he found an entirely different culture than he'd known at Lola.

Where Broadley's core focus was on suspension geometry – "he knew aerodynamics were important, he just thought he could design a car without a windtunnel!" – at Reynard a "top-down" focus on aerodynamics "to the point where we designed our own windtunnels" and forensic attention to detail were the order of the day. That suited Ashmore just fine: he regarded his emphasis on thorough windtunnel testing to validate aero numbers



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as a key strength. In that regard, the two companies closely reflected their founders.

“Eric was very hands-on with the design, he loved working at the drawing board and really did control a lot of the geometries that went on the cars,” Ashmore says. “He was very involved in that, but not so much windtunnel testing, whereas Adrian was more conceptual and focused on design philosophies.

“He was good at noticing when we had a problem and getting everybody together to solve it before it took effect. That was a big strength of Reynard over Lola.”

Reynard would seek the best drivers and partner teams to run its cars – not to mention the best engines and tyres, as its cars were designed to run on Firestones – and also took a keen interest in the staff on those teams as part of a philosophy it called ‘good guy racing’.

“We made sure all the good guys got



Reynard (right) gave his “top guy” Oastler (left) unquestionable support

onto our teams and if we recognised a bad apple in a team then we would do everything in our power to get them replaced,” explains Ashmore. “We figured if our teams have all the good guys, then they will win and all the bad guys will end up on the other teams and they will lose.”

Shortly before joining, Reynard took Ashmore out to dinner and informed him

“We figured if our teams have all the good guys, then they will win”

in no uncertain terms that if there was any friction with Oastler, then the latter would always win out.

“He said, ‘Malcolm is my top guy, if you don’t get on with him, I’m going to support him and you’ll be out of the door,’” Ashmore recalls. “That was fine, because I had met Malcolm and I thought he would be a good guy to work with.”

Ashmore found in Oastler a kindred spirit – who had also progressed through the Formula Ford ranks – with a passion for aerodynamics and making cars simple. ▶

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1995 marked start of seven-year CART title run for Reynard



Villeneuve won 1995 Indy 500

Indeed, upon his arrival Ashmore was given free rein to tweak Oastler's 94I as he saw fit, but "changed hardly anything". Sure enough, it continued Reynard's tradition of winning on its series debut in Australia with Formula 1 refugee Andretti and Chip Ganassi Racing, despite a rushed pre-race engine change and early contact with the wall.

"Everything was driven to winning that first race," confirms Ashmore. "Adrian would come down to the windtunnel and you'd tell him everything we'd found. Then he'd say, 'How's that going to work at Surfers?' It wouldn't surprise me if that was how he went about each series that they had entered."

That began a flood of success as Reynard won back-to-back Indy 500s in 1995 and 1996, and from 1995 won every CART title until 2001, the year before it went bankrupt. In addition to working with Oastler on car development, a core part of Ashmore's remit had been to oversee the design and build of the Auto Research Centre, a windtunnel and CFD facility in Indianapolis servicing major

manufacturers. That responsibility gradually expanded as he was appointed president of Reynard North America in 1999 and he describes the two-year period splitting time across various projects – which included running Reynard's newly purchased sportscar arm, Riley & Scott – prior to his departure in November 2000 as "the busiest period of my life".

"I was working all the time," he says. "I had offices at Reynard North America, ARC and Riley & Scott, and I would bounce between all three. Whichever company I felt needed me, that's where I was."

Needing a new challenge, two years as technical director at Forsythe Racing followed – his first experience of directly working for a team. He helped to integrate the two sides of the "disjointed" outfit which, before his arrival, "didn't have a computer network joining the teams, so all the data was separate".

Patrick Carpentier made good on his promise to become a race winner, despite the tumult caused by Reynard's bankruptcy, which meant Ashmore had to take on

development himself, and effectively turned Forsythe into a manufacturer in its own right to remain competitive. Carpentier ended 2002 third and, although Ashmore was no longer with the team when Paul Tracy gave Forsythe the title in 2003 – having left to set up his own design and development agency – he could feel more than a little satisfied with the part he had played in turning its fortunes around.

"It was a super-competitive time," he says. "Then at the end of that year [2002] they switched to Lola and it pretty much became a spec car series."

Today Ashmore Design works on various projects in and out of motorsport, having pitched for the 2012 chassis contract that eventually went to Dallara. The Italian marque currently has a near-monopoly on spec racing series, with Lola going the same way as Reynard and March before it in 2012, but some things haven't changed in the intervening years. Just as in Reynard's period of late 1990s domination, the team at the top is owned by one Chip Ganassi... ■



Juan Pablo Montoya setting the pace, Detroit 1999

WRT Audi R8 leads GPX Porsche on its way to a composed victory



WRT Audi is the 'San Marino' supremo

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE
ENDURANCE CUP
IMOLA (ITA)
26 JULY
ROUND 1/4**

The opening round of the GT World Challenge Europe season at Imola was, for some, the first competitive outing in over nine months. For Audi and Team WRT, it was a chance to fire a warning shot to the rest of the field as Mirko Bortolotti, Kelvin van der Linde and Matthieu Vaxivière claimed a largely comfortable victory.

That the R8's winning margin over the GPX Racing Porsche 911 GT3-R of Mathieu Jaminet, Matt Campbell and Patrick Pilet was only 3.4 seconds masks the sheer dominance of the Audi trio, who controlled the race from the start of the second hour after a remarkable stint from van der Linde.

The South African took over from Vaxivière, rejoining in fifth – where the

Audi had qualified – but hit the front within 20 minutes. Using the Audi's V10 grunt down the straights, van der Linde delivered two sublime overtakes under braking for Rivazza, first on FIA Formula 2 regular Louis Deletraz's Porsche for fourth and then the Mercedes of Timur Boguslavskiy for third.

Before long, van der Linde caught and passed the SMP Ferrari of ex-Williams Formula 1 driver Sergey Sirotkin to claim second on the run towards Tamburello and pulled off another decisive manoeuvre on Nicklas Nielsen's AF Corse Ferrari 488 before building a handsome 16s advantage.

The obstacles were numerous but the Audi held firm. Three full-course-yellow periods before van der Linde's charge had already disrupted proceedings, with the third doing for the polesitting Attempto Racing Audi of Mattia Drudi, Kim-Luis Schramm and Frederic Vervisch.

Vervisch held the early lead before and after two safety car interventions – brought

out for Christian Hook's altercation with the Rivazza barrier and Petru Razvan Umbrurescu's Bentley being given a helping hand into wall exiting Tosa by the Mercedes of Remon Vos – but suffered a botched pitstop when the third caution period coincided with the first round of stops.

Almost the entire field had to navigate their way through the narrow Imola pitlane, with the Attempto crew having to reposition Vervisch's R8 in the box to allow the mechanics to service it. This dropped it down the order and it eventually retired.

Two further full-course yellows bunched the pack up in the closing stages, preventing Bortolotti from extending the margin further. The Audi had been leading by a whopping 26s before the final safety car period.

Jaminet brought the GPX Porsche home in second but only after staving off a valiant attack from the AKKA ASP Mercedes of Felipe Fraga, Raffaele Marciello and Boguslavskiy, and the second WRT Audi of Christopher Mies, Dries Vanthoor and Charles Weerts.

It was a difficult day for the 2019 benchmark, Lamborghini. The FFF Racing Huracan GT3 of Andrea Caldarelli, Marco Mapelli and Dennis Lind had been on the cusp of the top 10 before suffering a broken damper in the final hour. There was some joy for the Italian marque though, as the Barwell line-up of Frederik Schandorff, Patrick Kujala and Alex MacDowall claimed the Silver Cup class victory with 12th overall.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON



Champion team FFF was outside the top 10 even before damper damage

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Hamlin leaves it late to break poor run of form

NASCAR CUP
KANSAS (USA)
23 JULY
ROUND 19/36

Joe Gibbs Racing's Denny Hamlin held on for his second consecutive NASCAR Cup victory at Kansas Speedway, having grabbed the lead with 13 of 267 laps to go.

His triumph put an end to a streak of three sub-par finishes as he passed Kevin Harvick for the lead and held off a furious challenge from Team Penske's Brad Keselowski to win.

Hamlin led the race following the break between Stages 2 and 3, as the lead-lap cars all pitted. The Toyota Camry pilot was the first to rejoin after stopping for just two tyres.

But pile-ups in the following laps



– including a multi-car incident triggered by Joey Logano drifting into the back of Harvick – helped Hendrick Motorsports' Chase Elliott into the lead ahead of Hamlin.

A hefty impact for Ryan Preece against the infield wall brought the race back under caution, before a brief red flag was called to clear the track of debris.

Hamlin remained among the lead group, despite a further flurry of cautions in the final 70 laps, but was overcome in

several late changes for the lead.

But on lap 255, Hamlin went to the outside of Harvick and was able to clear him for the lead, and was followed through by Keselowski – who kept the pressure on.

Hamlin stayed firm, resisting Keselowski's advances to claim his 42nd series win by 0.5 seconds. It was also his fifth victory of the 2020 season – the most of any driver.

JIM UTTER

Brilliant debutant Vidales

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP
IMOLA (ITA)
25-26 JULY
ROUND 2/10

David Vidales had been set to make his car racing debut in the Formula Regional European Championship this season, but when that fell through he had to wait until last weekend's brace of Renault Eurocup races at Imola to make his single-seater bow.

But for the 18-year-old Spaniard, the delay paid off as he claimed a double victory for JD Motorsport to become the first debutant to score back-to-back Eurocup victories since a certain Lando Norris in 2016.

An impressive getaway from pole earned a lights-to-flag triumph in the opening race, for which Renault

Junior and Monza race two winner Caio Collet had no reply. A safety car – called when Petr Ptacek hit the gravel at Tamburello – was of little issue as Vidales ran clear at the restart to a 0.5-second success.

A 2.5s gap came the chequered flag in the second race was again reflective of Vidales' composure. Despite missing out on Sunday pole to team-mate William Alatalo, his time in second place didn't last for long. He cruised past on the run to Turn 1 and never looked back.

Imola proved far more of a struggle for 2019 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award winner Johnathan Hoggard, however. Last year's British F3 runner-up retired from race one on his debut. He had looked set for points the next day after starting 11th, but he ran off track and fell to an eventual 18th, one lap down.



WEEKEND WINNERS

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE CUP

IMOLA (ITA)
Mirko Bortolotti/Matthieu Vaxiviere/
Kelvin van der Linde
Team WRT (Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo)

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP IMOLA (ITA)

Races 1 and 2 David Vidales, JD Motorsport

NASCAR CUP KANSAS (USA)

Denny Hamlin, Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

NASCAR XFINITY KANSAS (USA)

Brandon Jones, Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Supra)

NASCAR TRUCK KANSAS (USA)

Race 1 Austin Hill, Hattori Racing
Enterprises (Toyota Tundra)

Race 2 Matt Crafton
ThorSport Racing (Ford F-150)

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS GOIANIA (BRA)

Race 1 Ricardo Zonta
RCM Motorsport (Toyota Corolla)

Race 2 Rubens Barrichello
Full Time Sports (Toyota Corolla)

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP ROME (ITA)

Alexey Lukyanuk/Dmitriy Eremeev
Sainteloc Junior Team (Citroen C3 R5)

For full results visit motorsportstats.com



France's new two-wheeled hero lands a hammer blow

ALL PICS: GOLD AND GOOSE

MOTOGP
JEREZ (ESP)
26 JULY
ROUND 2/13

Insert your own cliché about the timely arrival of London buses, as Petronas SRT's Fabio Quartararo dealt Marc Marquez's 2020 title defence another hammer blow with a devastating romp to his second successive MotoGP victory in the Andalusian Grand Prix at Jerez.

Reigning champion Marquez's heroic effort to return to action just days after surgery on a broken right arm ultimately had to be abandoned after qualifying on Saturday, leaving the door wide open for Spanish GP winner Quartararo to take command in the championship.

After completing his first task by securing

a second pole in a row (albeit fortunately, as Maverick Vinales' faster final effort was scrubbed for exceeding track limits) the start would be crucial for Quartararo.

Lining up alongside the Yamaha-mounted pair was Pramac Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia. Both he and team-mate Jack Miller almost derailed Quartararo's Spanish GP when they jumped him and used the Ducati's massive horsepower advantage over the M1 to keep the French rider at bay.

Task two was executed to perfection, as Quartararo utilised Yamaha's new holeshot device to excellent effect at lights out. Task three was to succeed where Vinales had failed seven days earlier and use the M1's corner speed to dart into the distance.

Quartararo's afternoon was dealt a significant boost when Vinales ran wide, which allowed Valentino Rossi to put his

factory Yamaha into second. Though the latter's practice speed suggested he'd be a closer match to Quartararo, Rossi – having won his fight against team “politics” that forced him to use Vinales and Quartararo's set-up for the Spanish GP – was running comparable pace to his team-mate.

By the end of lap three, Quartararo had seized the opportunity this presented and was 1.6 seconds clear. His lap times from the second to the fifth tour were some 0.6s to 0.8s quicker than his factory team Yamaha counterparts. This meant his lead stood at 3s after six laps, and in a performance reminiscent of three-time world champion Jorge Lorenzo's Yamaha glory days, he continued to open up his lead to over seven seconds – his efforts all in the mid-high 1m38s until the final five laps.

Effortless, however, it certainly wasn't. Air temperatures above 40C and a 60C track made it a brutal race of survival, with Quartararo admitting it was “one of the hardest races of my life”.

Of the 21 starters, only 13 made the finish. Bagnaia, running second after overtaking the works Yamaha pair, dropped out with a technical issue on lap 19. Franco Morbidelli, who was hounding Rossi for a podium, was taken out by another Yamaha engine issue on lap 16. Danilo Petrucci, Miller, Aleix Espargaro, Brad Binder and Iker Lecuona ended their races in the gravel thanks to the greasy conditions.

Vinales was lucky to avoid the same fate, as Rossi's superior braking capabilities



Rossi (46) loses out to team-mate Vinales but would still finish third



Quartararo deployed
Yamaha's cornering
speed to break free



Marquez attempted a
comeback but withdrew
after qualifying

forced the Spaniard to push. Several failed attempts later, Vinales finally scythed through on the inside of Turn 9 on the penultimate lap when Rossi ran wide.

Vinales then put 1s between himself and his team-mate to bag second, while Rossi spent all of the experience of 25 years in grand prix racing to put a halt on Takaaki Nakagami's late surge to complete the first Yamaha podium lockout in six years and secure his first rostrum since Austin 2019.

Nakagami grabbed the opportunity to be Honda's leading light, while its star assets Marquez and Cal Crutchlow battled injury, and wound up 0.6s from a maiden podium in fourth ahead of Suzuki's Joan Mir.

Andrea Dovizioso struggled from 14th to a damage-limiting sixth on the factory Ducati. Though an electronics tweak allowed him to brake better, he's still searching for lost speed. KTM's Pol Espargaro was left ruing a crash in qualifying, which meant he started 12th on a weekend where he felt he could have fought for something "great". Alex Marquez flew the factory Honda flag in absence of his brother in eighth, having started last.

Now France's most successful MotoGP rider, Quartararo has done what he needed to do in securing a maximum of 50 points. With the coming Czech and Austrian GP triple-header posing a potential headache for the down-on-power (and apparently fragile) Yamahas, Quartararo's back-to-back Jerez wins may be all the more crucial.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 2/16, JEREZ, 26 JULY (25 LAPS - 68.708 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	PetronasYamaha	41m22.666s
2	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Yamaha	+4.495s
3	Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Yamaha	+5.546s
4	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+6.113s
5	Joan Mir (ESP)	Suzuki	+7.693s
6	Andrea Dovizioso (ITA)	Ducati	+12.554s
7	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	KTM	+17.488s
8	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Honda	+19.357s
9	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Avintia Ducati	+23.523s
10	Alex Rins (ESP)	Suzuki	+27.091s
11	Tito Rabat (ESP)	Avintia Ducati	+33.628s
12	Bradley Smith (GBR)	Aprilia	+36.306s
13	Cal Crutchlow (GBR)	LCR Honda	-1 lap
R	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	19 laps-technical
R	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha	16 laps-engine
R	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	12 laps-accident
R	Danilo Petrucci (ITA)	Ducati	11 laps-accident
R	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	10 laps-accident
R	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	8 laps-accident
R	Iker Lecuona (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	5 laps-accident
R	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Tech3 KTM	0 laps-accident
W	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Honda	DNS-injury

Winner's average speed 99.630mph. **Fastest lap** Quartararo 1m38.119s, 100.836mph.

QUALIFYING 2

1 Quartararo 1m37.007s; **2** Vinales 1m37.102s; **3** Bagnaia 1m37.176s; **4** Rossi 1m37.342s; **5** Oliveira 1m37.344s; **6** Morbidelli 1m37.412s; **7** Miller 1m37.423s; **8** Nakagami 1m37.464s; **9** Binder 1m37.596s; **10** Mir 1m37.600s; **11** Petrucci 1m37.906s; **12** P Espargaro 1m40.277s.

QUALIFYING 1

1 Oliveira 1m37.355s; **2** Morbidelli 1m37.512s; **3** Crutchlow 1m37.644s; **4** Dovizioso 1m37.656s; **5** Zarco 1m37.761s; **6** A Espargaro 1m37.885s; **7** Lecuona 1m38.206s; **8** Rabat 1m38.211s; **9** Smith 1m38.310s; **10** Rins 1m38.601s; **11** A Marquez 1m38.648s; **NS** M Marquez.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Quartararo 50; **2** Vinales 40; **3** Dovizioso 26; **4** Nakagami 19; **5** P Espargaro 19; **6** Rossi 16; **7** Miller 13; **8** A Marquez 12; **9** Zarco 12; **10** Morbidelli 11; **10** Mir 11; **12** Bagnaia 9; **13** Oliveira 8; **14** Petrucci 7; **15** Rabat 7; **16** Rins 6; **17** Smith 5; **18** Crutchlow 3; **18** Binder 3.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Yamaha 50; **2** Ducati 26; **3** Honda 19; **4** KTM 19; **5** Suzuki 11; **6** Aprilia 5.



L-r: Rossi, Quartararo and
Vinales complete Yamaha
podium clean sweep

**WEEKEND
WINNERS**

MOTO2

JEREZ (ESP)

Enea Bastianini
Italtrans Racing Team
(Kalex)

MOTO 3

JEREZ (ESP)

Tatsuki Suzuki (below)
Sic58 Squadra Corse
(Honda)



NEXT REPORT

**CZECH GRAND PRIX
13 AUGUST ISSUE**

How long can Quartararo maintain his 100% record for this season? Or will Brno and the Red Bull Ring expose the Yamaha's power deficiencies?

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Capacity 35-car grid has been whittled down for the opening round at Oulton Park this weekend

JEP motorsport IMAGES

‘CONSOLIDATION’ YEAR FOR BRITISH GT AFTER COVID-19

BRITISH GT

A reduced grid of 21 cars consisting of 12 GT3s and nine GT4s will start the British GT season at Oulton Park this weekend.

The championship had announced a capacity 35-car grid prior to the media day in March, featuring 19 GT3s and 16 GT4s, but several cars have withdrawn due to factors relating to the coronavirus pandemic.

Both Aston Martin Vantage GT3s due to be entered by 2019 drivers’ title-winning team TF Sport have pulled out. The reduced programme for sister Aston squad Beechdean AMR – which will conduct a round-by-round schedule with team boss Andrew Howard beginning at Brands Hatch instead of its planned two-car entry – means there will be no full-season Aston Martin entry in the premier class for the first time since 2010.

The championship has gained two extra McLaren

720S GT3s – entered by Jenson Team Rocket RJN and Optimum Motorsport – plus Duncan Cameron’s AF Corse Ferrari that will enter every round except the second Donington Park meeting that clashes with the Le Mans 24 Hours.

But the series has also lost a further two McLarens from Balfe and Optimum, the JRM Bentley of reigning GT4 Pro-Am champions Martin Plowman and Kelvin Fletcher, John Seale’s JMH Lamborghini and the G-Cat Racing Porsche.

Steller Performance has not announced any drivers for its Audi R8 GT3 and remains on the full-season entry list, but will not feature at Oulton Park, while drivers for the second 2 Seas Motorsport GT3 McLaren had yet to be confirmed at the time Autosport went to press.

In GT4, five McLaren 570S GT4s have fallen by the wayside, including the two Driver Development Programme cars run by Tolman Motorsport, Graham Johnson’s Balfe car and both Optimum Motorsport entries, which have switched to International GT Open.

“The 2020 season has undoubtedly shifted from a year of great expectation – and especially after securing so many GT3 entries – to one of consolidation,” said British GT championship manager Lauren Granville.

“Clearly a lot has changed since we announced the capacity entry in early March. But, while we’re obviously disappointed to have lost several cars, the strong initial entry has at least helped us to maintain competitive GT3 and GT4 grids.

“I’ve also been pleasantly surprised by the subsequent interest from new entries like AF Corse, Optimum and Balfe, as well as others who we expect to return before season’s end.”

JAMES NEWBOLD



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

➔ P69 OPINION

Strong entry expected for Minis

MINI CHALLENGE

The Mini Challenge is set to feature the largest grid of all the categories appearing at the season-opening Donington Park British Touring Car Championship event this weekend as it makes its delayed first appearance at a TOCA meeting.

The Mini series has replaced the Renault UK Clio Cup on the BTCC bill for 2020 and, while it won't feature the capacity grid expected prior to the coronavirus pandemic, around 30 drivers are still due to compete.

"We were originally expecting to be absolutely full, but we've had a few people unfortunately pull out," said promoter Antony Williams. "Considering the backdrop, that's a sterling effort."

Unlike the other BTCC support series,

the Mini Challenge has opted to dramatically reduce its number of rounds this year amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Instead of appearing at eight BTCC events, the top JCW class will now run at just five.

"We've involved people in the decisions and went with the majority view of what to do," Williams said. "That was to cut back the number of rounds quite considerably and that seems to have worked."

"It wasn't just the budget but the logistics – having so many events in a short space of time if you're not doing it for a living makes it a struggle."

The second-tier Cooper class will therefore appear at three BTCC weekends instead of two and Williams expects this to now have larger entries than prior to the lockdown.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Williams and Maximum join forces

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Former British GT driver Luke Williams will contest the 2020 Ginetta GT4 Supercup series with Maximum Motorsport, taking the place of reigning Civic Cup champion Lee Deegan.

The 2017 National Formula Ford champion most recently raced an HHC Motorsport-run

McLaren 570S GT4 last season, taking a best result of third at Oulton Park alongside Tom Jackson.

Ahead of the coronavirus pandemic, Williams had intended to compete in the NLS endurance series in Germany, but instead will race in the UK alongside ex-British Touring Car driver and Maximum team boss Stewart Lines.

"It's so last minute I can't put pressure on getting a result," said Williams. "We're not going there to make up the numbers but I can't really say where we'll be performance wise, but it's nice not to be the one being chased and I can do the chasing."

"The championship is very competitive and other drivers have been testing a lot more than we have. I'm excited and ready to go back racing, hopefully we just get the bit of luck you need."

Williams tested the car for the first time earlier this week at Brands Hatch ahead of the opening round at Donington Park this weekend, with the intention to also do the six subsequent events this season.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Williams will make the switch from British GT

DAVENPORT TO GIVE LIGIER JS2 R UK RACE DEBUT

BRITCAR

Former British Touring Car Championship driver Luke Davenport will return to racing this weekend in the Britcar Endurance Championship at Brands Hatch, giving the Ligier JS2 R its UK competition debut.

The planned multi-race programme alongside Marcus Vivian will be a first regular programme for British GT4 race winner Davenport since a BTCC qualifying crash at Croft in 2017 left him in an induced coma.

The 27-year-old has had irregular race outings since his accident, which also shattered his pelvis, contesting the 2018 Fun Cup 25 Hours of Spa and a Britcar race at Donington Park the same year in an ex-Rob Austin Audi A4 entered by Reflex Racing.

Davenport's return with the Ligier (below), which has its own one-make series in France and in support of the European Le Mans Series, also comes with Derek Holden's Reflex squad in what is thought to be the only example of the car in the UK.

It will be entered in Class 4 against GT4, TCR and GT3 machinery.

Davenport told Autosport: "It's small steps to begin with, but Britcar is an ideal place for us both to start and good for me to get back into it with a big multi-class grid. I still believe pace-wise I'm just as strong as I was, I'm maybe not quite as fit as I was but the only thing I'm missing out on is a bit of racecraft."

Davenport added that Vivian "shows a lot of promise" and plans to race the car in Europe.

JAMES NEWBOLD





CLIO CUP UK

Clio Cup UK teams have supported the decision not to run the championship this year following the coronavirus pandemic.

The category was due to feature the new fifth-generation Clio and race on the British GT bill this season, but Renault Sport Racing announced last week that the launch of the revised series has been postponed to 2021.

This will give teams more time to get to grips with the car, and the new machines are now expected to arrive in September. British teams have been invited to take part in European events later in the year.

“We would be better having a good season next year than a poor one this year that would only damage the reputation,” said Richard Colburn, boss of longstanding Clio squad Westbourne Motorsport. “It had

been tough because of the new car – we hadn’t been able to prove it to anybody. The Clio Cup’s got a 20-year history of great cars and I’m sure it will be great in Europe – I would like to do some of the later European rounds if we can.”

Mike Ritchie, owner of the MRM team that powered Jack Young to last year’s title, added: “I think, because we were coming into a new car and COVID-19 struck, if they had run it the grid would’ve been so small it would’ve looked underrated and it would’ve gone downhill from there. The new car does look very good, so it was the right decision.”

Ritchie is optimistic that the series will be able to bounce back next year. He says that the two drivers he had lined up for this season both intend to race in 2021.

“It’s always been a good recipe and the cars are cheaper than they used to be, so it just needs the first 10 cars to be out there and show it’s good racing, and people will come,” he said.

Team Pyro boss Mark Hunt feels it was the right decision but says Renault Sport Racing needs to look at inventive ways of making the series stand out next year.

“You have only one go at bringing in a new championship and the impact wouldn’t be as good as it possibly could be [if it launched in 2020],” he said. “You need to do something a little bit different – perhaps have a couple of hillclimbs too.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Just one 2020 Pickups and Super Silhouette round

BARC

The Pickup Truck Racing and Super Silhouette championships will feature just one event this year.

Amid financial and health concerns – along with worries about the lack of spectators at the usually well-attended truck meetings the Pickups are often part of – the decision was made to have a radical cutback of the calendar.

Before the pandemic, the two SHP-run series

were due to have five events between July and November, but now they will just appear at Brands Hatch on 7-8 November.

SHP founder Sonny Howard explained that, after looking at the costs of buying track time and other expenditure involved in running the meetings, he asked competitors what they wanted to do.

“There were five or six Pickup truck drivers who said that they would race but, unless we can guarantee

[good] numbers, we can’t make it stack up,” he said.

However, Howard has been encouraged by the amount of interest in that sole Brands Hatch event, and is expecting around 20 Pickup trucks to compete.

“During the closedown, five trucks changed hands,” he added. “The interest is still there, the motivation is still there but they wanted it as it was. They wanted to race with the big trucks and big crowds.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH



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IN THE HEADLINES

CHAIMONGKOL BACK TO F3

Thai driver Sasakorn Chaimongkol will remain at Hillspeed for the 2020 BRDC British F3 Championship. The 20-year-old has already contested the series full-time for the past two seasons, taking his maiden win at Silverstone last year and eighth overall in the standings. He will join Brit Oliver Clarke at Hillspeed, with a further 18 entries set for the opening round at Oulton Park this weekend.

CHAPMAN STEPS UP TO JCW

Scottish Mini Cooper Cup race winner Hannah Chapman will step up to the Mini Challenge JCW class for two rounds this season, teaming up with LUX Motorsport. Chapman, who last year competed in the Cooper Pro championship, will test at each of the five rounds in the truncated 2020 season, racing at Silverstone and the Brands Hatch finale. "It has been an ambition of mine for so long, to have it become a reality is just incredible and I'm ready to make the most of every second of it," Chapman said.

BANKS ROLLS HIS CLIO 172

Seconds after a bold first-lap outside pass attempt at Campbell corner narrowly failed to wrest the lead of last weekend's Tin Tops race from Andrew Windmill at Thruxton, Dave Banks walked away from a shunt that wrecked the Renault Clio 172 he shares with Ryan Colvey. "I slid wide at Village and thought I could get it back, but hit the marshal's post on the inside," said Banks, who escaped injury. Having scattered the tyre wall, the car came to a halt on its left side, floorpan towards officials. Windmill won the shortened restart.

UNUSUAL MALIBU RACES

Shropshire-based American Geoffrey Ethelston made a brief racing debut at Thruxton last weekend, in his 1965 Chevrolet Malibu SS (below) in the Classic Sports Car Club's Swinging Sixties event. The imposing 5.7-litre 'high-boy' had previously been configured for drag racing, but Ethelston's race only lasted two laps.



JONES



Three Scottish Renegades Cup events are planned during 2020

Scottish Formula Ford drivers will get to race in 2020 after all

SCOTTISH RENEGADES CUP

Scottish Formula Ford 1600 drivers will race in 2020 following the creation of a three-round Scottish Renegades Cup.

The category failed to make the revised 2020 Scottish Motor Racing Club calendar, which has been trimmed due to a lack of daylight hours in the new one-day events.

The Scottish Renegades Cup, organised by FF1600 regular Neil Broome, will take place over three weekends, with the opening round joining James Beckett's Heritage series at Oulton Park in August and two rounds at Knockhill.

Broome told Autosport: "The Renegades Cup is a great opportunity for FF1600 in

Scotland to go racing this year and we feel it is an important part of keeping the category alive for the future.

"We're looking forward to the collaboration with FF1600 people [in England], especially those in the north where Knockhill is arguably closer."

The 13 September Knockhill round will run as a separate class within the popular Knockhill Motor Sports Club-run Super Lap Scotland category, whereby cars compete in a time trial format.

The October finale will have a standard qualifying and two-race format, alongside Super Lap Scotland and will also incorporate the David Leslie Trophy.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

Three MG classes to run as series

MGCC

Three of the MG Car Club's categories, including its popular MG Trophy, will not run as championships this year amid the fall-out from the coronavirus pandemic.

As well as the MG Trophy, the Midget and Sprite Challenge and Metro Cup have also elected not to be point-scoring competitions during the shortened 2020 season.

MG Trophy chairman Pete Macwaters explained it was a "difficult decision" to take, but was made to avoid pressuring competitors into taking part in

order to score vital points.

"We have drivers scattered all around the country and the last thing we wanted to do was influence them in any way by running it as a championship," he said. "Graham Ross is in Scotland and had a different set of rules [at the time] and could only travel five miles to defend his championship.

"It's just not fair – we've got a smattering of ages and some people wouldn't have been comfortable with it. Since then we've had people say 'thanks very much for doing that'"

Discussions were held with Motorsport UK to ensure the

decision would not affect the category's championship status going forward.

Entries were expected to drop as a result – and just 15 drivers participated in the Donington Park MG Trophy opener earlier this month – but Macwaters was pleased that five new drivers were still involved at Donington.

These were former junior dragster competitor Andrew Herron, MR2 driver Ashley Parsons, MG Owners' Club racer Darren Harris, and ex-karters Kayleigh Powell and John Donnelly.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

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Bove beats Hodkin to the double at Mallory Park

750MC

Four-time 750 Formula champion Peter Bove opened his 2020 campaign with two close-fought victories at Mallory Park.

Bove had to overcome Dave Hodkin, the 2013 title winner, who was fast at the start of both races and led in race one before Bove grabbed the initiative at the hairpin on lap seven of 18. Hodkin – in the self-built HRD Mk2 that he debuted at Oulton Park last October – closed the gap that Bove had built up, but the Darvi driver set the fastest lap and capitalised on traffic to seal the win.

Hodkin swept around the outside of Bove at Gerard's on the second lap of race two and held the advantage over his rival until lap 12 before finishing runner-up again. Reigning double champion Mark Glover had two largely solitary races to third.

Historic 750 Formula boasted a capacity



grid and provided two superb races with several cars in contention. Lyndon Thruston's DNC led the early stages of both contests although he eventually had to settle for fourth and third places. Martin Depper's Centaur Mk14 was the on-the-road winner of the opener but was disqualified for inadvertently overtaking backmarkers under yellows at Lake Esses.

Trefor Slatter, in his Centaur Mk11, took the spoils instead but in his bid to take the lead from Depper in race two he went grass-cutting at the Esses before spinning twice at Shaw's corner. Chris Wilson's rapid

Cooper Mk9 claimed two second positions.

Gary Prebble dominated the opening rounds of the Hot Hatch championship in his Honda Civic against relatively slim opposition in the top division. The other, more well-supported, classes, also had double winners in Phil Wright and 2019 champion David Drinkwater.

In spite of slow starts, Sigmax racer Harry Senior bounced back from disappointment at Croft – he was unable to start the races there due to a gearbox issue – to take a clean sweep of three wins.

IAN SOWMAN

COVID measures get approval from competitors

BARC

The British Automobile Racing Club has released the results of a survey that shows large support for the measures the club has taken to get racing back under way.

Competitors, marshals, officials and series organisers were asked a range of questions about the club's opening two meetings of the season, including whether they felt safe and the quality of guidance offered to them about coronavirus.

In total, 96.8% of respondents said they did feel safe at the race meetings



and, encouragingly, only 1.4% said they were less likely to attend another event in the future because of their initial experience.

The BARC also scored strongly in terms of how information about the events was communicated

beforehand and 94% felt the club's COVID-19 guidance covered all of the details they needed to know.

While over 90% felt the new protocols were adhered to during the race weekends, there were some respondents who raised concerns about

people not following social distancing guidelines and the use of face masks.

"There has been a huge amount of work put into getting the sport up and running again, and it's great to see that these efforts have been well received by the people on the ground," said BARC chief executive Ben Taylor.

"We have learned a lot from these first two events and of course we can make further improvements but it is encouraging that, of all our respondents, there was only one person who didn't have an enjoyable event."

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Could this be Keen's year at last?

The spate of COVID-related withdrawals from the British GT championship leaves a clear favourite on paper, but it's not as simple as that

JAMES NEWBOLD

Joe Osborne describes Phil Keen as “weird”. In the most endearing way possible, of course. The McLaren factory driver, who spent last year commentating on Keen's latest British GT championship near-miss with GT3 rookie

Adam Balon, has been a fierce competitor of Keen's over the years – witness their battle at Snetterton in 2016, which resulted in Osborne being penalised after taking the flag first – and a team-mate too, having finished third in the Pro-Am class at the 2016 Spa 24 Hours with Keen, Oliver Gavin and Jon Minshaw.

Osborne is therefore well-placed to judge the merits of a driver many are tipping to win this year's British GT title after so many close calls in recent years, particularly in the wake of the withdrawal of several expected contenders amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“He's wicked, there's nothing you can't like about Phil,” Osborne tells Autosport. “I've always been super conscious to portray this self-assured image and Phil is the opposite. That's why I think he's weird in my eyes but also why he's so easy to get on with, because he doesn't have that front of something that he's not. He lets his driving do the talking.”

After winning both Snetterton races, Keen and Balon led the 2019 standings virtually all year, but a few small mistakes from

“Barwell has done a good job developing the car, so I feel we have the equipment to do the job”

smoothie drink entrepreneur Balon – hitting team-mate Sam De Haan at Silverstone, crashing out at Spa and a tangle with a GT4 car at Donington Park – ultimately dropped them to an unrepresentative fourth in the points.

Obviously, Osborne points out that Keen – who set fastest lap at each of the first four races last year across Oulton Park and Snetterton – could be even stronger this year as Balon will “massively benefit” from the continuity of a second year in the familiar environment of the Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan.

“That's going to be worth a lot to him,” says Osborne. “Even Phil probably will be a bit better, because in Adam's first year Phil would have been having to give him as much track time as possible over a weekend for the greater good.”

With fewer rivals up against them – just 12 confirmed GT3 cars feature on the entry list for this weekend's Oulton opener – the expected Pro-Am challenge will come from last year's Oulton race – one poleman Ian Loggie and Yelmer Buurman in the new RAM Mercedes, and fellow Lamborghini entrant Dennis Lind and Michael Igoe, fresh from dominating the GT Cup season opener at Snetterton earlier this month.

Yet it's not just the absence of serial champion Jonny Adam that means this year will have a different feel to it, that's also down to the proliferation of Silver Cup entries. From two full-season entrants last year, this season there will be five, equating to almost half the GT3 field. As Osborne observes, this means Silver crews will have more clout than ever this year and, if Barwell is to win its first overall drivers' title since 2014, it will also have to beat them. When asked, Keen is typically quick to downplay his prospects.

“There are a lot of fast Silver cars this year and I'll be surprised if we can beat them,” he says. “Most good Silver drivers such as Patrick Kujala, Sandy Mitchell, they're only ever going to be a couple of tenths slower than me if not at the same pace.”

“In reality I think they're going to outqualify us and a lot of the British circuits are difficult to overtake around, and if you're only three or four tenths quicker than the car in front then it's very difficult. Obviously the goal is to win overall, but I think we'll just be concentrating on winning the Pro-Am championship.”

Keen reckons that the reduced GT4 field – down from around 20 cars last year to nine – will also play to the Silver crews' advantage as they will afford the Pros fewer opportunities to pass them, while this year's calendar features five one-hour races, which will also offset the disadvantage the extra weight Silver cars carry on the tyres. Osborne helpfully points out that the carbon-tub McLaren 720S – three of which are entered for Silver crews – “does carry its weight pretty well”. But Keen knows all he can do is focus on his own job and to that end feels “as prepared as we can be for the season”, having done plenty of testing. “Barwell has done a good job developing the car around the new [construction] tyre too,” he says, “so I feel like we have the equipment underneath us to do the job.”

For most drivers in the GT arena, reaching works driver status – which Keen achieved with Lamborghini in 2019 – is the holy grail. That he is not an officially endorsed factory driver in 2020 because of his desire to race an ERC Sport Mercedes with Lee Mowle in the Pro-Am class of the GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup is typical of the man. Keen simply loves his racing and, while he likely wouldn't say so himself, getting that long-overdue title in 2020 would mean an awful lot to a driver who, at 36, calls himself an “old napper”. ❄

John a cut above the rest as he takes victory in Magnificent 7s

**THRUXTON
CSCC
25-26 JULY**

Thruxton came alive last weekend as an unprecedented 400 plus competitors were in action for the Classic Sports Car Club's first meeting of the year.

Torrential rain on Saturday afternoon tested typically eclectic grids and the marshals' fortitude, as Spire veteran John Cutmore celebrated his unusual Magnificent Sevens victory over the Caterham hordes.

The Suffolk driver – at the wheel of a Suzuki Hayabusa-powered RB7 – made his mandatory pitstop under a perfectly timed safety car. Cutmore and Tim Bishop's Caterham 7 Roadsport arrived together and resumed two minutes later, joining the crocodile headed by runaway leader Stephen Nuttall. The Caterham Roadsport driver had yet to pit and would have to settle for third, more than minute in arrears, as Cutmore headed Bishop.

Later, on a wet track, Nuttall and Colin Watson (C400) traded the shorter race's lead frantically. Under pressure, Watson arrived at the chicane too quickly on the final lap and ran deep. Nuttall darted past, only for a 10-second jump-start penalty to reverse their order, as Christian Pittard staved off brother Jonathan for third. Cutmore had no confidence in his tyres in the conditions, and dropped down the order, overtaken by team-mate David Watson, screaming his 1440cc RB7 from the back to ninth.

Saturday's big winner was Jamie Sturges who took the first of two Open Series bouts and the New Millennium finale in his SEAT Leon TCR. The husky BMWs of Brad Sheehan (E46 M3) and Dominic Malone (ex-Andy Priaulx BMW E90 World Touring



A well-timed safety car helped Cutmore (98) to take win in Spire RB7

Car shell with an Amspeed 3.2-litre engine transplant) finished 12 seconds adrift in race one. Sheehan subsequently turned the tables on Sturges, with Mark Jones third in Robert Taylor's SEAT. Top gun in the concurrent Jaguar Saloon Series was James Ramm, who worked hard in the first stanza to repel fellow XJS driver Colin Philpott and Tom Robinson's XJR.

Sturges also saw off poleman Russell Humphrey and Mark Wyatt (BMW E92 M3) in the New Millennium race. Third-placed David Marcussen (E46 M3) breathed a sigh of relief when challenger Arran Moulton-Smith (E46 M3) was lapped by Sturges into the chicane on his final tour.

The VW Beetle RSi of Jake and Andre Severs braved heavy rain in Modern Classics, four-wheel drive putting its 3.2-litre VR6 engine's power down in unspectacular style to beat Turbo Tin Top split winner Andy Thompson (SEAT Leon) in an interrupted race.

Andy Southcott hurtled his 2.3-litre Vauxhall-powered spaceframe MG Midget to a Special Saloon & Modsports double. From P11 – the previous winner's 10-place

grid drop – the local man was fortunate not to be penalised for seizing the race-two lead from Ricky-Parker Morris (Peugeot 309 Turbo) under double waved yellows at the left kink before Campbell, while a marshal was attending to Clive Anderson's 5.1-litre BMW Turbo.

A tag at Allard ended a heady fight for third embroiling Marcus Bicknell's Joey Logano-liveried Ford Mustang and James Plant (Austin-Healey Chevrolet clone) as both cars hit the barriers. Malcolm Harding and his Zakspeed Castrol tribute Ford Escort took the place, with Mike Chittenden's big BMW M3 breathing down its neck.

Driving the Lotus Elan in which they finished fourth in last year's Spa Six Hours, Anthony and Ollie Hancock romped to Classic K victory by over 30 seconds once the latter had shaken off early leader Paul Tooms' similar car. The early laps with Allen Tice (Marcos 1800GT) were exciting.

On a damp track, Swinging Sixties leader Jamie Keevill spun his Elan into retirement while lapping a Mini approaching Church on the penultimate tour. Pursuer Ray Barrow (Chevrolet Camaro) watched the drama unfold, and his penalty for overtaking under yellows and pursuer David Thompson's for Jon Wolfe's eager start in their TVR Tuscan V8 left the order intact. Dave Roberts (Datsun 240Z) pipped Julian Howell's well-conducted Mini for third.

Future Classics was a V8 benefit once a worsening smokescreen in his mirrors prompted top qualifier Mark Chilton to retire his Nissan Skyline GT-R R32. Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan) beat Bill Lancashire (Morgan+8) as Alex Taylor's Mazda RX-7 rocketed from the back to take third from Aston and Tony Blake's Porsche Carrera RS.

MARCUS PYE



ALL PICS: JONES



TOUGH CORVETTE DEBUT A 690bhp Chevrolet Corvette C5 gave Mike Coker his first sight of Thruxton in qualifying for the Slicks Series race. The spaceframe chassis was built by 2003 Grand-Am GTS series champion Tommy Riggins in the US in 2005 and raced more recently in European VdeV enduros by Richard and Benton Bryan, with renowned driver coach Nigel Greensall. Sometime Fun Cup racer Coker could have done without a wet race as he failed to make the finish.

THRUXTON WEEKEND WINNERS

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Race 1 John Cutmore (Spire RB7)
Race 2 Colin Watson (Caterham C400)

OPEN SERIES/JAGUAR SALOONS

Race 1 Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon TCR)
Race 2 Brad Sheehan (BMW E46 M3)

NEW MILLENNIUM

Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon TCR)

MODERN CLASSICS/TURBO TIN TOPS/ PUMA CUP

Jake and Andre Severs (VW Beetle RSi Cup)

SPECIAL SALOONS & MODSPORTS

Races 1 & 2 Andy Southcott (MG Midget-Vauxhall)

CLASSIC K

Anthony & Ollie Hancock (Lotus Elan '26R')

SWINGING SIXTIES

Ray Barrow (Chevrolet Camaro, below)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan)

TIN TOPS

Andrew Windmill (Honda Civic Type R Leggera)

SLICKS SERIES

Ollie Brown (Ginetta G55)



SLICKS SERIES GETS OFF TO A WET START Debuting, ironically with a wet race, the Slicks Series adds another arrow to the CSCC's diverse quiver. Fifteen entries was an encouraging start as British Touring Car Championship racer Jake Hill qualified Jamie Sturges' VW Golf TCR on pole and led to the mandatory stops. Team Hard scholarship winner Ollie Brown subsequently forged his Ginetta G55 ahead of Kevin Clarke (BMW M3 CSL) as Sturges slipped to fourth. The race finished prematurely with Matty Evans' BMW 1M Coupe perched atop its own rear wheel at Allard.



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



NIKE IMP-ABARTH HYBRID The Special Saloons and Modsports retrospective attracts some original cars but also welcomes intriguing hybrids. Originated by fabled north Devon fabricator Ken Nichols – constructor of the Nike single-seaters – this spaceframe Imp, which incorporates Formula Ford 2000 Royale suspension, has evolved since Mike Lee hillclimbed it in the 1980s. Powered by a two-litre Fiat Abarth engine developing 200bhp, Kevin and Alan Cooper's rocketship engaged John Cockerton's Porsche 935 in combat before fuel pressure issues intervened!

De Sadeleer begins Radical season with win

**OULTON PARK
MSVR
25 JULY**

Having narrowly missed out on last season's Radical Challenge title, Jerome de Sadeleer started the new campaign with a win in the opening contest at Oulton Park.

He led from the start of race one, with Marcus Clutton in second, as Jac Constable, Jason Rishover and Mark Richards disputed third. Richards suffered fuel pump failure, and after Rishover dived ahead of Constable into Knickerbrook, he then spun back to seventh at Old Hall, promoting Shane Stoney to fourth.

A safety car interlude then almost coincided with the pitstop window, but both de Sadeleer and Clutton missed out and pitted a lap later. Constable was the last one to stay out, leaving Stoney in front, from de Sadeleer and Clutton. But the new leader spun off at Britten's with six of the 29 laps to go, leaving de Sadeleer to head home Clutton for the win, while Stoney recovered to retain third.

Clutton led the sprint race out of Old Hall, as Richards, Constable and Rishover slotted in behind, while de Sadeleer was down in fifth. The lead duo soon consolidated their advantage, and they held station, with Clutton 0.807 seconds clear at the flag.

Both Rishover and de Sadeleer had managed to oust Constable on lap five of 13



De Sadeleer just missed out on last year's Radical title, but won this season's opener

and began to duel for third, until de Sadeleer became stuck in fifth gear. Rishover was left clear in third, as de Sadeleer was unable to prevent Constable reclaiming fourth.

Clutton had the race-three lead from Richards, Constable and de Sadeleer until the pitstop window. Constable made his stop late again and emerged from the pitlane just in front of Richards.

They were nose-to-tail for the rest of the race in a terrific battle, Richards briefly diving ahead into Cascades on the 23rd lap of 26. Clutton made it back into third, after depositing the shared Tom Ashton/Audunn Gudmundsson car, and closed enough to be a threat to the lead duo over the final laps.

Richards was given a track-limits penalty, dropping him to fourth behind de Sadeleer as Constable won, while a similar penalty robbed Rishover of fifth.

Clive Wood's Mallock won both Clubmans Sports Prototype races. Peter Richings led into Old Hall from

the start of the opener, before Jarred Lester's Lester 3T shot ahead.

But, from an early fourth, Wood had already taken Steve Dickens for third, before successfully challenging Richings into Knickerbrook. Lester also succumbed to Wood's charge at Shell on the second lap and eventually slipped back to fourth behind Richings and Dickens, with a slipping throttle linkage.

Wood was lucky to have an initial jump start cancelled out when race two had to be restarted, leaving him to storm past Richings down the Avenue on the opening lap for win number two. Dickens soon followed to consolidate second, while Lester got by at Shell to secure third and leave Richings to successfully hold off Alan Cook for fourth. Morris Hart and Barry Webb both took class-winning doubles.

Debutant Andy Godfrey was another double winner in the Focus Cup. Both he and PJ Gardner were on their own early in



McAleer (l) led from the start of opening Porsche race but faced constant pressure from Clark (r)

ALL PICS: READ

OULTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

RADICAL CHALLENGE

Race 1 Jerome de Sadeleer

Race 2 Marcus Clutton

Race 3 Jac Constable

CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPES

Races 1 & 2 Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)

FOCUS CUP

Races 1 & 2 Andy Godfrey

MONOPOSTO

Race 1 Matthew Minett (Jedi Mk6, below)

Race 2 Dan Clowes (Jedi Mk6)

PORSCHE CLUB

Race 1 Mark McAleer (997 C2S)

Race 2 Simon Clark (Cayman S)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

race one, while Simon Watts initially led a queue for third. Simon Warr worked his way to the front of the seven-car battle and went clear, leaving Chris Wallis, Simon Tomlinson and Watts line astern for fourth.

A partially reversed grid couldn't stop Godfrey from taking win number two. He led from Shell on lap three of seven, leaving Wallis and Warr duelling for second, only for Gardner to close in and snatch the place with two laps to go. Wallis finally escaped for third, from Watts, Gary Mitchell and Spencer Fortag.

Matthew Minett headed the Monoposto battle of the Jedis and, when Dan Clowes finally got by, the race was red-flagged and places reversed, with Minett the victor and Chris Davison's Dallara completing the podium. Clowes got his revenge in race two, after Minett had led until the last lap, with Tony Bishop's Dallara holding off Davison for third.

Both Porsche Club races were close but fairly processionary. Mark McAleer led the first from lights to flag, but had Simon Clark as a constant shadow, once he had ousted Peter Morris on lap three. In the second, Clark led from the start, with McAleer well clear of Morris in a solitary third.

Chris Dyer was fourth first time out, but spent the entirety of race two, inches from James Caley's rear bumper, before heading the final charge up Clay Hill by just 0.176s.

PETER SCHERER

NEW CHALLENGE FOR LE MANS CLASS WINNER YOULES AS HE JOINS THE CLUBMANS GRID



There are two significant anniversaries for Mike Youles to celebrate this year. In 1990 he won Class C2 at the Le Mans 24 Hours, sharing a PC Automotive Spice SE89C Cosworth DFL V8 with Olindo Iacobelli and Richard Piper, and in 2000 the Oulton Park Gold Cup – which was also a round of the British GT Championship – with Tim Harvey in a PK Motorsport Porsche 911 GT2.

Youles was back at Oulton, his local circuit, again last weekend making his Clubmans Sports Prototype debut. "I have raced in sports and GT cars in various championships around the world, I was seventh in the GT class at Le Mans in 2001 and for a while was the fastest car in the race as the prototypes couldn't use their pace in the bad weather," he said.

He's won in the European Le Mans Series too, in a career that stretches back to 1981. "It started when I raced a Lotus Elan and my fourth ever race was the Willhire 24 Hours, when it was still a relay race," he added.



But he pretty much stopped racing in 2016, until there was an invitation for a one-off outing in an historic Mini at Angouleme last year, then the Clubmans offer came along.

"I knew Dave Beecroft had a car and I used to watch these and loved them, and I have been friends with him for a while," Youles explained.

So the plan was made to race the Mallock Mk27, but everything had to be put on hold due to the COVID-19 shutdown. "We decided to do Oulton, see how it went and then hopefully do some more," he added.

Youles hadn't even sat in the car until Friday testing and only managed six laps. "We had brake problems, like no brakes," he said.

The car was sorted overnight for the two races on Saturday, then in qualifying he was 11th best. In the first contest he was into the top 10 after three laps and continued to battle on to secure eighth.

Despite having to go through a restart on his second outing, he held on to his ninth-place grid spot initially, but a strong second lap took him into the top six, where he remained until the chequered flag in the shortened race.

"I have raced numerous Porsches, and both Spice and Tiga prototypes, but this was great, I really enjoyed it," said Youles. "If I do get to race the Mallock again, I need to sort out the clutch too but, before we make any decisions, I need to sit down and discuss this with Dave."

PETER SCHERER

Khera overcame tough opposition and tricky conditions to emerge on top



Khera powers to a brace in Ferrari Challenge UK

**BRANDS HATCH
MSVR
25-26 JULY**

Enthusiasm among drivers and series personnel was not in short supply when the Ferrari Challenge UK series made its long-awaited return to Brands Hatch.

This was despite the COVID-19 pandemic contributing to a drop in entry numbers compared to the total that appeared at the inaugural meeting last year.

In May 2019, a grid of no fewer than 20 entrants were attracted to the inaugural round of the series held at the Kent track, while last weekend, the delayed curtain

raiser for the one-make category for drivers of the Ferrari 488 Challenge yielded only nine starters.

Despite the decline in grid size, opinions of those involved suggest there is still cause for optimism that the series can continue to thrive in 2020 across three further meetings.

Woolfitt brothers prove to be the class of the field at Cadwell

**CADWELL PARK
CMMC
26 JULY**

Jon and Paul Woolfitt took a win apiece during an incident-filled day for the Northern Saloons and Sports Cars as the Classic and Modern Motorsport Club's season got under way at Cadwell Park.

Andy Robinson qualified on pole for both races in the Ford Falcon V8 Supercar with which he won the Classic Touring Car Racing Club's Thunder Saloons title last year, but he was beaten off the line by the Woolfitt brothers each time.

Jon Woolfitt led all the way in the first encounter to claim victory in his Spire GTR ahead of his brother's Lotus Exige, but only after the race was restarted

following a huge five-car pile-up at the original start.

Heading into Coppice bend on the first lap, the Honda Civic of Chris Sparks was turned into the outside barrier by Kirk Armitage's BMW M3 before being collected from behind, with the Renault Clios of Stevie McNab and Eduardo De Sousa, as well as David Cox in a Peugeot 205 GTI, unable to avoid the melee. Despite some heavily damaged cars, all drivers emerged unscathed as Armitage was disqualified from the result of the race after being deemed at fault.

In race two, Jon Woolfitt led again from brother Paul but, on the fourth lap, the race leader retired after his car slowed with a problem. That promoted Paul Woolfitt into the lead, until a trip across the grass



Jon Woolfitt's Spire GTR leads brother Paul's Lotus Exige

dropped him to third in the closing stages behind Mike Cutt (M3) and Andrew Morrison (SEAT Leon TCR).

But Woolfitt's blushes were spared when seconds later red flags curtailed the race after a crash involving Robinson and, with results put back by one lap, he was reinstated in first place. Robinson had collided with a backmarker at Chris Curve, citing the huge difference in speeds between the two cars as a contributing factor.

Front-end damage to his Falcon prevented Robinson from taking the start of the second race of Modified Fords in which he was also competing, having finished runner-up in race one behind Dave Cockell in a Ford



Races were held on Brands Hatch GP layout on Sunday

“We know how difficult the COVID-19 situation has made life for everyone,” said Francesco Balli, regional manager for Ferrari North Europe, “but I am extremely proud and grateful to the drivers for all the hard work they have put in so we could return to Brands Hatch.

“With the meetings we still have to come, I am sure we will see more drivers on the grid before the end of the year.”

Former Tourist Trophy class winner Alex Moss, one of the few drivers currently able to return for a second season in the series, expressed his hope that more drivers would be back in due course, despite the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic.

“The last four months have been challenging for everyone,” he said, “but the camaraderie in this series is so strong that I hope we can see more drivers on the grid soon. It’s still a great series to be involved with.”

Competitor numbers may have been small, but there was no shortage of drama

in the double-header event. In the first contest, Paul Hogarth got the jump on polesitter Lucky Khera to lead the field into Paddock Hill Bend on the opening tour. Persistent drizzle made track conditions difficult, but this did not stop Khera and the rapidly closing Graham de Zille from pressuring Hogarth hard. The trio ran close for 24 laps until increasing rain caused Hogarth to spin off at Paddock, with Khera handed the victory as the race ended under caution.

In the second encounter – held on the Grand Prix circuit on Sunday – Britcar ace Khera powered to a lights-to-flag success, although a mid-race rain shower threatened to drop him back into the reach of Hogarth as the race progressed. Hogarth survived a clash with backmarker Paul Stevens at Paddock to claim second ahead of de Zille.

Tim Mogridge produced a faultless performance in treacherous conditions to claim the spoils in the opening Ferrari Formula Classic race in his F355 Challenge.

WEEKEND WINNERS



BRANDS HATCH FERRARI CHALLENGE UK
Races 1 & 2 Lucky Khera

FERRARI FORMULA CLASSIC
Races 1 & 3 Tim Mogridge (F355 Challenge)
Race 2 Wayne Marris (F355 Challenge, above)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

James Cartwright stormed through from the fifth row to claim second in his 328 GTB, while 2015 GT Cup champion Wayne Marris recovered from a sluggish start and a spin at Graham Hill Bend to salvage third in his F355.

Marris bounced back to win the first of two drier races held on the GP layout on Sunday, relieving Mogridge of his early advantage with a fine move at Paddock on lap seven of 12. Mogridge got his revenge in the finale though, beating Marris by over seven seconds, while Tristan Simpson finished a distant third in his F355.

MARK LIBBETER



Armer almost took two wins in Historic Formula 3

Escort Cosworth after a close battle. Cockell doubled-up with a far more comfortable victory in the second event.

Round two of the Historic Sports Car Club’s Historic Formula 3 series took place at Cadwell, with defending champion Simon Armer taking a dominant win in race one aboard his March 703.

A bad start dropped him to third at the beginning of race two, but he took second from Ian Bankhurst (Alexis Mk8) in the closing stages after a long scrap, and a mistake from race-long leader Paul Waïne (De Sanctis F3 69) at Gooseneck corner on the final tour gave Armer a sniff of a second victory.



Classic Era Challenge race was won by Strong’s Jaguar XJS

But the two cars made slight contact into Mansfield bend, with Bankhurst gratefully accepting the opportunity to grab the win, Waïne and Armer recovering to take second and third respectively.

Ewen Sergison, who felt he had the pace to add to his race win at the opening round at Brands Hatch earlier in the month, was unable to take part in the two races having suffered an oil pressure issue with his Merlyn in qualifying.

Nick Strong dominated the Classic Era Challenge race at the wheel of a Jaguar XJS, while Lee Harpham was in a class of his own in Superkarts, winning all three encounters.

STEVE WHITFIELD

WEEKEND WINNERS

CADWELL PARK NORTHERN SALOON & SPORTS CAR CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Jon Woolfitt (Spire GTR)
Race 2 Paul Woolfitt (Lotus Exige)

MODERN CHALLENGE & MODIFIED FORDS
Races 1 & 2 Dave Cockell (Ford Escort Cosworth 4WD)

HISTORIC FORMULA 3
Race 1 Simon Armer (March 703)
Race 2 Ian Bankhurst (Alexis Mk8)

CLASSIC ERA CHALLENGE & CLASSIC CHALLENGE
Nick Strong (Jaguar XJS)

SUPERKARTS
Races 1, 2 & 3 Lee Harpham (MS Kart)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Returnee Barrable right on the pace

MONDELLO PARK
IMRC
25-26 JULY

Returning to full-time racing after a break of 23 years, Michael Barrable took Ford Fiesta Zetec pole, with less than two tenths covering the top nine cars as the Irish circuit racing season finally began at Mondello Park.

However, reigning champion William Kellett was alongside Barrable on the front row and he got the jump and led away. Youth appeared to be able to contain experience as each of Barrable's attempts to retake the place were rebuffed. But Kellett hadn't budgeted on a great run out of the final corner by the former Formula Ford 1600 star, who got alongside as they crossed the line and snatched the win, by just seven thousandths of a second!

In race two, poleman Ulick Burke, having built the car inside a week, held off allcomers for a popular and well-earned victory, a last-lap challenge from Alastair Kellett not quite coming off.

Cian Carey grabbed BOSS pole ahead of Paul O'Connell, but it was O'Connell who made the better start, while Eamon



Matheson rocketed up to grab second. Barry Rabbitt outraked Carey into Turn 1 before sitting round the outside of Matheson to take second at Turn 2.

Matheson immediately returned the favour though, blasting past on the run to Turn 3 before closing up to the rear wing of O'Connell's World Series machine as they completed the opening lap. Carey got by Rabbitt and set off in pursuit of O'Connell, as Matheson fell back. Just as Carey caught the leader, however, the red flags flew, calling a halt to proceedings.

In race two, with O'Connell stuck on the line, Rabbitt worked his way into the lead. Dallara F317 driver Carey soon usurped the

Formula Renault and blasted away to win, smashing the class lap record on the way.

Kevin Doran grabbed the Fiesta ST lead from the outside of the front row, but poleman Alex Denning managed to get by on the final lap for the win. Graham McDonnell ran with the pair throughout, the trio having eased away from the rest. In race two, despite a reversed top six, Denning was quickly into the lead and drove away for the double, with a delighted McDonnell in second from Barry-John McHenry and Doran.

Formula Vee champion Anthony Cross won the opener from pole, Gavin Buckley keeping him honest throughout as Dan

FF1600 racers star as Kirkistown season begins

KIRKISTOWN
500MRCI
25 JULY

The 500 Motor Racing Club of Ireland opted for a compact event for its belated Kirkistown season-opener. With just two races each for the four 'home' classes, it promised to be a quiet day. However, the small crowd of masked and elbow-bumping club members were treated to some superb racing that promises much for the rest of the season, COVID-19 permitting.



Formula Ford 1600 has been a Kirkistown mainstay for the past half century, and the Kent-engined cars didn't disappoint, despite the relatively small 11-car grid. Alan Davidson started the first race in pole in his ex-Conor Murphy Mondiale, with defending champion David McCullough (Van Diemen RF01) alongside.

As ever, the first couple of laps were nip and tuck, with McCullough, Davidson and second-row starter David Parks (Ray) in the thick of things, pursued by Scott Finlay — in Davidson's old Mondiale — and Trevor Delaney (RF02). Some mighty late braking eventually got Parks to the front and, once there, some canny defensive moves kept him ahead.

Davidson's race ended on lap six after a moment over the kerbs at the Chicane deprived him of a radiator, while a few laps later Finlay departed the scene with a misfire. Up front, though, McCullough's efforts to get ahead of Parks continued unabated but to no avail, Parks' winning

advantage after 16 laps was 0.347 seconds. Delaney was a clear third ahead of FF1600 newcomer Drew Stewart. The Pre-90 category went to Philip Harris (Mondiale).

A couple of hours later, the same suspects lined up for race two, and this time it was McCullough who got the drop on the rest, treating Parks to a race-long view of his gearbox on the way to a win — by just 0.071s. Davidson, complete with new radiator, took the final podium position and Pre-90 honours, some 3s adrift, with Delaney in fourth.

With Gerard O'Connell's Millington-powered Mk1 SHP Escort on pole, there was no doubt about the winner of the first Saloon/GT encounter. Paul Parr in an ASK Supercar was second, while Stephen Traub's Honda Integra was top saloon in third. Race two was red-flagged after a first-lap tangle in the midfield, but O'Connell won again after a damp restart, with Ciaran Devir's Honda Civic second and top saloon, and Parr third.

A small Roadsports grid also ran twice.



As O'Connell struggled in BOSS race two, F3 Cup champion Carey pounced to win and break the class lap record

CHESTER

CHESTER

Polley charged to third from a lowly 11th place in qualifying. Mark Reade was fourth in the works Leystone, with fastest lap. Race two was a far more exciting affair, including two red flags for various incidents. Philip Sheane and Cross battled mightily for the lead but collided on the penultimate lap, handing Buckley the win, with Cross limping home in second.

David Reynolds took Stryker pole but Vincent O'Rourke rocketed away from the outside of the front row to grab the lead. Reynolds soon reasserted himself at the front to take the win, with Dominic Ryan a strong second, from Adrian Deasy and O'Rourke.

Race two was a carbon copy, with O'Rourke leading away again before Reynolds came through for the double. Deasy snatched second from O'Rourke late on, but a spectacular lunge at Turn 3 allowed O'Rourke back past for his best result to date.

Pat Masterson's Toyota MR2 had the legs of the Future Classics field in race one, but Richard Shattock's Honda Civic deposed him to second in race two. Geoff Richardson and Jamie Moylan took a pair of Legends wins apiece, with the other two taken by James Holman and Peter Barrable.

LEO NULTY



Parks (l) just kept champion McCullough at bay in race one

DEMPSTER

In the first contest, John Benson's front-row-starting Crossle led until a fuel pump failed, leaving victory to polesitter Trevor Allen's Westfield ahead of the Crossle of Steve Morris. Benson was back on song in race two and was victorious from Allen and Morris.

In the first combined affair for Ford Fiestas and Mazda MX-5s, Paul Sheridan dominated a depleted Mazda field while Mark Stewart was on top among the

Fiestas, ahead of Neville Anderson, Ricky Hull and Megan Campbell. That result was then repeated in race two.

Paul Stewart might well have been a factor among the Fiestas, but for contact with an errant MX-5 on the opening lap of race one, which left his Fiesta looking rather second hand. A bid to dash home for a replacement car in time for the second race was then thwarted by officialdom.

RICHARD YOUNG

WEEKEND WINNERS



CHESTER

MONDELLO PARK

FIESTA ZETEC

Race 1 Michael Barrable

Race 2 Ulick Burke

FORMULA BOSS IRELAND

Race 1 Paul O'Connell (Dallara World Series)

Race 2 Cian Carey (Dallara F317)

FIESTA ST

Races 1 & 2 Alex Denning

FORMULA VEE

Race 1 Anthony Cross (Sheane)

Race 2 Gavin Buckley (Sheane)

STRYKERS

Races 1 & 2 David Reynolds

FUTURE CLASSICS

Race 1 Pat Masterson (Toyota MR2)

Race 2 Richard Shattock (Honda Civic)

LEGENDS

Races 1 & 2 Geoff Richardson (above)

Race 3 James Holman

Races 4 & 6 Jamie Moylan

Race 5 Peter Barrable

GINETTA JUNIOR IRELAND

Races 1 & 2 Jack Byrne

SEAT SUPERCUP IRELAND

Race 1 Barry English

Race 2 Neil Tohill

For full results visit: timing.ie

KIRKISTOWN

NORTHERN IRELAND FF1600

Race 1 David Parks (Ray GR07)

Race 2 David McCullough (Van Diemen RF01)

SALOON/GT

Races 1 & 2 Gerard O'Connell (SHP Escort)

ROADSPORTS

Race 1 Trevor Allen (Westfield Honda)

Race 2 John Benson (Crossle 37S, below)

MAZDA MX-5s/FORD FIESTAS

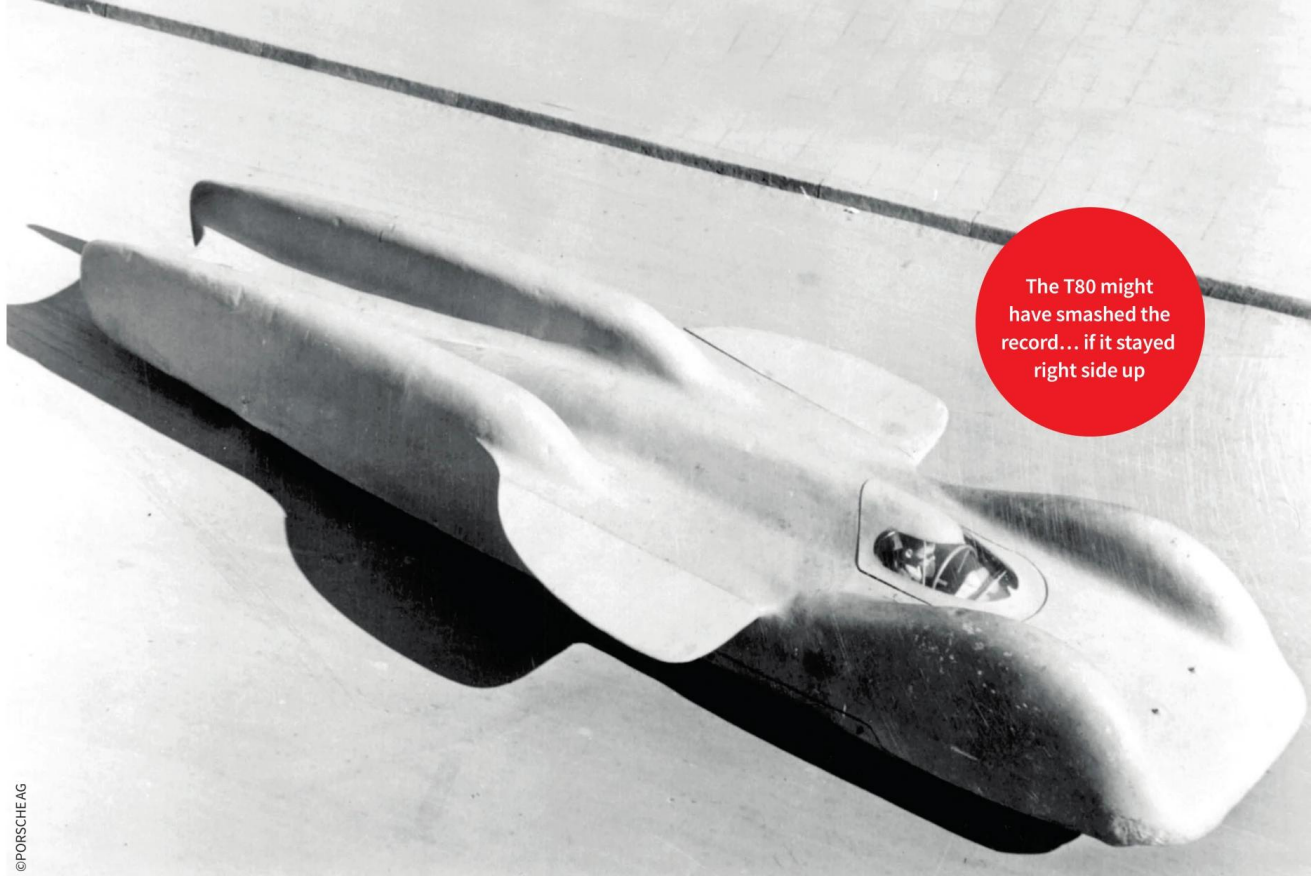
Races 1 & 2 Paul Sheridan (MX-5)



DEMPSTER

For full results visit: speedhive.mylaps.com

©PORSCHERAG



The T80 might have smashed the record... if it stayed right side up

THE NAZI SPEED FASCINATION

DOCUMENTARY REVIEW HITLER'S SUPERCARS

A seven-year grudge match funded by 33million Reichsmark of government investment that bore 11 land speed records and culminated in a six-wheeled behemoth that should have been capable of 375mph thanks to a 44.5-litre V12. The 1930s speed war played out by Auto Union and Mercedes is inescapably connected to a grim Nazi undercurrent, but it remains one of the most compelling chapters in all of motorsport history.

As such the tale that begins with Germany rising out of the Great Depression to bear the W25 at Avus and Type A in 1934 has been oft told, yet the one-off, one-hour *Hitler's Supercars* documentary broadcast on Channel 4 last Sunday (and available to watch on demand via All 4) – coincidentally as Avro Lancaster PA474 dips its wing over Autosport's Lincolnshire back garden to the glorious sound of its quadruple-Merlin soundtrack, remains essential viewing.

Author and historian James Holland, inter-war Silver Arrows specialist Eberhard Reuss, famed classic car auctioneer Chris Routledge and the ever-brilliant Richard Williams are all hugely engaging as talking-head interviewees, who help tell the narrative along with reams of period footage and archive images –



assembled by expert hand Richard Wiseman.

While many will be familiar with this particular story of grand prix victories, the rise of celebrity athletes – spearheaded by Rudolf Caracciola and Bernd Rosemeyer – and the power of Nazi propaganda fronted by Joseph Goebbels, there is new ground trodden by *Hitler's Supercars*. Most notable is the modern-day analysis of the Mercedes T80, which was penned by former Auto Union designer Ferdinand Porsche.

The slippery titan is assessed by TotalSim to see if it would have been capable of beating the British road speed record of 369.7mph, despite its questionable balance that could well have led to a Peter Dumbreck-style flip long before Mercedes would achieve it with the CLR at Le Mans in 1999.

Of course, the T80 would never set the record as its run was delayed by the invasion of Poland, with the later Battle of Britain not only securing the English shores but also stopping Germany from toppling the benchmark. Incidentally, due to the war effort, its enormous engine was repurposed back into a plane.

This kind of new introspection, combined with the fascinating rise of Mercedes and Auto Union, means that *Hitler's Supercars* is prime fodder for a series – an hour barely scratches the surface.


In a similar vein, the brief life of Rosemeyer – which includes him supposedly mocking the Nazi hierarchy from GP podiums, his marriage to national sweetheart and revered pilot Elly Beinhorn and his fatal cross-wind crash on the A5 autobahn just south of Frankfurt – would easily suffice for another 60 minutes.

How these 1930s feats of engineering should be viewed against the backdrop of a dictatorship and the death of 85million people is a debate for a different day. Nevertheless, *Hitler's Supercars* is recommended in the highest terms for its recall of a critical period of both motor racing and global history.

MATT KEW

 **YouTube** youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



 Formula 1 teams are awfully innovative when it comes to giving their cars the upper hand. Enter McLaren's infamous 2010 F-duct, where teams sought to recreate the concept for themselves before the FIA put their foot down on the pipework idea. **Go to bit.ly/Fduct**



autosport.com/podcast



 Racing Point has proven that copying the fastest car on track gives you a competitive boost over your rivals, so are the complaints from Renault founded? Or are rivals just frustrated that they didn't think to do it first? **Go to bit.ly/F1copy**

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Formula E

Round 5/7

Berlin, Germany

5-6 August

 **Live** Eurosport 2, Wed 1800, Thurs 1800
BBC Red Button, Wed 1700, Thurs 1730

Livestream on BBC iPlayer and the BBC Sport website

 **Highlights** Quest, Thurs 0700, Fri 0700

Eurosport 1, Thurs 0800, Fri 0800

Jaguar I-PACE eTrophy

Round 3/5

Berlin, Germany

5-6 August

Formula Regional European

Round 1/8

Misano, Italy

1-2 August

IMSA SportsCar

Round 4/11

Road America, USA

2 August

DTM

Round 1/9

1-2 August

Spa, Belgium


 **Live** Free Sports, Sun 1215

NASCAR Cup

Round 20/36

Loudon, USA

2 August

 **Live** Premier Sports 2, Sun 1930

Ferrari Challenge Europe

Round 3/7

Algarve, Portugal

1-2 August

 **Livestream** on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1650, 1810, Sun 1450, 1610

UK MOTORSPORT

British Grand Prix

Formula 1 World Championship

Round 4

Silverstone
2 August
 **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1330, Channel 4, 1300
 **Highlights** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1930
Channel 4, 2345

FIA Formula 2

Round 4

Silverstone

1-2 August

 **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 1635, Sun 1100

FIA Formula 3

Round 4

Silverstone
1-2 August
 **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 1020, Sun 0935

Porsche Supercup

Round 4/8

Silverstone
2 August
 **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1220

Castle Combe CCRC

1 August

FF1600, Saloons, GT, Hot Hatch, Dave Allan Trophy

Donington Park BARC

1-2 August

BTCC, F4, Carrera Cup, Mini Challenge, Ginetta GT4, Ginetta Junior

 **Live** ITV4, Sun 1035

Oulton Park MSVR

1-2 August

British GT, British F3, Ginetta GT5, Ginetta G40, Radical SR1

Cadwell Park BRSCC

1-2 August

Mazda MX-5, Mazda Supercup, ClubSport Trophy, Fiesta, Fiesta Junior, ST-RX Challenge, Caterham Roadsports, Caterham 270R, Caterham 310R, Caterham Seven, CityCar Cup

Brands Hatch BARC

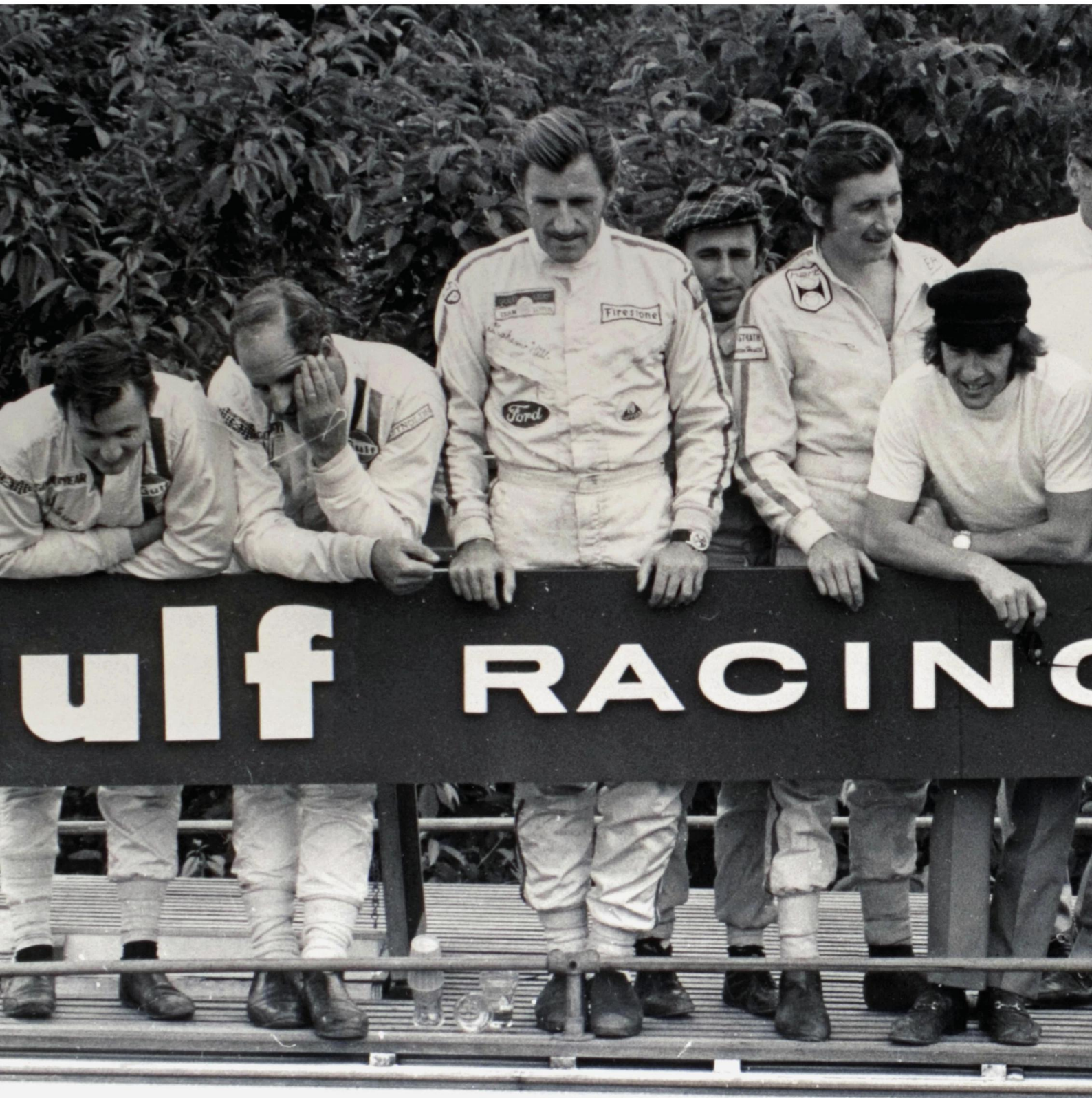
1-2 August

Britcar, Sports Prototype, Junior Saloon, Kumho BMW, MGOC, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Pre '83 Touring Cars, Thunder & BOSS



ROMNEY

 **motorsport**
IMAGES



FROM THE ARCHIVE

All aboard (well, almost all) for the driver parade ahead of the 1969 French Grand Prix at Clermont-Ferrand. Left to right: Bruce McLaren (McLaren M7C), Denny

Hulme (McLaren M7A), Graham Hill (Lotus 49B), Silvio Moser (Brabham BT24), Jo Siffert (Lotus 49B), Jackie Stewart (Matra MS80), Piers Courage (Brabham BT26A), Jochen Rindt

(Lotus 49B), Vic Elford (McLaren M7B), Jean-Pierre Beltoise (Matra MS80), Jacky Ickx (Brabham BT26A) and Chris Amon (Ferrari 312). Grand prix debutant John Miles (Lotus 63) isn't pictured.



For classic 1960s Formula 1 DVDs head to dukevideo.com/F1



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The move towards the halo gathers momentum

30 July 2009

Driver safety was a talking point on this day in 2009. Just a week after Formula 2 racer Henry Surtees was killed by a flying wheel at Brands Hatch, Felipe Massa was seriously injured when a spring struck his head during Hungarian Grand Prix qualifying.

Massa suffered a fractured skull in the accident and underwent surgery that evening. He was then placed in an induced coma for 48 hours.

The two accidents contributed to the launch of a study into driver head protection. A fully enclosed cockpit was discussed, but the situation was not straightforward, as Brawn test driver Alexander Wurz said: "That would have worked very well in Felipe's case, but it would be more difficult for driver extraction. It's not a simple fix – we need to look at all avenues."

It would be nearly nine years before the halo arrived in F1, almost immediately proving its worth in the

Belgian GP start accident involving Fernando Alonso and Charles Leclerc.

Massa would return for 2010, but he had scored his last F1 victory.

The 2009 visit to the Hungaroring was much better for Lewis Hamilton. The McLaren MP4-24 had not started the season strongly, but upgrades, the nature of the circuit and Hamilton's virtuosity paid dividends.

He started fourth and jumped to third on the first lap, boosted by his McLaren's KERS. He then harried Mark Webber's Red Bull and took second on lap five. Once the lightly fuelled Renault of polesitter Alonso was out of the way, Hamilton took command. He beat Kimi Raikkonen's Ferrari by 11.5 seconds to score his 10th F1 win.

Away from F1, Daniel Ricciardo strengthened his bid for the British F3 title, winning the first race at Spa from Jules Bianchi and Valtteri Bottas, then taking second to Adriano Buzaid.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

British Grand Prix action

CAN HAMILTON TAKE HIS SEVENTH F1 WIN AT SILVERSTONE?



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