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MEXICAN GP

ROSBERG TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

But win lays down
2016 title marker



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POLE POSITION

Rosberg must sustain his form to threaten

WHAT DEFINES GREAT DRIVERS IS RARELY THEIR PEAKS.

Anyone who could even be thought of as a genuine topliner will win on their day, but what really matters is that those days are as frequent as possible and the bad ones conversely rare. Nico Rosberg will have to remember that.

The Mercedes driver is a fascinating case. Is it coincidence that, with the championship no longer on the table, he finally broke a four-month victory drought? Perhaps. But you can also argue that, without the bigger picture of the title race to concern himself with, he was able to narrow his focus and ensure he did his own job as well as possible. That approach usually yields the best results in sport and it's why many competitors, rather boringly, talk about taking things "step by step" or "each game as it comes".

Rosberg will hope that his Mexico victory has laid down a marker. In a way it has done, because he defeated Lewis Hamilton fair and square. But the real marker will be whether he can sustain it. If he can do a similar job in the final two races in Brazil and Abu Dhabi, he will go into 2016 in very good shape.

That's a big ask, but Hamilton would then have reason to worry.



EDD STRAW EDITOR
 edd.straw@haymarket.com
 @eddstrawF1

COVER STORY



"It was a performance worthy of the accolade champion"

Mexican GP report, p10

FIND US ON



Cover images: Coates/LAT, Ebrej/LAT

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This week in F1

ASTON MARTIN SET FOR F1 RETURN



GIBSON/LAT

4

The Force India team is set to be rebranded as Aston Martin Racing from the start of the 2016 season.

Negotiations are ongoing, but close to a conclusion. The team is planning to adopt a blue-and-gold livery as part of a tie-up with new sponsor Johnnie Walker.

Aston Martin, which competed in F1 with a works team in 1959 and '60 with little success, will

collaborate to allow technology transfer between F1 and road cars.

Explaining his rationale behind the move, team principal Vijay Mallya said: "That marque is one of the most famous British brands. It is at a level of luxury and aspiration, and it attracts more sponsors and makes Force India more marketable.

"That's why I'm talking. It adds that little bit."



REMEMBER WHEN

Aston Martin's finest hour in F1 came in the non-championship International Trophy in 1959. Roy Salvadori (second from right) finished in second place.

SAUBER DUO CLEAR AIR

Sauber team-mates Felipe Nasr and Marcus Ericsson claim to have resolved their differences after their clash in the recent United States Grand Prix.

"I spoke to Felipe about it and it's history now," said the Swede. "We had a good working relationship all year and that's going to continue.

Nasr, whose passing attempt led to the collision, confirmed it was "something we don't want to happen again".



XPBIMAGES

Schumacher 'fighting'

FIA president Jean Todt has revealed that Michael Schumacher is still battling to recover from the head injuries he sustained in a skiing accident in 2013.

"I see Michael very often, and Michael is still fighting, and we must keep fighting with the family," said Todt.

For all the breaking news, visit AUTOSPORT.COM



GUTIERREZ CONFIRMED AT HAAS

The Haas team has completed its 2016 driver line-up with the signing of Mexican Esteban Gutierrez.

After two seasons with Sauber in 2013 and '14 – the latter with a particularly uncompetitive car – and spending this year as Ferrari reserve driver, Gutierrez now has an opportunity to prove himself again. The move could also put him in contention for a Ferrari drive in 2017.

“It’s going to be a very exciting season, and yes, it provides many opportunities for the future in a natural way,” said Gutierrez.

GUTIERREZ IN F1

STARTS	38
BEST FINISH	7th
BEST QUALIFYING	8th
POINTS	6
BEST CHAMPIONSHIP	16th, 2013



FIA’s low-cost engine idea sparks commercial debate

The FIA’s stated intent to introduce a more-affordable engine package was a source of controversy during the Mexican Grand Prix weekend.

After using its right of veto to block a maximum price of €12 million a manufacturer can charge a customer, Ferrari came under fire and was forced to defend its position.

Team boss Maurizio Arrivabene claimed the Scuderia exercised its veto as a means of “defending commercial principle”. But he claimed that the organisation remained “open to finding any other solution”.

FIA president Jean Todt and Bernie Ecclestone feel the only way open to

them is to test the water with regard to the introduction of a cheaper system to aid the smaller teams.

Todt expressed “disappointment” with Ferrari for exercising its veto, which he likened to “having a gun in your pocket – and you have to be careful when you use a gun”.

Todt will be hoping that Ferrari does not pull the trigger a second time on the low-cost engine idea.

Having explored many other avenues to cut costs in Formula 1, Todt said: “In this case I only see the possibility of introducing a more-affordable engine that will allow the teams to be competitive.”

BOOTH AND LOWDON RESIGN FROM MANOR TEAM

Team principal John Booth and president Graeme Lowdon have tendered their resignations from the Manor team and will leave their roles at the end of the season.

It is understood that Booth and Lowdon – who fought to keep the team alive last season after it fell into the hands of administrators – have had a difference of opinion with owner Stephen Fitzpatrick as to the future direction of the team. Neither Booth nor Lowdon was prepared to comment during the Mexican GP weekend.

This is not the only change ahead. It has emerged that tech chief Bob Bell had resigned and left a week before the race, and a number of other key staff are expected to take the lead of Booth and Lowdon and follow the duo out of the door at the end of the year.



Minimum VSC speed needed

Red Bull driver Daniel Ricciardo has called for a minimum speed to be introduced under the virtual safety car after being passed by Mercedes driver Nico Rosberg at a restart during the United States Grand Prix two weeks ago.

Deltas are supposed to be maintained during a VSC period, but Lewis Hamilton backed the pack up, closing the gaps that had been in place at its start, allowing Rosberg to close on Ricciardo.



“They need to put something in to stop us from doing that [bunching the field up]. I think a minimum [speed] will be proposed,” said Ricciardo.

Honda ‘keen’ on Red Bull deal

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner claims Honda is prepared to supply the squad with engines next year despite vigorous opposition from McLaren’s most senior figure.

“I haven’t spoken to anybody from McLaren other than Ron Dennis, who is the one guy who has the right of say there, and his views were quite clear,” said Horner. “Honda are very keen, but unfortunately they have a contractual status that is between them and McLaren.”

BIG NUMBER

2.5

Number of seconds per lap that Fernando Alonso believes McLaren-Honda can and must find by next season.

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Ian Parkes

From the paddock

Now the EU competitions commissioner is taking an interest in Formula 1, will the sport's finances ultimately change for the better?

Following the recent low-cost engine bombshell dropped on Formula 1 by the FIA, it would come as no surprise if European Union competitions commissioner Margrethe Vestager took a more considerable interest in the sport over the next few weeks. F1 had already appeared on the combative Danish politician's radar thanks to an official complaint by Force India and Sauber over what they see as "unfair and unlawful" rules, and now she is understood to be mulling over whether there is a case to answer.

Force India and Sauber are drawing on Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which aim to prohibit anti-competitive agreements and the abuse of dominant market positions. When the FIA issued its recent press release with regard to the possibility of the introduction of a budget engine from 2017, it also highlighted one of F1's flaws to Vestager – one which, in many respects, falls within the bailiwick of the aforementioned Articles.

As 'reward' for its status and longevity in F1, Ferrari enjoys a right of veto over the introduction of regulations, providing it with the kind of power no team or competitor in any other sport possesses. It exercised that right after FIA president Jean Todt and Bernie Ecclestone joined forces at a Strategy Group meeting to push through the principle of a maximum powertrain price of €12 million for customer deals. Both Todt and Ecclestone believe their proposal to be a fair solution to

positioning the FIA as a crusading force for fairer competition. It has not allowed Ferrari's veto on the engine-price cap to derail its project to make F1 more affordable, pushing forward with plans to open up the engine-supply market.

There will now be a period of consultation with all the sport's stakeholders, and beyond that a potential tender process for the putative low-cost engine with the hope that it could be introduced in 2017. Naturally, Todt and the FIA have no intention of abandoning the current power-unit regulations, but they remain eager to aid the smaller, financially struggling teams by providing a cheaper alternative, and in doing so introduce greater competition to F1. At present, Ferrari and Mercedes are controlling the engine market, a situation the EU may look unfavourably on since it suggests the abuse of what is clearly a dominant position – even though you could, for instance, argue that the greater competitiveness of Mercedes and Ferrari power units this season have rendered them the *de facto* choice.

The benefit for the FIA, however, is that it is showing the EU that it is attempting to encourage competition.

Of course, the possibility of having two divergent engine technologies has led to suggestions of a two-tier championship, akin to the 1987-88 seasons when turbo power went up against normally-aspirated engines. As we all know, there was only one winner in that. But even before we enter the opening sorties of that battle, two

“The FIA has not allowed Ferrari's veto to derail its project to make F1 more affordable”

the challenge of attempting to lower costs and make F1 more sustainable for the independent teams.

In developing the current 1.6-litre V6 turbocharged power units, costs spiralled out of control, forcing the manufacturers to claw money back from their clients, who are paying in the region of €20 million per season for the power units. That has placed the likes of Force India and Sauber under considerable financial pressure, forcing their hand in calling on the EU to help them fight their cause for an equitable distribution of revenues.

While the disparity between F1's haves and have-nots is considerable, under bilateral agreements signed in 2012, what will now surely catch Vestager's eye is the fact that one team can effectively overrule a governing body, and in doing so place the financial wellbeing of a number of its rivals in jeopardy. One can only assume that it was a deliberate ploy by the FIA to 'out' Ferrari on this occasion, in one stroke punishing it for scuppering the governing body's cost-cutting plans while also

key questions have to be considered: will there be any manufacturers willing to tender for the low-cost engine, and will any teams want to take on a supply?

For a manufacturer, the potential pitfalls are glaringly obvious, not least that they would be up against the might of Mercedes and Ferrari with only a year to develop and test before a 2017 entry. With that in mind, will any team really want to risk its current position for the sake of saving, let's say, €8 million per year?

For argument's sake, Manor is to run with Mercedes power units from 2016, which could make its cars quicker next year by 2.5-3s per lap. Would it give up that likelihood of scoring points to run a less expensive but fresh-out-of-the-box system?

What we are witnessing here are the latest shots being fired in F1's political power play between Ecclestone, the FIA and the engine manufacturers. As usual, the only casualty is likely to be F1's reputation as the ramifications of the tawdry saga play out. ❧

This week in motorsport



CHRIS OWENS

OLD-SCHOOL FAVOURITES RETURN FOR INDYCAR

IndyCar has set its 2016 season dates, featuring the return of the famed Road America road course (above) and Phoenix oval as well as a new street race in Boston.

Out have gone the ovals at Milwaukee and Fontana together with the NOLA Motorsports Park

road circuit in New Orleans, which has been dropped after just one year.

The series has also extended the season by five weeks, kicking off a fortnight earlier than previously with the popular St Petersburg street race and ending three weeks later at California's Sonoma track.

Champion Scott Dixon said: "Road America and Phoenix are great venues and two of the best choices that we could have had to add to the schedule. Road America is an old-school track that I always look forward to, and Phoenix was a fun track for me in the past – we'll put on a great show."

INDYCAR CALENDAR

DATE	LOCATION
March 13	St Petersburg
April 2	Phoenix
April 17	Long Beach
April 24	Barber Motorsports Park
May 14	Indianapolis road course
May 29	Indianapolis 500
June 4-5	Detroit Belle Isle
June 11	Texas Motor Speedway
June 26	Road America
July 10	Iowa Speedway
July 17	Toronto
July 31	Mid-Ohio
August 21	Pocono
September 4	Boston
September 18	Sonoma

8

New Alfa set for Macau Guia

Alfa Romeo is to join the growing TCR International grid for this year's season finale, the Macau Guia race.

Tin-top specialist (and 2013 F3 participant) Romeo Ferraris is developing a Giulietta TCR, and Salvatore Tavano – who drove for the works-blessed Alfa squad in the WTCC in the past – will drive.

REMEMBER WHEN

2006



Salvatore Tavano won a World Touring Car Championship race? The Italian triumphed from pole position in the Mexican round at Puebla in an N.Technology-run 156.



Magnussen Porsche test

Kevin Magnussen will test for Porsche's LMP1 World Endurance squad at Barcelona next week.

The Dane, released by McLaren last month, will be given a tryout in a Porsche 919 Hybrid at the Spanish track on November 10-11. He will be joined by GP2 racer Mitch Evans, who

will also drive at the official WEC rookie test in Bahrain, and Briton Oliver Turvey.

Team boss Andreas Seidl said that the test was "to see who might be the next candidate" for a drive. He stressed that Porsche still hopes for a date change for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix to allow Nico Hulkenberg to take up his Le Mans 24 Hours seat.

Honda appeals Thai exclusion

Honda's World Touring Car Championship team plans to appeal the exclusion of Tiago Monteiro from his win in last weekend's Buriram round.

The left side of Monteiro's Civic WTCC was found to be below the 60mm minimum ground clearance after winning the second race at the Thai track, but the works JAS-run team

says this was caused by damage in the first race that impacted the front-left fixing point of the splitter.

Team boss Alessandro Mariani said: "Tiago deserves this win – it was not a deliberate misinterpretation of rules."

P57 LOPEZ WINS TITLE



EBREY/LAT

For all the breaking news, visit **AUTOSPORT.COM**

Cox stands down at Nissan

Nissan motorsport boss Darren Cox, the driving force behind the manufacturer's return to top-line sportscar racing in LMP1 this season, has left the company.

Cox has relinquished his role as global motorsport director and marketing boss of NISMO to set up his own consultancy.

He also pioneered the successful GT Academy gamer-to-racer scheme.



BRUNDLE IS UNITED STRIKER

Alex Brundle will lead the Anglo-American United Autosports team's assault on the European Le Mans Series next season.

The 25-year-old will race one of two Ligier-Nissan JSP3s United intends to field in the six-race ELMS on its graduation to the prototype ranks in 2016. Brundle has strong links with the group behind the Ligier, having previously raced LMP2 chassis for its in-house OAK Racing team.

United boss Richard Dean said that Brundle would "bring a huge amount of knowledge of LMP racing to our team".



KALISZ/LAT

In brief



HOY TESTS LMP2 CAR

Cycling legend Sir Chris Hoy drove an LMP2 car for the first time this week in the latest step on his quest to race at the Le Mans 24 Hours next year. The 39-year-old (above) completed 40 laps in a Greaves Motorsport Gibson-Nissan O155 at Estoril on Monday, while fellow ELMS LMP3 champion Charlie Robertson took his turn on Tuesday.

HUNTER-REAY FOR ROC

IndyCar star Ryan Hunter-Reay is the latest driver confirmed for the Race of Champions, which takes place in London's Olympic Stadium on November 20-21. This is the third RoC appearance for the 2014 Indy 500 winner.

STROLL'S PREMA STAY

Top European Formula 3 team Prema Powerteam has confirmed Ferrari junior Lance Stroll for his second season in the series in 2016. Meanwhile, two-time Brazilian Formula 3 champion Pedro Piquet is enjoying a series of tests with Euro F3 team Van Amersfoort Racing, which hopes to run him next year.

WELLS IN ASIAN LMS

Briton Dan Wells make his sportscar debut this weekend in the Asian Le Mans Series round at Sepang. Wells, the Asian Formula Renault champion, will drive KCMG's Porsche Cup car with Christian Ried and team principal Paul Ip.

WRX'S 2016 SCHEDULE

The World Rallycross Championship calendar has slimmed from 13 rounds to 12 for 2016. Latvia's event in capital city Riga comes in, while the Italian and Turkish dates have been axed. Dates are as follows: April 16-17 Montalegre; May 7-8 Hockenheim; May 14-15 Mettet; May 28-29 Lydden; June 11-12 Hell; July 2-3 Holjes; August 6-7 Trois-Rivieres; September 3-4 Loheac; September 17-18 Barcelona; October 1-2 Riga; October 15-16 Estering; November 26-27 Rosario.

VW pledges three cars amid emissions woe

Volkswagen sports boss Jost Capito has said that a three-car team is central to the firm's World Rally Championship ambitions in the wake of talk that it could be forced to slim to two due to the emissions crisis.

While Capito is looking for ways to save money in the wake of VW's scandal, Capito says he won't lose a car.

"For me," he says, "the third car is vital to win the championship. We have three drivers under contract - we will

have three cars next season."

The team's 2017 Polo continues to take shape, with two-time world champion Marcus Gronholm completing the new car's initial asphalt running in France last month.

Tohill for international return

Double European Rallycross TouringCar champion Derek Tohill will campaign an Olsbergs MSE-built Ford Fiesta Supercar in next season's ERX series.

The Irishman is moving back onto the international scene after an absence of one year, having raced a Citroen to 14th in the 2014 World Rallycross standings.

"We've been through a rebuilding phase this season and now we feel ready to head back into Europe, where we certainly have unfinished business in



HAL RIDGE

Supercar," said Tohill. "It's difficult to describe how excited I am - I really believe we can compete for finals."

It was just a complete coward move. It was a chicken-you-know-what move to take out the leader when your race is over



Joey Logano slams Matt Kenseth after NASCAR got nasty at Martinsville

Performance pulls out of F3

Formula 3 stalwart team Performance Racing has called time on its presence in the category after 15 years.

The Silverstone-based, Anglo-Swedish operation had planned to graduate to the F3 European Championship in 2016 with Malaysian Akash Nandy, who has raced with the team in Austrian F3 and the MSV F3 Cup this year, before Nandy called a halt to the project.

Performance raced in British F3 from 2001-07 and then competed in German F3 between 2008-14, during which time it gave Felix Rosenqvist and Tom Blomqvist their F3 debuts.



KAMIO/LAT

COUTO CLAIMS GT300 CROWN

Super GT veteran Andre Couto, best known as the 2000 Macau GP winner, wrapped up the Japanese series' hotly contested GT300 title at Autopolis last weekend in his Nissan GT-R, shared with Katsumasa Chiyo

MEXICAN GP



LA GRAN PREMIO DEL MEXICO 2015

IN MÉXICO

ROSBERG LEADS MEXICAN FIESTA

After losing the world championship to Lewis Hamilton a week earlier, Nico Rosberg finally put one over on his team-mate.
BEN ANDERSON asks why the German can't do it more often



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TOUR PACKAGES

DEPARTURES



FORMULA ONE WINTER TESTING	BARCELONA	Pit Lane Hospitality Team Packages
FORMULA ONE 2016	ALL GRAND PRIX	UK Tour Travel Team Escorted Tours By-Air with Holiday options
FORMULA ONE COACH TOURS	SPAIN, MONACO, AUSTRIA, BRITISH, HUNGARY, GERMANY, BELGIAN, ITALY	Escorted Holiday Tours Executive Coach Travel
LE MANS / WEC-6HR	LE MANS 24HR, SPA & NURBURGRING 6HR	By-Air, Coach Tours Self Drive
HISTORIC EVENTS	MONACO HISTORIC MILLE MIGLIA GOODWOOD FESTIVAL LE MANS CLASSIC GOODWOOD REVIVAL	Escorted Tour Package By-Air Coach Tours Self Drive

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First-corner battle decided
outcome for several drivers



DUNBAR/LAT

THE RACE 13:00, 01.11.2015



This was the drive of a champion. Well, not quite, because the man who won the Mexican Grand Prix cannot now finish the 2015 Formula 1 season as champion, but it was a performance worthy of the accolade.

The big question is whether Nico Rosberg can make a habit of what he produced last weekend – on F1's return to the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez for the first time in 23 years – and use his victorious display as a platform on which to build a title tilt in 2016.

In all honesty, Rosberg has not given Lewis Hamilton much to worry about this season. Such has been Hamilton's superiority that he was able to clinch his third world title with three races to spare.

True, Rosberg has suffered two unfortunate car failures over the second half of this year. But even if you credit back the 25 points he lost for a likely

victory in Russia, and the 15 he would have scored for third before his engine blew in Italy, Hamilton still would have led the championship by 33 points with 75 to play for coming into this weekend.

Of course, Hamilton could point to the 12 points he likely lost when his engine's turbo pipe worked loose in Singapore, but even with 100 per cent reliability on both cars we'd simply be seeing a prolonging of the inevitable.

Since winning September's Japanese GP, Hamilton only needed to finish second to Rosberg in every subsequent race to be assured of the championship. This is Hamilton's season; Rosberg just hasn't been good enough this year.

But if he can reproduce the form he showed in Mexico more regularly than he *will* be good enough. This was arguably Rosberg's most complete display of the season, staying one step ahead of

his Mercedes team-mate through qualifying and converting pole position into victory with a flawless drive in the race.

Well, flawless apart from the brief 'off' he had at the esses late on, which ultimately cost him nothing on a day when circuit conditions caught out almost everyone. No question, this was Rosberg at his best. The qualifying tide has turned a little already recently (this was Rosberg's fourth straight pole start) but, having been outmanoeuvred by Hamilton after inconsistent getaways recently, this time Rosberg nailed it.

"I've been working on it to try and get everything perfect, and today it worked out," said Rosberg, who got a clean launch from pole, while Hamilton spun his rear wheels and therefore couldn't take full advantage of an aerodynamic tow from the sister Mercedes on the long run down to Turn 1. "That was important, maybe the most important part of the race."

Thereafter the race was Rosberg's to lose, and he showed no signs of cracking. You wonder if the early climax to this year's championship battle has created a shift in mental balance, whereby Rosberg is able to drive more freely without the pressure of the bigger picture weighing him down, while Hamilton has throttled back slightly, after finally fulfilling his life's ambition of three titles.

In fact it didn't seem to work out that way. After the first lap, Rosberg was only 0.050 seconds faster per lap than Hamilton on average over the next 24 (before he made his first pitstop) as the duo traded fastest laps. During the second stint on medium tyres, Hamilton was 0.206s faster than Rosberg on average. This wasn't the driving of a newly crowned champion in cruise-and-collect mode. ▶

Vettel's race was below par
by his rarefied standards



ETHERINGTON/LAT

STALEY/LAT

Fiddly stadium section was great for crowd noise



► “Nico drove really well today, no mistakes, no gust of wind,” said Hamilton, referring to the reason Rosberg gave for losing the previous race at Austin. “It was very difficult to follow [another car] here, but I gave it my all. I was pushing the whole way.”

“It was quite fun actually just to be able to push and not have to be worrying about points or anything like that. Just go out and race. That was one of the fun races for me.”

So Hamilton was clearly on full-attack, even with the championship settled. In fairness, Rosberg has always been a driver who’s seemed strong at resetting after a setback, treating each race as an individual challenge and not allowing a sequence of negatives to trouble him unduly.

Therefore, the question of using these final races to build momentum for next season doesn’t hold any water for him, despite the fact that this was probably his most convincing victory yet over Hamilton. “I don’t think about it that way,” he said. “For me, I’m just thinking about the races. It’s awesome to win here and that was my target, there was no [thought of] P2 in the championship or getting one back on Lewis or whatever, none of that, it was just ‘go out there and win’ and the same thing for the next two.”

“I’m not thinking about 2016 yet majorly. Of course there’s bits and pieces that you need to plan ahead and already count for next year, but I don’t think of these trends or things like that. “For me, this weekend was about the weekend; pole position was the best chance to win and get the job done and that’s it. I did manage to put the past away and move forward.”

But perhaps one element of the past has been crucial here. Mercedes called a meeting between its



Rosberg managed to hold the lead from pole

XPB IMAGES

Lauda: “I felt sorry for him [Rosberg] because I know how it feels when you get blown off all the time”

this victory was vital, coming so soon after he’d thrown the race away at Austin with that oversteer moment at Turn 16 while leading.

“I felt sorry for him because I know how it feels when you get blown off all the time,” said the team’s non-executive chairman Niki Lauda, who knows what it takes to win a world championship, or three. “The worst thing is when you screw a race up and the other guy is champion. This is the worst thing that can happen to a racing driver.”

“Therefore it’s good that this race was the other way around, so he [Rosberg] gets his stability back, and he will keep on fighting. Psychologically it’s the best you can do after the weekend he had before. You have pole position, you win the race, and Hamilton is second. Then you are fully recovered. This is all it takes. For me the most important thing is these two guys push each other. If one does not push as much anymore the other doesn’t go as quick. This calibration is back, which is good for the drivers and good for us.”

Whether Rosberg can translate the form he showed here to the majority of circuits on the calendar will also depend on technical aspects, as much as his mental fortitude.

The revised and resurfaced Mexico City track was naturally slippery, with grip levels changing ►

PETER RATCLIFFE

LEGENDS IN TIME



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AYRTON SENNA

The first suit worn by Ayrton Senna at Williams in Dec 1993. The only one ever to be available, with provenance.



FORMULA ONE SHOW CAR

All genuine components. Stunning!



Hamilton tracked Rosberg, but could not catch him

XPB IMAGES

► dramatically from session to session. Rosberg has generally been strong in circumstances where the circuit has been inconsistent, such as Silverstone this year, when he was faster than Hamilton on slicks as rain began to fall.

The new surface also behaved similarly to Sochi in terms of its interaction with the tyres, which meant less concern over rear-tyre degradation and more about wear. Rosberg was faster than Hamilton in Russia, and was a step ahead on the resurfaced Interlagos circuit at last year's Brazilian GP. Perhaps there is something about new and smooth surfaces that favours Rosberg, or nullifies an advantage of feel that Hamilton holds at other places...

Whatever the specific reasons, Rosberg held the edge here, and Hamilton's only real chance to steal victory came when Mercedes decided to switch to a two-stop strategy. Rosberg pitted for a fresh set of mediums on lap 46, conceding his lead to Hamilton. Mercedes mechanics readied themselves in the pitlane to receive Hamilton a lap later, but he stayed out, questioning whether it was really necessary to make another stop.

Rosberg: "I had all the puzzle fall into place this weekend. From the first lap onwards I just felt comfortable"

"This wasn't a simple race," explained Mercedes technical chief Paddy Lowe. "We went into it with lots of unknowns, and plenty of parts of the car right on the limit, especially in terms of brake cooling. We had to manage the temperatures throughout to ensure that they stayed within limits, and we didn't get into a situation of runaway brake wear.

"Tyre behaviour was also an unknown, and after the first stint it was clear that the wear levels were higher than we predicted on Friday. After



COATES/LAT

completing the first stint, we had no rubber left on one of Lewis's tyres, and a much longer stint to complete on the prime. With a clear pitstop gap to the cars behind, we therefore switched to a two-stop strategy because the planned stint length on the prime tyre would have been too marginal for comfort."

Hamilton eventually accepted this argument and made his own second stop on lap 48 (a lap later than scheduled), but insisting that his team "check

those tyres and let me know" clearly showed he felt the stop was unnecessary.

The fact that Mexican home hero Sergio Perez was able to complete the race without trouble having done 53 laps on his sole set of mediums suggests Hamilton had a point.

You wonder if he would have ignored the team and stayed out had the title still been on the line, but as it was this became academic when Hamilton decided to obey Mercedes' call to stop.

A bad day for the team's nearest rivals created the conditions for this strategy switch. Red Bull was not as quick on Saturday or Sunday as it looked on Friday when the track was its most gripless, while Ferrari suffered its first double retirement since the 2006 Australian GP thanks to both drivers crashing out in separate incidents.

Hamilton was again marginally faster (by about 0.008s per lap on average) over the final stint on the medium tyres, but could make no significant inroads. In fact, he ran off the road at Turn 12 before Rosberg had his own moment at the esses. Whichever way you sliced it, this was Rosberg's day.

"I just had all the puzzle pieces fall into place this weekend and at previous ones there was one that didn't fall into place," he said. "That's it; that was the only difference – the whole weekend just went really well. From the first lap onwards I just felt comfortable, got the set-up right – we had all of

Home hero Perez did 53 laps on one set of tyres



STALEY/LAT

QUALIFYING

Rosberg celebrated pole number 20



XPBIMAGES



Having regularly come up second best to Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton in qualifying this year, Nico Rosberg suddenly looks unstoppable on Saturdays.

Rosberg claimed his fourth consecutive pole position in Formula 1 in qualifying for the Mexican Grand Prix, lapping 0.188 seconds faster than Hamilton during what proved to be the crucial first runs in Q3.

Although he didn't improve on his second run, the German actually produced two laps good enough for pole. Hamilton locked up and ran wide at Turn 12 on his second run, but was already trailing Rosberg by nearly two tenths before that mistake, so wouldn't likely have snatched pole had he completed a clean lap.

Rosberg's pole lap was a perfect demonstration of controlled aggression, on a circuit where grip was at a premium and car balance difficult to come by. Apart from a small oversteer moment, it couldn't be faulted.

"The track is changing all the time and it's getting faster and faster, so you need to adapt the balance," he explained. "When the grip comes up you get more understeer, so you need to come up with the front flap, change all the settings, it's a massive challenge.

"I didn't have it right until Q3, [but] when I got to Q3 everything was in the right place, and it was good timing."

It certainly was for another pole to Rosberg. Suddenly, Formula 1's 2014 qualifying king is looking more like the driver who ascended that throne last year. So what's changed? "Well for sure I've been working on it, because it was not good for much of the season," he added. "But can I now say I've found something that will help me? No, I can't, and I can't say either that it's a new trend now, and I'm going to be on pole for all of the remaining races.

"I don't know. Just the way it was today felt comfortable. I did a good job with my engineers, who did a good job to get the car to my liking."

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel was the only other driver to break through the 1m20s barrier, as he filled his customary best-of-the-rest slot, but he still ended up nearly four tenths adrift of pole. "We were hoping for it to be a bit closer," he said. "Already in Q1 with the hard tyre they [Mercedes] looked very, very quick, so it was difficult. I tried everything. I was happy with the first attempt in Q3. On the second I probably pushed too hard and didn't go any faster.

"I don't think it's fair to blame it on the conditions or track. In the end they were just a sniff too quick."



Win was psychologically important for Rosberg



Bottas and Raikkonen tangled once more

that; a great job from the engineers, pole of course, got into Turn 1 first. All of those things count."

Rosberg talks of the continually evolving battle between himself and Hamilton, as each seeks to self-improve and outdo the other. Perhaps Rosberg has just been a little slower on the uptake this season, taking several races longer to work out the key nuances of the W06 than his team-mate.

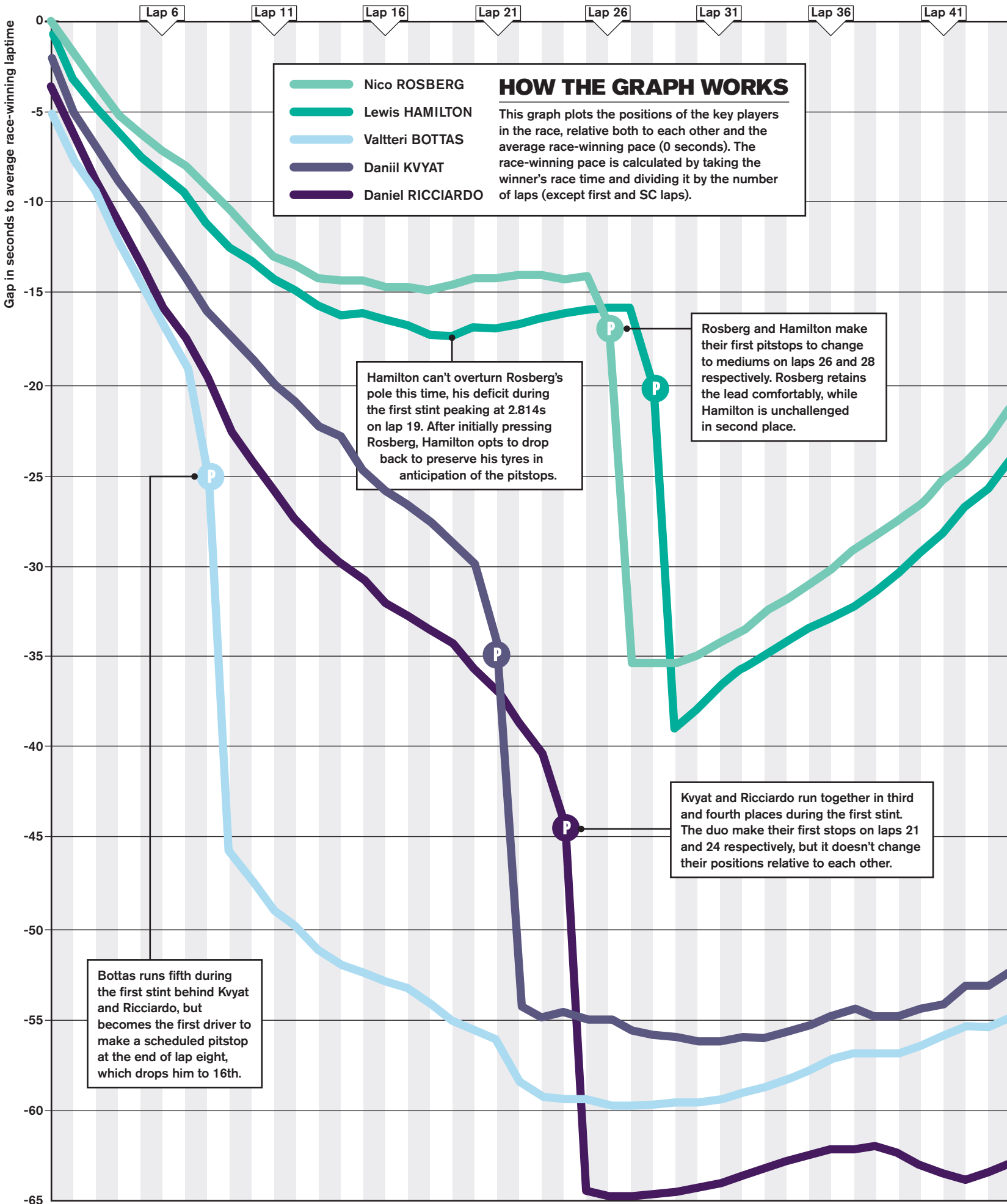
Whatever, during the past two races Rosberg has displayed everything he needs to be a champion in future: pure speed, aggression, confidence in battle, the capacity to stay calm and bounce back from adversity, and the ability to beat his nearest

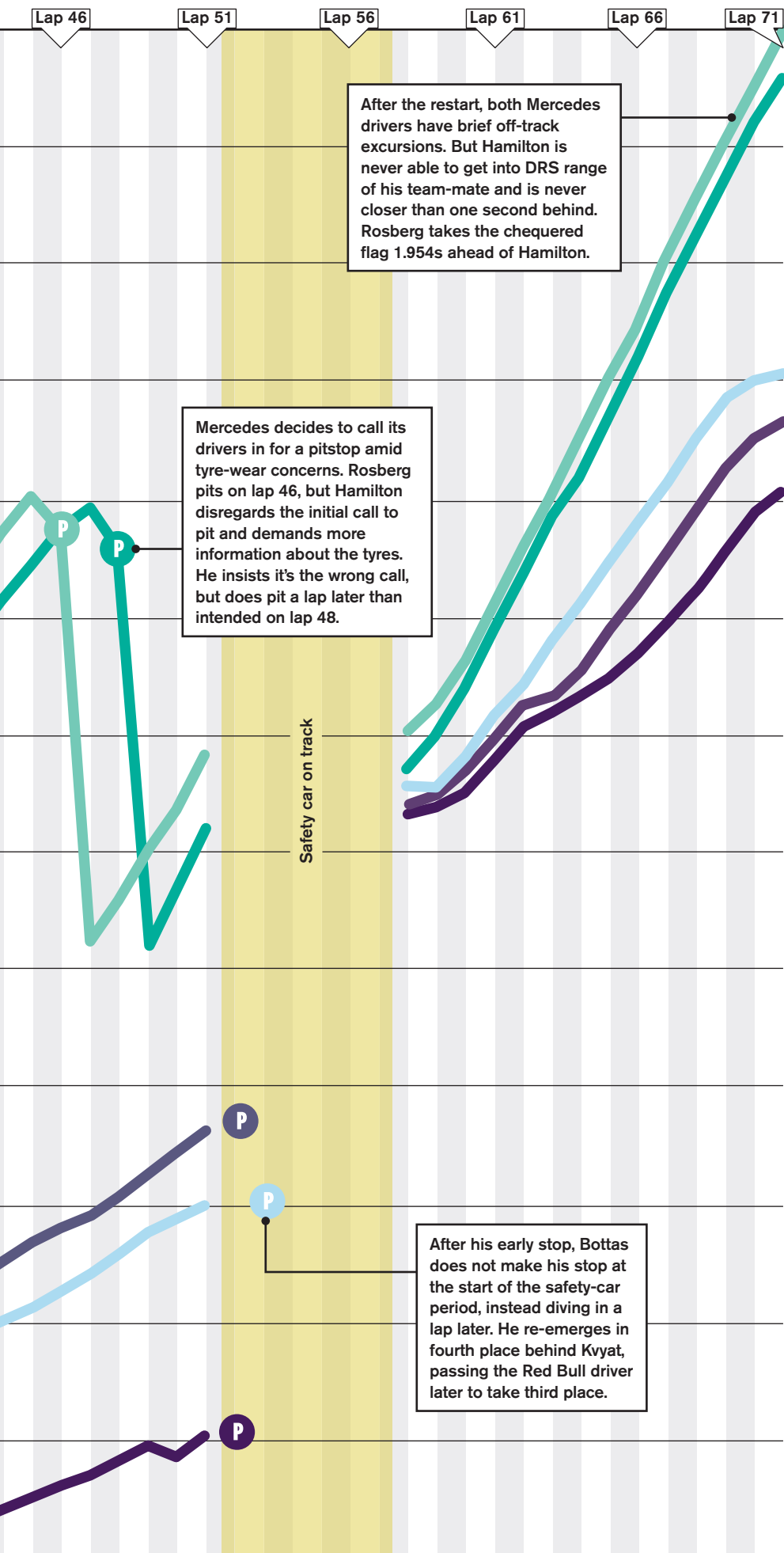
rival convincingly over the course of a full GP weekend, with no obvious extraneous circumstances falling in his favour.

But it's also true that in each of the past two races he's essentially had nothing to lose. The title battle has been all but over for some time, pretty much for the past three races, which is also pretty much the point at which Rosberg has started driving with greater freedom.

Under these circumstances he's proved he can get the job done, but the true test will come when everything is on the line once again. And that situation won't come around again for a while yet. ❧

HOW THE RACE WAS WON





After the restart, both Mercedes drivers have brief off-track excursions. But Hamilton is never able to get into DRS range of his team-mate and is never closer than one second behind. Rosberg takes the chequered flag 1.954s ahead of Hamilton.

Mercedes decides to call its drivers in for a pitstop amid tyre-wear concerns. Rosberg pits on lap 46, but Hamilton disregards the initial call to pit and demands more information about the tyres. He insists it's the wrong call, but does pit a lap later than intended on lap 48.

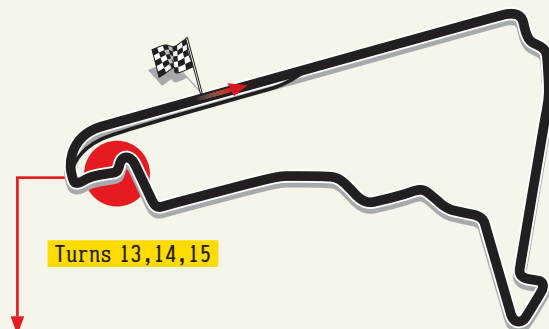
Safety car on track

After his early stop, Bottas does not make his stop at the start of the safety-car period, instead diving in a lap later. He re-emerges in fourth place behind Kvyat, passing the Red Bull driver later to take third place.

TRACKSIDE VIEW

BEN ANDERSON
GRAND PRIX EDITOR

ben.anderson@haymarket.com
@BenAndersonAuto



A lap of the old Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez ended with a fearsomely fast, 180-degree right-hander called the Peralta (banked curve). It was akin to something like Monza's Parabolica, and made famous by Nigel Mansell's brave outside pass of Gerhard Berger to finish second in the 1990 Mexican Grand Prix.

Upon F1's return to Mexico in 2015 the first part of this historic turn is now a 'Mickey Mouse' combination of hairpin left and two tight right-handers, designed by Hermann Tilke.

But they are set in a fantastic 'bowl' of grandstands, which created a superb atmosphere as thousands of enthusiastic fans turned out to cheer home hero Sergio Perez on the first day of practice.

The asphalt is relatively new, so the surface was super-slippery for FP1, not helped by some residual dampness from overnight rain. Therefore, the cars began the session on intermediates, but even when the track improved enough for slicks grip was still low.

Watching from the outside of the left-hander (Turn 13), it's clear to see how the slow nature of this section tempts the drivers to try too hard, either by turning in too aggressively and early and losing the rear late in the corner, or by trying to take a wider and faster line in, but just sliding wide and missing the apex.

"It's clear the slow nature of the new area tempts drivers to try too hard"

Patience is required to get this corner right, and slippery conditions make it even easier to make a mistake. If you do, you end up offline for the tight right that follows.

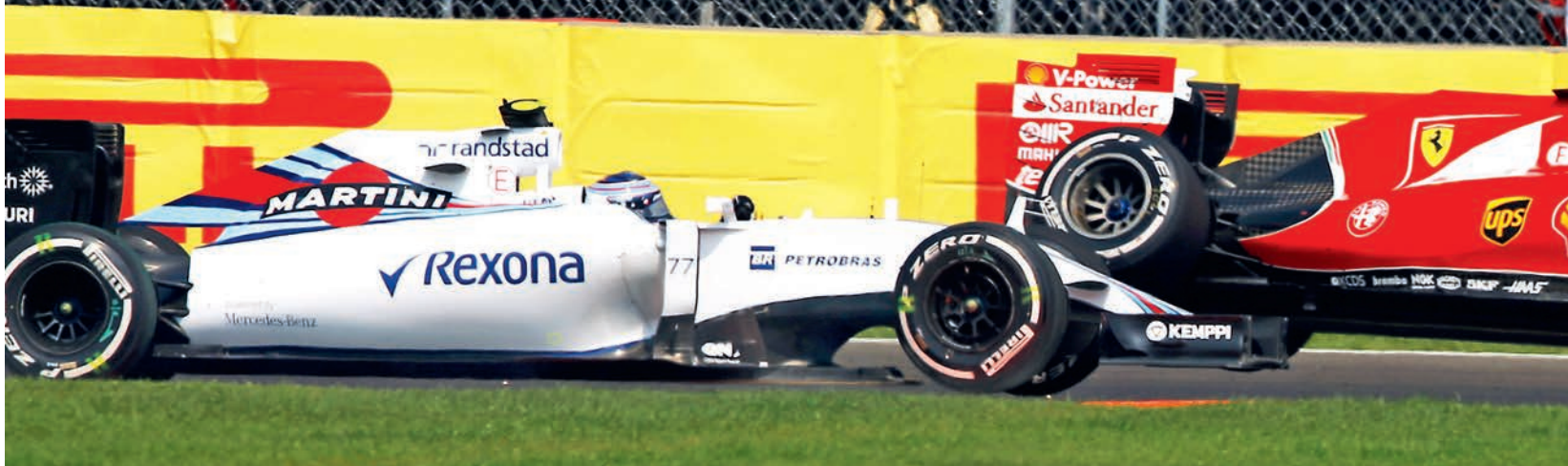
They then disappear out of view, into the second tight right that leads them back to the last part of the old corner, now named in Mansell's honour. The whole section is technical and fascinating, but not really befitting the ballsy style that Mansell displayed so fearlessly back in 1990.



Perez in action on Friday in the stadium

STORIES OF THE RACE

Formula 1's Finns clash again...



Kimi Raikkonen retired from the Mexican Grand Prix following his second collision in three races with Williams driver Valtteri Bottas.

The two Finns came together at Turn 5 on lap 22 when fighting over sixth place, after Bottas had attacked Raikkonen around the outside of the Turn 4 left-hander.

Raikkonen then tried to turn in for the right of Turn 5, but Bottas was still partly alongside in his Williams and they made wheel-to-wheel contact

as Bottas locked up over the inside kerb, putting the Ferrari driver out of the race with suspension damage.

Two races ago in Russia, the pair collided when fighting over third place on the final lap, with Raikkonen the one trying to make a pass on that occasion.

Raikkonen says he believes Bottas could have avoided the collision, but said he holds "nothing against" his fellow Finn.

"I don't think it helps or changes anything [to discuss the clash]," said Raikkonen after the race. "There was

not much room, but if you go over the kerb on the inside then there is enough room.

"It was tight, but if you ask him, I'm sure he's going to blame me. Obviously it was quite slippery there so he locked the front wheel. I had to turn in at some point – I cannot just go straight."

Bottas finished third, and after the race also said he saw no reason to discuss the crash with Raikkonen. "It was big contact, but it was just unlucky that we got together again," said Bottas. "There is not anything

Vettel puncture caused by Ricciardo touch

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel and Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo collided at the first corner of the Mexican Grand Prix, causing the Ferrari to suffer a puncture.

Vettel made a slow start from third on the grid, allowing Daniil Kvyat's Red Bull to pass him. Ricciardo tried to follow his team-mate past on the inside at Turn 1, where the left-front wheel of Ricciardo's car made contact with the right rear of Vettel's.

Vettel was upset with Ricciardo afterwards, but after watching a TV replay agreed with the stewards' decision to take no action.

"Initially I was pretty angry because I have a

puncture and the race is lost," Vettel said. "Looking at it now I think it was correct not to take any action.

"I don't think Daniel had anywhere to go. Equally he was trying, but there was no gap really. It's a very difficult judgement to make. I saw him in the very last second and tried to open a gap but it was too late."

Ricciardo added: "It gets bunched up at Turn 1 and I thought he closed the door and didn't leave enough room.

"He's come across quite quickly. I was on the anchors hard, and on the kerb as well, so I bounced off the kerb and hit him."



Ferrari star accepts blame for accident

Sebastian Vettel took the blame for the crash that ultimately put him out of the Mexican Grand Prix, in a scrappy race for the four-time world champion.

The Ferrari driver suffered several incidents in Mexico City, first picking up a puncture in a clash with Daniel Ricciardo (see story left), then spinning at Turn 7 on lap 17 while running 12th in front of Jenson Button's McLaren and the Toro Rosso of Carlos Sainz.

Vettel then got stuck behind the Lotus of Pastor Maldonado, having flatspotted his tyres in the spin. He dived down the inside at Turn 1 on lap 27 but failed to make it stick, then pitted for new tyres on lap 35.

He eventually crashed out after losing the car again under braking for Turn 7 while running a lapped 12th.

"There was nothing wrong with the car, I went in with more or less the same speed and very suddenly lost the car," Vettel explained.

"We know it has been tricky here all weekend, but that's not blaming the conditions or the circuit. In the end it's my mistake.

"Once you lose the grip, we've seen this weekend that, depending on where it happens, it can be quite costly."





COATES/LAT

to speak about, for me. Normally there is enough space for two cars when you go into a chicane. I thought there was a decent possibility to get through, but it ended up like this.

"There was just no room. I was on the inside and we touched, but I had no space to go into."

Raikkonen was penalised for causing the accident in Russia, while the Mexican GP stewards deemed this latest collision a racing incident, but the Ferrari driver said he was not interested in apportioning blame.

"It's pointless to go through this; one guy will say it's his fault, one guy will say it's my fault," he added. "We have different stewards at each race, and if you ask 10 people they will see it in a different way.

"Maybe he [Bottas] feels better now with what happened in Russia. I have nothing against anybody. This is racing, and if he has a better feeling now it's good for him, but things have a certain way of working out in the long run."



COATES/LAT

...but Bottas survives contact to grab podium

Valtteri Bottas survived his contact incident with Kimi Raikkonen to beat the Red Bulls of Daniil Kvyat and Daniel Ricciardo to a podium finish in the Mexican Grand Prix.

The Finn's Williams team pursued an aggressive two-stop strategy from the start, having qualified behind, while Red Bull hedged its bets on completing the race on a single stop.

Bottas made his first stop on lap eight and jumped Ricciardo for fourth when the Australian pitted on lap 24, shortly after Bottas had been involved in a collision with Raikkonen's Ferrari at Turn 5.

Bottas then tried to close down Kvyat, but the Russian responded and appeared to have the Williams covered (having pitted on lap 21 and rejoined ahead) until the safety car was deployed on lap 52.

Both drivers used that opportunity to make further pitstops, with Bottas taking a new set of medium tyres and Kvyat switching back to softs. Bottas then stole third place from Kvyat at the restart on lap 58 of 71.

"It was a really good call from the team – the medium is a low-range tyre, and it seemed to work," Bottas said. "I saw Daniil sliding in the last corner and I managed to get close enough and get through."

Q&A

SERGIO PEREZ FORCE INDIA DRIVER

How was your first home grand prix?

"It was a great experience. Having all the people here cheering for me is something that will stay with me for the rest of my days."

Have you been surprised by the atmosphere?

"It's been amazing! For me it's very easy to say it's the best weekend on the calendar, but I've heard from many drivers and people around, so I think this grand prix has become very popular. I think we will see what we saw here every year."

Unfortunately the safety car destroyed your strategy in the race...

"It totally destroyed my race, and at the same time it gave me a very hard time to finish, because everyone behind pitted, everyone in front pitted, so I was the only car out there with more than 30 laps on the medium tyre. To restart on those tyres was a big challenge."

You had 53 laps on the tyres but didn't get too much trouble from behind in the end...

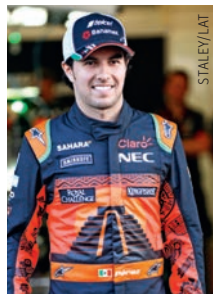
"Well that's what it looks like from the outside, but to keep Verstappen behind on the new softs and to make that medium tyre last to the end with the issues of braking and losing rubber on the front tyres, the graining on the rear tyres, it was difficult to keep the car on track and not do any mistakes."

Do you think you'd have moved forward if you'd changed tyres?

"Definitely I would have had a shot; I would have been fighting with Nico [Hulkenberg] and Massa, but I definitely would have moved up places if the strategy went normal, because I was on a good one-stop strategy."

Any disappointment that you didn't get a better result, or has the other stuff made up for that?

"No. At the end of the day there were so many things that were out of my hands. What I could do I did 1000 per cent perfect, so I'm happy with that. I've been very lucky in the past with safety cars, and this is how things go in racing. You cannot be disappointed; you have to move on."



STALEY/LAT



STALEY/LAT

STORIES OF THE RACE



DUNBAR/LAT

McLaren reaches a nadir in Mexico City

Jenson Button described his Mexican Grand Prix as "painful" as he ended a tough weekend for the McLaren-Honda team with a lowly 14th-place finish, while teammate Fernando Alonso retired at the end of the first lap.

Button missed qualifying on Saturday because of a misfire, and owing to a number of engine changes during the weekend he served a 70-place grid penalty.

He therefore started last, and his McLaren lacked the speed to make progress during the race. Only the two Manor cars finished behind the British driver, who was often overtaken easily on the start-finish straight.

Asked to sum up his race, Button said: "Painful, I think, is the word. The straightline speed that [other cars] have is just phenomenal. I couldn't hold people behind even if I was in front of them – not that I was very often, unless they were pitting or lapping me."

Button believes that Honda suffered a greater power loss than its rivals from the thinner air at the Mexico City circuit, which suggests it was unable to compensate as much for the effects of running at altitude.

Alonso began the race knowing he would not see the finish, owing to an unfixable MGU-H fault.

It's frustrating not even participating. Even if you are last at least you are on the track



Fernando Alonso sums up his feelings after Mexican GP retirement

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XPB IMAGES

Cooling undoes Toro Rosso

Max Verstappen and Carlos Sainz Jr reckoned Toro Rosso was capable of beating the Force Indias to seventh and eighth places in the Mexican Grand Prix, but for overheating engines.

Verstappen started ahead of the Force Indias in eighth, and gained two places on the first lap when Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari punctured a tyre at Turn 1 and then delayed Felipe Massa's Williams at Turn 4. But he had to back off to cool the car during that first stint and eventually finished behind the VJM08s in ninth, dropping behind Sergio Perez after running wide at Turn 12.

Team-mate Sainz had a difficult race to 13th place, after struggling to manage engine and brake temperatures, as well as suffering two off-track moments.

Nasr rues yet more Sauber brake woe

Felipe Nasr called on Sauber to improve the cooling package on the C34 after suffering brake failure in the Mexican Grand Prix.

The Brazilian had been nursing the temperature of his braking system for much of the race before being forced to park at Turn 13 on the final lap of the safety-car period, retiring from 14th position. Nasr has suffered brake problems earlier this season, and said he couldn't understand why they were worse in Mexico than on the sister Sauber of Marcus Ericsson, who finished 12th.

"It was a very tough race, managing my brakes since lap one," Nasr told *Autosport*. "We knew

it was going to be a problem; even from qualifying I had brakes overheating.

"We took all the precautions, we asked the FIA permission to change master cylinders and calipers. I did everything in the race – lift and coast, putting brake balance to the rear, using more engine braking to take the load from the front, and even doing all of that somehow it was more extreme in my car.

"I could see a lot of smoke on the brakes halfway through the race, and the pedal just getting longer, until the point they failed. It's not the first time. We need to bring a better cooling package."



COATES/LAT

DRAWING BOARD

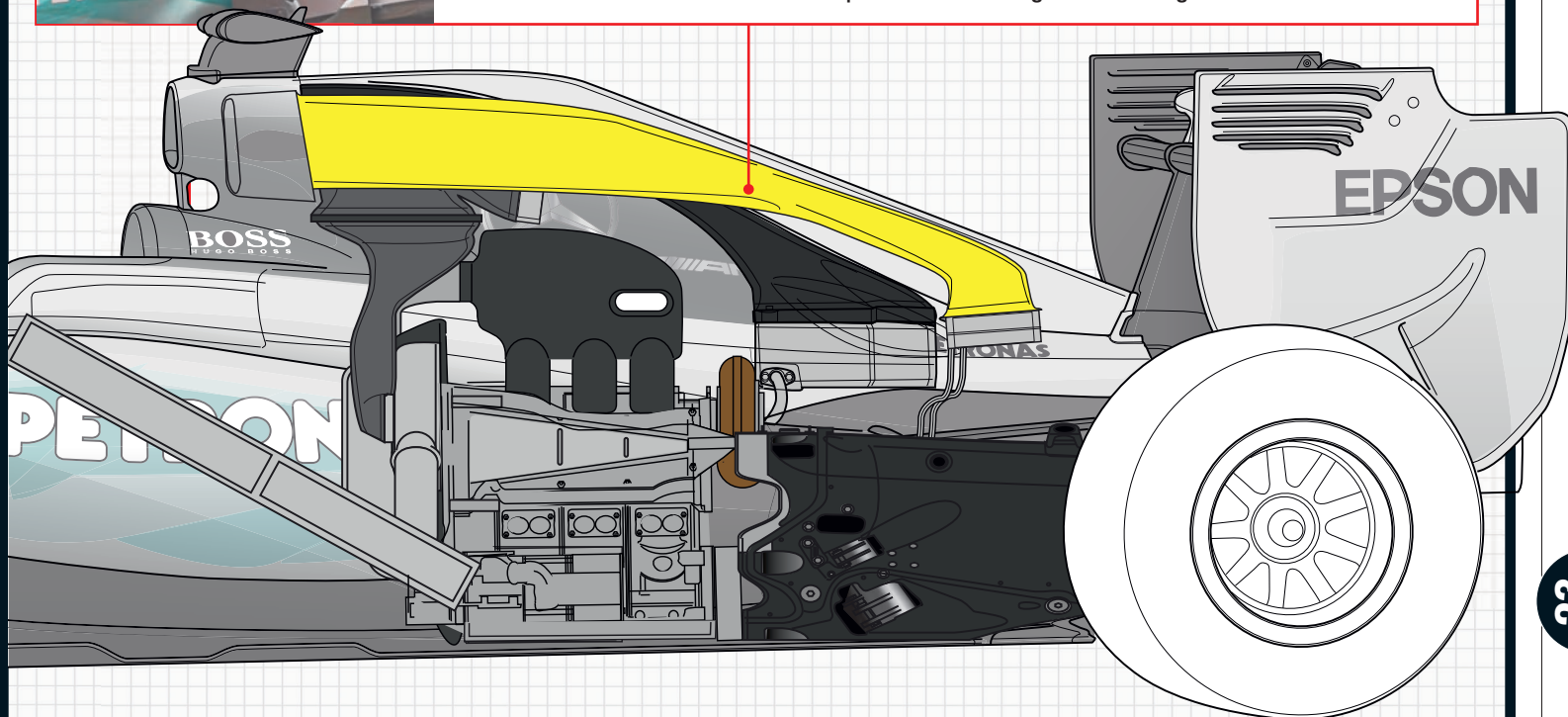
by Craig Scarborough



Mercedes solves the thin-air problem

To cope with running at altitude in Mexico City, many teams modified their airboxes to maximise engine power and cooling. Mercedes normally uses a duct in its airbox to feed air to a small radiator. To maximise airflow into the engine, Mercedes removed the airbox's radiator duct and replaced it

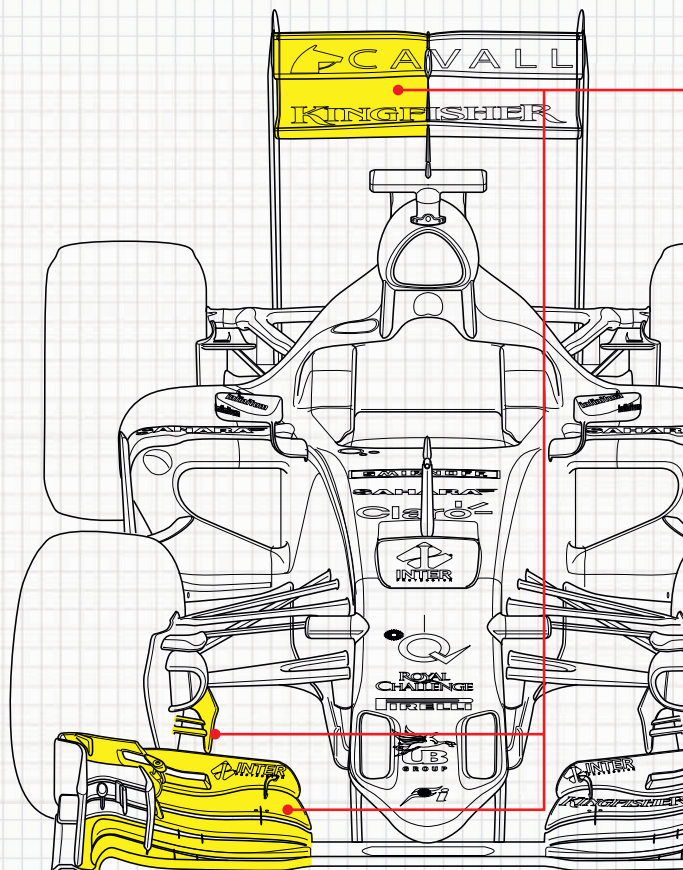
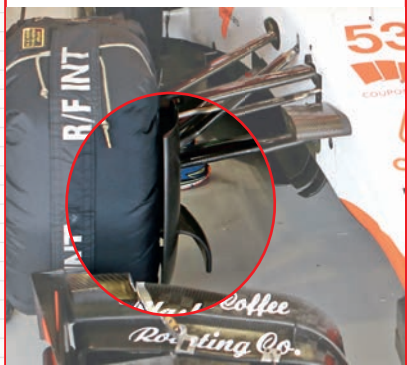
with two 'ear' inlets around the rollhoop. These provided a dedicated airflow to the radiator, which was repositioned at the back of the engine cover. Both Sauber and Toro Rosso also added new inlets over the rollhoop to provide dedicated cooling ducts directing flow to the back of the car.



Manor adopts new ducts

The Manor car has not had many updates, but in Mexico it featured new front brake ducts. These now have a straighter edge to the vane, which protrudes forwards to wrap around the tyre sidewall.

Where the previous iteration had a stepped profile, the new design is slimmer and retains the same cooling inlets, but allows more space for an L-shaped vane on the inside. This helps to steer the airflow around the inner face of the wheel.



Force India front wing

More updates appeared on the VJM08, including a new front wing, front brake ducts and rear wing. The front wing, first tested in Austin, featured revised flaps and endplates, and fewer cascade elements.

This was matched to the front brake ducts, which featured a curved vane mounted on two pylons to direct the airflow around the back of the front tyre.

The new rear wing was also interestingly detailed, with both elements featuring a flatter step in their front profile. The unit's new profile bears a close resemblance to Red Bulls rear wing.

DRIVER RATINGS

“ROSBERG’S MOST CONVINCING DRIVE OF 2015 SO FAR”



MERCEDES



NICO ROSBERG 🇩🇪
The sort of weekend he needs to enjoy more often. Produced a superb lap to beat Hamilton to pole (for the fourth race in a row), and converted that into his fourth win of the season with an assured performance. Nailed the start, which was crucial, but also showed the pace and composure needed to keep Hamilton at bay. His most convincing drive of 2015 so far.



LEWIS HAMILTON 🇬🇧
Says race wins and championships are what count, so is not bothered by current pole drought, but defeat to Rosberg on Saturday here proved crucial in failing to add to his tally of 43 grand prix victories. Said he was pushing hard in the race, so doesn't seem to be giving Rosberg an easy ride now the title battle is over, just didn't nail it at the crucial moments.

24

McLAREN



FERNANDO ALONSO 🇪🇸
Changing his engine and gearbox before the start of the weekend meant this was always going to be a tough event on a track that brutally exposed the car's ERS weakness. Alonso therefore reckoned there was "no point" pushing in qualifying, so squeaking ahead of a Sauber looked a good effort. His race was over after a handful of corners thanks to an MGU-H problem.



JENSON BUTTON 🇬🇧
Deserves 11 out of 10 for perseverance. Endured a terrible build-up thanks to engine problems in practice, losing valuable tracktime, and sitting out qualifying when Honda couldn't fix a misfire. Multiple engine changes meant a 70-place grid penalty, and he stood no chance of meaningful progress given the car's pace. Beating the Manors was his only reward.

FORCE INDIA

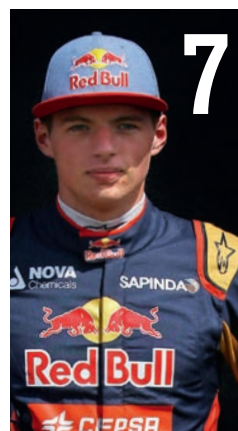


SERGIO PEREZ 🇲🇽
Edged out team-mate Hulkenberg in qualifying, in what is becoming a close battle now, and reckoned Sunday would be "the biggest day of my career" as his country hosted its first grand prix since 1992. Likes to attempt the 'impossible' one-stopper, and looked on course to jump Massa, Hulkenberg, and maybe Ricciardo too without the safety car intervention.



NICO HULKENBERG 🇩🇪
Felt this weekend would be like "starting with a blank sheet of paper" thanks to aero updates on the VJM08. Felt the lap that put him 10th was "really good", just not quite good enough to beat his team-mate. Made up for that with a solid drive in the race. Admitted he was a bit lucky with the safety car timing, but needed that after two tough races recently.

TORO ROSSO



MAX VERSTAPPEN 🇳🇱
Felt his performance in qualifying was one of his best given the crash he suffered in FP2. Force India was also impressed that he managed to get his Toro Rosso ahead of both VJM08s on the grid. Made a strong start to split the two Williams drivers, and reckoned beating the Force Indias was possible without engine overheating that set in during the first stint.



CARLOS SAINZ JR 🇪🇸
Was disappointed to not make Q3, but was much happier with his car after struggling badly for rear grip on Friday. His race started decently enough, but felt the need to save brakes and the engine from overheating spoiled his planned two-stop strategy. Locking up and going off in front of Perez also didn't help, and a later off dropped him behind Ericsson's Sauber.

BEN ANDERSON reviews and rates each driver's grand prix weekend performance out of 10

RED BULL



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Was disappointed at the gap to Merc in qualifying, admitting "confusion" as to how to extract the best from the tyres, but gap to Kvyat was negligible at 0.001s. After bouncing off Vettel's Ferrari at Turn 1 Ricciardo drove a solid race, but couldn't match Kvyat's pace on the soft tyre, complaining of a lack of rear grip. Did a good job to close down and pass Massa for fifth.



DANIIL KVYAT

Kvyat was excellent this weekend. Edged out his team-mate in qualifying, but his race performance was more impressive. Passed Vettel off the line and showed superior pace to Ricciardo over the first stint on soft tyres. Was looking good for a podium until the safety car came out and helped Bottas to mug him at the restart. Not quite the ultimate result, but a fine drive.

WILLIAMS



FELIPE MASSA

Wasn't too far behind team-mate in qualifying (0.119s), but struggled particularly over the second part of the lap. Lost ground on lap one, when Vettel's slow Ferrari allowed Max Verstappen to steal past, but more crucial was the struggle for rear grip towards the end of his second stint, which allowed Ricciardo to overtake. Decent result but not a great race.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Could Williams have beaten the Red Bulls in qualifying? Bottas felt the conditions needed to be hotter to favour the FW37. He got his wish on Sunday, when the track temperature was higher. The car came alive on the medium rubber and he drove a combative race. Fortunate to survive contact with Raikkonen, and for a safety car restart to set up a pass on Kvyat.

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Tried "everything I could" to beat the Mercedes in qualifying, but third was the best he could hope for. Asked jokingly whether Hamilton and Rosberg would take each other off at Turn 1, but in fact it was Vettel who endured incident, colliding with Ricciardo and puncturing a rear tyre. Later got stuck behind Maldonado's Lotus, then spun and crashed at Turn 7.



KIMI RAIKKONEN

Weekend unravelled when his car caught fire in final practice, which led to an engine and gearbox change for qualifying. Took a new engine for the race so started on the last row, but was making progress when he tangled with Bottas. Has questioned consistency of driving standards rulings recently, so one wonders if he was trying to make a point by closing the door...

LOTUS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

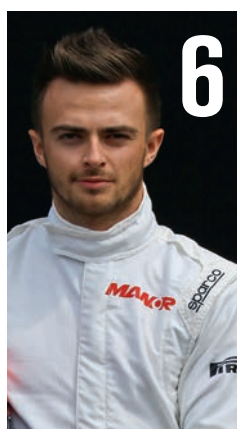
Felt this circuit exposed low-speed weaknesses of the E23, so failing to make Q3 was no great surprise. Nevertheless maintained his excellent qualifying record over his team-mate this year. Lost out to Maldonado at the start, but jumped him again at the first round of pitstops. Not much to choose between them overall, with Grosjean a bit quicker on the medium tyre.



PASTOR MALDONADO

Found generating rear grip difficult here and ended up two tenths adrift of Grosjean in qualifying, which is about par for the course. Got ahead at the start, but lost time waiting for traffic in the pitlane at his first stop. Team felt he would have been the point scorer without that delay, though that depends on whether late 'off' at Turn 12 would have happened regardless.

MANOR



WILL STEVENS

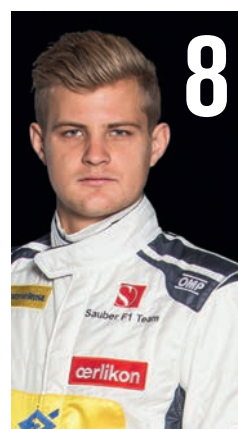
A mixed bag. Manor was impressed with his lapping a quarter of a second slower than team-mate Rossi in qualifying, given a software reset was required when the car lost ERS deployment. Was much quicker than Rossi on the soft tyre early in the race, so was allowed past, but struggled on the medium, and wasn't too impressed to be told to let him back through.



ALEXANDER ROSSI

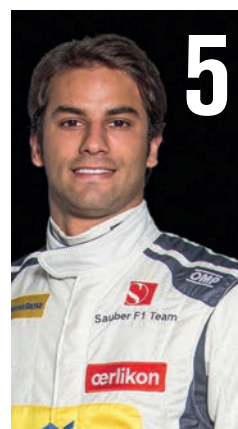
Was delighted to even the score by out-qualifying Stevens for the second time in the four races they've done together as Manor team-mates, but felt so bad about his lack of pace at the start of the race that he apologised to the team. Conversely, his pace on the medium was superb compared. A decent display in a strange race of opposites for the Manor cars.

SAUBER



MARCUS ERICSSON

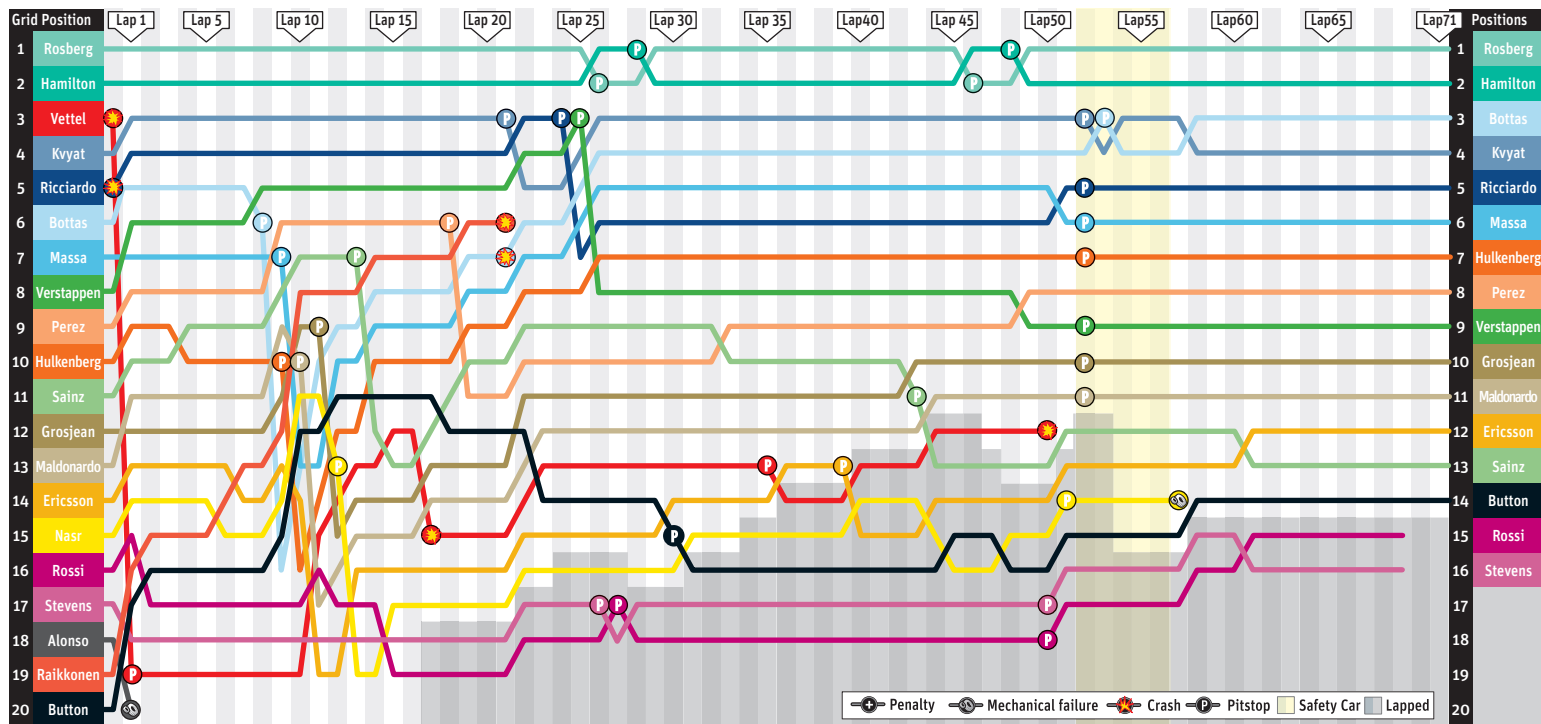
A good performance on a difficult weekend for Sauber. His lap to go 10th in Q1 was supreme, but overheated his rear tyres pushing for more time in Q2 so ended up slower than he should have been. Reckoned his drive to 12th was his best of the season given he was managing overheating brakes from the early stages. A mature drive in trying circumstances.



FELIPE NASR

Brakes have been a big issue for Nasr at times this season and they were his undoing here as well. Suffered overheating problems in qualifying, despite running the same material and cooling package as his team-mate. Was saving brakes "from lap one" in the race, but couldn't keep the temperatures under control, and retired when they finally caught fire.

RESULTS



PRACTICE 1: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	VERSTAPPEN	1m25.990s
2	KVYAT	1m26.295s
3	RAIKKONEN	1m26.295s
4	VETTEL	1m26.886s
5	RICCIARDO	1m27.185s
6	ROSBERG	1m27.196s
7	BOTTAS	1m27.303s
8	SAINZ	1m27.410s
9	PEREZ	1m27.581s
10	MASSA	1m27.695s
11	HAMILTON	1m27.723s
12	ERICSSON	1m28.498s
13	MALDONADO	1m28.559s
14	NASR	1m28.579s
15	PALMER	1m28.711s
16	HULKENBERG	1m29.099s
17	ALONSO	1m30.072s
18	ROSSI	1m30.619s
19	BUTTON	1m32.091s
20	STEVENS	1m32.866s

PRACTICE 2: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ROSBERG	1m21.531s
2	KVYAT	1m21.776s
3	RICCIARDO	1m21.868s
4	HAMILTON	1m21.961s
5	VETTEL	1m21.984s
6	RAIKKONEN	1m22.399s
7	BOTTAS	1m22.721s
8	ALONSO	1m22.993s
9	BUTTON	1m23.109s
10	MASSA	1m23.289s
11	HULKENBERG	1m23.290s
12	MALDONADO	1m23.363s
13	SAINZ	1m23.364s
14	NASR	1m23.430s
15	PEREZ	1m23.597s
16	GROSJEAN	1m23.614s
17	ERICSSON	1m24.533s
18	ROSSI	1m25.940s
19	STEVENS	1m26.968s
20	VERSTAPPEN	no time

PRACTICE 3: Saturday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ROSBERG	1m21.083s
2	HAMILTON	1m21.097s
3	RICCIARDO	1m21.201s
4	VETTEL	1m21.294s
5	KVYAT	1m21.530s
6	PEREZ	1m21.603s
7	BOTTAS	1m21.772s
8	SAINZ	1m21.775s
9	MASSA	1m21.945s
10	HULKENBERG	1m22.010s
11	VERSTAPPEN	1m22.039s
12	MALDONADO	1m22.042s
13	GROSJEAN	1m22.184s
14	ERICSSON	1m22.871s
15	ALONSO	1m23.065s
16	NASR	1m23.067s
17	RAIKKONEN	1m24.648s
18	STEVENS	1m25.654s
19	ROSSI	1m28.176s
20	BUTTON	1m29.336s

Weather: dry, sunny; track 40C, air 21C

Weather: dry, cloudy; track 22C, air 21C

Weather: dry, cloudy; track 27C, air 19C



FRIDAY TESTERS

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	PALMER	1m28.711s



QUALIFYING TIMES

POS	DRIVER	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2	QUALIFYING 3
1	ROSBERG	1m20.436s (1)	1m20.053s (3)	1m19.480s
2	HAMILTON	1m20.808s (3)	1m19.829s (1)	1m19.668s
3	VETTEL	1m20.503s (2)	1m20.045s (2)	1m19.850s
4	KVYAT	1m20.826s (5)	1m20.490s (5)	1m20.398s
5	RICCIARDO	1m21.166s (9)	1m20.783s (8)	1m20.399s
6	BOTTAS	1m20.817s (4)	1m20.458s (4)	1m20.448s
7	MASSA	1m21.379s (12)	1m20.642s (6)	1m20.567s
8	VERSTAPPEN	1m20.995s (8)	1m20.894s (9)	1m20.710s
9	PEREZ	1m20.966s (7)	1m20.669s (7)	1m20.716s
10	HULKENBERG	1m21.315s (11)	1m20.935s (10)	1m20.788s
11	SAINZ	1m20.960s (6)	1m20.942s	-
12	GROSJEAN	1m21.577s (15)	1m21.038s	-
13	MALDONADO	1m21.520s (14)	1m21.261s	-
14	ERICSSON	1m21.299s (10)	1m21.544s	-
15	RAIKKONEN	1m21.422s (13)	1m22.494s	-
16	ALONSO	1m21.779s	-	-
17	NASR	1m21.788s	-	-
18	ROSSI	1m24.136s	-	-
19	STEVENS	1m24.386s	-	-
20	BUTTON	-	-	-

Weather: dry, cloudy; track 33C, air 21C

QUALIFYING STATISTICS

	HEAD TO HEAD	
ROSBERG	5	12 HAMILTON
RICCIARDO	11	6 KVYAT
MASSA	8	9 BOTTAS
VETTEL	14	3 RAIKKONEN
ALONSO/MAGNUSSEN	9	7 BUTTON
PEREZ	7	9 HULKENBERG
SAINZ	9	8 VERSTAPPEN
GROSJEAN	16	1 MALDONADO
ERICSSON	9	8 NASR
STEVENS	10	5 MERHI/ROSSI



POLE POSITION TROPHY

HAMILTON	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	HC	CDN	A	GB	H	B
I	11									
ROSBERG	E	J	RUS	USA	MEX	5				
VETTEL										
SGP	1									



RACE: 71 LAPS - 189.738 MILES

POS	DRIVER	DRIVER NUMBER	TEAM	LAPS	TOTAL TIME	FASTEST LAP	PITSTOPS	TIME IN PITS	GRID
1	NICO ROSBERG	6	MERCEDES	71	1h42m35.038s	1m20.521s	2	44.694s	1
2	LEWIS HAMILTON	44	MERCEDES	71	+1.954s	1m20.723s	2	44.632s	2
3	VALTTERI BOTTAS	77	WILLIAMS-MERCEDES	71	+14.592s	1m21.585s	2	46.117s	6
4	DANIIL KVYAT	26	RED BULL-RENAULT	71	+16.572s	1m21.549s	2	45.077s	4
5	DANIEL RICCIARDO	3	RED BULL-RENAULT	71	+19.682s	1m21.625s	2	44.910s	5
6	FELIPE MASSA	19	WILLIAMS-MERCEDES	71	+21.493s	1m22.009s	2	45.935s	7
7	NICO HULKENBERG	27	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	71	+25.860s	1m22.391s	2	47.413s	10
8	SERGIO PEREZ	11	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	71	+34.343s	1m22.757s	1	23.547s	9
9	MAX VERSTAPPEN	33	TORO ROSSO-RENAULT	71	+35.229s	1m22.603s	2	45.574s	8
10	ROMAIN GROSJEAN	8	LOTUS-MERCEDES	71	+37.934s	1m22.893s	2	45.836s	12
11	PASTOR MALDONADO	13	LOTUS-MERCEDES	71	+38.538s	1m22.963s	2	50.584s	13
12	MARCUS ERICSSON	9	SAUBER-FERRARI	71	+40.180s	1m22.716s	3	1m09.709s	14
13	CARLOS SAINZ	55	TORO ROSSO-RENAULT	71	+48.772s	1m22.172s	3	1m09.972s	11
14	JENSON BUTTON	22	McLAREN-HONDA	71	+49.214s	1m23.006s	2	46.374s	20
15	ALEXANDER ROSSI	53	MARUSSIA-FERRARI	69	-2 laps	1m25.005s	2	55.809s	16
16	WILL STEVENS	28	MARUSSIA-FERRARI	69	-2 laps	1m25.540s	2	49.311s	17
R	FELIPE NASR	12	SAUBER-FERRARI	57	brakes	1m23.350s	3	1m10.256s	15
R	SEBASTIAN VETTEL	5	FERRARI	50	spun off	1m21.847s	2	50.226s	3
R	KIMI RAIKKONEN	7	FERRARI	21	collision	1m24.054s	-	-	19
R	FERNANDO ALONSO	14	McLAREN-HONDA	1	power unit	-	-	-	18

Weather: dry, sunny; track 55C, air 22C. Winner's average speed: 110.975mph. Fastest lap: Rosberg 1m20.521s (119.568mph) on lap 67.
Lap leader: 1-25 Rosberg, 26-28 Hamilton, 29-45 Rosberg, 46-48 Hamilton, 49-71 Rosberg.

TYRE CHOICE

STINT 1	STINT 2	STINT 3	STINT 4
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	
Soft u	Medium N	Soft u	
Soft u	Medium N	Soft u	
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	
Soft u	Medium N	Soft u	
Soft N	Medium N	Soft u	
Soft N	Medium N	Soft u	
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	Soft N
Soft N	Medium N	Soft N	Soft u
Medium N	Soft N	Soft N	
Soft N	Medium N	Soft N	
Soft N	Medium N	Soft N	
Soft N	Medium N	Medium N	Soft N
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	
Medium N			
Medium N			

N - new; U - Used

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

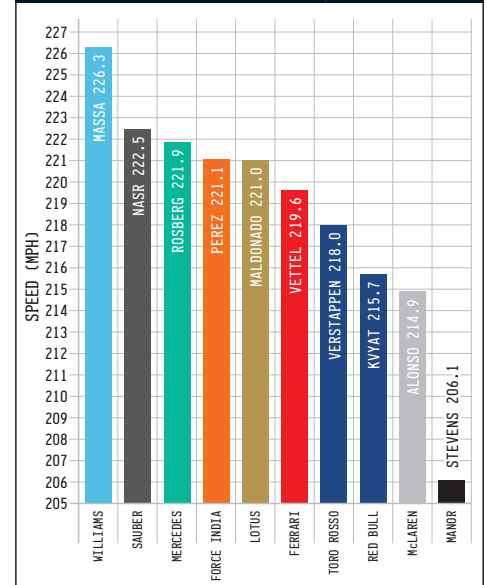
POS	DRIVER	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	I	SGP	J	RUS	USA	MEX	BR	UAE
1	HAMILTON	345	1st	2nd	1st	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	1st	6th	1st	1st	ret	1st	1st	1st	2nd	-	-
2	ROSBERG	272	2nd	3rd	2nd	3rd	1st	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	8th	2nd	17th	4th	2nd	ret	2nd	1st	-	-
3	VETTEL	251	3rd	11th	3rd	5th	3rd	2nd	5th	4th	3rd	1st	12th	2nd	1st	3rd	2nd	3rd	ret	-	-
4	BOTTAS	126	DNS	5th	6th	4th	4th	14th	3rd	5th	5th	13th	9th	4th	5th	5th	12th	ret	3rd	-	-
5	RAIKKONEN	123	ret	4th	4th	2nd	5th	6th	4th	ret	8th	ret	7th	5th	3rd	4th	8th	ret	ret	-	-
6	MASSA	117	4th	6th	5th	10th	6th	15th	6th	3rd	4th	12th	6th	3rd	ret	17th	4th	ret	6th	-	-
7	KVYAT	88	DNS	9th	ret	9th	10th	4th	9th	12th	6th	2nd	4th	10th	6th	13th	5th	ret	4th	-	-
8	RICCIARDO	84	6th	10th	9th	6th	7th	5th	13th	10th	ret	3rd	ret	8th	2nd	15th	15th	10th	5th	-	-
9	PEREZ	68	10th	13th	11th	8th	13th	7th	11th	9th	9th	ret	5th	6th	7th	12th	3rd	5th	8th	-	-
10	VERSTAPPEN	47	ret	7th	17th	ret	11th	ret	15th	8th	ret	4th	8th	12th	8th	9th	10th	4th	9th	-	-
11	GROSJEAN	45	ret	11th	7th	7th	8th	12th	10th	ret	ret	7th	3rd	ret	13th	7th	ret	ret	10th	-	-
12	HULKENBERG	44	7th	14th	ret	13th	15th	11th	8th	6th	7th	ret	DNS	7th	ret	6th	ret	ret	7th	-	-
13	NASR	27	5th	12th	8th	12th	12th	9th	16th	11th	DNS	11th	11th	13th	10th	20th	6th	9th	ret	-	-
14	MALDONADO	26	ret	ret	ret	15th	ret	ret	7th	7th	ret	14th	ret	ret	12th	8th	7th	8th	11th	-	-
15	SAINZ	18	9th	8th	13th	ret	9th	10th	12th	ret	ret	ret	ret	11th	9th	10th	ret	7th	13th	-	-
16	BUTTON	16	11th	ret	14th	DNS	16th	8th	ret	ret	ret	9th	14th	14th	ret	16th	9th	6th	14th	-	-
17	ALONSO	11	-	ret	12th	11th	ret	ret	ret	ret	10th	5th	13th	18th	ret	11th	11th	11th	ret	-	-
18	ERICSSON	9	8th	ret	10th	14th	14th	13th	14th	13th	11th	10th	10th	9th	11th	14th	ret	ret	12th	-	-
19	MERHI	0	DNQ	15th	16th	17th	18th	16th	ret	14th	12th	15th	15th	16th	-	-	13th	-	-	-	-
20	ROSSI	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14th	18th	-	12th	15th	-
21	STEVENS	0	DNQ	DNS	15th	16th	17th	17th	17th	ret	13th	16th	16th	15th	15th	19th	14th	ret	16th	-	-
22	MAGNUSSEN	0	DNS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	I	SGP	J	RUS	USA	MEX	BR	UAE
1	MERCEDES	617	43	33	43	40	43	40	43	43	43	12	43	25	12	43	25	43	43	-	-
2	FERRARI	374	15	37	27	28	25	26	22	12	19	25	6	28	40	27	12	15	0	-	-
3	WILLIAMS	243	12	18	18	13	20	0	23	25	22	0	10	27	10	10	12	0	23	-	-
4	RED BULL	172	8	3	2	10	7	22	2	1	8	33	12	5	26	0	10	1	22	-	-
5	FORCE INDIA	112	7	0	0	4	0	6	4	10	8	0	10	14	6	8	15	10	10	-	-
6	LOTUS	71	0	0	6	6	4	0	7	6	0	6	15	0	0	10	6	4	1	-	-
7	TORO ROSSO	65	2	10	0	0	2	1	0	4	0	12	4	0	6	3	1	18	2	-	-
8	SAUBER	36	14	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	8	2	0	-	-
9	McLAREN	27	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	12	0	0	0	0	2	8	0	-	-
10	MARUSSIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-

SPEED TRAP FOR EACH CONSTRUCTOR (QUALIFYING)



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Mexico proves a hit on return

The green surface of the reborn Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez was rather tricky for the drivers, but the crowd had plenty to cheer about. By **LAWRENCE BARRETTO**

Mexico had to wait 23 years for Formula 1 to return, so when it did so last weekend the country made sure it put on a show that established new standards for other races on the calendar.

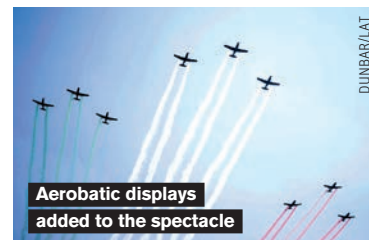
The once-moribund Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, to the east of Mexico City, received a thorough makeover. Ferrari team principal Maurizio Arrivabene says he hardly recognised the place on his return: "I thought I was at the wrong circuit when I arrived. The organisers have done an incredible job."

The facilities were right up there with the very best on the calendar, the grandstands were among some of the biggest and most imposing, and the track itself proved to be quite the challenge. The infamous bumps had been replaced with a smooth surface and, since the asphalt was freshly laid and this was its first encounter with racing machinery, it yielded little grip in the opening practice sessions. "I think it was among the most slippery surfaces I've driven on," says Williams's Felipe Massa.

Early on, the uncooperativeness of

the track did not sit well with the drivers, and predictably many of the allocated round-table media sessions were dominated by grip gripes. The rain did not help. But as the weekend wore on, more rubber was laid down, the weather became more obliging, and at last the newly applied bitumen began to offer some semblance of purchase.

Massa's team-mate Valtteri Bottas felt it: "Laptimes were getting quicker and quicker every lap of the weekend, so maybe next year we will have some more grip, which would be nice."



Aerobatic displays added to the spectacle

DUNBAR/LAT

Beyond the initial reservations about its upper layer, the track broadly met with approval from the drivers. "It's good, it's unique," says Mercedes' Nico Rosberg. "It's great to drive and I think they've done a good job. It reminds me of my youth because it's like a kart track with tight corners."

Altitude played its part in the challenge. Since Mexico City is 2200m above sea level, thinner air placed unusual and – for some teams at least – borderline onerous demands on power units and on brake-cooling capacity.

"We had the easiest brake configuration we can have and still it was on the limit," says Toro Rosso's Carlos Sainz. "It's a big



New track surface was slippery at first

XPB/IMAGES



Home hero Perez loved the weekend

STALEY/LAT



Grandstand section had incredible crowd

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

This year's Mexican Grand Prix was, by most metrics, a roaring success. Once you escape the incessant traffic, which admittedly you'll find in any major city, and head through the gates of the Autodromo, it's like walking into a Formula 1 paradise.

The fans, dressed in an array of team gear or the colours of the Mexican flag, engulf the place. Chants of 'Checo, Checo, Checo' rang out on the grid every time Sergio Perez moved. When the lights went out, the voices of the

multitude rang out around the venue and didn't subside until the podium celebrations were done and dusted many hours later.

F1 fever wasn't just restricted to the area within the track perimeter. The city laid on a lot of promotional activities, such as the fanzone in Chapultepec Park, while locals could be heard discussing the grand prix at bus stops, over dinner and while out on their morning run. And billboards across the city were plastered with the face of Sergio Perez, who was front-page news during the weekend.

The fact that the race took place on the same weekend the country celebrated the Day of the Dead festival only served to enhance the experience. The rain in the week leading up to the race helped too, since it mercifully dispersed much of the pollution that usually hangs heavy in the city.

Mexico just gets F1. The people understand its heritage and are passionate about it, Mexico City is a fantastic, bustling city and the track is a challenger. Let's hope it's here for the long haul.



Drivers bought in to joyous atmosphere

TEE/LAT

issue here, even more than we could have anticipated."

Mercedes executive technical director Paddy Lowe adds: "We went into it with plenty of parts of the car right on the limit, especially in terms of brake cooling. We had to manage the temperatures throughout to ensure they stayed within limits."

While the track delivered as a whole, the baseball stadium is perhaps the venue's greatest achievement. It was initially disappointing to see this huge structure perched over the vestiges of the legendary Peraltada corner, turning what was possibly the ultimate men-from-the-boys challenge into a low-gear trickle.



COATES/LAT

"With the grandstands, you feel like the fans are right there with you"

DANIEL RICCIARDO

But with 55,000 people packed into the towering stadium, which fanned around the new tight-and-twisty final sector, it went some way to making amends. The atmosphere was like no other.

"It's quite unique to enter a stadium, see that many people and to go through the big grandstands," says Sebastian Vettel. "It's a little bit like Singapore, just bigger. It's a great feeling." Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo adds: "The way they built

the grandstands, you feel like the fans are right there with you."

The place erupted during the ceremony on the podium, which had cleverly been located in front of the stadium grandstand. "It's the best podium of the year," says Rosberg. "To be in a stadium like that, the atmosphere and the energy was just unbelievable, so I'm really thankful to all the Mexican people and to all the people that have been here. It's really special."

Across the weekend, a staggering 335,850 fans walked through the gates, of which a remarkable 90,000 turned up for Friday practice, and that's a figure few races on the current calendar can approach.

While they cheered for all the drivers as they flew past, the loudest cheers were reserved for their hero – Sergio Perez.

"It's been amazing," he says. "What I've lived this weekend will stay with me for the rest of my life. It's the best weekend in the calendar. It's not just me saying that. I've heard it from many drivers and many people. There is no race you can compare to Mexico."

Some have likened it to Monza, others to Silverstone, but Mexico has its own flavour. In an era where some additions to the calendar have been sterile, Mexico stands out.

"There are so many people with so much energy and excitement for the sport here," says Lewis Hamilton. "The other countries we go to need to make a big effort to keep up." That's perhaps the biggest compliment of all. ☑

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WINNING IT...



APB IMAGES

...THE HARD WAY

Nissan's leading crew bucked Blancpain Endurance tradition to become champs despite a grim Spa 24H. By **GARY WATKINS**

This was a championship that no one seemed to want to win, or at least not in the conventional way. Victory in the Blancpain Endurance Series usually comes on the back of a big haul at the double-points Spa 24 Hours round, but this time around RJN Nissan drivers Alex Buncombe, Katsumasa Chiyo and Wolfgang Reip took the title after claiming just four

points in the Belgian classic.

Their tally from Spa in July contrasts with that of previous champions since the inception of the BES in 2011. The title has been won by a winner or winners from Spa in three years, and in the other it went to the runners-up.

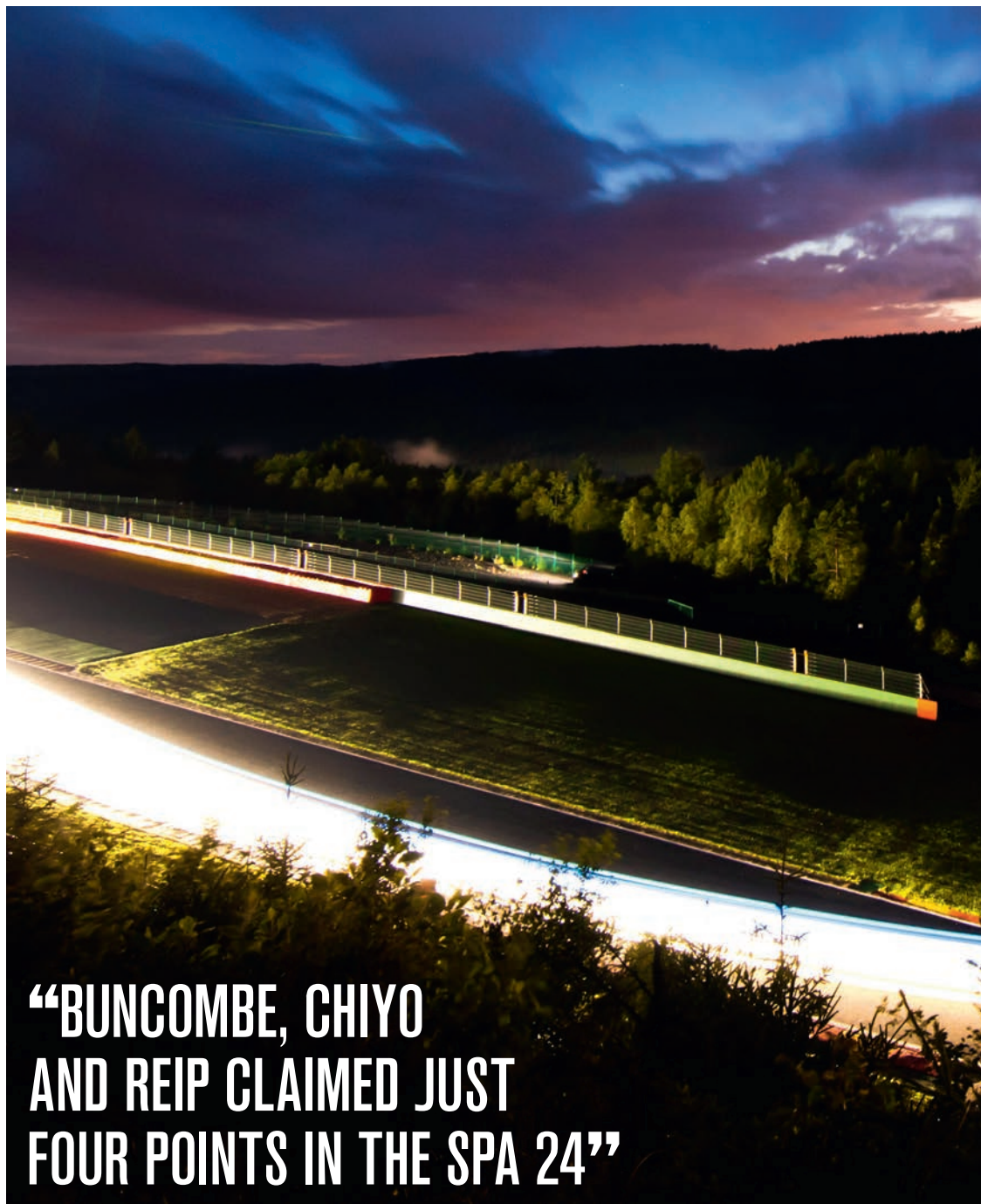
But it wasn't just the Nissan trio who failed to get the big result at Spa on which end-of-season success in the five-race BES normally depends. The championship runners-up, the M-Sport Bentley line-up of Steven Kane, Guy Smith and Andy Meyrick, failed to see the chequered flag in Belgium. The same goes for the fourth-placed VonRyan McLaren crew of Kevin Estre, Rob Bell and Shane van Gisbergen.

Of the top crews in the final order only Stephane Ortelli and Frank Stippler finished well at Spa on the way to third place in the final points for the WRT Audi squad.

And just to emphasise what might have been for any of the line-ups that finished behind the Nissan trio, two of the Spa-winning drivers took fifth in the points despite contesting only two races. Markus Palttala and Lucas Luhr, who shared the spoils in Belgium with Nicky Catsburg, also finished third with the Marc VDS BMW squad at the Paul Ricard 1000Km in June. Because the French race came with extra points courtesy of its additional duration, the two results gave them a points tally just 13 points short of the champions.

That's not to say that the events of Spa were insignificant in the outcome of the championship. Those four points won by the Nissan drivers ultimately proved decisive in their 62-59 margin over the Bentley Boys.

That made the efforts of Reip to replace an electrical relay on the lead RJN Nissan GT-R NISMO GT3 all-important in the final reckoning. The Nissan had already lost time to repairs and,



“BUNCOMBE, CHIYO AND REIP CLAIMED JUST FOUR POINTS IN THE SPA 24”

after this second delay, recovered to finish 15th and, crucially, eighth in the Pro Cup class.

Equally decisive were the efforts of Buncombe in repelling the advances of Kane at both Ricard and the Nurburgring finale. The Nissan driver sealed the only victory of the season for the eventual champions in France after holding off the lead M-Sport Bentley Continental GT3.

He also fought tooth and nail to keep the Bentley out of second at the 'Ring. Buncombe ultimately failed, but the time Kane lost in fighting his way past meant that the winning McLaren was too far up the road to catch. With

the Nissan third, the victory required to make the Bentley drivers champions was out of reach.

There were 'what ifs' for just about everyone competing at the sharp end in the 2015 BES, the eventual champions included. They would have had a shout for a podium at the series opener at Monza but for an electronic glitch and a botched safety-car release that meant Buncombe lost contact with the leaders.

Buncombe qualified on pole at Silverstone and Reip led to the first pitstops, although the time lost to repairs after the Belgian collided with a slower car at the end of his stint left the Nissan out of the points.

Nissan's championship success was anchored with victory in the Ricard race, which became the series' 1000km fixture instead of the Nurburgring in 2015. That victory came with 33 points instead of the normal 25 for a three-hour race, another crucial factor in the outcome of the title.

Bentley's lead trio finished in the runner-up spot for the second season in a row, although this time Kane and co did so without winning a race. The closest they came were two second positions, at Ricard and the 'Ring. ▶





RACE BY RACE



1 Monza

- 1 Babini/Mul/Palmer
- 2 Salikhov/Siedler
- 3 Vernay/Frijns/Vanthoor

The Lamborghini Huracan trio won after leading most of the race, but were excluded and later reinstated on appeal just before the final round. The victory for those six months was held by the Rinaldi Ferrari of Siedler and Salikhov, who still won the Pro-Am class on a track that favours the 458 Italia.



2 Silverstone

- 1 Estre/Bell/van Gisbergen
- 2 Vernay/Frijns/Vanthoor
- 3 Stippler/Richelmi/Ortelli

The VonRyan McLaren squad won this one on fuel economy. Bell stopped under a full-course yellow 50 minutes into the race, handing van Gisbergen a 40s lead. The Kiwi then stretched his stint on a fuel load to 70 minutes at the same time as maintaining his advantage over the pursuing Audis.



3 Paul Ricard

- 1 Buncombe/Reip/Chiyo
- 2 Smith/Meyrick/Kane
- 3 Martin/Luhr/Palittala

Chiyo charged the Nissan up to second behind the leading Lambo in the first stint. Reip kept pace with the Italian car until handing over to Buncombe. The Brit then took the lead, which Chiyo extended, before Kane in the Bentley chased down the Nissan until spinning with six minutes left.



4 Spa

- 1 Catsburg/Palittala/Luhr
- 2 Stippler/Ortelli/Muller
- 3 Mamerow/Mies/Thiim

Marc VDS triumphed in what turns out to be its last assault on its home race. The BMW took over at the front shortly after the sister car retired in the 19th hour with transmission issues. Catsburg led the comeback after the car lost time on slicks in the rain and then was hit with a penalty.



5 Nurburgring

- 1 Estre/Bell/van Gisbergen
- 2 Smith/Meyrick/Kane
- 3 Reip/Buncombe/Chiyo

Another tactical masterpiece from VonRyan Racing gave McLaren its second victory of the season. The Nissan with Buncombe at the wheel held off Kane's Bentley for long enough in the final stint that Estre was too far up the road to catch. Third gave the Nissan drivers the Endurance title.



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GINETTA

The Marc VDS BMW (right) won the big race at Spa



► Their tales of woe concerned Silverstone and Spa. A wheelnut problem on home ground deprived them of a possible victory, while at Spa Kane endured a stint on slicks on a wet track early on in the race, which meant no points at the six-hour cut-off at which the first batch of points was awarded, and then Meyrick shunted in the seventh hour.

The reigning champion WRT squad failed to win a BES race in 2015, and only remotely looked like doing so on one occasion. Laurens Vanthoor, Robin Frijns and Jean-Karl Vernay finished a reasonably close second at Silverstone, but the Audi R8 – either the original or the new-generation car that undertook two development races in 2015 – was never truly competitive.

WRT pointed the finger at the Balance of Performance, the system by which GT3 cars are meant to be equalised. It was hard not to agree with the team or its argument that the Audi's BoP reflected its prowess as a team and the quality of its driver line-ups. That was backed up by the inability of other teams running the German cars to notch up any meaningful results in either the BES or the sister Blancpain Sprint Series.

Ortelli and Stippler were WRT's top scorers on the back of a second place at Spa (where they raced with Nico Muller), combined with the same

“WRT POINTED THE FINGER AT THE BoP EQUALISING RULES”

position when the second tranche of points was dished out at half-distance. They went to the finale in the championship lead, but the car wasn't competitive and a spin for Stephane Richelmi left them outside the points.

Vanthoor's attempt to retain his BES title started to go off the tracks with a gearbox problem for his new R8 LMS, shared with Rene Rast and Mike Rockenfeller, at Ricard. He was as good as derailed when he crashed after being forced off line on a drying track at Spa when he was driving with Rast and Markus Winkelhock. A distant fourth in the finale got him, Frijns and Vernay up to sixth equal in the points.

Frijns, who was paired full-time with Vanthoor in the Blancpain Sprint Series, claimed the overall Blancpain GT Series on the basis of his results across both championships. WRT also claimed

the teams' crown in the BGTs rankings, but these triumphs were just consolation prizes.

The only double winners this season were the VonRyan McLaren trio of Estre, Bell and van Gisbergen. They claimed the spoils aboard the 650S GT3 at Silverstone and the Nurburgring, but failed to knit together a coherent title tilt.

It would have been different had the early pace of Estre at Spa been converted into a decent finish. A collision with a backmarker and then an engine-sensor failure late on put paid to that.

The Lamborghini Huracan GT3 was the other race winner in 2015. The Grasser entry shared by Fabio Babini, Jeroen Mul and Andrew Palmer pretty much dominated at Monza, only to be disqualified because the team used an oversize refuelling restrictor. Months of wrangling later, Grasser was reinstated on a procedural point.

The fifth edition of the BES might have been won by a team contesting just two races – the big story at Spa was the comeback of the winning crew after an erroneous call on tyres cost their BMW Z4 two laps early on. Add those missing laps to their six and 12-hour race times, and they would have been in the lead on both occasions. That would have meant an extra 19 points, more than enough to have made Palttala and Luhr champions. Bizarre. ☒

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM & CAR	1	2	3	4	5	PTS
1	Katsumasa Chiyo (J)/Wolfgang Reip (B)/Alex Buncombe (GB)	Nissan GT Academy Team RJN Nissan GT-R Nismo GT3	8th	13th	1st	15th	3rd	62
2	Guy Smith (GB)/Andy Meyrick (GB)/Steven Kane (GB)	Bentley M-Sport Bentley Continental GT3	5th	9th	2nd	DNF	2nd	59
3	Frank Stippler (D)/Stephane Ortelli (MC)	WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra/Audi R8 LMS	6th	3rd	37th	2nd	11th	56
4	Shane van Gisbergen (NZ)/Rob Bell (GB)/Kevin Estre (F)	VonRyan Racing McLaren 650S GT3	16th	1st	DNF	29th	1st	54
5	Markus Palttala (FIN)/Lucas Luhr (D)	BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS BMW Z4 GT3	-	-	3rd	1st	-	49
6	Jean-Karl Vernay (F)/Robin Frijns (NL)/Laurens Vanthoor (B)	WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra/Audi R8 LMS	3rd	2nd	30th	21st	4th	48
=	Stef Dusseldorp (NL)/Nico Bastian (D)	ROWE Racing Mercedes SLS AMG GT3	11th	10th	4th	16th	19th	48
8	Daniel Juncadella (E)	ROWE Racing Mercedes SLS AMG GT3	15th	11th	4th	16th	19th	42
9	Nico Muller (CH)	Audi Sport Team WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra/Audi R8 LMS	6th	-	34th	2nd	-	41
10	Maxime Martin (B)	BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS BMW Z4 GT3	-	-	3rd	31st	-	33
11	Maximilian Buhk (D)/Maxime Soulet (B)/Andy Soucek (E)	Bentley M-Sport Bentley Continental GT3	13th	6th	12th	DNF	5th	31
12	Nicky Catsburg (NL)	BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS BMW Z4 GT3	-	-	-	1st	-	30
13	Giovanni Venturini (RSM)/Adrian Zaugg (ZA)/Mirko Bortolotti (I)	GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Huracan	25th	8th	6th	DNF	6th	29
14	Andrew Palmer (USA)/Jeroen Mul (NL)/Fabio Babini (I)	GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Huracan	1st	17th	DNF	DNF	13th	28
15	Gregory Guilvert (F)/Christopher Mies (D)	Sainteloc Racing Audi R8 LMS ultra	DNF	-	20th	3rd	7th	23
16	Sean Walkinshaw (GB)/Martin Plowman (GB)/Craig Dolby (GB)	MRS Racing/AIM Autosport Nissan GT-R Nismo GT3	12th	5th	42nd	DNF	8th	18
=	Marco Bonanomi (I)/Filip Salaquarda (CZ)/Frederic Vervisch (B)	ISR Audi R8 LMS ultra	7th	4th	5th	DNF	12th	18

18= Edward Sandstrom (Sainteloc Racing Audi R8 LMS ultra) & Christian Mamerow/Nicki Thiim (Audi Sport Team Phoenix Audi R8 LMS), 17; 20 Stephane Richelmi (WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra), 15; 21 Dirk Werner/Augusto Farfus (BMW Sports Trophy Team Marc VDS BMW Z4), 14; 22 Marcel Fassler/Andre Lotterer/Mike Rockenfeller (Audi Sport Team Phoenix Audi R8 LMS), 13; 23= Hubert Haupt/Abdulaziz Al Faisal/Yelmer Buurman (Black Falcon Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), Bruno Senna/Adrian Quaife-Hobbs/Alvaro Parente (VonRyan Racing McLaren 650S GT3) & Harold Primat/Vincent Abril/Mike Parisy (HTP Motorsport Bentley Continental GT3), 10; 26= Tristan Vautier/Morgan Moullin Traffort/Alessandro Pier Guidi (Akka ASP Ferrari 458 Italia GT3) & Marc Basseng (Sainteloc Racing Audi R8 LMS ultra), 9; 28 Edoardo Mortara (Sainteloc Racing Audi R8 LMS ultra) & Felipe Fraga/Sergio Jimenez (AH Competicoes Team Brasil BMW Z4 GT3), 8; 30 Klaus Graf (ROWE Racing Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), 7; 31= Miguel Molina (Sainteloc Racing Audi R8 LMS ultra), Rinat Salikhov/Marco Seefried/Norbert Siedler (Rinaldi Racing Ferrari 458 Italia GT3) & Caca Bueno (AH Competicoes Team Brasil BMW Z4 GT3), 6; 34 Alex Zanardi/Bruno Spengler/Timo Glock (ROAL Motorsport BMW Z4 GT3), 4; 35= Ahmad Al Harthy (Oman Racing Team Aston Martin Vantage GT3) & Atila Abreu (AH Competicoes Team Brasil BMW Z4 GT3), 2; 37= Rory Butcher/Stefan Mucke (Oman Racing Team Aston Martin Vantage GT3), Nicolai Sylvest/Indy Dontje (GT Russian Team Mercedes SLS AMG GT3) & Daniel Lloyd/Jonny Adam (Oman Racing Team Aston Martin Vantage GT3), 1.

Pro Am Cup 1 Duncan Cameron/Matt Griffin (AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia GT3), 88; 2 Michal Broniszewski/Michael Lyons (Kessel Racing Ferrari 458 Italia GT3), 63; 3 Francisco Guedes (AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia GT3), 58. Am Cup 1 Ian Loggie/Julian Westwood (Team Parker Racing Audi R8 LMS ultra), 81; 2 Jurgen Haring/Dimitrios Konstantinou/Frank Schmickler (Attempto Racing Porsche 911 GT3-R), 80; 3 Marco Zanuttini/Stephen Earle/Liam Talbot (Kessel Racing Ferrari 458 Italia), 67.

Combined Blancpain GT 1 Frijns, 170; 2 Buhk, 158; 3 Vanthoor, 152; 4 Abril, 136; 5 Ortelli, 126; 6 Siedler, 118; 7 Seefried, 97; 8 Richelmi, 90; 9 Mies, 83; 10 Estre/Bell, 76.

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BLANCPAIN SPRINT SERIES



Abril and Buhk won the Sprint crown

XPB IMAGES

Laurens Vanthoor and Robin Frijns were clear favourites for the Blancpain Sprint Series title from the moment their partnership at the WRT Audi team was announced. And they were firmly on course until an engine-change problem in qualifying at the penultimate weekend at Misano set in motion a sequence of events that allowed the HTP Bentley duo of Maximilian Buhk and Vincent Abril to steal the title.

The WRT pairing needed to outscore the Bentley drivers by just nine points to seal the title in Italy, a pretty impressive statistic given that they had failed to start either race at the Nogaro season opener and this was only a seven-event championship. Such was their dominance that they were able to take five victories over the four weekends between Nogaro and Misano, which appeared to make the title a formality.

The engine change meant Vanthoor would have to start the qualifying race at Misano from the back. His charge through the field got him no further than 13th when an incident with the second HTP Motorsport Bentley Continental GT3 driven by Jules Szymkowiak destroyed his Audi and left Vanthoor with fractures to both legs.



Vanthoor's Misano shunt cost the title

XPB IMAGES

There were obviously no points for the Benelux pairing at Misano and, worse still, Vanthoor was put out of action for the season's finale at Zandvoort the following weekend. What's more, Buhk and Abril were able to finish second in the main race at Misano to close the gap to the championship leaders to just six points.

Frijns was joined in the car at Zandvoort by Christopher Mies after a reshuffle at WRT. A spin for Frijns following contact with Norbert Siedler's Rinaldi Ferrari 458 Italia left them outside the points in the qualifying race, which was won by Buhk and Abril. The Audi stormed up into second in the hands of Mies during the opening stint of the main race, but Frijns was unable to overcome Buhk to claim the win that would have given him the title in a thrilling finish to the season.

New factory driver Buhk and Abril, who had moved over from WRT to HTP for his second season of international GT racing, won four times over the course of the season, although their championship aspirations took a knock when Buhk crashed in practice at Brands, damaging the car beyond immediate repair.

Siedler and regular team-mate Marco Seefried won both races at Misano with the steadily improving Rinaldi team to give the former a shot of the title at Zandvoort. An engine failure in the warm-up ahead of the main race put paid to that.

The Team BMW Brazil squad claimed a main race victory in the season-opener at Nogaro with stand-in factory drivers Maxime Martin and Dirk Muller when its regular roster were on Brazilian Stock Car Championship duty. The two other race winners, both in qualifying races, were Stephanes Ortelli and Richelmi at Nogaro, and Reiter Lamborghini duo of Nicky Catsburg and Albert von Thurn und Taxis in Moscow.



Title winners can chill out now

STANDINGS

- 1 Maxi Buhk/Vincent Abril (HTP Motorsport Bentley Continental GT3), 135;
- 2 Robin Frijns (WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra), 127;
- 3 Laurens Vanthoor (WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra), 109;
- 4 Norbert Siedler (Rinaldi Racing Ferrari 458 Italia GT3), 95;
- 5 Marco Seefried (Rinaldi Racing Ferrari 458 Italia GT3), 92;
- 6 Stephane Ortelli/Stephane Richelmi (WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra), 76;
- 7 Atila Abreu/Valdeno Brito (AH Competicoes BMW Z4 GT3), 74;
- 8 Christopher Mies (WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra), 62;
- 9 Markus Winkelhock/Niki Mayr-Meinhof (Phoenix Racing Audi R8 LMS ultra), 48;
- 10 Enzo Ide (WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra), 44.

PRO AM CUP

- 1 Alexey Karachev (GT Russian Team Viatti Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), 209;
- 2 Alexey Vasilyev (GT Russian Team Viatti Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), 144;
- 3 Marko Asmer (GT Russian Team Viatti Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), 116.

SILVER CUP

- 1 Jules Szymkowiak (HTP Motorsport Bentley Continental GT3), 164;
- 2 Anders Fjordbach (ISR Audi R8 LMS ultra), 138;
- 3 Thomas Fjordbach (ISR Audi R8 LMS ultra), 114.

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS

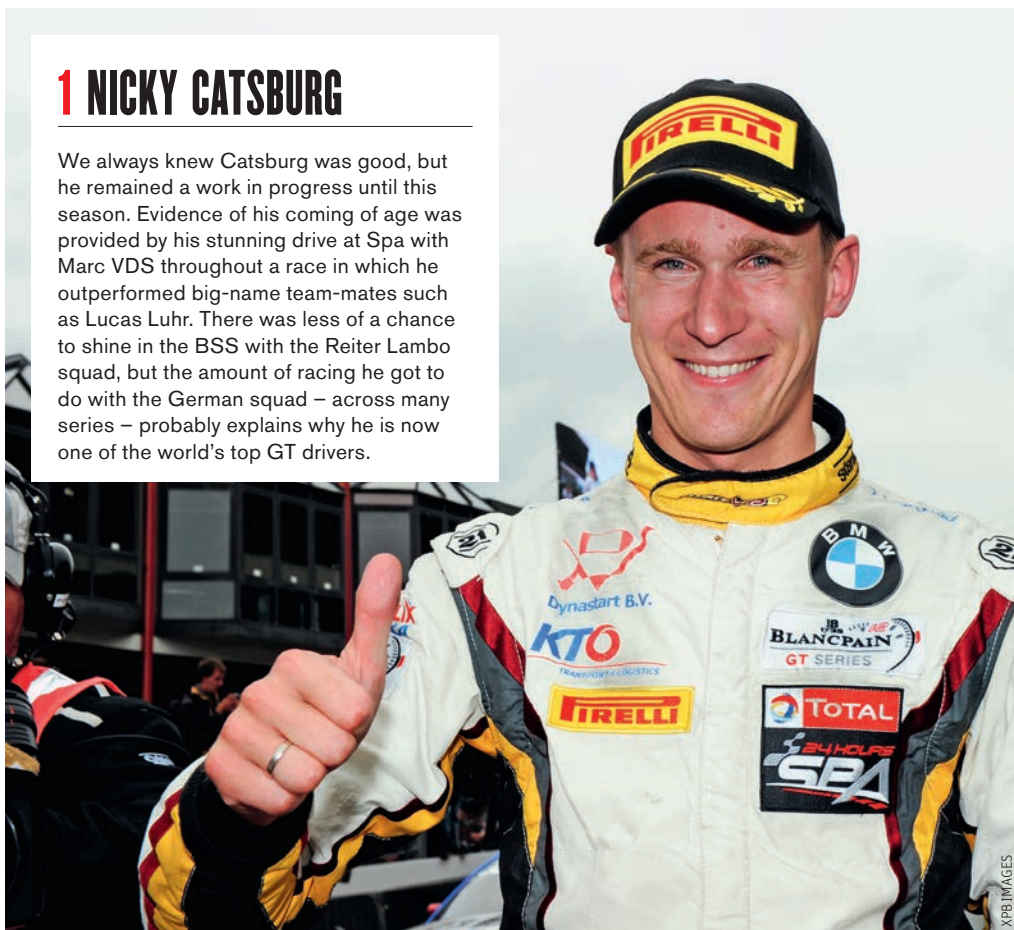
BASED ON BOTH THE ENDURANCE AND SPRINT CAMPAIGNS



38

1 NICKY CATSBURG

We always knew Catsburg was good, but he remained a work in progress until this season. Evidence of his coming of age was provided by his stunning drive at Spa with Marc VDS throughout a race in which he outperformed big-name team-mates such as Lucas Luhr. There was less of a chance to shine in the BSS with the Reiter Lambo squad, but the amount of racing he got to do with the German squad – across many series – probably explains why he is now one of the world's top GT drivers.



2 STEVEN KANE

There's not much to say about the Northern Irishman's 2015 season, except that he performed exactly as we expected him to. He was blindingly fast as the quickest of the M-Sport Bentley drivers and posted some of those impressive charges – most notably at the Nurburgring finale – that have become his trademark. There was a mistake as he strived to take the lead at Paul Ricard. That spin shouldn't be held against him, though. Getting past the Nissan was always going to be a long shot on that track and the gyration ultimately had no bearing on the outcome of the championship.

3 ALEX BUNCOMBE

He proved again that he should be considered to be among the elite of the world's GT drivers, even if he doesn't yet have the profile to match his talents. The Briton was strong everywhere, didn't make any mistakes and played a key role in turning a line-up that was completed by two much less experienced drivers into a title-challenging combination. The solid rearguard actions against Kane at Ricard and the Nurburgring ultimately gave Nissan the title, even if he did lose out to the Bentley in Germany.



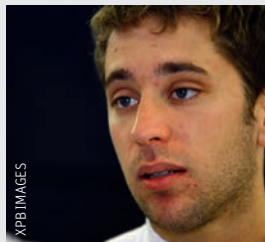
4 LAURENS VANTHOOR

The WRT Audi driver probably drove better than ever in 2015, yet he can't retain the top spot in this ranking courtesy of the mistakes at Brands Hatch, Spa and, if you agree with the stewards, Misano. Brands perhaps best summed up his season: he crashed in opening free practice, put it on pole with barely a lap's running under his belt and was imperious over the two races. Whatever your view of the Misano shunt, it meant Vanthoor undeservedly ended the season without a title.



5 KEVIN ESTRE

Estre is always a joy to watch at the wheel of a racing car and nowhere more was that so than in the rain at Spa when he stormed into the lead. It was one of those drives that underlined the talents of the man. There were other impressive performances, most notably at the wheel of the Attempto McLaren in the BSS race at Brands. The irony of his season is that he had less to do – as the last driver in the car – when the VonRyan team claimed its pair of enduro victories.



6 ROBIN FRIJNS

Had Frijns not been paired with Vanthoor, we'd likely be eulogising about him as the next big thing in sportscar racing. The Dutchman had an impressive first season of GT racing. It began badly with a car-destroying shunt at the Nogaro BSS round, but that didn't knock his confidence. He bounced back and was a worthy foil for Vanthoor in the BSS, looked the part in the enduros and didn't make another mistake all year. His reward, one that shouldn't be overlooked, was the BGTS title.

7 MAXIMILIAN BUHK

Is Buhk the superstar that we suspected he might be back in 2013? If he is, the 2015 season didn't provide the necessary evidence. Rather it reinforced the view that the 22-year-old is an enigma, a driver who is super-quick and intuitive on his day, yet too inconsistent and prone to mistakes. Buhk did his impressing in the BSS within the home environment of the German HTP squad rather than with M-Sport in the BES, but then he isn't the first driver to fail to shine in the second works Bentley.



8 SHANE VAN GISBERGEN

Kiwi van Gisbergen was able to transfer his V8 Supercars pace to the northern hemisphere on tracks he didn't know and against drivers with much more GT3 experience. He shone at Spa, while VonRyan's Silverstone victory was all about him. He showed phenomenal pace at the same time as stretching out a tank of fuel after taking over the McLaren early during a full-course yellow. No one could quite believe the times he was able to set.

9 CRAIG DOLBY

The underused Briton made an impressive transition to GT racing after landing a job as development driver for JRM, NISMO's partner on the GT-R GT3 programme. He proved his credentials with the German MRS squad, even though results didn't get much better than a qualifying-race third at Brands and a smattering of top sixes. A switch to the AIM-run Always Evolving Motorsport squad proved what might have been. He and his regular team-mate, Sean Walkinshaw, may have notched up a victory at Misano with a bit more luck.



10 WOLFGANG REIP

The former Nissan GT Academy winner – in only his third proper season of racing, remember – stepped up to the plate as the Japanese manufacturer entered a car in the Pro Cup class for the first time. The Belgian proved able to hold his own with any of the established stars of the series and was particularly impressive at Silverstone and Ricard. He gets the nod for the final place on this list over team-mate Chiyo because of where he came from.

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SWEDISH HOUSE MAFIA

Felix Rosenqvist did a superb job, not only for himself but for the happy family of Prema Powerteam, to sweep to the Euro F3 title.

MARCUS SIMMONS watched the season unfold



Rosenqvist took the title in his sixth F3 year

RACE BY RACE



1 Silverstone

RACE 1 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 2 George Russell
RACE 3 Charles Leclerc

Rosenqvist cruised home in the opener, but exclusion from second qualifying for a bent wing endplate threw him to the back of grid and allowed new boys Russell and Leclerc to win. Honorary mention: Menezes, cracking start from eighth to third in race three, only for fuel-pump problem to relegate him to fourth.



2 Hockenheim

RACE 1 Antonio Giovinazzi
RACE 2 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 3 Charles Leclerc

Series leader Giovinazzi passed Rosenqvist to win a wet opener, before the Swede bounced back to trounce the field in the dry. It was wet again in the finale, with Leclerc beating Rosenqvist in an epic race. Honorary mention: Iltott, who finished fifth in his second race in his rookie car-racing season.



3 Pau

RACE 1 Jake Dennis
RACE 2 Jake Dennis
RACE 3 Antonio Giovinazzi

Dennis was on awesome form at a circuit he loves to win the first two races. But suspension damage cost him the Pau GP itself, Giovinazzi squeezing by with a few laps remaining to extend his points lead as Rosenqvist struggled. Honorary mention: Maini, who excelled on the streets with a fourth.



4 Monza

RACE 1 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 2 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 3 Felix Rosenqvist

Rosenqvist was unbeatable, but lost 25 points as second and third races only counted for half-points, with Stroll and Beretta barrel-rolling and Tvetter hospitalised. In race one, Jensen challenged clutch-troubled Rosenqvist. Honorary mention: Hyman ran in leading group for sixth in race one.



5 Spa

RACE 1 Charles Leclerc
RACE 2 Jake Dennis
RACE 3 Jake Dennis

Leclerc won the season's most-exciting race thanks to canny racecraft and a Rosenqvist/Giovinazzi clash. Chaos thereafter meant more Stroll controversy, a rollhoop-shearing shunt for Menezes and two wins for Dennis. Honorary mention: Ferrucci second, on Dennis's tail, in race two.



6 Norisring

RACE 1 Charles Leclerc
RACE 2 Maximilian Gunther
RACE 3 Antonio Giovinazzi

A serene drive in soaking conditions showed Leclerc's class in race one. It then dried out, Gunther snatching race-two win when Albon, Russell and Leclerc ran wide. Giovinazzi won race three after keeping Russell at arm's length. Honorary mention: Boccolacci took points in all three races.



How do you beat Prema Powerteam? That's a question that's vexed many in the Formula 3 European Championship over the past few years – five successive drivers' titles, including in the series' predecessor, the F3 Euro Series, have seen to that. Yet, the continued strength of the series depends on the Italian team's leading rivals regarding that tough question not as a negative, rather as a spur to get better for next season.

In 2015, that task of beating Prema was perhaps more daunting than ever. The behind-the-scenes investment of Canadian fashion tycoon Lawrence Stroll, whose son Lance stepped up to F3 as reigning Italian Formula 4 champion, allowed the team to recruit veteran Felix Rosenqvist as well as to enjoy fantastic R&D resources. Rosenqvist's job was a) to drive as fast as possible and b) to help team-mates Stroll, Jake Dennis and (initially) Brandon Maisano, and he fulfilled both sides of the bargain to perfection. To the extent that, in a classic case of shutting a stable door that few are really too worried about after the horse has bolted (see also Max Verstappen and F1 superlicence regulations), there looks to be a strong chance that drivers will be limited from 2016 to a maximum of four years in the series.

“APART FROM A NORISRING DISASTER, PREMA WAS ON TOP AT EVERY CIRCUIT”

Apart from a disastrous weekend at the Norisring, where Rosenqvist drove what he felt was one of the best laps of his career to qualify fifth, Prema was on top at every circuit this season. Excluding Norisring, Rosenqvist and Dennis topped all but three of the remaining 20 qualifying sessions – one of them was a bizarre damp/dry/red-flagged lottery at Spa, headed by Mikkel Jensen; the other two were courtesy of Antonio Giovinazzi, the hard-charging Italian who brilliantly upheld Carlin honour and only conceded the title to Rosenqvist with three races remaining.

Over the 11 rounds, Rosenqvist set the fastest lap of the weekend at nine, Dennis once (at the Pau Grand Prix weekend, where his Swedish team leader was curiously bereft of pace), while impressive rookie Alexander Albon, with the returning Signature team, stuck in the ▶



7 Zandvoort

RACE 1 Antonio Giovinazzi
RACE 2 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 3 Markus Pommer

Rosenqvist fumed about traffic in qualifying, but still grabbed one pole and one win. Chased Giovinazzi throughout race one before beating him in the second. A cracking start from Pommer allowed him to win the finale. Honorary mention: MacLeod – no points but plenty of overtaking.



8 Red Bull Ring

RACE 1 Jake Dennis
RACE 2 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 3 Antonio Giovinazzi

Dennis got the jump on polesitting team-mate Rosenqvist to win the first race, before Rosenqvist led Giovinazzi throughout the second. Then the rain came, and the third race was a non-event behind the safety car, with Giovinazzi taking a half-points 'win'. Honorary mention: Sette Camara, twice on the second row.



9 Algarve

RACE 1 Jake Dennis
RACE 2 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 3 Felix Rosenqvist

Another win for Dennis, this time from Albon, who lost pole for race two with insufficient fuel for a sample. Rosenqvist beat Dennis and Stroll in the second and third races, only now moving past Giovinazzi into the series lead... Honorary mention: Fittipaldi bagged his first top-six finish, then got another.



10 Nurburgring

RACE 1 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 2 Felix Rosenqvist
RACE 3 Felix Rosenqvist

A dominant Rosenqvist claimed the title with one round to spare. He left Cassidy and Iltott behind in the first race, then took the second, as Giovinazzi jumped Stroll on a restart for second. Stroll got second in the finale. Honorary mention: two podiums for Cassidy.



11 Hockenheim

RACE 1 Lance Stroll
RACE 2 Antonio Giovinazzi
RACE 3 Felix Rosenqvist

Rosenqvist played the team game, as Stroll won the first race from Dennis in a Prema 1-2-3-4. Giovinazzi soaked up Rosenqvist pressure in second race, before the Swede let Dennis through. Rosenqvist cruised to final win, from Albon. Honorary mention: Sims got new team Hitech GP into top four.

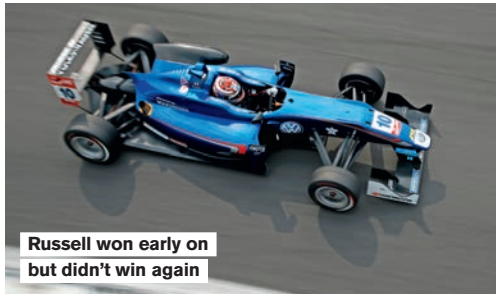
► speediest lap times when Prema got it all wrong at Norisring.

But to say that Prema is unbeatable would be inaccurate, and anyway it's only towards the end of the season that such mutterings increased in volume. Firstly, the disappointing Maisano, who had matched Stroll on pace throughout the 2014 Italian F4 season, and driving the same car with which Esteban Ocon won the '14 crown, had an average grid position of 11.4 before he split with the team in the summer. If Prema was beyond rivalling, then he'd have done much better than that. That he was replaced by Nick Cassidy for the next two rounds, and Maximilian Gunther for the Hockenheim finale, ensured that Prema had four fast F3 drivers. (Gunther, indeed, had qualified third with his former team Mucke Motorsport at the same venue earlier in the season.)

It's not just a crushing domination founded on resources; it's equally a no-stone-turned dedication to the tiny details.

"Honestly I've never been in a working environment in any place that's so spot-on," says Rosenqvist. "They are just really switched on with the car every weekend. I don't know how they do it, but somehow they seem to be really, really strong. It's just a privilege to work with them. I also can contribute a lot to the team, and we just made a strong combination. Big cred to them. They are very technically skilled and also they have a nice Italian flavour – it's like a big family and everyone's laughing and having fun. It doesn't feel like you're working here."

One factor that increased the perception of Prema invincibility was the late-season slide of two drivers who had hitherto given Rosenqvist an extremely good run for the title. Volkswagen protege Giovinazzi's season unwound a little after he had to make a mad dash from his DTM debut with Audi at Moscow Raceway across to the other extreme of Europe for two days of official F3 tests at Algarve, beginning first thing on the Tuesday



Russell won early on but didn't win again



Poor driving standards dominated at Monza

morning. He was tired and, on Prema's most-dominant track, he scraped just a few points. Next up was Nurburgring, where Prema is always mega anyway, and it's to Giovinazzi's and Carlin's credit that he was back on pole and race-winning form at the Hockenheim finale – the Italian driver and his English team don't know the meaning of the phrase 'give up'.

The other series leader to drop back was rookie Charles Leclerc, who was Van Amersfoort Racing's direct replacement for Max Verstappen and looked awesome early in the season. His season began to unravel in July when rear-suspension failure, a legacy of a startline tangle, caused a massive crash at Zandvoort. Eye-witnesses of the accident say the Monegasque looked dazed in the aftermath, and the chassis was sufficiently damaged for a brand-new car to be pressed into service next time out at the Red Bull Ring. He was back in his repaired car for Algarve, but VAR, as it had at Zandvoort, was struggling with excess tyre wear in hot conditions. That wasn't the problem at the two chilly season-ending German events, and the fact that team-mates Arjun Maini and Alessio Lorandi were back in more-representative grid positions suggested something was amiss with Leclerc. He looked back to his best as he topped

a damp-on-slicks free practice for some time at the Hockenheim finale by as much as a second, but when it dried Leclerc reported his car as still extremely hard to drive, and only outqualified Maini by 0.047 seconds in the year's final session. He finished the weekend dropping to fourth in the points behind the surging Dennis.

The Zandvoort startline clash was one of many that caused safety cars and driver penalties (in this case Markus Pommer), and this was the other hot topic of the season. The fact that 27 of the 33 races went under caution is a dismal statistic, and the combination of nervous officials, gigantic grids and drivers who were super-well-prepared for the simple act of driving, but many of whom have inept racecraft, made for an unsatisfactory season. An average grid in the low to mid-thirties made for congested circuits and numerous frustrated drivers who couldn't get a clear lap in the brief 20-minute qualifying sessions, and the almost-inevitable shunts when they were let loose from 'rolling starts' after safety-car periods.

Drivers were read the riot act at Monza in the wake of Stroll's spectacular barrel roll after contact with Giovinazzi, and they were then given a much-more-productive talking-to by temporary steward Emanuele Pirro at the following round at Spa (he was also on board at the Hockenheim

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM & CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes	1st	7th	12th	2nd	1st	2nd	13th	5th	6th	1st	1st	1st	2nd	DNF	5th	3rd
2	Antonio Giovinazzi (I)	Carlin Dallara-VW	2nd	3rd	2nd	1st	3rd	3rd	2nd	3rd	1st	4th	DNF	4th	DNF	9th	15th	2nd
3	Jake Dennis (GB)	Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes	3rd	DNF	3rd	4th	15th	8th	1st	1st	23rd	3rd	2nd	2nd	5th	1st	1st	DNF
4	Charles Leclerc (MC)	Van Amersfoort Racing Dallara-VW	12th	2nd	1st	3rd	2nd	1st	3rd	2nd	3rd	5th	DNF	3rd	1st	6th	2nd	1st
5	Lance Stroll (CDN)	Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes	6th	4th	DNF	6th	14th	6th	9th	10th	4th	11th	DNF	EXC	29th	DNF	BAN	8th
6	George Russell (GB)	Carlin Dallara-VW	8th	1st	5th	11th	9th	18th	8th	6th	8th	8th	6th	7th	6th	13th	3rd	10th
7	Alexander Albon (T)	Signature Dallara-VW	4th	6th	6th	13th	8th	9th	5th	7th	DNF	21st	DNS	DNS	3rd	16th	9th	5th
8	Maximilian Gunther (D)	Mucke/Prema Dallara-Mercedes	9th	12th	21st	5th	4th	5th	4th	18th	2nd	DNF	DNF	9th	13th	7th	8th	4th
9	Mikkel Jensen (DK)	Mucke Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes	13th	10th	10th	7th	11th	4th	7th	12th	9th	2nd	3rd	DNF	7th	DNF	DNF	12th
10	Markus Pommer (D)	Motopark Dallara-VW	5th	DNF	7th	EXC	17th	7th	23rd	8th	20th	DNF	8th	10th	19th	28th	EXC	9th
11	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	Mucke Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes	18th	9th	13th	10th	6th	28th	DNF	11th	10th	DNF	4th	8th	4th	2nd	12th	DNF
12	Callum Iloft (GB)	Carlin Dallara-VW	10th	19th	9th	12th	5th	10th	11th	15th	16th	20th	14th	14th	14th	11th	4th	11th
13	Gustavo Menezes (USA)	Carlin Dallara-VW	7th	18th	4th	9th	7th	11th	15th	14th	DNF	13th	5th	6th	22nd	DNF	DNS	7th
14	Sergio Sette Camara (BR)	Motopark Dallara-VW	17th	DNF	20th	17th	25th	27th	14th	20th	11th	DNF	11th	22nd	16th	3rd	22nd	15th
15	Brandon Maisano (F)	Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes	DNF	5th	8th	8th	10th	17th	10th	DNF	21st	9th	7th	5th	15th	4th	6th	20th
16	Nick Cassidy (NZ)	Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	DNS	DNS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	Pietro Fittipaldi (BR)	Fortec Motorsports Dallara-Mercedes	11th	8th	DNF	DNF	20th	DNF	DNS	DNS	DNS	7th	9th	11th	8th	21st	10th	19th
18	Arjun Maini (IND)	Van Amersfoort Racing Dallara-VW	DNF	14th	16th	15th	DNF	13th	12th	4th	5th	10th	20th	20th	17th	23rd	16th	DNF
19	Dorian Boccia (F)	Signature Dallara-VW	21st	DNF	17th	20th	32nd	12th	DNF	26th	14th	DNF	28th	BAN	18th	5th	13th	6th
20	Alessio Lorandi (I)	Van Amersfoort Racing Dallara-VW	DNF	16th	14th	DNF	30th	DNF	6th	13th	7th	18th	13th	17th	10th	10th	7th	17th

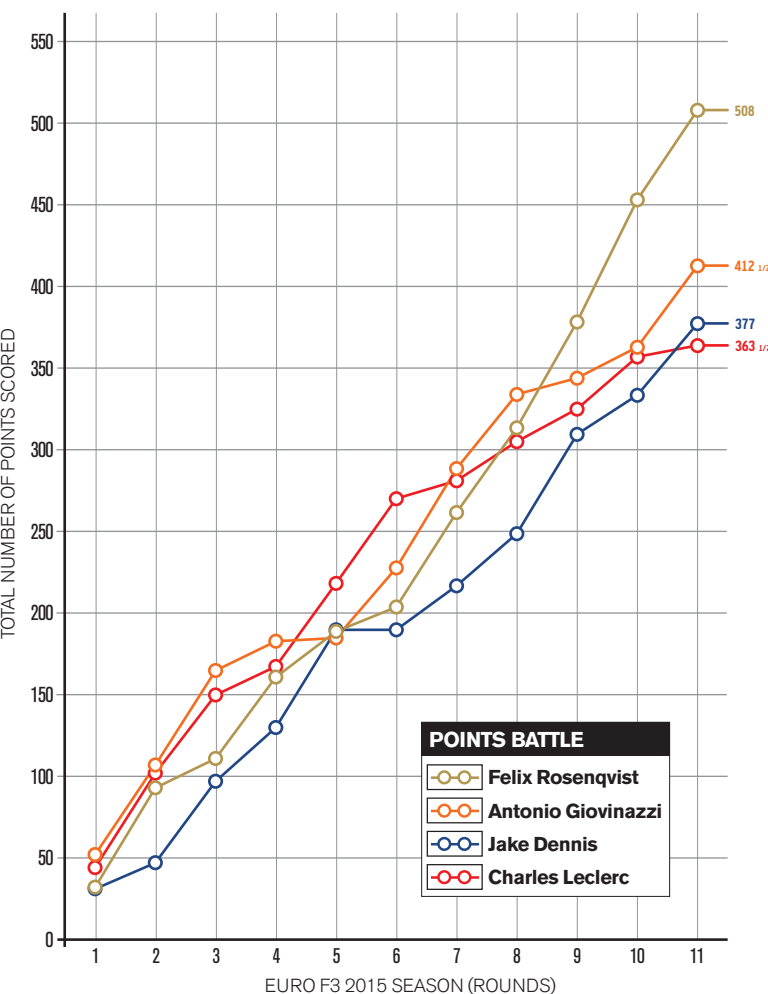


WINS	
ROSENQVIST	13
DENNIS	6
GIOVINAZZI	6
LECLERC	4
RUSSELL	1
GUNTHER	1
POMMER	1
STROLL (below)	1

POLES	
ROSENQVIST	17
DENNIS	6
GIOVINAZZI	4
LECLERC	3
ALBON	2
JENSEN	1



SUPERGRID
Average of positions in the 22 qualifying sessions, disregarding grid penalties. Where excluded for technical infringement, that session is disregarded. Only those who started a minimum five rounds included.



finale). After this, things seemed to calm down a bit – probably partly due to the fact that the majority of the circuits that followed allowed for less slipstreaming. But still there were too many cases of poor judgement, suggesting that most of the field should have spent a bit longer in the junior classes before stepping up to F3.

Most, but not all. Leclerc and George Russell, for instance, both had just one season in cars under their belts before stepping up to F3 in 2015, but each was notable for their clean and respectful racing. Both have just earned their licences to drive on the road too, something they have in common with Verstappen, whose sensational 2014 season was partly responsible for the massive influx of drivers with high aspirations not yet matched by their ability.

Despite the bumper field, the impression is that European F3 2015-style was not quite a match for its epic Ocon-versus-Blomqvist-versus-Verstappen predecessor, but that should in no way detract from the achievements of Rosenqvist. Yeah, he's been around forever, but for the first time this underfunded and hugely likeable bloke was put in a position where all he had to worry about was driving. No one should begrudge the outstanding jobs he did for himself, and the team did for him. 🏆

17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	PTS
17th	13th	2nd	1st	3rd	2nd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	3rd	3rd	1st	508
22nd	1st	1st	2nd	2nd	3rd	2nd	1st	9th	8th	8th	10th	2nd	13th	6th	1st	3rd	412.5
DNF	11th	DNF	3rd	4th	1st	8th	7th	1st	2nd	2nd	DNF	4th	4th	2nd	2nd	7th	377
3rd	4th	5th	DNF	10th	6th	4th	6th	6th	7th	7th	4th	5th	5th	8th	10th	23rd	363.5
4th	26th	4th	DNF	5th	4th	3rd	5th	4th	3rd	3rd	9th	3rd	2nd	1st	6th	DNF	231
5th	2nd	6th	5th	6th	5th	7th	9th	10th	5th	4th	13th	8th	10th	7th	8th	DNF	203
2nd	3rd	7th	4th	8th	7th	5th	8th	2nd	12th	DNF	12th	14th	11th	11th	DNF	2nd	187
1st	DNF	29th	7th	12th	20th	14th	19th	14th	14th	DNF	-	-	-	4th	4th	6th	152
6th	5th	8th	18th	DNF	10th	9th	13th	8th	9th	DNS	5th	10th	DNF	19th	5th	8th	117.5
11th	12th	3rd	21st	1st	17th	6th	4th	5th	11th	DNF	6th	13th	6th	9th	9th	21st	116.5
DNF	6th	28th	8th	9th	12th	13th	11th	7th	10th	DNF	7th	7th	7th	10th	17th	DNF	91
16th	7th	11th	12th	22nd	30th	12th	10th	16th	26th	11th	3rd	9th	8th	15th	11th	5th	65.5
7th	DNF	16th	10th	DNF	8th	10th	12th	15th	4th	DNF	14th	DNF	14th	20th	12th	13th	65
23rd	19th	DNF	6th	7th	9th	19th	3rd	11th	13th	5th	11th	11th	9th	17th	7th	11th	57.5
10th	10th	10th	13th	29th	26th	DNS	DNS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32nd	DNF	9th	2nd	6th	3rd	-	-	-	43
DNF	16th	17th	20th	20th	23rd	32nd	24th	12th	6th	6th	15th	DNF	18th	13th	16th	DNF	37
14th	17th	13th	15th	17th	21st	15th	22nd	28th	25th	16th	8th	12th	16th	29th	14th	17th	27
8th	8th	15th	DNF	25th	16th	17th	17th	22nd	16th	10th	21st	17th	DNF	30th	15th	24th	27
9th	9th	30th	28th	19th	15th	28th	20th	17th	27th	DNF	19th	DNF	DNF	12th	13th	12th	26



21 Raoul Hyman (Team West-Tec Dallara-Mercedes), 14.5; 22 Michele Beretta (Mücke Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes), 4; 23 Ryan Tveter (Carlin Dallara-VW), 2; 24 Sam MacLeod (Motopark Dallara-VW), 2; 25 Fabian Schiller (Team West-Tec Dallara-Mercedes), 2; 26 Nabil Jeffri (Motopark Dallara-VW), 2.

3.3	Rosenqvist	4.1
4.6	Dennis	5.5
7.1	Giovinazzi	9.4
9.6	Stroll	10.4
10.5	Pommer	10.5
11.4	Albon	13.0
13.1	Maisano	14.3
14.8	Jensen	16.2
17.0	Ferrucci	17.9
18.1	Sette Camara	18.3
20.0	Tveter	21.5
22.0	Hyman	22.1
22.8	Fittipaldi	23.6
25.5	MacLeod	26.3
27.0	Jeffri	27.4
27.9	Cao	28.0
30.6	Schiller	30.8
32.1	Ling	Li
	Ragunathan	



AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



1 FELIX ROSENQVIST

After four seasons with Mücke Motorsport, Rosenqvist was recruited by Prema and, funnily enough, didn't much like the Italian team's car when he first tested it. He knew it was up to him to get to grips with it though, and by the time of the Silverstone opener his form was ominous, not just in qualifying, but on old-tyre race pace. Shunts not of his making threatened to derail his season but he came through and was dominant in the late rounds. A class act on the track and off it, where his help of his team-mates and his articulate views on rivals' bad driving standards both impressed.



2 ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

The perception is that the popular southern Italian is hugely experienced. OK, this was his third season in F3, but he had just eight car-race meetings under his belt, predominantly in Asia, prior to that. Giovinazzi rewarded the support of his benefactors the Gelael family, plus VW and Carlin, with a hugely committed season. He's added consistency and polish to the raw, rough-diamond talent evident in his early career, even if he's still more prone to the occasional setback-causing error than, say, Rosenqvist. Now on the brink of a fully deserved professional career.

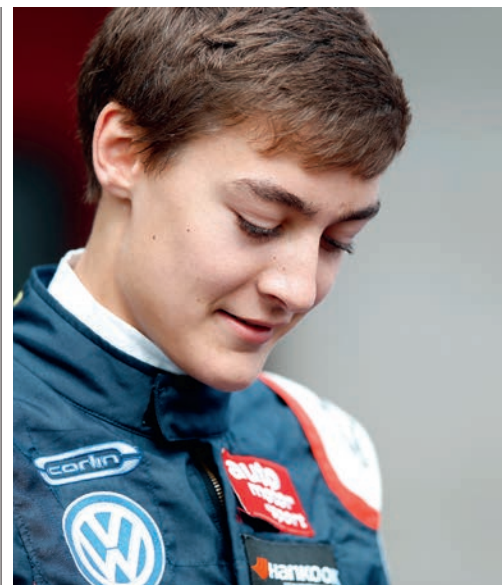


3 CHARLES LECLERC

At the suggestion of his late friend and mentor Jules Bianchi, the Monegasque made the step to F3 after just one season in Formula Renault ALPS. He settled in well with Van Amersfoort Racing, and his committed yet precise, elegant and classy style – reflected well in his mature off-track demeanour – mean he would have been No1 in this ranking had it been published in July. Dig down and there are very subtle temporary reasons behind his consequent slump, which both driver and team will almost certainly recover from. If he can do this, you'd say he's the most likely of this year's crop to get to F1.

4 JAKE DENNIS

After an inconclusive rookie F3 season at Carlin, the Racing Steps man had a few questions to answer at Prema. He absolutely rose to the challenge and was comfortably the team's best driver behind Rosenqvist, and even outshone his experienced team leader on the few occasions when he got it wrong. That's impressive – the six-foot-two Dennis gives away an estimated couple of tenths on weight to Rosenqvist, even though he's as lean as a dieting lamppost. Now ready for the next step, although a couple of heat-of-the-moment incidents at Pau and Zandvoort raised questions about his temperament.



5 GEORGE RUSSELL

The 2014 BRDC F4 champion has a quite exquisite judgement, feel and perception of those around him in racing situations that made him not only arguably the best racer in the field, but also usually able to avoid putting himself into vulnerable situations. Which is just as well, because his qualifying let him down too often. Looked outstanding when he won in the cold at Silverstone, where his team Carlin always excels, but he had to wait until Norisring, where he really began ragging the car, to get back to the front of the grid. He was also ace at the Nurburgring, but penalties for an engine change scuppered his weekend.



6 ALEXANDER ALBON

After three seasons in FRenault he finally stepped up to F3, and can count himself unlucky not to win a race. The Signature squad was back in F3 after three seasons away, so sometimes was a little behind when it came to adjusting to a new set of track conditions, but the fact that Albon ended 17 of the 22 qualifying sessions in the top 10 reflects well on driver and team. There were errors that cost him good race and qualifying results, but otherwise he was impressive. Could be a title contender wherever he races next year.

7 MAXIMILIAN GUNTHER

The 2014 Formel Masters runner-up showed outstanding fast-corner feel and verve right from the start with Mücke Motorsport, and after the team's traditional Silverstone-opener nightmare he qualified third for the next six races. The fact that he only converted the sixth of those to a podium suggested he needed to develop racecraft – and then he drove from 12th to first Norisring by cannily avoiding incidents! The relationship with Mücke soured (relations between the three quick drivers weren't great either), but he looked good in his last-round cameo with Prema.

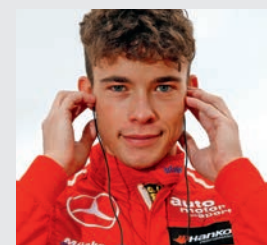


8 LANCE STROLL

The Ferrari Driver Academy prospect learned more than he could ever have bargained for in his rookie F3 season with Prema. He seemed to be settling in quite nicely before a couple of highly controversial crashes that raised serious worries about his judgement and earned him a one-race ban, even if no one sane suggested he was crashing into others deliberately. He then did a nice job to not only bury his bad-boy reputation, but also to gain in competitiveness, especially on those tracks that reward smoothness and technique. You can be sure that he'll fly in 2016 with the Prema team behind him.

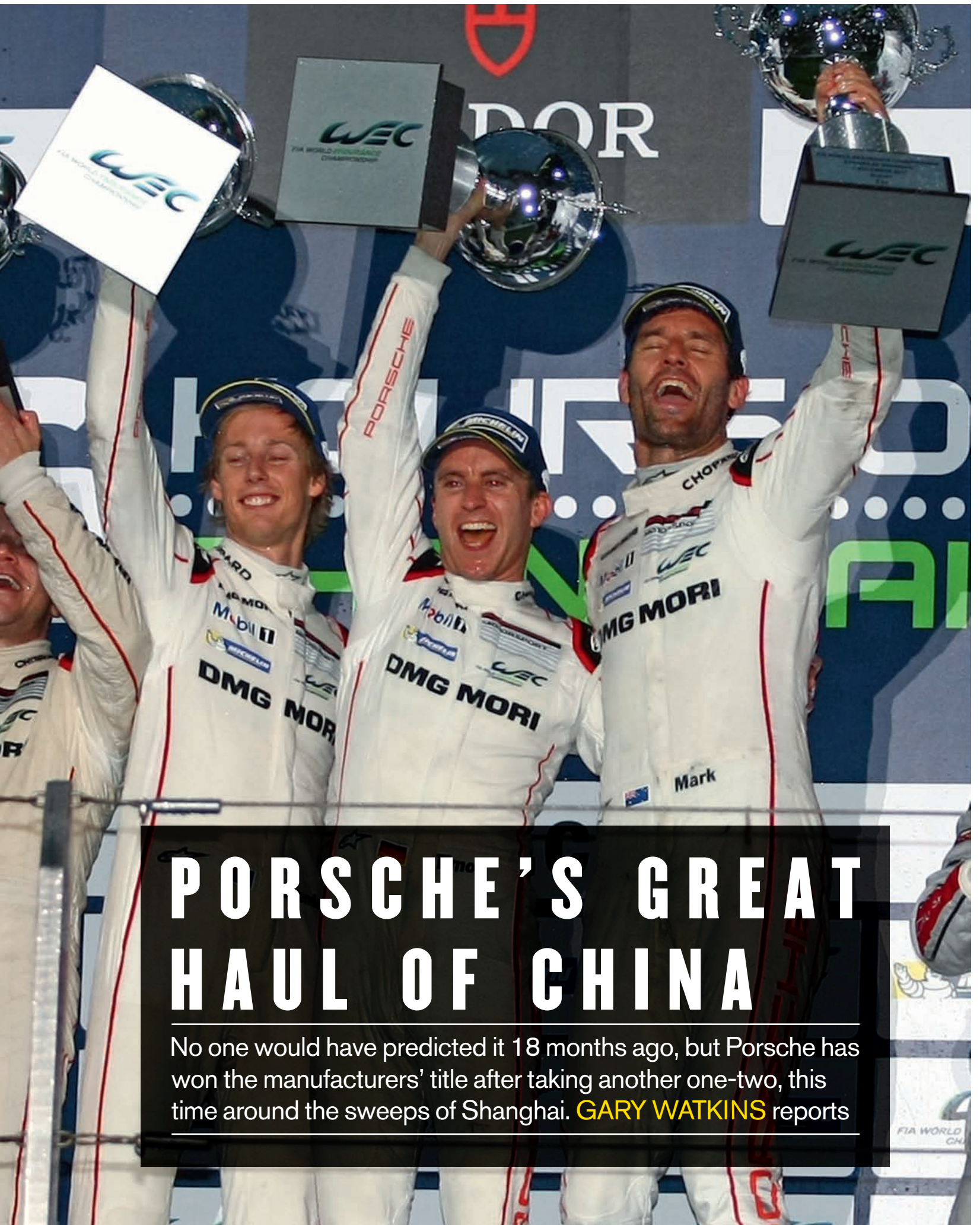
9 MARKUS POMMER

Like Signature, Motopark returned to the top level of F3 after three years away. The technical staff are the same guys (with DTM background) who ran the Russian Time GP2 squad in 2013 and Motopark's dominant German F3 team. Pommer graduated with them as German F3 champ and put in an impressive season, fully deserving his win at Zandvoort. He's pretty aggressive – in driving style and racecraft – and this led to some incidents, but he was invaluable to the team, not only through his own performance but also in bringing Sergio Sette Camara up to speed.



10 MIKKEL JENSEN

The Dane beat Gunther to the 2014 F Masters title and then joined him at Mücke. Jensen's strength was technique in the slow corners, but he gained confidence in the faster stuff too and also got his head around early braking issues, coming close to beating Rosenqvist to a win at Monza. It was tough at Mücke this year, with the team's quick drivers all inexperienced and evenly matched, so no one to use as a benchmark. But glimpses at the Hockenheim finale proved team and driver together will be potent in 2016.



PORSCHE'S GREAT HAUL OF CHINA

No one would have predicted it 18 months ago, but Porsche has won the manufacturers' title after taking another one-two, this time around the sweeps of Shanghai. **GARY WATKINS** reports

DAN WHELDON

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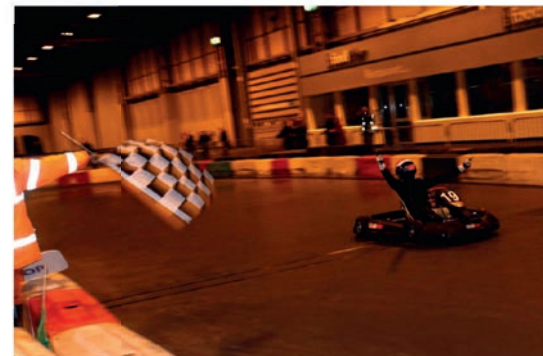
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Porsche led even
in wet conditions



PORSCHE WRAPPED UP ITS FIRST WORLD championship title for 30-odd years in China last Sunday. That was always on the cards, but another one-two result led by Mark Webber, Timo Bernhard and Brendon Hartley at Shanghai allowed the German manufacturer to place one hand on the drivers' title as well.

A fourth consecutive victory for Webber and his team-mates aboard the #17 Porsche 919 Hybrid had a lot to do with that, but so too did the last-gasp second position from the sister car driven by Neel Jani, Romain Dumas and Marc Lieb. That deprived the championship-challenging Audi crew of Andre Lotterer, Benoit Treluyer and Marcel Fassler of three points, which is enough to ensure that it now has to rely on problems – technical or otherwise – for its rival at the Bahrain finale later this month. Or perhaps, just as unlikely on current form, a Toyota resurgence.

Even if the two R18 e-tron quattros finish one-two, third place would be enough for Webber and co to seal the title, albeit presuming that

WEC Shanghai (PRC) November 1

Round 7/8



the #17 car takes the point for pole. Given the 919's clear superiority in qualifying, that looks reasonably likely.

Audi had a decent shot at ensuring that the championship battle truly stayed open going into the last round and pushed Porsche hard for much of a six-hour race that was held in wet and drying conditions. Both of the turbodiesels led this race, it is worth noting. That the Audis

ultimately fell short had something to do with the superior pace of the Porsche in the dry and its rival's success in double-stinting its tyres.

The R18 was at least a match for the 919 when the 3.39-mile Shanghai International Circuit was at its wettest over the course of a race that started behind the safety car. That wasn't the case in dry conditions and, by the time a dry line started to appear, Porsche was already in the pound seats.

The two Audis were able to battle with the Porsches once the track conditions worsened in the second hour and remained very much in the hunt until the third round of pitstops shortly before the halfway mark. Treluyer was given a new set of wets at this point and Lucas di Grassi in the sister car went from wets to intermediates, whereas Porsche opted not to change the wet-weather Michelins on either of the 919s.

The pace of all four German cars was pretty much the same after the stops, despite the differing tyre choices. But the damage had been done to Audi's chances to the tune of half a minute.

The petrol-powered leaders and their turbodiesel pursuers were evenly matched until a dry line began to emerge. The Porsches began to pull away once they went onto intermediates, Webber setting a sequence of fastest laps along the way. Audi switched to slicks first with approximately 80 minutes to go, but its brief sniff of victory disappeared when Porsche quickly followed suit.

The next chink of light for Audi came when Dumas spun after going off line to pass an LMP2 car in Turn 2. Problems restarting the Porsche dropped him to fourth, but the superiority of the 919 Hybrid on a dry track coupled with Porsche's ability to leave Dumas on the same tyres after a late splash-and-dash pitstop ▶

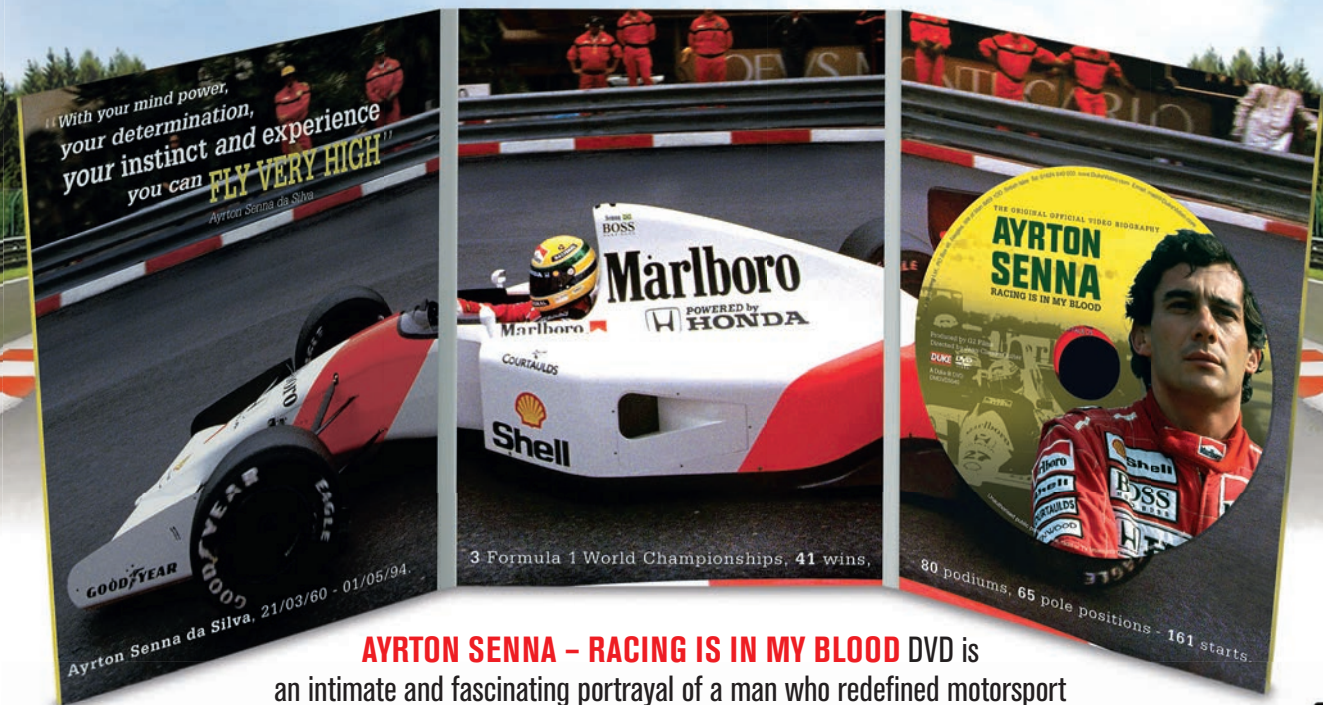
#18 Porsche nicked
second at the end



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Jani scrambles from the second 919

GTE

Lietz moves closer to the GT crown

PORSCHE DRIVER RICHARD LIETZ CLAIMED HIS third GTE Pro win in four races with Michael Christensen to move ever closer to the GT crown, but the German marque missed a chance to move into the lead in the manufacturers' standings. The rear-engined 911 RSR was the car to have in the wet conditions at Shanghai, but largely unexplained issues for the second of the Manthey Porsches, plus an impressive fightback from Ferrari, prevented it from completing the one-two result required to achieve that.

The Porsches had qualified only fourth and fifth after opting for a conservative strategy on tyres, but Lietz was able to move past the polewinning AF Corse Ferrari with Toni Vilander at the wheel and into the lead just 15 laps into the opening stint. It was more or less plain sailing from there on for the winning duo, who were able to complete a 45-second win over Vilander and Gianmaria Bruni in AF's lead Ferrari 458 Italia.

"The car was very good in the rain," said Lietz afterwards, stating the obvious. "They were the conditions we were hoping for."

The advantage that Lietz and his team-mate had built up was, however, enough to ensure the victory. They were more than 90s up the road when the race hit two-thirds distance.

Lietz took third win in four races



XPB IMAGES

The problem for the second Porsche, which Frederic Makowiecki shared with Patrick Pilet, was that it didn't have enough in hand to maintain second on the drying track. That was partly explained by a loss of time during the opening stint in which 'Mako' had an off and then a forced decision to double-stint a set of wets in the middle of the race.

Makowiecki gained more than 20s on Lietz by not changing tyres and continued to eat into his lead until his Michelins started to wear. A 20s deficit had turned into a minute when they stopped, the lost time allowing the Ferrari to get within range.

"We don't know why, but we had an issue with the front tyres in the beginning and I had to stop early because the car was undrivable," said Makowiecki. "We came back into the game, but we needed to do a double stint because we didn't have enough tyres, which cost us a lot of time."

Exactly why Manthey didn't have enough sets of wets – or the correct choice of wet – for its second car hasn't been explained. The presumption must be that it allocated its best rubber to its championship-contending car instead.

Bruni was 32s down on the second Porsche after the GTE Pro class leaders had all completed their switch to slicks. The Italian's pace on the track combined with its ability to double-stint the tyres allowed the Ferrari to move ahead after the final pitstops.

AF Corse adopted a strategy, as at Fuji, that involved Vilander staying aboard beyond half distance. In Japan he drove for more than three and a half hours; this time he approached the maximum drive time of four and a half hours.

The idea was that the Finn was in tune with the wet conditions and was left in the car until it was time to go to slicks. It was a strategy that paid rich dividends on a day in which it should never have got among the Porsches.



Nakajima lost time after an off

XPB IMAGES

▶ allowed him to sneak out just ahead of Lotterer to take second.

"It's easy to say at the end what we should have done or what we shouldn't have done, but I do think we were missing a bit on strategy today," reckoned Treluyer. "We should have taken a risk and stayed on [the same] wets in the middle of my stint. Porsche doubled, as they did in Fuji, and we didn't learn from that."

Audi Sport Team Joest boss Ralf Juttner wasn't so sure that the team had made any strategic mistakes in China, although he pointed out that both cars had lost a handful of seconds when they had pitted together – and in the wrong order – at the second round of stops.

"From our figures from free practice, changing tyres was the quickest option, but looking back the degradation wasn't as bad as we expected," he explained, pointing out that the rationale applied to both its decision to change tyres when Porsche didn't in the wet and not to double-stint on slicks at the end.

If the jury is still out on Audi's strategy, it was difficult to argue with winner Brendon Hartley's take on proceedings. "We made all the right calls and kept it on the road – and there isn't a mark on the car," said the Kiwi. "We got the maximum out of the car and pretty much had the perfect race."

The same couldn't be said of the second Porsche. It didn't have the pace of its sister car through practice and into qualifying – it had a change of engine along the way after encountering problems in FP3 – and it spun twice during the race. Lieb got the jump on poleman Hartley when the green flag was waved, only to outbrake himself at the Turn 6 hairpin. That allowed both his team-mate and Lotterer to get a ▶



Conditions were gloomy early on

► decent run on him through the long left-hander that is Turn 7.

Lieb turned across Lotterer and spun, dropping the second Porsche to dead last. The safety car that followed meant the loss wasn't as great as it might have been and allowed Jani to get involved in the lead battle when he took over the car. The Swiss was able to overtake Bernhard in the second hour, but was behind before they got out of their mounts after encountering braking issues.

The second Audi, in which di Grassi was joined as usual by Oliver Jarvis and Loic Duval, finished only 20s down on its sister car at the end of a race in which there was again very little between them.

Toyota filled out its now customary fifth and sixth positions on a day when the drivers of its pair of TSO40 HYBRIDS were unable to show the same wet-weather form as at Fuji last month. Exactly why isn't clear, but Sebastien Buemi had a theory. "Fuji is a low-grip track, we all know that, but here the grip is high," he explained. "If you have more grip the gap to the rest doesn't reduce by so much. That's my conclusion anyway."

Buemi and team-mates Anthony Davidson and Kazuji Nakajima finished behind the sister car of Alex Wurz, Mike Conway and Stephane Sarrazin this time. That state of affairs resulted from an off from Nakajima on the two-hour mark in which the car lost two laps.

Toyota was succeeded as WEC manufacturers' champion on a day that the best of its cars finished four laps down after a clean run. Perhaps that brings the progress Porsche has made since last year into sharp focus. It is easy to forget that Porsche, with all its sportscar history, is in only its second season back at this level.

Bernhard, the first man to drive the original 919, perhaps summed it up best.

"I still remember the first roll-out in 2013, and we could barely manage five kilometres, and now we are sitting here having won a world championship for Porsche," he said. "It is unbelievable really."

FOR FULL RESULTS, PAGE 60



Podium joy for the Signatech team

LMP2

LMP2 honours go to Signatech

THE SIGNATECH ALPINE SQUAD DIDN'T LOOK like potential P2 winners early in the race at Shanghai. Yet Nelson Panciatici, Paul-Loup Chatin and prototype debutant Tom Dillmann ended up claiming victory aboard the French team's Alpine-badged ORECA-Nissan o3R.

Dillmann's recruitment to replace Vincent Capillaire, whose deal never covered Shanghai and Bahrain, was controversial. The 26-year-old Frenchman is somehow rated as a silver, despite his Formula 3 and GP2 successes.

Yet Signatech boss Philippe Sinault made no bones about his choice of driver. "The FIA grading list was my starting point; it was my tool," he said. The implication was that the team, European Le Mans Series champions in 2013-14, needed a good result.

Panciatici struggled on intermediates on the wet track initially, but Chatin brought the car back into contention and on into the lead with a triple stint on the same set of Dunlop inters. Dillmann then had the pace to win.

The championship-leading G-Drive trio of Sam Bird, Roman Rusinov and Julien Canal claimed second to inch closer to the title. Bird starred as ever, but silver-rated Canal haemorrhaged time aboard the Ligier-Nissan JSP2 when the conditions were at their worst.

The KCMG squad's title hopes, which had looked so strong after back-to-back victories at the Le Mans 24 Hours and the Nurburgring, took another dive. Nick Tandy went off on the

first racing lap, beached the ORECA-Nissan o5 on the kerbs and lost the better part of two laps.

A gamble to put Matt Howson out on rain tyres didn't pay off, but Richard Bradley and Tandy still were able to haul the car back towards the podium. They were handed third in the closing stages when Ricardo Gonzalez went off in the second of the OAK-run G-Drive Ligiers.

Alex Brundle put in a starring performance on his return to competition after a six-month hiatus. He exploited the superiority of the Michelin wet tyre to propel the Pegasus Morgan-Nissan LMP2 up from second-last in class on the grid into the lead.

Ho-Pin Tung stayed on the same set of wets on which Brundle had started the race, but life was always going to be difficult for silver driver David Cheng. Not only was the Michelin slick no match for the Dunlop, but this is an old-spec Morgan without the latest aero upgrades.



Panciatici won after early inters struggle



Joy unconfined in the Porsche garage

IN THE PADDOCK

GARY WATKINS
CONTRIBUTOR

@gazasportscars



I'M NOT SURE ANYONE WOULD HAVE predicted this 18 months ago, but here we are with a round to go of the WEC, and the Stuttgart marque is set for a clean sweep of all the silverware that matters.

Porsche has claimed the makers' crown to go with its triumph at the Le Mans 24 Hours, and is on course for a victory in the drivers' championship with Webber, Bernhard and Hartley. And just to prove its dominance, it looks likely to complete a clean sweep of pole positions, something that will be of particular satisfaction to Porsche LMP1 tech boss Alex Hitzinger.

The returning giant of international sportscar racing has achieved a lot, and it is easy to forget that it started from next to nothing after the decision in the middle of 2011 and some significant early hiccoughs.

I don't like taking sides, but I'm going to stick my neck out and say that Porsche's phenomenal season has been exceptionally good for our branch of the sport. I'm sure its successes have increased interest in the WEC, bringing in new fans and perhaps reinvigorating the interest of others.

Porsche's triumphs have created a link between the reborn WEC of today and the rich history of world championship sportscar racing, something I'm not sure was there before. That's important to me and, I think, for many of you too.



XPBIMAGES

MILESTONE

The 2015 WEC manufacturers' crown is the first world title for Porsche since the Brun squad claimed the teams' title in the series' previous iteration in 1986. The last manufacturer award was in '84 (below), before it was replaced by the teams' classification.



LAT



Bradley penalised for Fuji G-Drive clashes

KCMG DRIVER RICHARD BRADLEY

was given a suspended penalty for his clash with G-Drive Racing's Gustavo Yacamán in the closing stages of last month's Fuji WEC round.

The original stewards' decision to reprimand Bradley was suspended

following the presentation of new evidence by KCMG, but a second hearing last weekend came up with the same decision and increased the Briton's punishment. He was given a drive-through penalty, suspended to the end of the season.

The report concluded that the KCMG ORECA-Nissan O5 shifted into sixth gear, unlike on previous laps, on the run to Turn 10 and this slowed the car and caused a contact with Yacamán. It went on to find that he braked 40 metres early for the corner, which caused a second contact.



Audi reprises fuel debate

AUDI IS ATTEMPTING TO reopen the debate on the length of a stint on a tankful of fuel in LMP1.

Christopher Reinke, head of LMP at Audi, argued that the shorter stints of a turbodiesel P1 running in the four megajoule hybrid class, compared with its petrol-powered rivals in a higher energy-retrieval division, is unfair. He said that events of last month's Fuji race, where Porsche stole a march on Audi because its leading car was able to complete a stop under a full-course yellow, brought the factor into focus.

"If by regulation you can do a couple of extra laps, then you have more flexibility," he said. "It has an

influence in general because they pit later and can always see what we do, and on occasions it has a race-deciding influence like at Fuji.

"We should all do the same length of stints. That is the only way this championship is going to develop."

Audi voiced the same argument last season, to which WEC organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest reacted by holding a press conference to counter the claims.

Porsche LMP1 technical boss Alex Hitzinger also dismissed Audi's stance. "If there is no performance incentive between running a 4MJ and an 8MJ car, why do it?" he said. "That's how the rules were written."

TITLE TO REBELLION

The Rebellion Racing squad survived a late-race accident to claim the LMP1 privateers' championship. Its Rebellion-AER R-One, shared by Mathias Beche and Nicolas Prost, sustained heavy damage when Beche crashed in the closing stages. After repairs, the car still had a one-lap margin over the ByKolles CLM-AER P1/01 of Pierre Kaffer and Simon Trummer.

TEST FOR ELLINAS

Strakka Racing's Formula Renault 3.5 race winner Tio Ellinas will be given a try-out by the squad's LMP2 team. Ellinas, who will be joined by Briton Lewis Williamson, will drive the team's Gibson-Nissan O15S in the WEC rookie test in Bahrain on November 22.

TOYOTA KEEPS KERS

Toyota will retain its dual kinetic-energy recovery system for its 2016 LMP1 challenger. It has confirmed a battery energy-storage system, twin KERS and a new engine so far.

COLLARD CREW TOPS

AF Corse Ferrari trio Emmanuel Collard, Rui Aguas and Francois Perrodo claimed a first GTE Am victory after, said Collard, their 458 Italia "was always on the right tyres at the right time". The series-leading SMP Racing Ferrari came back from a 30s pit-infringement penalty to finish third with Andrea Bertolini, Viktor Shaitar and Aleksey Basov.

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A ninth win of the year gave Lopez a WTCC title double



WTCC BURIRAM (T), NOVEMBER 1 RD11/12

Lopez bags the booty once again

ONE MANUFACTURER AND ONE DRIVER HAVE dominated the World Touring Car Championship since the new, faster era began last year.

Citroën's Jose Maria Lopez is now a double champion, the class of the field since he arrived full-time at the start of 2014. He clinched his second title just as he did his first: with victory in the first race of the penultimate race weekend. This time it came in a new host country for the WTCC – Thailand.

In qualifying on Sunday morning (as planned on this occasion, unlike at Shanghai), Citroën locked out the Q3 pole position shootout with its five cars. That was despite Yvan Muller only just squeezing out of Q1 by climbing from 16th to 12th on his last lap. Lopez was the third of the Citroëns in terms of both Q2 pace and Q3 running order, but he put his C-Elysee on pole after Muller and Mehdi Bennani failed to deliver.

In the opening race, Lopez was able to wrap up the title in style after the championship situation was effectively settled on a scrappy first lap that claimed rival Muller among its victims. The remaining Citroëns formed a 1-2-3-4 finish, with

Sebastien Loeb, Ma Qing Hua and Bennani trailing in Lopez's wake.

There was more first-lap woe for Muller in race two, this time at Turn 1 after contact with Ma and Bennani. A second retirement put him into clutches of Loeb in their fight over the runner-up spot in the standings, as the nine-time World Rally champion finished second yet again.

Honda factory driver Tiago Monteiro passed the Zengo Motorsport Civic of reversed-grid polesitter Norbert Michelisz on lap three and was still out front when the race was red-flagged because the twilight race had become a night race.

It started later than planned because the safety car prolonged the first race, and so there was insufficient light for the full distance to be run. Loeb had been frustrated by the early end denying him the chance to catch Monteiro, but around seven hours later, close to 1am local time, the Portuguese driver was excluded after his Honda Civic failed a ground-clearance check.

A fourth win of 2015 for Loeb, ahead of Ma and Lopez in another Citroën podium lockout, moved him ahead of Muller in the points.



Lopez, pictured with wife Victoire, was emotional

In taking the start of race two, Muller at least made it further than four other casualties of the day's first racing lap. The Turn 1 run-off had resembled a New York taxi rank when the yellow cars of Tom Coronel (Chevrolet), Nick Catsburg and Nicolas Lapierre (both Ladas) came to rest after contact. They were joined on the sidelines by Chevrolet Cruze driver Hugo Valente, who was involved in the Muller melee between Turns 5 and 6.

Two drivers who avoided the chaos were Gabriele Tarquini and Rob Huff, who came from the back of the grid to finish fifth and sixth respectively in both races. Classified ahead of them in fourth in race two, despite being shuffled back just before the red flag, was Tom Chilton.

Debutant and local driver Tin Sritrai also stayed clear of harm to finish 10th on the road twice. The Campos Racing Chevrolet driver's race-two result was bumped up to ninth once Monteiro was excluded.



Monteiro won race two but was then disqualified

FOR FULL RESULTS, PAGE 60

Champion McLaren (front) and race winner sandwich Lathouras/Rugolo Ferrari



INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN BARCELONA (E), OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 1 RD 7/7

Parente and Ramos are champions

ALVARO PARENTE AND MIGUEL RAMOS claimed the crown in their Teo Martin Motorsport McLaren after a strong weekend that saw mistakes and misfortune marginalise their title rivals. For twice championship runner-up Ramos, sealing the title was particularly enjoyable, as he and Parente reaped the rewards for remarkable consistency this season.

A season-high grid ensured that Ramos and Parente couldn't afford to coast and would have to push for results. In the event a third place in Saturday's first race was sufficient to seal the championship.

It was the second TMM McLaren of Andrew Watson and Fernando Monje that took victory on Saturday,

following an inspired drive from Watson. The Northern Irishman was steadily reeling in the leading AF Corse Ferrari of Pasin Lathouras when the Thai ran wide through Turn 5, slipping to second and costing himself and Michele Rugolo any hope of the crown. The other car in contention for the title, the sister Ferrari of Raffaele Giammaria and Ezequiel Perez Companc, was out of contention following first-corner contact with Shaun Balfe.

Giammaria and Perez Companc took revenge on Sunday, claiming their fifth victory of the season. It was a hard-fought win, Giammaria delayed in a first-corner accident that eliminated Franck Perera and

Jose Perez Aicart. Polesitter Euan Hankey (TF Sport Aston) was also an early casualty, punted off when Watson misjudged his braking.

The latter stages were thrilling as post-pitstop leader Nicola Benucci (Villorba Corse Ferrari) was being chased down by Balfe's Ferrari (following an inspired stint from Phil Keen) and Perez Companc. The Argentinian carved through to take the lead with eight minutes remaining, and Balfe also passed Benucci to claim a strong second. A charging drive from Parente was enough to claim third, overcoming 30 seconds of pit handicap, the McLaren demoting Benucci in the closing laps. ● Ben Evans

RESULTS

RACE 1 1 Fernando Monje/Andrew Watson (McLaren 650S GT3), 38 laps in 1h10m58.638s; 2 Pasin Lathouras/Michele Rugolo (Ferrari 458 Italia GT3), +15.954s; 3 Miguel Ramos/Alvaro Parente (McLaren); 4 Franck Perera/Henry Hassid (BMW Z4 GT3); 5 Alessandro Balzan/Nicola Benucci (Ferrari); 6 Duncan Cameron/Matt Griffin (Ferrari).

RACE 2 1 Ezequiel Perez Companc/Raffaele Giammaria (Ferrari), 32 laps in 1h00m05.069s; 2 Shaun Balfe/Phil Keen (Ferrari), +4.181s; 3 Ramos/Parente; 4 Balzan/Benucci; 5 Stefano Pezzucchi/Thomas Biagi (Porsche 911 GT3-R); 6 Lathouras/Rugolo.

POINTS 1 Parente/Ramos, 212; 2 Rugolo/Lathouras, 179; 3 Giammaria/Perez Companc, 172; 4 Benucci/Balzan, 132; 5 Keen/Balfe, 87; 6 Claudio Sdanewitsch, 72.

SUPER GT AUTOPOLIS (J), NOVEMBER 1 RD 7/8

NISMO wins GT-R dust-up

THE NISMO TEAM WON AFTER AN all-Nissan scrap with the Impul car ended with victory for Ronnie Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda.

Poleman Joao Paulo de Oliveira led from the start in the Impul car from the Cerumo Lexus of Yuji Tachikawa and Quintarelli. That was until Tachikawa spun – the Lexus would eventually finish fourth with Hiroaki Ishiura taking over the wheel at the pitstops.

Matsuda was leading after the stops but was passed by Hironobu Yasuda, who had taken over from de Oliveira, at the second hairpin.



NISMO GT-R leads Impul car

But then Matsuda gave Yasuda a push and got back into the lead, holding on to the end by just three tenths of a second and closing the points gap to the Impul pair to two.

From eighth on the grid, the Honda of Koudai Tsukakoshi – started by Hideki Mutoh – starred in the closing stages as he charged up to third in damp conditions.

● Jiro Takahashi

RESULTS

1 Tsugio Matsuda/Ronnie Quintarelli (Nissan GT-R), 65 laps in 1h50m42.495s; 2 Hironobu Yasuda/Joao Paulo de Oliveira (Nissan), +0.348s; 3 Koudai Tsukakoshi/Hideki Mutoh (Honda NSX Concept-GT); 4 Yuji Tachikawa/Hiroaki Ishiura (Lexus RC F); 5 Daisuke Ito/James Rossiter (Lexus); 6 Satoshi Motoyama/Masataka Yanagida (Nissan). **POINTS 1 Yasuda/de Oliveira, 66**; 2 Matsuda/Quintarelli, 64; 3 Tachikawa/Ishiura, 53; 4 Motoyama/Yanagida, 50; 5 Naoki Yamamoto/Takuya Izawa, 49; 6 Rossiter/Ito, 49.

EUROFORMULA OPEN BARCELONA (E), OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 1 RD 8/8

Baptista is anointed

VITOR BAPTISTA IS CHAMPION after a weekend of solid points finishes allowed the Brazilian to notch up a tally sufficient to edge out Konstantin Tereschenko.

RP Motorsport-run Baptista reaped the benefits of a late-season surge that left his Russian rival with only a tenuous shot at the title.

Tereschenko dominated the weekend, and two lights-to-flag victories were enough to hand the Campos Racing ace the Spanish F3 crown. On Saturday it was Yu Kanamaru who led the chasing pack, with Baptista in a solid third.

Sunday's race was livelier with plenty of jostling in the early stages, as Tereschenko led home team-mate Diego Menchaca and Dani Juncadella (making a one off Macau-qualifying appearance with De Villota Motorsport). Also impressive was



Two wins not enough for Tereschenko

newcomer Ferdinand Habsburg, the Formula Renault graduate hustling Juncadella to the flag.

● Ben Evans

RESULTS

RACE 1 1 Konstantin Tereschenko, 17 laps in 29m12.753s; 2 Yu Kanamaru, +0.904s; 3 Vitor Baptista; 4 Daniel Juncadella; 5 Diego Menchaca; 6 Leonardo Pulcini. **RACE 2 1 Tereschenko**, 17 laps in 29m18.276s; 2 Menchaca, +3.659s; 3 Juncadella; 4 Ferdinand Habsburg; 5 Baptista; 6 Kanamaru. **POINTS 1 Baptista, 291**; 2 Tereschenko, 286; 3 Kanamaru, 206; 4 Tanart Sathienthirakul, 133; 5 Yarin Stern, 119; 6 Alessio Rovera, 100.

NASCAR SPRINT CUP
MARTINSVILLE (USA),
NOVEMBER 1 RD 33/36

Gordon gets through as Penske wars

IT SEEMS STRANGE THAT A VICTORY for the soon-to- retire Jeff Gordon – incredibly, his first of the season – didn't take centre stage.

Take nothing away from Gordon; his Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet had been in the hunt throughout and it seems only fitting that victory guarantees him a shot at one final Sprint Cup title.

But instead, two separate incidents between Matt Kenseth and Penske team-mates Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano, the pair having dominated much of the day's running, stole much of the attention.

Keselowski was the first to fall; he and Logano had earlier perfected a restart strategy, with whichever of the two had been leading opting to take the outside line – but by the lap 429 restart Kenseth had that sussed.

Kenseth launched his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota around the outside but touched with Keselowski before Kenseth was spat across the front of his rival, forcing Keselowski back to the pits with damaged suspension.

Logano sprinted away at the



Gordon chases 'doomed' Logano

resulting restart but soon came across an ailing Kenseth. Logano thought he had lapped his rival after a couple of attempts, only to be smacked out of contention by his rival, causing a red flag.

That handed Gordon the lead, but his run to victory was far from simple. He pitted soon after the restart and was forced to make his way past Denny Hamlin and AJ Allmendinger – the pair having stayed out – before surviving a late onslaught from Jamie McMurray to claim a ninth Martinsville win.

Meanwhile, Keselowski and recent

dominator Logano are left facing a tough task to qualify for the winner-takes-all top-four final-round showdown.

RESULTS

1 Jeff Gordon (Chevrolet SS), 500 laps in 3h46m35s; 2 Jamie McMurray (Chevy), +0.335s; 3 Denny Hamlin (Toyota Camry); 4 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy); 5 Kyle Busch (Toyota); 6 Martin Truex Jr (Chevy); 7 Ryan Newman (Chevy); 8 Kevin Harvick (Chevy); 9 Kasey Kahne (Chevy); 10 Tony Stewart (Chevy). **ELIMINATOR 8 1 Gordon, 4047;** 2 Kyle Busch, 4039; 3 Truex, 4039; 4 Harvick, 4037; 5 Carl Edwards, 4030; 6 Brad Keselowski, 4013; 7 Kurt Busch, 4011; 8 Joey Logano, 4009.

JAPANESE F4

TOM'S talent Sho Tsuboi continued his mega run with a win in the first race at Autopolis, but an off at the first corner in race two meant a maiden win for B-Max-run Shinnosuke Yamada. Hiroki Ohtsu was second in both races.

ASIAN CARRERA CUP

A second and a fourth in the WEC-supporting finale at Shanghai were enough to confirm Chris van der Drift as champion. Martin Ragginger won the first race from van der Drift and Rodolfo Avila, before Nico Menzel triumphed in race two ahead of Ragginger and Ho-Pin Tung.

VLN

As if Philipp Eng hasn't won enough in a Porsche this year, he was victorious in the final round of the Nurburgring Nordschleife-based series too in the Black Falcon team's 911 Cup car, sharing with Manuel Metzger and 'Gerwin'. The race was delayed and shortened by fog, with the Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus SCG003C sports-racer of Jeroen Bleekemolen, Franck Mailleux and Manuel Lauck taking second.

NASCAR TRUCKS

Reigning champion Matt Crafton made up ground in the 2015 title chase with victory at Martinsville in his Toyota. He headed John Hunter Nemechek, who pushed Cameron Hayley out of the way on a restart two laps from home. Series leader Erik Jones finished 10th.

ERC VALAIS RALLY (CH), OCTOBER 29-31 RD 10/10

Tyre gaffe robs Breen

CRAIG BREEN SAID BEFORE THE start that his 2015 campaign had been "more bad than good." Little did the Irishman know that it was about to get worse, when he was denied victory after his Peugeot Rally Academy team used 20 tyres instead of the permitted 18.

Having driven faultlessly, mastering the spectacular Swiss Alpine asphalt stages and cruising serenely to what he thought was his fourth ERC win of the season, Breen was handed a two-minute penalty, dropping him to second.

Alexey Lukyanuk had already surpassed all expectations by finishing second in his Ford Fiesta R5. It was only the Russian

driver's third full asphalt rally of his career, yet he inherited his second ERC win of the season.

One of the most outstanding drives came from Emil Bergkvist. The 21-year-old Swede had been released from his Opel contract to take up his ERC Junior title-winning prize drive in a Sainteloc Racing Peugeot 208 T16. He'd never driven a four-wheel-drive rally car until a test three days before, but finished a stunning fourth overall, just behind the top-placed Swiss driver, Olivier Burri (Citroen DS3 RRC).

● Paul Evans

RESULTS

1 Alexey Lukyanuk/Alexey Arnautov (Ford Fiesta R5), 2h32m53.0s; 2 Craig Breen/Scott Martin (Peugeot 208 T16), +1m20.6s; 3 Olivier Burri/Nicolas Klinger (Citroen DS3 RRC); 4 Emil Bergkvist/Joakim Sjoborg (Peugeot); 5 Florian Gonon/Manuel Guex (Peugeot 207 S2000); 6 Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov (Skoda Fabia R5). **POINTS 1 Kajetan Kajetanowicz, 230;** 2 Breen, 185; 3 Lukyanuk, 157; 4 Robert Consani, 79; 5 Jaromir Tarabus, 75; 6 Bruno Magalhaes, 68.



Lukyanuk lucked in for victory

Honda protege Matsushita bagged two MRF wins



MRF CHALLENGE YAS MARINA (UAE), OCTOBER 30-31 RD 1/4

Matsushita claims a double

JAPANESE GP2 RACE WINNER

Nobuharu Matsushita warmed up for the series' final two rounds with a double MRF win in Abu Dhabi.

Matsushita took both poles and led the two races from start to finish. In the first he was chased by Formula 3 drivers Pietro Fittipaldi and Jake Dennis. For his second win he outpaced Dennis, with Fittipaldi jumped for third at the last gasp by fellow F3 racer Tatiana Calderon.

Calderon had tried to pass leader Tarun Reddy at the final corner of the first reversed-grid race, only for the two to collide, allowing F4 graduate Nikita Troitskiy to claim the spoils. The final reversed-grid

race went to Fittipaldi, with Calderon this time completing a successful last-turn move on Reddy for second.

RESULTS

RACE 1 1 Nobuharu Matsushita, 10 laps in 24m46.225s; 2 Pietro Fittipaldi, +4.453s; 3 Jake Dennis; 4 Nikita Troitskiy; 5 Tatiana Calderon; 6 Tarun Reddy. **RACE 2 1 Troitskiy**, 10 laps in 22m24.789s; 2 Calderon, +0.588s; 3 Fittipaldi; 4 Reddy; 5 Matsushita; 6 Dennis. **RACE 3 1 Matsushita**, 10 laps in 26m11.046s; 2 Dennis, +5.505s; 3 Calderon; 4 Reddy; 5 Fittipaldi; 6 Troitskiy. **RACE 4 1 Fittipaldi**, 10 laps in 22m16.068s; 2 Calderon, +5.617s; 3 Reddy; 4 Matsushita; 5 Dennis; 6 Troitskiy. **POINTS 1 Matsushita, 80;** 2 Fittipaldi, 68; 3 Calderon, 61; 4 Troitskiy, 53; 5 Dennis, 53; 6 Reddy, 47.

RESULTS ROUND-UP

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

ROUND 7/8 SHANGHAI (PRC), NOVEMBER 1 (169 LAPS – 572.419 MILES)

1 Brendon Hartley (NZ)/Timo Bernhard (D)/Mark Webber (AUS) Porsche Team Porsche 919 Hybrid (LMP1)	6h00m07.725s
2 Marc Lieb (D)/Romain Dumas (F)/Neel Jani (CH) Porsche Team Porsche 919 Hybrid (LMP1)	+26.294s
3 Andre Lotterer (D)/Marcel Fassler (CH)/Benoit Treluyer (F) Audi Sport Team Joest Audi R18 e-tron quattro (LMP1)	+30.311s
4 Oliver Jarvis (GB)/Lucas di Grassi (BR)/Loic Duval (F) Audi Sport Team Joest Audi R18 e-tron quattro (LMP1)	+50.906s
5 Mike Conway (GB)/Alexander Wurz (A)/Stephane Sarrazin (F) Toyota Racing Toyota TSO40 HYBRID (LMP1)	-4 laps
6 Anthony Davidson (GB)/Sebastien Buemi (CH)/Kazuki Nakajima (J) Toyota Racing Toyota TSO40 HYBRID (LMP1)	-5 laps
7 Mathias Beche (CH)/Nicolas Prost (F) Rebellion Racing Rebellion-AER R-One (LMP1)	-11 laps
8 Pierre Kaffer (D)/Simon Trummer (CH) Team ByKolles CLM-AER P1/01 (LMP1)	-13 laps
9 Nelson Panciatici (F)/Paul-Loup Chatin (F)/Tom Dillmann (F) Signatech Alpine ORECA-Nissan O3R (LMP2)	-15 laps
10 Sam Bird (GB)/Roman Rusinov (RUS)/Julien Canal (F) G-Drive Racing (OAK) Ligier-Nissan JSP2 (LMP2)	-16 laps
11 Nick Tandy (GB)/Matt Howson (GB)/Richard Bradley (GB) KCMG ORECA-Nissan O5 (LMP2)	-16 laps
12 Oliver Webb (GB)/Pierre Ragues (F)/Chris Cumming (CDN) Team SARD Morand Morgan-Judd/BMW EVO (LMP2)	-17 laps
13 Alex Brundle (GB)/David Cheng (USA)/Ho-Pin Tung (PRC) Pegasus Racing Morgan-Nissan LMP2 (LMP2)	-17 laps
14 Richard Lietz (A)/Michael Christensen (DK) Porsche Team Manthey Porsche 911 RSR (GTE Pro)	-18 laps
15 Toni Vilander (FIN)/Gianmaria Bruni (I) AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia (GTE Pro)	-18 laps
16 Frederic Makowiecki (F)/Patrick Pilet (F) Porsche Team Manthey Porsche 911 RSR (GTE Pro)	-18 laps
17 Davide Rigon (I)/James Calado (GB) AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia (GTE Pro)	-19 laps
18 Alex MacDowall (GB)/Fernando Rees (BR)/Richie Stanaway (NZ) Aston Martin Racing Aston Martin Vantage V8 (GTE Pro)	-20 laps
19 Darren Turner (GB)/Jonny Adam (GB) Aston Martin Racing Aston Martin Vantage V8 (GTE Pro)	-20 laps
20 Johannes van Overbeek (USA)/Ed Brown (USA)/Jon Fogarty (USA) Extreme Speed Motorsports Ligier-Honda JSP2 (LMP2)	-22 laps
21 Emmanuel Collard (F)/Francois Perrodo (F)/Rui Aguas (P) AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia (GTE Am)	-23 laps
22 Pedro Lamy (P)/Paul Dalla Lana (CDN)/Mathias Lauda (A) Aston Martin Racing Aston Martin Vantage V8 (GTE Am)	-23 laps
23 Viktor Shaitar (RUS)/Andrea Bertolini (I)/Aleksy Basov (RUS) SMP Racing (AF) Ferrari 458 Italia (GTE Am)	-24 laps
24 Patrick Long (USA)/Patrick Dempsey (USA)/Marco Seefried (D) Dempsey Racing-Proton Porsche 911 RSR (GTE Am)	-24 laps
25 Paolo Ruberti (I)/Gianluca Roda (I)/Nicolai Sylvest (DK) Larbre Competition Chevrolet Corvette C7.R (GTE Am)	-25 laps
26 Danny Watts (GB)/Nick Leventis (GB)/Jonny Kane (GB) Strakka Racing Gibson-Nissan O155 (LMP2)	-25 laps
27 Stuart Hall (GB)/Francesco Castellacci (I)/Liam Griffin (GB) Aston Martin Racing Aston Martin Vantage V8 (GTE Am)	-30 laps
28 Christian Ried (D)/Khaled Al Qubaisi (UAE)/Klaus Bachler (A) Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing Porsche 911 RSR (GTE Am)	-30 laps
R Dominik Kraihamer (A)/Alexandre Imperatori (CH)/Matheo Tuscher (CH) Rebellion-AER R-One (LMP1)	153 laps-engine/electrical
R Pipo Derani (BR)/Gustavo Yacamán (CO)/Ricardo Gonzalez (MEX) G-Drive Racing (OAK) Ligier-Nissan JSP2 (LMP2)	152 laps-spin
R Ryan Dalziel (GB)/Scott Sharp (USA)/David Heinemeier Hansson (DK) Extreme Speed Ligier-Honda JSP2 (LMP2)	88 laps-gearbox

Winner's average speed 95.369mph.

Fastest lap Lotterer, 1m46.685s, 114.294mph.

LMP2 Tandy, 1m55.560s, 105.517mph. GTE Pro Rigon, 2m03.759s, 98.526mph. GTE Am Shaitar, 2m05.932s, 96.826mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Hartley, 1m42.621s	Webber, 1m42.818s	1m42.719s
2 Lieb, 1m43.320s	Dumas, 1m43.657s	1m43.488s
3 Duval, 1m43.776s	di Grassi, 1m44.625s	1m44.200s
4 Treluyer, 1m43.851s	Fassler, 1m45.439s	1m44.645s
5 Buemi, 1m45.410s	Davidson, 1m46.142s	1m45.776s
6 Conway, 1m45.780s	Wurz, 1m46.145s	1m45.962s
7 Imperatori, 1m49.156s	Kraihamer, 1m49.681s	1m49.418s
8 Beche, 1m50.878s	Prost, 1m51.006s	1m50.942s
9 Kaffer, 1m51.707s	Trummer, 1m52.431s	1m52.069s
10 Bird, 1m51.984s	Canal, 1m53.543s	1m52.763s
11 Tandy, 1m52.592s	Howson, 1m54.098s	1m53.345s
12 Derani, 1m52.331s	Gonzalez, 1m54.449s	1m53.390s
13 Webby, 1m53.249s	Ragues, 1m53.951s	1m53.600s
14 Panciatici, 1m53.079s	Dillmann, 1m54.415s	1m53.747s
15 Dalziel, 1m54.298s	Hansson, 1m55.252s	1m54.775s
16 Watts, 1m52.926s	Leventis, 1m57.484s	1m55.205s
17 Brundle, 1m55.612s	Cheng, 1m57.637s	1m56.624s
18 van Overbeek, 1m54.359s	Brown, 2m00.506s	1m57.432s
19 Bruni, 2m01.987s	Vilander, 2m02.500s	2m02.243s
20 Rigon, 2m02.390s	Calado, 2m02.627s	2m02.508s
21 Rees, 2m02.289s	MacDowall, 2m02.792s	2m02.540s
22 Makowiecki, 2m02.884s	Pilet, 2m03.213s	2m03.048s
23 Lietz, 2m03.308s	Christensen, 2m03.397s	2m03.352s
24 Adam, 2m03.337s	Turner, 2m03.450s	2m03.393s
25 Lamy, 2m03.484s	Dalla Lana, 2m05.972s	2m04.728s
26 Hall, 2m04.367s	Griffin, 2m05.350s	2m04.858s
27 Ruberti, 2m03.432s	Roda, 2m06.316s	2m04.874s
28 Collard, 2m04.518s	Perrodo, 2m06.392s	2m05.455s
29 Shaitar, 2m05.540s	Basov, 2m05.572s	2m05.556s
30 Long, 2m04.143s	Dempsey, 2m08.249s	2m06.196s
31 Al Qubaisi, 2m10.458s	Ried, 2m13.244s	2m11.851s

CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP drivers **1** Hartley/Webber/Bernhard, **155**; **2** Treluyer/Lotterer/Fassler, **143**; **3** Dumas/Jani/Lieb, **113.5**; **4** Jarvis/di Grassi/Duval, **91**; **5** Davidson/Buemi, **67**; **6** Tandy, **66.5**.

LMP manufacturers **1** Porsche, **308**; **2** Audi, **238**; **3** Toyota, **137**; **4** Nissan, **0**.

LMP2 drivers **1** Canal/Rusinov/Bird, **153**; **2** Howson/Bradley, **137**; **3** Yacamán/Derani/Gonzalez, **119**; **4** Nicolas Lapierre, **84**.

GT drivers **1** Lietz, **135**; **2** Christensen, **117**; **3** Rigon/Calado, **115**; **4** Bruni/Vilander, **112.5**; **5** Makowiecki, **93**; **6** MacDowall/Rees, **78**.

GT manufacturers **1** Ferrari, **259**; **2** Porsche, **255**; **3** Aston Martin, **165**.

GT Am drivers **1** Basov/Bertolini/Shaitar, **155**; **2** Collard/Perrodo/Aguas, **136**; **3** Lauda/Dalla Lana/Lamy, **118**; **4** Seefried/Dempsey/Long, **116**.

#17 Porsche took pole and the win



EBREVLAT

WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

ROUND 11/12 BURIRAM (T), NOVEMBER 1

RACE 1 (16 LAPS – 45.179 MILES)

1 Jose Maria Lopez (RA) Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	29m10.403s
2 Sebastien Loeb (F) Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	+1.380s
3 Ma Qing Hua (PRC) Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	+6.376s
4 Mehdi Bannani (MA) Sebastien Loeb Racing Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	+7.202s
5 Gabriele Tarquini (I) Honda Racing Team JAS Honda Civic WTCC	+14.500s
6 Rob Huff (GB) Lada Sport Lada Vesta WTCC	+15.177s
7 Tiago Monteiro (P) Honda Racing Team JAS Honda Civic WTCC	+18.493s
8 Stefano D'Aste (I) Munnich Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	+21.004s
9 Gregoire Demoustier (F) Craft Bamboo Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	+22.830s
10 Tin Sritrai (T) Campos Racing Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	+27.419s
R Tom Chilton (GB) ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	11 laps-puncture
R John Filippi (F) Campos Racing Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	6 laps-accident damage
R Yvan Muller (F) Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	4 laps-accident damage
R Norbert Michelisz (H) Zengo Motorsport Honda Civic WTCC	1 lap-accident damage
R Hugo Valente (F) Campos Racing Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	0 laps-accident
R Nicky Catsburg (NL) Lada Sport Lada Vesta WTCC	0 laps-accident
R Nicolas Lapierre (F) Lada Sport Lada Vesta WTCC	0 laps-accident
R Tom Coronel (NL) ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	0 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 92.917mph.

Fastest lap Loeb, 1m39.577s, 102.303mph.



QUALIFYING 3

1 Lopez, 1m37.916s; **2** Loeb, 1m38.185s; **3** Muller, 1m38.231s; **4** Ma, 1m38.333s; **5** Bannani, no time.

QUALIFYING 2

Bannani, 1m38.166s; Muller, 1m38.186s; Lopez, 1m38.201s; Loeb, 1m38.212s; Ma, 1m38.220s; **6** Valente, 1m38.224s; **7** Catsburg, 1m38.399s; **8** Chilton, 1m38.533s; **9** Monteiro, 1m38.551s; **10** Michelisz, 1m38.642s; **11** Filippi, 1m39.623s; **18** Huff, no time*.



Second WTCC title for Citroen's Lopez

QUALIFYING 1

Lopez, 1m38.261s; Bannani, 1m38.306s; Filippi, 1m38.570s; Ma, 1m38.573s; Loeb, 1m38.608s; Chilton, 1m38.637s; Valente, 1m38.668s; Huff, 1m38.696s; Monteiro, 1m38.830s; Michelisz, 1m38.930s; Catsburg, 1m38.964s; Muller, 1m38.991s; **12** Lapierre, 1m39.279s; **13** Demoustier, 1m39.343s; **14** Coronel, 1m40.618s; **15** Tarquini, 1m39.161s*; **16** Sritrai, no time; **17** D'Aste, no time. * grid penalty.

RACE 2 (10 LAPS – 28.200 MILES)

1 Loeb, 16m41.918s; **2** Ma, +5.722s; **3** Lopez, +10.534s; **4** Chilton, +11.753s; **5** Tarquini, +12.014s; **6** Huff, +12.609s; **7** Bannani, +13.056s; **8** D'Aste, +16.239s; **9** Sritrai, +17.643s; **10** Demoustier, +18.163s; **11** Filippi, +21.684s; **12** Michelisz, +33.000s; EX Monteiro, -2.062s; **R** Muller, 0 laps-accident; **NS** Catsburg, 0 laps-accident damage; **NS** Lapierre, 0 laps-accident damage; **NS** Valente, 0 laps-accident damage; **NS** Coronel, 0 laps-accident damage.

Winner's average speed 101.326mph.

Fastest lap Tarquini, 1m39.275s, 102.614mph.

GRID FOR RACE 2

Decided by qualifying, but with the top 10 reversed.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Lopez, **441**; **2** Loeb, **329**; **3** Muller, **324**; **4** Ma, **213**; **5** Tarquini, **191**; **6** Michelisz, **172**; **7** Monteiro, **171**; **8** Huff, **103**; **9** Chilton, **96**; **10** Valente, **95**.

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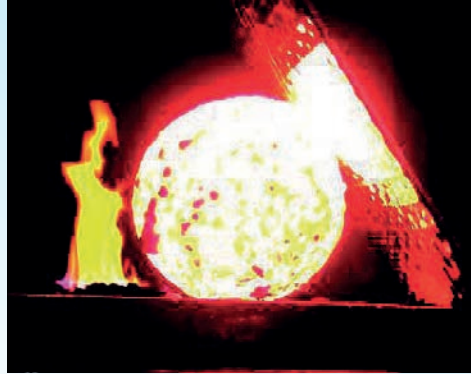
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Snetterton win was Neal's first in tin-tops

Neal Junior steps up on road to the BTCC

Twenty-year-old will race a new Team Dynamics-prepared Gen-3 Mini in next year's Challenge

HENRY NEAL WILL GRADUATE into the top class of the Mini Challenge next season as the next step in his plan to emulate his three-time British Touring Car champion father Matt.

Neal, 20, celebrated his maiden tin-top win in last weekend's second Cooper Class race at Snetterton. This year has been his first full campaign racing cars, having previously only contested a handful of Scottish Legends races.

Team Dynamics has ordered one of the new 255bhp Gen-3 F56 cars for next year, and Neal says that investment represents his first true step on the road to a BTCC career.

"This year was all about experimenting for me, seeing if I liked the racing and taking the results how they come, but now we're ready to make more of a commitment to it," he said.

"We're getting the new car for next year and it will be a big step up. I could have done a second year in the 130bhp Coopers, but the Gen 3 is more of a relevant training car for touring cars.

"I've not tested one yet, and while I did run in a Renault Clio Cup car, my dad and I felt the all-round package offered by the Mini was the better way to go.

"The plan is to get into the BTCC and do what my dad has done. I want to one day win the championship, just like him."

Neal Sr added: "There was some pressure on Henry as his car was currently the only one in the Dynamics stable that hadn't won a race this year, but he's done a superb job and the Gen 3s are the next step.

"All of the good guys in the BTCC have done the single-make racing route because it teaches you good

racecraft. Will he join the BTCC one day? I'll never say never."

Next season's Mini Challenge grid will be boosted due to a wave of interest in the new-generation F56 car, which ended its maiden season of competition last weekend.

Numbers for the new-generation cars have hovered around the low teens all season, but series organisers expect that to double for 2016 now that the car has had a full season of development.

BTCC regular Eurotech Racing is one new team planning an entry in 2016. Driver and team owner Jeff Smith joined the grid at Snetterton last weekend and took a podium finish on his debut. He is now planning to run a multi-car Mini team next season.

"We want to expand Eurotech and get a ladder going towards the BTCC team," said Smith. "In terms of feel



Neal will race in the top class in 2016

and sensation the Gen 3 Mini is very much like a baby touring car. The power is good and you have a lot of front-end grip and not so much at the rear, so they can be a handful."

Butler-Henderson determined to defend Mini title in 2016

Charlie Butler-Henderson plans to bid for a second successive Mini Challenge title next season.

Butler-Henderson, 36, secured the inaugural Gen-3 F56 championship with two victories at Snetterton last weekend, taking his total to

seven wins from 19 races this year. He snatched the title from long-time points leader David Grady, despite skipping three races due to work commitments earlier in the season.

"This entire year has been like a dream, and now there's only one

thing to do, which is come back and defend the championship," said Oakfield Motorsport driver Butler-Henderson.

"When I missed the Brands Hatch Mini Festival I honestly thought that was my championship over, so I haven't actually been concentrating on it for the

last few rounds. It was only after I won both races at Donington [in the penultimate round] that it became a reality. I've really loved this season and I just want more like it, so I'll spend the winter planning to get back on the grid."

Dempsey says he won't contest WHT again



EBREY

FF1600

Excluded Dempsey vows not to return

THREE-TIME WALTER HAYES

Trophy winner Peter Dempsey has declared that he will not contest the event again after being disqualified from second place in its 2015 edition for failing to run a frontal head restraint.

New rules introduced for this season make the use of HANS-style devices mandatory in the UK when racing single-seaters built after 2000.

"I'm not doing it next year," Dempsey said. "I've got so much respect for James Beckett and all the effort he makes to make this event happen, but I raced hard to get to second and got kicked out for something like a HANS. I should've been told at scrutineering."

Dempsey, who now works for leading American junior single-seater team Juncos Racing, has not raced in the UK since last

year's WHT and said he was unaware of the rule. He added that he was warned by an official that he needed the restraint prior to the final and was prepared to borrow one from sidelined team-mate Michai Stephens. But he chose not to run it when another competitor told him he had been given dispensation to run without an FHR provided he remembered it for next season.

"The seat wasn't set up for it, so it would've been more dangerous to run with it," Dempsey said.

Prior to the final, Dempsey had been involved in a separate controversy when he ran into Kevin O'Hara as they disputed the lead in semi-final two. O'Hara was eliminated, and Dempsey was given points on his licence by the stewards.

72

Ginetta Junior

Caroline crowned champion after penalty appeal rejected

JAMIE CAROLINE HAS BEEN

confirmed as Ginetta Junior champion after an appeal against a penalty for Stuart Middleton was rejected.

Middleton was given a 30-second time penalty after the final race at Brands Hatch last month having made a jump start. The Douglas Motorsport driver's demotion meant HHC Motorsport man Caroline finished 16th and secured the title on countback after taking 10 wins to the four of rival Senna Proctor.

The appeal was set to be heard by the MSA National Court, but was thrown out without needing a full hearing.

A statement said: "The official result comes after the MSA Court of Appeal rejected an appeal made by Stuart Middleton during the season finale at

Brands Hatch, because it does not meet the requirements of MSA General Regulation C7.1.3."

Proctor initially crossed the line believing he was champion by a single point until Middleton's penalty was subsequently applied.



EBREY/LAT

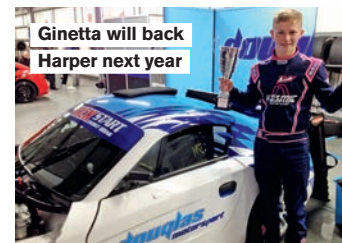
Ginetta Junior

Karting star Harper wins Ginetta Junior Scholarship

2014 NORTHERN IRISH KARTING champion Daniel Harper has won this year's Ginetta Junior Scholarship and will contest the full BTCC support series next year.

The 14-year-old from County Down beat 64 other drivers to land a fully funded season worth more than £60,000.

Harper was chosen as the winner after a final shootout at Bedford Autodrome last week. All finalists were given tuition by BTCC racers Adam



Morgan and Tom Ingram, Ginetta GT4 Supercup race winner Bradley Smith and British GT driver Jody Fannin.

Harper beat Harry King and Seb Priaux – son of triple World Touring Car champion Andy – in the final to land the prize. "I've really enjoyed every moment of the week and I still can't believe I got this far and actually won it!" he said.

Chief instructor Ingram added: "It was a very close call between the final three, but Daniel is a worthy winner."

In brief

Middlehurst to GTs

FF1600 driver Chris Middlehurst plans to switch to sportscars next year. The ex-Formula Renault BARC champion suffered a broken leg in a crash mid-season and had a miserable Water Hayes Trophy last weekend.

Moyers rolls in final

Michael Moyers suffered a dramatic roll while fighting for the lead in the Walter Hayes Trophy final last weekend. The Kevin Mills Racing driver missed a gear out of Luffield in the restarted final, which led to a clash at Copse that pitched Moyers's Spectrum over. He was unhurt after skating across the run-off upside down.

US scholar eyes UK

Team USA Scholarship winner Dakota Dickerson says the amount he learned about racecraft in the Formula Ford 1600 showpieces makes staying on this side of the Atlantic more appealing now that both National and Scottish FF1600 offer the opportunity to "get a punch-in" to Mazda's Road to Indy USF2000 scholarship.

'Higgins from Combe'

Double Castle Combe FF1600 champion Adam Higgins is pushing ahead with plans to switch to the resurgent National series in 2016. "I've got stuck with this name 'Adam Higgins from Combe' and I need to show what I can do at other tracks," he said. He will run brother Richard at Combe.

BRDC F4

Fielding, Scott and Moore in F4 Autumn Trophy entry

FORMER McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC Award finalists Harrison Scott and Sennan Fielding plus Struan Moore will headline a limited grid for the BRDC Formula 4 Autumn Trophy.

Fielding will partner Sisa Ngebulana at HHC Motorsport for the eight-race series, returning to the category in its uprated form after a race-winning MSA Formula campaign.



MSA race winner Fielding is back to F4

Formula Renault Eurocup rookie champion Scott will race for the Douglas Motorsport squad alongside an as-yet-unnamed team-mate.

Meanwhile, Moore – who competed in BRDC F4 in 2013 and '14 – returns from a season in the Japanese Formula 3 Championship. He will lead the challenge of the Hillspeed team.

Series organisers are expecting eight entries for the opening round of the Trophy at Snetterton this weekend, with 10 cars set to run a week later at the Brands Hatch Indy Circuit.

Ameya Vaidyanathan will race alongside Moore at Hillspeed, while new entrant Fortec will enter three cars, one for Omani racer Faisal Al Zubair.

The Autumn Trophy will mark the full-race debut of the new-for-2016 Tatuus-Cosworth BRDC F4 car.

NACAM FORMULA 4

Mexico gets new F4 series

THE FIA'S FORMULA 4 CONCEPT featured on the support bill of a Formula 1 race for the first time at last weekend's Mexican Grand Prix.

An exhibition race was held on the revamped Mexico City circuit on Sunday for the NACAM F4 series, named after the body of promoters from North and Central America, which uses the same Mygale-Ford combination as Britain's MSA Formula.

Australian 15-year-old Luis Leeds

won the inaugural event. He converted pole into a 10-second lead, and held on to win the 12-lap race after a late safety car.

Mexican Fernando Urrutia, a regular in Britain's BRDC F4 series in 2015, while Formula 1 driver Esteban Gutierrez is involved as advisor to the MartigaEG team.

The full 2015-2016 season is set to kick off at the Puebla circuit on November 28-29.



Mexican F4 starts properly late this month

UK Clio Cup

Clio Cup drops Knockhill in favour of Snetterton for '16

THE RENAULT UK CLIO CUP WILL return to Snetterton next season after a year's absence.

The Norfolk track will replace Knockhill on the nine-round calendar as the series remains part of the British Touring Car Championship support bill. Next season will be the first time since 2013 that the Clios won't race in Scotland.

"2016 will mark the 26th consecutive year that Renault UK has raced alongside the BTCC," said championship manager Will Fewkes. "It means the Clio Cup is showcased in front of British motorsport's

biggest trackside crowds as the championship visits the best circuits around the UK."



Snetterton will replace Knockhill

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"FIRMAN'S RETURN TO FORMULA FORD IS A MAJOR BOOST"

Ralph Firman Racing's announcement that RFR/Firman Cars is to enter the Formula Ford Kent marketplace in 2016 is the best thing to happen to FF1600 in years. It's easily the best thing since James Beckett introduced the Walter Hayes Trophy event in 2001, in an impassioned bid to reinject momentum into the world's greatest training category, founded in 1967.

Firman and FF1600 are synonymous, having, in essence, grown up together. Ralph and Tasmanian Ross Ambrose launched the Van Diemen marque in 1973, cunningly evolving Lotus Components' 69F jigs into a contemporarily packaged product that filled the void created when Colin Chapman's offshoot ceased manufacturing customer cars. But even before then Firman was entrenched in the class through brother-in-law Jim Russell's racing school enterprise.

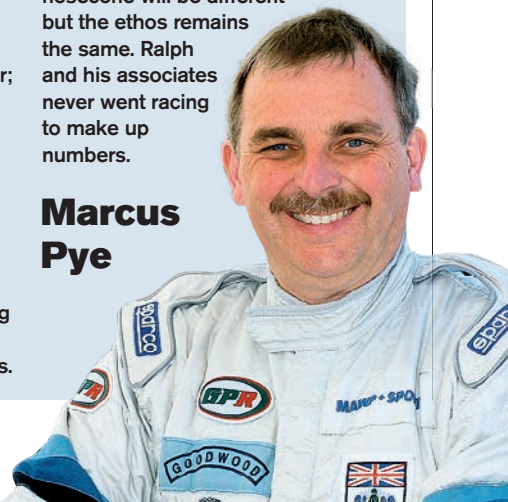
Formula Ford was much more than Van Diemen's bread and butter; it was its lifeblood. More than 2000 Kent-engined cars rolled out of factories in Norfolk, latterly a low sprawling set of units adjacent to Snetterton circuit. It took 12 years to reach the 1000-unit landmark in '85 [as did innovative sportscar manufacturer Radical in the very different 21st century motorsporting landscape], but three decades on Firman has more-modest ambitions.

What RFR does have, beside unparalleled experience, is a product line through which suspension geometries have been optimised. Since RFR/Firman Cars' launch in 2009 it has built chassis for the motorcycle-engined F1000 category that originated in the USA, and has also branched out into F2000/FC.

Having won the F1000 title at the prestigious SCCA National Championship Run-Offs with JR Osborne for the past two years, and sold cars as far afield as Australia, the compact company is on a high.

I can't wait to see the bespoke car that will bring the old guard back into the FF1600 arena for the first time since 2002. That was the year in which Van Diemen International was sold to American Don Panoz's Elan Motorsport Technologies group, which then, unfathomably, snuffed it out. The name on the nosecone will be different but the ethos remains the same. Ralph and his associates never went racing to make up numbers.

Marcus Pye



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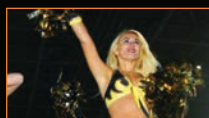
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Scott (left) and Thornton (centre) shared victories

COATES/LAT

Historics

Brits top Mexican GP support

AARON SCOTT AND GREG

Thornton won a race apiece at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez last weekend as British competitors dominated the Masters USA Historic Formula 1 double header in support of the Mexican Grand Prix.

A 20-car field of machines dating from the 1970-1985 era assembled in Mexico City. Scott qualified Tommy

Dreelan's ex-Arturo Merzario March 761 quickest, with 2013 Masters FIA champion Thornton (Lotus 91/5) and Simon Fish (Ensign N180) leading the chase.

After a safety car interlude to remove the Williams cars of team-mates Mike Cantillon (FW05) and Max Smith-Hilliard (FW07C), which tangled on lap one of Saturday's race, Scott scorched to victory with Thornton – minus second gear – and

Fish in pursuit. Thornton passed Scott early in Sunday's sequel, in which Fish outran the pack to finish third again, ahead of Smith-Hilliard.

Martin Lauber (Wolf WR6) and surgeon Nick Colyvas (March 761) were the first Americans home, sixth and seventh in the respective races. FIA Masters Pre-'78 champion Nick Padmore finished ninth in both legs.



READ

In brief Radical finale

Terrence Woodward and Ross Kaiser were crowned Radical European Masters champions in Barcelona last weekend. Victory in race one was followed by a title-clinching third in race two behind Victor Correa/Paddy McClughan and Alain Costa/Johan-Boris Scheir. James Swift led the first two races but retired from both, then finally claimed victory in the third.

Minis to Zandvoort

The Mini Se7en Racing Club is working to run a championship round at Zandvoort next season after a successful trial event recently. The club was invited to be a part of the Dutch venue's British Racing Festival event last month, and held some open invitation races with grids made up from its Se7en and Miglia championships. A total of 23 cars made the trip across, prompting club bosses to open talks with Zandvoort over it becoming a fixture on next year's calendar.

F3 Cup class tweak

The F3 Cup will have a revised class structure for next season, with a new class introduced to help reduce the cost of competing in the series. The new F3 Open Class is for Formula 3 chassis manufactured from 2005 onwards, run with a stock normally aspirated 2000cc engine.

Irish ace to UK series

Ginetta Junior Ireland champion Jordan Dempsey will make his UK racing debut in the Ginetta Junior Winter Series at Snetterton on November 7-8. The Motorsport Ireland Young Racing Driver of the Year finalist secured the Irish title at Mondello Park with a pair of dominant race victories in the final two rounds, and was awarded the chance to step up to the British Championship as part of his prize for winning the Irish series.



Ginetta launches P3-inspired racer

Ginetta has revealed its new G57 sports car, a branch-off from its successful LMP3 programme. Intended primarily for the trackday and American markets, the LMP3 chassis has been fitted with a reworked aerodynamic kit, as well as a 6.2-litre Chevrolet LS3 engine producing upwards of 570bhp, and an upgraded Xtrac sequential gearbox.

Carrera Cup GB

Oliphant eyes Porsche switch

RECENTLY CROWNED GINETTA GT4

Supercup champion Tom Oliphant is considering switching to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB next season after a successful test last week.

The 25-year-old tested with the GT Marques team at Silverstone and was very impressed with the car.

"It was lovely to drive, very different to the Ginetta," said Oliphant. "It took 10 to 15 laps to get used to it, but since it was difficult conditions I didn't want to push too hard and crash the car. The Carrera Cup is one of my options for next year."

British GT drivers Lewis Plato and Luke Davenport also tested the car at Silverstone last week as Porsche held a taster session for prospective drivers. Plato drove for Redline Racing, while Davenport tried one of Porsche GB's cars.

Race of Remembrance

New Mazda MX-5 to make UK race debut

THE LATEST MAZDA MX-5 WILL make its debut in this weekend's Race of Remembrance at Anglesey Circuit.

Two Mk4 MX-5s will take part in the endurance race. Roddisons Motorsport and race organiser Mission Motorsport will field a car apiece.

The new-generation car was released earlier this year and both teams have been working hard to get the machine onto a grid for the first time.

"We ordered this car as soon as we possibly could," said Roddisons boss Paul Roddison. "It was something new, and we

built the first Mk3 race car, so we wanted to do the same with the Mk4."

Alongside Roddison, the MX-5's driver line-up will include Dan Welch, with past and present British Touring Car ace Jack Goff, Tom Onslow-Cole, Adam Morgan and Paul O'Neill all set to take part.



Mk4 MX-5 will race in Wales



WALTER HAYES TROPHY SILVERSTONE OCTOBER 31 - NOVEMBER 1 HSCC

Carroll wins the toughest WHT yet

SIX LAPS INTO THE WALTER HAYES Trophy final, 15 cars were within three seconds of the lead. By the chequered flag, one of those cars was upside down, a further half-dozen were mangled in various ways, another was about to be excluded and Graham Carroll was celebrating winning what Joey Foster declared the toughest WHT yet. And he knows – he's won three of them.

Nearly a quarter of a 113-strong field packed with present, past and future category aces could boast an FF1600 title or trophy race victory on their CV. One past regional champion admitted he'd woken up

more "jittery" than he could remember on a race day. Understandably so.

The smallest things can make a crucial difference in the biggest events. And the 2015 WHT was ultimately decided by two missed gears and two relatively light instances of contact.

The first of those came in semi-final two. Martin Donnelly Trophy winner Kevin O'Hara had come back from an early slip on oil to overcome Peter Dempsey in their heat, helped by strong straightline performance he put down to his lower body weight. The tension

ramped up considerably when they resumed battle on Sunday, joined by Dempsey's Cliff Dempsey Racing team-mate James Raven, and it overspilled when Dempsey ran into O'Hara at Becketts on the penultimate lap.

"For no apparent reason I got hit from behind and spun," said O'Hara, who was eliminated. "Everybody knows what happened and it has happened before." Dempsey's version: "Kevin's engine was just unbelievable on the straights. I tried to push on the brakes into Becketts and he was focusing on the exit and I just tagged the back of him."

Kevin Mills could be forgiven for having a bit of a chuckle as he watched his drivers Stephen Daly and Michael Moyers cruise past the delayed CDR cars for a one-two, 12 months after a particularly controversial Dempsey opening lap had eliminated KMR's Moyers and Scott Malvern from a WHT final they had swept the front row for.

The Mills Spectrums were again ominously fast all weekend. Just as he had at the Festival, Daly – who had dominated heat two by a massive 6s – reached the final unbeaten. But in further *deja vu*, he ended the deciding race with



J BLOWHAM

a tattered car, having been at the centre of a second decisive tangle.

It didn't matter what the other 14 cars in the lead pack tried over those raucous first six laps, Daly was equal to all their moves and could not be shifted from first place. His main opponent was this year's Oulton champion Josh Fisher, who had withstood incessant pressure from Foster to win heat three. As "savage", "mental", "absolutely chaotic" and "brilliant" as the racing in the lead pack was, for every wheel banged there were another dozen inch-perfect wheel-to-wheel moments without contact, but a battle this fraught was never likely to run its course without a flashpoint, and it came when Fisher tried to go around the outside of Daly into Brooklands.



JONES



Carroll triumphed under a setting sun



STYLES

Orgee stars with 97-place surge through the field

No WHT would be complete without a heroic recovery tale, and 2015's came from Combe champion Roger Orgee. A broken driveshaft meant he didn't even get to the grid for his heat, but he stormed from 28th to win the progression race, and from 31st to win a shortened last-chance race. He then reached seventh in his semi and thought an unbelievable outright victory might even be on the cards when he reached seventh by the time the final was stopped. Little more ground was gained, but fifth – 97 places better off than he started the day – was a supreme achievement.

Others who might've hoped for something similar included Stuart Gough, Jayde Kruger and

Chris Middlehurst. Having worked most of the night to change the engine that had wilted in his heat, the valve plugs that dropped off and left him misfiring down the last-chance order were a cruel blow that summarised Middlehurst's rough year. Having collided with Matt Cowley on Saturday, Kruger battled Orgee as they surged through the progression field, then got "absolutely smashed off" in the last chance.

After a Saturday incident with Dickerson and Svensson, Gough suspected his Sunday would be either busy or short. It was the latter, as he was wiped out along with Pascal Wehrlein's DTM engineer, Tom Seward, in a chaotic opening lap.



Boyd was left spinning wildly mid-pack

JONES



Fisher and Foster had a series of close calls

JONES

"He'll blame me, I'll blame him. I'm over it," said Fisher of the touch that damaged his Van Diemen and sent Daly sliding before being violently collected by Wayne Boyd, last year's WHT winner and last week's Festival victor. Further chain-reaction incidents accounted for the luckless Luke Cooper and returnee Matt Rivett (who was left with back pain from slamming into the

Woodcote wall), and prompted a long red flag.

It was well timed for Dempsey. A brush with Moyers had given him a slow puncture, and he'd backed off to retire before seeing the shunt unfold. Permission to change the tyre was granted and the countback for the restart kept him in the hunt.

National champion Jonny McMullan was also ready to strike.

The straightline deficit that had plagued his Dolan-run Motorsport Ireland Van Diemen at the Festival had been traced to a brake sticking (when a fresh engine failed to resolve the problem), and he started his WHT by winning the blistering sixth heat. He narrowly defeated Oliver White, pole-winning Scottish champion Adam Mackay, Doug Crosbie, Spectrum-endorsed

Australian star Scott Andrews, CDR's extra contender Tim Buret (a Pro Mazda frontrunner), Northern champion Tom McArthur and Gaius Ghinn. White had led that for a spell after passing McMullan under yellows he didn't spot in the setting sun, a move that earned him a grid penalty for his semi that he swiftly overcame.

But it was Moyers (the narrow winner of heat one ahead of Raven, ▶

► Rob Barrable and Ivor McCullough) who looked best-placed when the final resumed. He made a 0.7s break on the opening lap, leaving Carroll, Raven, McMullan and Dempsey to do the entertaining in his wake.

With just over two laps to go, one fluffed gearshift changed everything again. The pack had closed on Moyers and that mistake out of Luffield brought him under attack from all angles down the pit straight. Carroll made it through, but as Raven, McMullan and Dempsey all tried to do likewise into Copse things went awry. Moyers ended up rolling down the run-off, McMullan was out too and Raven was dumped down the order.

After that, Carroll was uncatchable. And that was partly due to missed gear #2. That mistake had come on Saturday, not Sunday. It had, however, cost 2007 Scottish and '08 National champion Carroll victory in heat five, allowing Boyd and Team USA man Michai Stephens to demote him to third. And it left Carroll very, very annoyed with himself – and very eager to make amends next day.

“It was like I said, ‘There’s the win, have it!’ I really beat myself up over it,” said Carroll. He was doubly



Carroll (14) fends off Boyd and McMullan

annoyed because he had hooked up with the B-M team that took Tom McArthur to this year’s Northern title and was driving a Van Diemen in which he flew at August’s National round at Silverstone and again from the moment WHT testing began. Still, he atoned for Saturday’s error by defeating Fisher, Boyd and McMullan in semi one.

“Not doing so well in the past couple of years knocked my

confidence, but coming back and putting it on pole for the National round boosted it. I’ve been waiting for this since 2008 when I was leading by a few seconds and then caught a white line. On that last lap I was crying my eyes out.”

Dempsey came through for second, only to be excluded for failing to wear the mandatory frontal head restraint, elevating White and Andrews to the podium. Foster was fourth after losing ground in a tangle with Fisher in their semi, with recovery charge hero Roger Orgee (see panel, p77) fifth. Jake Byrne was sixth, having got ever quicker as the weekend progressed, ahead of Barrable and McCullough. In the only 20th-century car to finish the final, heat-three podium man John Svensson claimed ninth, with Buret, Jamie Thorburn, David McArthur and Dakota Dickerson on his tail.

Rapid drivers with ‘might-have-been’ tales included Murray –



White recovered from grid penalty

collected by Seb Melrose on lap one of their semi – and Mackay, who was denied a final place by 0.052s by FF1600 legend Rick Morris having dropped down the semi-one order in an incident at Brooklands. A reserve for the final, he at least had a superb view of the sort of epic Silverstone National slipstreaming some think you can now only find on scratchy old YouTube clips. You don’t need the nostalgia, such racing is here and now in an emphatically resurgent FF1600 scene.

● Matt Beer and Ian Sowman



Mullan collects spinner Barlow

JONES

Aussie Andrews stars for the US racing contingent

“In the US we sort of roll around and wait till the last few laps and then go at it. In the UK, if there’s an opportunity at every corner, they go for it. The racing is definitely the next level here.”

That was the verdict of US F1600 champion Scott Andrews. The Australian was best of a strong contingent from the American junior series, Spectrum’s International Scholarship programme awarding him a WHT seat with Kevin Mills Racing that he took full advantage of. One of many ruing a lack of dry testing, he made rapid progress and peaked by battling from 18th to fourth in the final, which became third after Dempsey’s exclusion.

Promoted runner-up Oliver White’s priority before getting his second-place trophy was delivering the third-place cup to Andrews, concerned that he didn’t set off for his long journey home without it.

Andrews’s thoughts on UK racecraft echoed the Team USA scholars. Michai Stephens appeared on the cusp of the necessary self-belief breakthrough when he went toe-to-toe with Wayne Boyd and Graham Carroll for heat victory, finishing a close second, but ended the weekend with a bandaged and ice-packed hand after a clash with Doug Crosbie. Team-mate Dakota Dickerson was quick, before a semi tangle that eliminated potential frontrunner Ben Norton left him with a wounded car for the final.



Andrews didn’t get to celebrate third

EBREY

WHT HISTORIC FINAL AND SUPPORTS SILVERSTONE, OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 1 HSCC

Cowley claims unlikely Historic glory

A HISTORIC FINAL VICTORY seemed a long shot when National Pre-'90 champion Matt Cowley lined up 10th on the grid, a legacy of clashes with Jayde Kruger in his heat and Joe Porter in his semi. But he surged up the order and pounced on Nigel Thompson on the final lap to snatch the race win – if not the Bernard Baxter Trophy for best performance in an older car, as Neil Tofts snaffled that by reaching the final before retiring.

Thompson had led since overcoming fast-starter Josh Barnett, but his tyres went off in the closing stages. With Barnett outbraking himself at Brooklands, Rory Smith completed the top three, while fourth earned Gislain Genecand the Janet Cesar Trophy for Pre-'82 runners.

Had he not set the fastest lap, Tom Smith wouldn't be **Historic**

Formula Ford 2000 champion, but that bonus on top of his fourth place meant even passing Callum Grant for second on the final lap wasn't enough for main rival Andrew Park. Outgoing title holder Benn Simms won a thrilling race.

A last-lap retirement for dominant leader Henry Chart in the **Open Wheel Allcomers** race gave the win to Mark Dwyer's March 742. Will Schryver (Chevron B6) dominated the HSCC's **50km scratch race**, lapping second-place finisher Myles Castaldini.

Poleman Ray Mallock was an early pit visitor in the **Geoff Friswell Trophy Clubmans** race, handing Rob Manson (Mallock Mk21) the win.

Tim Gray's BikeSports Spire GT3 topped the **Contemporary Closed Wheel Allcomers**, while Jordan Sanders was second in Duncan Williams's Juno.

● Stephen Lickorish and Ian Sowman



Cowley battled through to win

EBREY

RESULTS

HEAT 1 (8 LAPS) 1 Michael Moyers (Spectrum 011C) 8m36.991s (90.72mph); 2 James Raven (Ray GR11) +0.190s; 3 Rob Barrable (Ray GR10); 4 Ivor McCullough (Van Diemen RFO0); 5 Jake Byrne (Ray GR13); 6 Andy Charsley (Ray GR15). **Class winner** Neil Tofts (Reynard 89FF). **Fastest lap** McCullough 1m03.396s (93.07mph). **Pole** Raven. **Starters** 18.

HEAT 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Stephen Daly (Spectrum 011) 8m31.089s (91.77mph); 2 Ben Norton (Spectrum 010B) +6.121s; 3 Richard Tarling (Ray GR13); 4 Liam Payne (Van Diemen JL014); 5 Edward Moore (Van Diemen JL013K); 6 Felix Fisher (Van Diemen RF02). **CW** Conor Murphy (Van Diemen RF83). **FL** Daly 1m03.021s (93.62mph). **P** Daly. **S** 19.

HEAT 3 (8 LAPS) 1 Josh Fisher (Van Diemen RF99) 8m28.787s (92.18mph); 2 Joey Foster (Ray GR08) +0.191s; 3 Niall Murray (Van Diemen RF99); 4 Tom Bradshaw (Van Diemen RF92); 5 Luke Cooper (Swift SC10); 6 Matt Rivett (Ray 97K). **CW** Rory Smith (Van Diemen RF88). **FL** Murray 1m02.428s (94.51mph). **P** Foster. **S** 19.

HEAT 4 (8 LAPS) 1 Kevin O'Hara (Van Diemen RFO1) 8m28.091s (92.31mph); 2 Peter Dempsey (Ray GR08/09) +0.573s; 3 John Svensson (Van Diemen RF92); 4 Dakota Dickerson (Ray GR15); 5 Adam Higgins (Van Diemen JL12); 6 David McArthur (Van Diemen LA10). **CW** David Wild (Lola T204). **FL** O'Hara 1m02.636s (94.20mph). **P** Dempsey. **S** 19.

HEAT 5 (8 LAPS) 1 Wayne Boyd (Van Diemen MS13K) 8m26.361s (92.63mph); 2 Michai Stephens (Ray GR13) +0.082s; 3 Graham Carroll

(Van Diemen JL13); 4 Sebastian Melrose (Ray GR14); 5 Sam McKenzie (Ray GR08); 6 Rick Morris (Ray GR10). **CW** Josh Barnett (Van Diemen RF80). **FL** Stephens 1m02.444s (94.49mph). **P** Boyd. **S** 19.

HEAT 6 (8 LAPS) 1 Jonny McMullan (Van Diemen LA10) 8m32.375s (91.54mph); 2 Oliver White (Van Diemen JL015K) +0.120s; 3 Adam Mackay (Ray GR14); 4 Doug Crosbie (Van Diemen JL13K); 5 Scott Andrews (Spectrum 011C); 6 Timothe Buret (Ray GR08). **CW** Tom Brown (Van Diemen RF86). **FL** Buret 1m02.851s (93.87mph). **P** Mackay. **S** 18.

PROGRESSION RACE (10 LAPS) 1 Roger Orgee (Van Diemen RFO0) 10m54.924s (89.63mph); 2 Jayde Kruger (Van Diemen RF92) +0.200s; 3 Matthew Cowley (Reynard 88FF); 4 Daniel O'Beirne (Swift Cooper SC95); 5 James Gowens (Vector MG95); 6 Dan Fox (PRS 81F). **CW** Fox. **FL** Orgee 1m03.367s (93.11mph). **P** Fox. **S** 28.

LAST CHANCE RACE (8 LAPS) 1 Orgee 8m36.453s (90.82mph); 2 David McCullough (Van Diemen RFO0) +1.488s; 3 Tom Brown (Van Diemen RF86); 4 Rory Smith (Van Diemen RF88); 5 Paul Mason (Swift SC94); 6 Nigel Thompson (Van Diemen RF88). **CW** Brown. **FL** Orgee 1m02.898s (93.80mph). **P** Mike Gardner (Crosle 25F). **S** 36.

SEMI FINAL 1 (12 LAPS) 1 Carroll 12m37.289s (93.10mph); 2 J Fisher +1.283s; 3 Boyd; 4 McMullan; 5 White; 6 Foster. **CW** Barnett. **FL** McMullan 1m02.023s (95.13mph). **P** Boyd. **S** 36.

SEMI FINAL 2 (12 LAPS) 1 Daly 12m36.286s (93.22mph); 2 Moyers +0.095s; 3 Raven; 4 Dempsey; 5 Barrable; 6 Byrne. **CW** Tofts. **FL** Raven 1m01.788s (95.49mph). **P** Daly. **S** 36.



Foster was out in an LMP3 car too

JONES

HISTORIC FINAL (12 LAPS) 1 Cowley 12m57.080s (90.73mph); 2 Thompson +0.161s; 3 Smith; 4 Gislain Genecand (Crosle 25F); 5 Klaus Dieter-Hackel (Van Diemen RF88); 6 Calum McHale (Van Diemen RF89). **FL** Cowley 1m03.246s (93.29mph). **P** Thompson. **S** 28.

FINAL (7 LAPS) 1 Carroll 7m22.241s (92.71mph); 2 White +1.126s; 3 Andrews; 4 Foster; 5 Orgee; 6 Byrne; 7 Barrable; 8 I McCullough; 9 Svensson; 10 Buret. **FL** Andrews 1m02.206s (94.85mph). **P** Daly. **S** 36.

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD 2000 CHAMPIONSHIP (20 LAPS) 1 Benn Simms (Reynard SF77) 20m47.271s (94.37mph); 2 Andrew Park (Reynard SF81) +0.315s; 3 Callum Grant (Delta T78); 4 Tom Smith (Royale RP27); 5 Lee Bankhurst (Royale RP30); 6 Graham Ridgway (Reynard SF78). **CW** David Margetts (Dulon MP21).

FL Smith 1m01.408s (96.08mph). **P** Simms. **S** 19. **HSCC 50KM CLOSED-WHEEL SCRATCH RACE (20 LAPS) 1 Will Schryver (Chevron B6) 21m28.380s (91.36mph)**; 2 Myles Castaldini (Davrian Mk8) -1 lap; 3 Mike Luck (Chevrolet Camaro); 4 Iain McBay (Davrian Mk8); 5 Alan Davenport (Mallock Mk18); 6 Nic Strong (Opel Ascona). **CW** Castaldini; Davenport; Jim Gathercole (Lotus Elan); David Hall (Ford Lotus Cortina Mk1); Chris Woodgate (Elva Courier). **FL** Schryver 1m02.820s (93.92mph). **P** Schryver. **S** 29.

GEOFF FRISWELL TROPHY FOR CLUBMANS CARS (20 LAPS) 1 Rob Manson (Mallock Mk21) 20m27.660s (95.88mph); 2 Steven Chaplin (Phantom P79) +5.710s; 3 Brendan Herd (Mallock Mk21T); 4 Marcus Bicknell (Mallock Mk26EB); 5 Peter Burnham (Mallock Mk28/30); 6 Phillip Hart (Mallock Mk16). **CW** Herd; Hart; Phillip Allen (Phantom P74). **FL** Manson 1m00.478s (97.56mph). **P** Ray Mallock (Mallock Mk18). **S** 12.

ALLCOMERS OPEN-WHEEL SCRATCH RACE (20 LAPS) 1 Mark Dwyer (March 742) 18m55.082s (103.70mph); 2 Neil Hunt (Tatuus F4-016) +3.644s; 3 Tim Buckley (Dallara); 4 Richard Mitchell (RSR F4-013); 5 Neil Glover (March 782); 6 Joe Stables (RSR F4-013). **CW** Hunt; Graham Ridgway (Reynard SF78). **FL** Henry Chart (Dallara F305) 53.652s (109.97mph). **P** Chart. **S** 16.

ALLCOMERS CLOSED-WHEEL SCRATCH RACE (20 LAPS) 1 Tim Gray (Spire GT3) 18m24.307s (106.59mph); 2 Jordan Sanders (Juno CN2012) +21.442s; 3 Richard Fearn (Radical SR8); 4 Joey Foster (Ginetta LMP3); 5 Richard Wise (Spire GT3); 6 Oliver Bryant (Lola T70). **CW** Sanders; Stephen Hall (Audi TT RS); Oliver Bull (Vauxhall Tigra). **FL** Gray 54.462s (108.34mph). **P** Gray. **S** 22.



Norton needed that rear wheel

EBREY

Mini title for Butler- Henderson

BACK IN JUNE CHARLIE BUTLER-Henderson wasn't even thinking about the **Mini Challenge** title, but last weekend he completed an incredible against-all-odds turnaround to land an emotional first championship.

Butler-Henderson skipped the three summer races at Brands Hatch with work commitments, and has been playing catch-up ever since. Remarkably, the championship's form man managed to overcome the points deficit and the British weather to secure two more wins, and with them the championship crown.

David Grady carried a 57-point lead to Norfolk over Butler-Henderson, but saw it go up in smoke in a dramatic first race.

Grady was only seventh in the wet-but-drying qualifying session after mistiming his run on slick tyres, while Butler-Henderson claimed the bonus three points for pole. Things got worse in the race for Grady. He ran in position for most of the race until getting into a scrap with William Phillips. With Butler-Henderson leading and Grady desperate to make up ground, he tried a daring move around the outside of Coram to pass Phillips but lost control and speared across the wet grass at Murrays, T-boning Phillips.

"I don't know whether I hit a wet patch, dipped a wheel on the grass or what, but I was a total passenger," said Grady, who limped home 12th in class.

Up ahead, Butler-Henderson was supreme, leading every lap despite pressure from first Lawrence Davey and then Luke Caudle. The result handed Butler-Henderson a slender



Two wins gave CB-H
Mini Challenge crown

points lead to defend. With Grady starting down the order for race two – and with a distinctly bent car – Sunday promised fireworks, but they almost weren't seen. Literally.

The descent of thick fog overnight reduced visibility to a matter of metres during the morning, forcing a long delay before any track activity could take place. While the Lotus Sprints were allowed to run, officials deemed the conditions too severe to allow packs of cars to race and the meeting came within a whisker of being abandoned. Fortunately, the murk lifted just after 1pm.

Butler-Henderson had pole for race two, but dropped to fourth after contact with Lee Pattison. Luke Caudle came through to win, but Butler-Henderson's place increased his points lead to 11 heading into the finale, while Grady salvaged eighth.

Butler-Henderson then lucked into pole on the ballot for race three and promptly led it from start to finish as Grady struggled to sixth with a gearbox issue as a legacy of his crash. "It's just the perfect result," said Butler-Henderson. "I had half a mind to take it easy, and then my wife said I couldn't come home unless I won the championship with a race win. So I decided to get on with it! I'm speechless."

Neil Newstead was crowned as the R56 JCW Class champion in race one, then helped Steve Ruxton-Cocker to glory in race two. Hamish Brandon won race three.

Nathan Harrison won the **Cooper Class** title with victory in race one, and it was a good thing too, because engine problems hindered both outings on Sunday. Henry Neal took his first tin-top win in race two after a string of fine overtaking moves

from eighth on the grid. Mark Wakefield starred in race three. Ricky Page's season ended with a pair of top five finishes and an exhaust problem.

Luigi Valentino Mazza secured the **Lotus Elise Trophy** title with a sensible drive to third place in the first outing on Saturday. Mazza only needed a top five finish to secure the crown, having carried a 28-point lead into the final round. He qualified a comfortable third, leaving his rivals James Little and Craig Denman to fight it out ahead of him.

Little took pole and led until lap three when Denman dived inside him at Riches before making the place his own into Montreal. Denman was then the architect of his own downfall as he ran too deep into Brundle and opened the door to allow Little back ahead. Little held on over the final few laps to secure

RESULTS

MINI CHALLENGE (10 LAPS) 1 Charlie Butler-Henderson 21m24.529s (83.20mph); 2 Luke Caudle +0.726s; 3 Lawrence Davey; 4 Jack Mitchell; 5 Lee Pattison; 6 Jeff Smith. **Class winners** Neil Newstead. **Fastest lap** Butler-Henderson 2m06.806s (84.28mph). **Pole** Butler-Henderson. **Starters** 25. **RACE TWO (7 LAPS) 1 Caudle 15m06.103s (82.56mph);** 2 Pattison +0.838s; 3 Davey; 4 Butler-Henderson; 5 J. Smith; 6 William Phillips. **CW** Steve Ruxton-Cocker. **FL** Butler-Henderson 2m07.000s (84.15mph). **P** Butler-Henderson. **S** 25. **RACE THREE (7 LAPS) 1 Butler-Henderson 15m00.120s (83.11mph);** 2 Pattison +0.915s; 3 J. Smith; 4 Caudle; 5 Phillips; 6 David Grady. **CW** Hamish Brandon. **FL** J. Smith 2m06.809s

(84.28mph). **P** Butler-Henderson. **S** 24. **MINI CHALLENGE COOPER CLASS (9 LAPS) 1 Nathan Harrison 21m28.178s (74.67mph);** 2 Mark Wakefield +0.181s; 3 Simon Walton; 4 Ricky Page; 5 Max Bladon; 6 Martin Poole. **FL** Wakefield 2m21.028s (75.78mph). **P** Harrison. **S** 15. **RACE TWO (7 LAPS) 1 Henry Neal 16m47.016s (74.29mph);** 2 Bladon +0.171s; 3 Wakefield; 4 Max Leaver; 5 Page; 6 Walton. **FL** Harrison 2m20.819s (75.89mph). **P** Wakefield. **S** 15. **RACE THREE (7 LAPS) 1 Wakefield 16m46.852s (74.30mph);** 2 Bladon +0.349s; 3 Leaver; 4 Neal; 5 Harrison; 6 Page. **FL** Harrison 2m21.220s (75.68mph). **P** Leaver. **S** 15. **LOTUS ELISE TROPHY (10 LAPS) 1 James Little (S1) 22m09.552s (80.38mph);** 2 Craig Denman (111R) +0.185s; 3 Luigi Valentino Mazza (S1); 4 Ryan Savage (S1); 5 David Ellesley (S1); 6 Jason McNulty (S1). **FL** Denman 2m11.194s

(81.46mph). **P** Little. **S** 20. **RACE TWO (9 LAPS) 1 Seth Walpole (111R) 20m11.181s (79.42mph);** 2 Denman +0.207s; 3 Jason Baker (S1); 4 Little; 5 Simon Oakley (S2); 6 Ellesley. **FL** Baker 2m11.351s (81.37mph). **P** David Alexander (S1). **S** 19. **LOTUS CUP UK (43 LAPS) 1 Adam Gore (Exige V6 Cup R) 1h31m55.935s (83.31mph);** 2 Alex Reed (Exige V6 Cup R) +2.620s; 3 Adam Balon (Exige V6 Cup R); 4 Adam Knight (Exige V6 Cup R); 5 Steve Train (2-Eleven); 6 Andrew Wright (Exige S1-Honda). **CW** Train; Wright; Stuart Ratcliffe/Anthony Dunn (Elise 111R). **FL** Gore 2m02.493s (87.25mph). **P** Gore. **S** 18. **TRACK ATTACK AUTUMN TROPHY (7 LAPS) 1 Matthew Simmons (Nissan 370Z) 17m07.688s (72.80mph);** 2 Roman Sarazin (Nissan 370Z) +1.136s; 3 James Janicki (Nissan Skyline R32); 4 Nerijus Zabolka (Subaru Impreza);

5 Don Hughes (Peugeot 306); 6 Nick Gwinnett (Renault Clio). **CW** Zabolka; Hughes; James Mumbray (BMW 330i); Arron Pullan (Toyota MR2 Mk1); Paul Lawrie (Toyota MR2 Roadster). **FL** Simmons 2m06.305s (84.62mph). **P** Simmons. **S** 40. **RACE TWO (7 LAPS) 1 Simmons 15m11.135s (82.11mph);** 2 Sarazin +0.465s; 3 Hughes; 4 Gwinnett; 5 Ashley Bruneau (Renault Clio 182); 6 Sonny Hardy (Renault Clio 182). **CW** Hughes; Zabolka; Andy McLennan (Suzuki Swift); Pullan; Lawrie. **FL** Simmons 2m04.544s (85.81mph). **P** Simmons. **S** 32. **RACE THREE (7 LAPS) 1 Zabolka 15m50.023s (78.75mph);** 2 Hughes +8.047s; 3 Gwinnett; 4 Bruneau; 5 Andy Wilkins (Renault Clio 200); 6 Pullan. **CW** Hughes; Pullan; McLennan; Lawrie. **FL** Zabolka 2m12.832s (80.46mph). **P** Hughes. **S** 30.

BRANDS HATCH OCTOBER 31 - NOVEMBER 1 CSCC

Wylie wins twice before fog cuts short Halloween meet

THE CLASSIC SPORTS CAR CLUB staged an entertaining Halloween race meeting that started in bright sunshine on Saturday but ended prematurely on Sunday owing to thick fog.

The opening laps of the **Modern Classics** event were tremendous as Dan Wylie in the potent E46 BMW hounded the E36 of early leader, Mark Smith. But Wylie was left with an unassailable lead over Thomas Houlbrook's E36 when Smith, a former winner, was obliged to serve a success penalty of an extra 60 seconds in the pits. James Moulton-Smith (replacing his dad, Mark) fought back bravely to salvage third place.

Wylie, in his BMW, romped home to win the **New Millennium** race as well. Tim Davis had seized the lead as his TVR was clearly the quickest car on the track, but a 60s winner's penalty stymied his chance of success and allowed Wylie to pull away. Davis fought back bravely and used his extra grunt to great advantage as he surged past Jamie Sturges and then Tom Houlbrook to salvage second.

Tom Eden claimed pole position for a full grid of **Magnificent Sevens**, led every lap except for his compulsory pitstop, and went on to take his maiden win in impressive



Wylie took a brace of wins

style. Peter Ratcliff started well and scythed past Richard Green and Jonathan Mitchell but he was unable to reel in the leader. Mitchell fought back strongly but had to settle for third place.

Eden completed the double in Saturday's **CSCC Open** event. He avoided a first-lap melee at Druids, when Danny Keenan ended up in the gravel, and then opted for an early pitstop. Peter Ratcliff emerged from the pits close behind Eden and he set the fastest lap as he gave chase, but his effort was foiled by backmarkers and he was two seconds adrift at the end. Jonathan Mitchell was a distant third.

Caterhams dominated Saturday's **Night Race**. The C400s of Robert Singleton versus Pascal and Richard Green fought it out between each other at the front until Singleton pulled away to win.

Richard Woods' ex-Tom Chilton Focus started Sunday's **Tin Top** race from pole and he increased the advantage over his rivals until a 30s former winner's penalty kicked in

and he found himself back in 26th place. Russell Hird (Integra) inherited the lead and he held on to win by 10s from the fast-closing Woods. Carl Chambers fought off a late challenge from Nigel Ainge to finish third.

The **Future Classics** race was ruined by thick fog. Nick Olson's twitchy Esprit led away from former Formula Ford Festival winner Dave Coyne in Chris Compton-Goddard's Ferrari. After just three minutes of racing the safety car prevailed until the chequered flag was put out some seven minutes before the scheduled time. The safety car and the pit-stop lottery rendered the result irrelevant, but the official winner was Stephen Scott-Dunwoodie (Ford Sierra Cosworth).

Visibility continued to be a major problem and at times it was impossible to see the bottom straight from the startline, with the meeting eventually abandoned at 1505.

● Kerry Dunlop

the win, as Mazza cruised home third to take the crown.

Seth Walpole won a turbulent second race, having started second on the top-ten reversed grid. Frontrunners Ryan Savage and Jason McNulty both hit trouble, leaving Denman in second ahead of Jason Baker. Mazza rounded his year out in seventh.

The **Lotus Cup UK** on Saturday evening boiled down to a straight fight between Alex Reed and Adam Gore, after points leader Ken Savage dropped out before the race. Damage sustained in a qualifying crash ruled Savage out, meaning if either Gore or Reed won outright they would stand a good chance of landing the outright title too.

Suitably motivated, the two played out a tight duel in which they were rarely more than a second apart. Gore fought valiantly through illness to win, but both lost the title on dropped scores to Adrian Hall, who crawled over the line second in the open class after the engine lost power in the final turns.

Nissan GT Academy duo Matthew Simmons and Roman Sarazin dominated the opening two **Track Attack Autumn Trophy** races in their Nissan 370Zs, finishing in formation twice. Both sat out race three, leaving Nerijus Zabotaka to win in his Subaru Impreza.

● Rob Ladbrook

Fog spoiled Sunday's races



RESULTS

MODERN CLASSICS (44 LAPS) 1 Daniel Wylie (BMW M3 E46) 40m41.537s (78.36mph); 2 Thomas Houlbrook (BMW M3 Evo E36) + 23.329s; 3 Mark Smith/James Moulton-Smith (BMW M3 E36); 4 James/Alan Broad (Porsche Boxster S); 5 Miles/Piers Masarati (Porsche 996); 6 Luke Johnson (Porsche 944). **Class winners** Broad, Johnson, Dan Rogers (Mazda MX5), Kyle Ward (Toyota Starlet), Andy Napier (Lotus Elise). **Fastest lap** Houlbrook 52.980s (82.08mph). **Pole Masarati Starters** 21.

NEW MILLENNIUM & PUMA CUP (44 LAPS) 1 Daniel Wylie (BMW M3 E46) 40m40.599s (78.39mph); 2 Tim Davis (TVR Tuscan) + 22.091s; 3 Thomas Houlbrook (BMW M3 Evo E36); 4 Jamie Sturges (SEAT Supercopa); 5 Kevin Bird/Charles Hyde-Andrews-Bird (BMW M3); 6 Riku Garner (Renault Clio Cup). **CW** Davis, Garner, Phil/George Barrett (Ford Focus RS), Dennis Hays/James Grange (Ford Mondeo ST), James Clare (Ford Puma). **FL** Davis 52.156s (83.37mph). **P** John Danby (Lotus Evora). **S** 20.

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS (43 LAPS) 1 Tom Eden (Caterham CSR) 40m23.463s (77.15mph); 2 Peter Ratcliff (Caterham C400) + 9.724s; 3 Jonathan Mitchell (Caterham CSR); 4 Joe Spencer (RS Motorsport); 5 Colin Watson/Robert Singleton (Caterham R300); 6 Richard Carter (Caterham R300). **CW** Mitchell, Graham Charman

(Caterham R400), Pascal/Richard Green (Caterham C400-E); Lee Bristow (Caterham Supersport), Wil Arif/Stephen Mansell (Caterham Roadsport), Mark Horton (Caterham 7), Peter French (Caterham Superlight), Alan Pegrum/Lawrence Barwick (Caterham 7). **FL** Danny Winstanley (Caterham R300) 49.781s (87.35mph). **P** Eden **S** 34.

CSCC OPEN (46 LAPS) 1 Tom Eden (Caterham CSR) 40m33.012s (82.21mph); 2 Peter Ratcliff (Caterham C400) + 1.883s; 3 Jonathan Mitchell (Caterham CSR); 4 Gary Bate (Caterham C400); 5 Richard Carter (Caterham R300); 6 Dave Harvey (RS Motorsport). **CW** Carter, Harvey, David Rowe/Robert Springate (Caterham Supersport), Christopher Compton-Goddard/Dave Coyne (Ferrari 308GTB), Joe Jackson (Vauxhall Tigra), Richard Crossley/Paul Merrett (Jaguar XJS), Jon Jeffery (Davrian Mk.8). **FL** Ratcliff 50.143s (86.72mph). **P** Mitchell. **S** 28.

NIGHT RACE (44 LAPS) 1 Robert Singleton (Caterham C400) 40m27.762s (78.81mph); 2 Pascal/Richard Green (Caterham C400) + 9.927s; 3 Colin Watson (Caterham R300); 4 John Danby (Lotus Evora); 5 Tim Davis (TVR Tuscan); 6 Lee Bristow (Caterham Supersport). **CW** Green, Watson, Danby, Davis, Bristow, Mark Smith/James Moulton-Smith (BMW M3 E36), James/Alan Broad (Porsche Boxster S), Ryan Colley/David Banks (Renault Clio), Dan Rogers (Mazda MX5), Kyle Ward (Toyota Starlet), Andy Napier

(Lotus Elise), Dennis Hays/James Grange (Ford Mondeo ST), James Clare (Ford Puma), John Boulton (Porsche 968), Phil/George Barrett (Ford Focus RST), Graham Charman (Caterham Superlight). **FL** Singleton 51.559s (84.34mph). **P** Danby. **S** 32.

TIN TOPS (42 LAPS) 1 Russell Hird (Honda Integra DC5) 40m00.896s (76.07mph); 2 Richard Woods (Ford Focus) + 10.223s; 3 Carl Chambers (Peugeot 306 Rallye); 4 Nigel Ainge (Honda Integra DC5); 5 Ryan Colvey/David Banks (Renault Clio); 6 Danny Cassar/Garry Barlow (Honda Integra). **CW** Colvey/Banks, Chris Boardman/Arran Moulton-Smith (BMW 318ti), Paul Boulton (Ford Fiesta ST), Toby Harris/Lisa Selby (Ford Puma), William Hardy/Scott Lock (Vauxhall Nova GTE). **FL** Woods 54.403s (79.93mph). **P** Woods. **S** 26.

FUTURE CLASSICS (19 LAPS) 1 Stephen Scott-Dunwoodie (Ford Sierra Cosworth) 32m18.791s (42.61mph); 2 Matthew Lewis (Marcos Mantula) + 0.602s; 3 David Thomas (Ford Capri Mk.1); 4 Alan Hersey (Jaguar XJS); 5 David Bryant (Toyota MR2); 6 Robert Hardy (Porsche 944). **CW** Bryant, Hardy, Holman Blackburn/Chris Keen (Ford Capri), Mark Luccock (Ford Escort Mk.1 RS2000). **FL** Olson 56.984s (76.31mph). **P** Christopher Compton-Goddard/Dave Coyne (Ferrari 308GTB). **S** 21.



TECH SPEC TATUUS-COSWORTH MSV F4-016



CHASSIS

Carbon and aluminium honeycomb monocoque chassis with rear diffuser

ENGINE

Two-litre Ford Duratec developed by Cosworth with fly-by-wire throttle and Cosworth SQ6 engine management system

TRANSMISSION

Sadev ST75LW six-speed sequential transmission with Sadev limited-slip diff. Quad-plate sintered clutch

SUSPENSION

Twin wishbones with pushrod activation and adjustable anti-roll bars all round. Adjustable ORAM dampers. Wheel tethers



BRAKES

AP Racing four-piston front calipers with floating, vented and grooved discs. Two-piston rear calipers with fixed vented rear disc. Cockpit-adjustable bias

WHEELS/TYRES

OZ Racing alloy wheels with Pirelli P Zero tyres 200/540-13 front, 250/575-13 rear

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase 2750mm, front track 1600mm, rear track 1500mm, weight 495kg (excl driver and fuel)

BRDC Formula 4

THE DAWN OF ANOTHER NEW ERA

BRDC F4's second generation kicks off with the start of the Autumn Trophy this weekend.

With a little help from tester Alexander Sims, ROBERT LADBROOK explains what is new

It's official: Britain really needs this new-look BRDC Formula 4 Championship. At least, that's the general consensus from everybody surrounding the remodelled series.

This weekend, a new dawn for British single-seater racing will break when the field of Tatuus-Cosworth F4-016 cars roars into life at Snetterton and begins its mission to try and fill the gaping chasm in this country's motorsport ladder.

Britain has historically been the place to hone rising motorsport talent from around the world, but in recent seasons it's been in danger of losing that reputation.

The rise of European categories such as the Formula Renault two-litre Northern European Cup and Eurocup has tempted drivers away from these shores early, and when British Formula 3 folded at the end of 2014 after finally losing the fight against the FIA's official European championship, it looked like the final nail in the coffin.

BRDC F4's initial incarnation, launched in 2013, helped stem the flow. And this year the FIA added another first-rung option by bringing MSA Formula to the UK. But with domestic F3 gone, drivers had nowhere to go and no reason to stay racing in the UK. Until now.

Led by MotorSport Vision head Jonathan Palmer, the updated BRDC F4 Championship is taking a



gamble, but it's a well-timed one.

The original Ralph Firman-built F4 car was always due to run for only three seasons before a new machine replaced it, and with that contract up and F3 gone, the timing is perfect for something new.

In truth, staying still wasn't really an option for BRDC F4. With renewed competition from MSA Formula, the two series were going head-to-head for the same shrinking pool of well-funded young drivers.

Both BRDC F4 and MSA Formula boasted grids in the high teens this year, which is a fine turnout, but wouldn't that have been better as a combined championship? That same question prompted Palmer and MSV into a new direction.

"We wanted to push BRDC F4 into a new performance plane," says Palmer. "We didn't want to become just another championship and

saturate the market. We founded F4 in the UK, but now something else has arrived and it's actually given us a chance to do something different and think outside of the box."

That thinking has spawned the new Tatuus-Cosworth car. Based on the Italian manufacturer's proven F4 chassis, the new car unlocks much of the potential of the, until now, heavily restricted FIA product.

FIA F4 rules mandate maximum power of 160bhp and limited aerodynamics. MSV and Tatuus worked to produce an update kit that transformed the performance figures of the car, but stayed within the base chassis' capabilities.

The engine is the two-litre Ford Duratec that BRDC F4 has used for the past three years, but it has been reworked by Cosworth to produce 230bhp. That sounds a big upgrade from the 180bhp unit in the old car, but the Duratec has been running at

"We wanted to push BRDC F4 into a completely new performance plane"

a similar power output in Caterhams and sportscars for years.

A bespoke aerodynamic kit has also been produced to boost the car's downforce figures. A twin-plane adjustable rear wing is coupled to an aggressive rear diffuser and adjustable front wing. The kit has been designed using Computational Fluid Dynamics and Tatuus has recorded an 81 per cent increase in overall downforce over its standard FIA F4 offering, plus an overall aerodynamic efficiency increase of 47 per cent. That explains the increased pace. ▶



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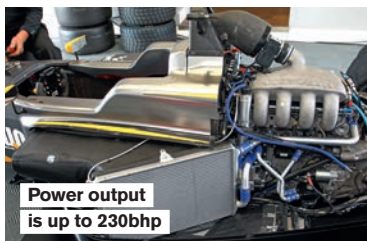
► Those are big numbers that move the performance of the new BRDC F4 car well clear of MSA Formula, and into laptime territory previously occupied by British Formula 3. But the new car is not trying to be an F3 car. The purpose of it is to narrow the gap between the current F4 generation and European F3 at a reasonable budget.

The technical changes mean a near-five-second gain in lap time around the Snetterton 300 Circuit compared with the old car, putting the Tatuus-Cosworth bang in the middle between the old F4 series and the fastest British F3 lap.

“The gap at the moment between F4 and F3 is huge, both in terms of aerodynamics and grip,” says Trevor Carlin, who will run three cars in the new championship with his eponymous team.

“The Tatuus-Cosworth is the right car for British motorsport at the right time in my mind because it fills a need. MSA Formula is a great learning tool for your 15-year-olds coming out of karting, but when they go to F3 they’re not used to the cornering speed or a car that moves around on the straights as the aero levels change.

“Having no national F3 series hurts because drivers do a year in



Power output is up to 230bhp



Car is challenging but not too much so

MSA Formula and then go straight to Europe, but so many of them could do with extra years in Britain. British circuits are tight and technical and if you can drive a car fast around somewhere like Oulton Park it makes the typical aerodrome-style European tracks with loads of run-off look easy.”

BMW factory GT driver Alexander Sims has handled virtually every junior single-seater available, having raced in Formula Renault UK, F3 and GP3 as well as coached drivers in both BRDC F4 and MSA Formula. He has done testing work on the new car.

“The new car is a perfect interim step between F4 and F3,” Sims says. “It feels a lot like an F3 car, but on a lesser scale.

“The aero isn’t on the same level as F3 – where you have changeable wing elements for low-high

downforce – but it’s not too far away. I drove at Snetterton, where Riches would be flat in an F3 car and it’s a corner that really shows up any aerodynamic efficiency in a car. In the Tatuus-Cosworth it’s not quite flat. I was bleeding off the throttle and brushing the brake, but after settling the car on turn-in you can keep the throttle pinned.

“Through corners that are fourth gear and up you can really feel the car working and the G forces increasing. It’s also a mid-point in physicality to an F3 car. F3 is tough through fast corners, not to the point where you can’t turn the wheel, but if you do 15 laps you know about it. You feel the steering loading up in the BRDC F4 car, but it never gets too much so you’d struggle to react.”

Sims is also convinced that the car will work as a stepping-stone

“The new car is a perfect interim step. It’s like an F3 car, but on a lesser scale”

from FIA F4: “MSA Formula cars do feel under-powered – they’re like a competitive school car, so there is a market for something faster that costs a fraction of a Euro F3 budget.

“There’s a lot more feel in the brakes of the Tatuus-Cosworth than the MSA Formula or the older BRDC F4 cars, and that’s very important as the key to learning how to go fast is to know how to slow down well.”

By making the new car faster and more physical, BRDC F4 is firmly pitching at second-year drivers graduating out of MSA Formula. But Sims adds that the car isn’t too advanced that those drivers coming out of top-level karting would struggle to get a grip on it: “The car is pitched at a level where good, experienced karters can come in and be challenged by it. It may take them half-a-season to really get on top of – much like the old Formula Renaults – but the good guys will manage. But it’s not a car you’d expect total rookies to come in to.”

Full-blooded Formula 3 it may not be, but that is long gone in Britain now. The new BRDC F4 Championship should prove to be the next best thing for the development of young drivers. ❧

A DIFFERENT KIND OF WINTER TESTING

The Tatuus-Cosworth BRDC F4 car has been more than a year in gestation, but this week’s Autumn Trophy is still likely to be used as a testing session.

The car has run behind closed doors for six months, with testing split between Bedford Autodrome and Snetterton. MSVR did consider running the new car for the 2015 main season, but instead opted for a development programme in an effort to iron out as many kinks as possible.

The first cars were delivered to teams in late September, leaving around five weeks for teams to get to grips with them ahead of the eight-round mini series.

HHC Motorsport, which ran Will Palmer to the title this year, has three cars, and is planning to run two of them this weekend. Team head Charlie Kemp said: “The new car is looking very good.

“There have been a few teething issues, which you’d expect with any new car. Things like making sure the oil level between the engine and the



Autumn series will help iron out issues

gearbox is as it should be. But these are small things that MSV is aware of and running these cars competitively over the winter helps to fix things like that.”

Graham Johnson runs former champion team Lanan Racing, which won’t be contesting the Autumn Trophy in favour of its own private testing programme. “The biggest surprise has been how fast the new car is. We’ve only had small set-up and operational issues. Because the development has taken

place at basically just two circuits we have found small problems, such as the length of the gear ratios for longer tracks, but that’s par for the course for a car with no competitive mileage.”

In truth, this year’s Autumn Trophy will garner a double figure grid as many teams follow Lanan’s lead of preferring to test in a non-pressured environment. But it will give a glimpse of what’s to come from the full championship next year.



Sims has helped develop the car



Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE, UK.
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5804 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5922
E-mail: autosport@haymarket.com Website: www.autosport.com

EDITOR
Edd Straw ext.5889
edd.straw@haymarket.com

DEPUTY EDITOR
Marcus Simmons ext.5807
marcus.simmons@haymarket.com

CHIEF F1 CORRESPONDENT
Ian Parkes ext.5810
ian.parkes@haymarket.com

GRAND PRIX EDITOR
Ben Anderson ext.5425
ben.anderson@haymarket.com

F1 REPORTER
Lawrence Barretto ext.5887
lawrence.barretto@haymarket.com

FEATURES EDITOR
Scott Mitchell ext.5370
scott.mitchell@haymarket.com

EDITOR AUTOSPORT.COM
Glenn Freeman ext.5309
glenn.freeman@haymarket.com

DEPUTY EDITOR AUTOSPORT.COM
Matt Beer ext.5811
matt.beer@haymarket.com

INTERNATIONAL EDITOR
Mitchell Adam ext.5432
mitchell.adam@haymarket.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Peter Hodges ext.5903
peter.hodges@haymarket.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Stuart Codling ext.5835
stuart.codling@haymarket.com

GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR
Rob Ladbrook ext.5209
robert.ladbrook@haymarket.com

RALLIES EDITOR
David Evans
david.evans@haymarket.com

ART EDITOR
Lydney Elliott ext.5914
lydney.elliott@haymarket.com

SENIOR DESIGNER
Michael Cavalli ext.5381
michael.cavalli@haymarket.com

PHOTOGRAPHS
LAT Photographic
XPB Images

GROUP PICTURE EDITOR
Peter Mills ext.5918
peter.mills@haymarket.com

AUTOSPORT.COM TECHNICAL TEAM LEADER
Geoff Creighton
geoff.creighton@haymarket.com

SENIOR DIGITAL DESIGNER
Amar Vijay
amar.vijay@haymarket.com

OFFICE MANAGER
Joanne Grove ext.5804
joanne.grove@haymarket.com

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS
Gary Watkins Mark Glendenning Gary Anderson
Marcus Pye Dieter Rencken Alan Eldridge

CORRESPONDENTS

ARGENTINA Tony Watson	ITALY Roberto Chinchero	UK & EIRE Peter Allen, Jonathan Crawford, Jack Cozens, Kerry Dunlop, Tom Errington, Leanne Fahy, Paul Healy, Linda Keen, Alex Kalinauckas, Lewis Larkam, Mark Libbeter, Stephen Lickorish,
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FINLAND Esa Ilmisen	SWEDEN Lege Tornvall	
GERMANY Rene de Boer	USA Jonathan Ingram, David Phillips, Robin Miller, Jeremy Shaw	
GREECE Dimitris Papadopoulos		

ADVERTISING
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5271
E-mail: autosport.ads@haymarket.com

AD PRODUCTION
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5588
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5320

SALES MANAGER
Jonathan Whitehead ext.5575
jonathan.whitehead@haymarket.com

DISPLAY ADVERTISING
Don Rupal ext.5244
don.rupal@haymarket.com

Karen Reilly ext.5718
karen.reilly@haymarket.com

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
Jamie Brooker ext.5271
jamie.brooker@haymarket.com

Jonathan King ext.5992
jonathan.king@haymarket.com

AUTOSPORT.COM SALES MANAGER
Fiona Bain ext.5551
fiona.bain@haymarket.com

AUTOSPORT.COM AGENCY ACCOUNT MANAGER
Jessica McFadyen ext.5820
jessica.mcfadyen@haymarket.com

ONLINE ADVERTISING
Leah Mims ext.5845
leahmims@haymarket.com

SPECIAL PROJECT SALES
James Robinson ext.5384
james.robinson@haymarket.com

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Matthew Witham

GROUP PRODUCTION MANAGER
Alisa Donovan ext.5639
alisa.donovan@haymarket.com

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER
Abby Gunner ext.5588
abby.gunner@haymarket.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS
UK 0844 8488817
OVERSEAS +44 (0)1795 592 974
EMAIL autosport@servicehelpline.co.uk
BACK ISSUES Tel: 0844 8488817

DIRECT MARKETING EXECUTIVE
Kadie Chantler ext.5622
kadie.chantler@haymarket.com

LICENSING AND SYNDICATION INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR
Alastair Lewis ext.8606
alastair.lewis@haymarket.com

SYNDICATION ENQUIRIES
Isia Friend ext.5024
isia.friend@haymarket.com

MANAGEMENT GROUP DIRECTOR
Tim Bulley

GROUP PUBLISHER
Stuart Williams

GROUP EDITOR
Anthony Rowlinson

GROUP COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
Ben Guyan

SPECIAL EVENTS MANAGER
Laura Coppin

DIGITAL SPECIAL PROJECT MANAGER
Simon Strang, ext: 5093
simon.strang@haymarket.com

DIGITAL PRODUCT MANAGER
Simon Grayson, ext: 5346
simon.grayson@haymarket.com

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EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Mark Payton

STRATEGY AND PLANNING DIRECTOR
Bob McDowell

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR
Patrick Fuller

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THIS WEEK

LETTERS • ON TRACK • TV PICKS • FROM THE WEB • AUTOSPORT.COM

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



Nocturnal action at Brands Hatch

HAWKINS

Brands' Saturday night fever

No need to go as far as Mexico for motorsport thrills at the weekend. Brands Hatch had it all – 30 cars ranging from Caterhams to M3s and from hot hatchbacks to Porsche 911s jostling their way around the Indy circuit, mandatory pitstops, the two main protagonists swapping the lead

several times a lap as they barged their way past slower competitors, and the whole thing run after dark.

That was the Classic Sports Car Club's night race on Saturday. And what a stellar performance from winner Robert Singleton, truly the boss of Brands.

Bruce Hales-Dutton, Tonbridge, Kent

Well done Mexico. Not the most exciting race we've ever seen, but wow, what a crowd. Grandstands pretty full for Friday practice, full for qualifying and heaving for the race, with by far the noisiest crowd of the season so far. Brilliant!

Brian McCausland
Portishead, North Somerset

Don't say it's OK when Hamilton does it as he's a racing driver and highly strung, and then allow criticism of Nico who just lost the word championship.

Derek Leslie
Loughborough

Congratulations to Lewis for defending his title, and making it three. I see in some quarters instead of being hailed, he is being accused of being too aggressive. All champions have to exert themselves over their opposition, otherwise they will just be another driver. Senna, Schumacher – two examples of legends who showed who was boss, just as Lewis has.

Kevin Friday
By email

Jean Todt has now established the principle of imposing a fixed maximum price for the engines in F1 to protect the sustainability and financial viability of the sport. Will he now extend this by imposing

maximum race hosting fees payable to FOM, and minimum payments to the teams by FOM? These are equally important areas where the sustainability of the sport needs protection.

Colin Scrivener
By email

What great news for Formula

Ford 1600 that the legendary Ralph Firman will build a new car for the category (October 29, p78). It goes to show what a popular series this still is and that after all these years it still has a place in modern motor racing providing a great start to any drivers career.

Along with James Beckett's unrelenting enthusiasm and drive for the category, hopefully FF 1600 will continue to grow and the national series will flourish, which will encourage more manufacturers to build new cars in the future.

Michael Skeet
Southampton

BIG NUMBER

4 Current V8 Supercars drivers on the grid for Pukekohe's first championship race in 2001 - Jason Bright, Todd Kelly, Craig Lowndes and Garth Tander

TITLE DECIDER

Four drivers go into the double-header Formula Nippon season finale in the hunt for the title: Hiroaki Ishiura and Kazuki Nakajima lead the way, with Andre Lotterer and Joao Paulo de Oliveira outsiders



WHAT'S ON TRACK IN THE UK

EVENT OF THE WEEK



Trucks will deliver final-round thrills

BRANDS HATCH BARC

November 7-8

The Brands Hatch Indy circuit plays host to the mighty British Truck Racing Championship for its final round.

There is also a packed support bill over two days, with Legends, the Intermarque championship, Tin Tops, Pickups and Motorsport News Saloons promising plenty of action.



LEGENDS

HAWKINS

SNETTERTON MSVR

November 7-8

The BRDC F4 Autumn Trophy kicks off around the Snetterton 300 configuration. This isn't just any old F4 round, though, because this marks the racing

debut of the new-spec car, which is faster and stronger. Series bosses have aspirations of F4 becoming the natural domestic successor to F3.

WHAT'S ON TRACK AROUND THE WORLD

FORMULA E

Second FE season heads to Malaysia next



FORMULA E

Rd 2/10
Putrajaya, Malaysia
November 7
fiaformulae.com

SUPER FORMULA

Rd 7/7
Suzuka, Japan
November 8
superformula.net

V8 SUPERCARS

Rd 12/14
Pukekohe, New Zealand
November 7-8
v8supercars.com.au

V8 SUPERCARS



V8s are off to NZ this weekend

KALISZ/LAT

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 34/36
Texas Motor Speedway, USA
November 8
nascar.com

V8 STOCK CARS

Rd 11/12
Taruma, Brazil
November 8
stockcar.com.br

SUPER TC2000

Rd 10/12
Mendoza, Argentina
November 8
super-tc2000.com.ar

ASIAN LE MANS SERIES

Rd 2/4
Sepang, Malaysia
November 8
asianlemansseries.com



NASCAR

COLEMAN/LAT

FROM THE SOFA

WHAT'S ON TELEVISION

Sepang incident was social-media gold



Go social if races get anti-social

THE HASHTAG WAS OUT THERE even before the race had finished: #sepangclash. And within two minutes of Marc Marquez hitting the ground after that instantly infamous incident with Valentino Rossi in MotoGP's Malaysian Grand Prix, a video clip of the incident was up not just on speedy tech-savvy fans' social media accounts, but on the championship's own @motogp channel. It was arguably the biggest motorsport controversy of the social-media era, and MotoGP's promoters were all over it.

They kept up that pace, too: an ICYMI repost of the video for when America and sleeper Europeans woke up, plus early social-media plugs for the live stream of what would surely be an incendiary press conference. Then, when Rossi didn't appear for that, no shortage of transcripts and video clips from the paddock media sessions. You certainly didn't have to be in Malaysia, and neither did you have to have a subscription to one of the satellite channels showing MotoGP live, or the championship's own web stream, to be fully up to speed with motorcycle racing's biggest scandal in years. If you did, of course there was plenty more on offer, but MotoGP has got pretty good at offering peeks behind the curtain to keep casual fans talking while enticing the hardcore to commit to the deals that suit its commercial model. And this isn't a recent innovation – motogp.com subscribers have been able to watch every session live online, plus



F1 must make more of controversies

"Would @F1 be able to make the most of such an incident? Probably yes"

abundant extra video, for a decade. The prices have been expensive enough not to suit anyone whose interest was only passing, but reasonable enough to make it near-essential for dedicated bikers.

It's tiresomely fashionable to use other championships' strengths to lambast Formula 1, but to say that FOM wouldn't capitalise on a major talking point as MotoGP has done is unfair. F1 had a lot of ground to make up, but it's taking strides in social media, web presence and fan interaction, although it needs to take less pride in its exclusivity and drop the draconian approach to YouTube clips.

You can't really compare MotoGP/F1 in this instance until F1 has a flashpoint that transcends its own borders in the same fashion – another Prost/Senna-level tangle, or something to equal

Michael Schumacher's championship-settling clashes with Damon Hill and Jacques Villeneuve. If such a controversy happened now, would @F1 pounce on it? It most likely would.

MotoGP also now has a tightrope to walk. The situation has escalated to the extent that Marquez has been accosted by reporters in his house. Motorcycle racing is dangerous. Four years ago the headlines coming out of Sepang were of the bleakest kind after the death of Marco Simoncelli (who would surely be a factor somewhere in the Rossi/ Marquez/Jorge Lorenzo circus, perhaps even the ally his old friend Rossi now needs). Governing body the FIM is trying to dampen the flames, which is the responsible stance with riders' wellbeing on the line, yet at the same time current events are promotional gold for a series with a decent profile, but one that could be much higher. Valencia this weekend will be fascinating on track, on line and on the screen.

Matt Beer

TV pick of

Edited by Matt Beer



S. BLOXHAM/LAT

FORMULA E - LIVE

ITV4

Saturday 0500-0730

Sebastian Buemi opened Formula E's new era with a convincing win in China and, while Renault e.dams team-mate Nicolas Prost didn't share the same fortune, the pair appear to have a dominant package. Little time between races and no testing means the picture may well be similar in Malaysia, although there's more than enough intrigue down the field to make the early start worthwhile. ITV4 isn't showing qualifying live, preferring three hours of teleshopping instead.



LePAGE/LAT

NASCAR TEXAS - LIVE

Premier Sports

Sunday 1930-2330

Revenge collisions, big names' title hopes in trouble and the retiring series hero being the first man to book a spot in the championship shootout all mean NASCAR's Chase is warming up nicely. There are just two more opportunities to sort out who will join Jeff Gordon in the four-way decider. After a lacklustre swansong season, Gordon could do with a few more wins to legitimise his title credentials. Pacesetter Joey Logano can't afford not to win after his Martinsville troubles, so there's a lot on the line at this weekend's Texas round.

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ONLINE

Top stories on AUTOSPORT.com in the past week

MERC REVEALS TERMS OF RED BULL TALKS

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff outlines the conditions that the German manufacturer put to Red Bull for a 2016 engine deal.

SCHUMACHER "STILL FIGHTING" - TODT

FIA president gives a brief update on Michael Schumacher's recovery from head injuries sustained in a skiing accident 22 months ago.

FORCE INDIA CLOSES ON ASTON MARTIN DEAL

Sportscar marque is on course to land naming rights of Vijay Mallya's Silverstone-based squad as part of a tie-up. The team is set to be rebranded Aston Martin Racing from the start of the 2016 season.

McLAREN-HONDA: NO CHARITY FOR RED BULL

Racing director Eric Boullier says he is in no rush to fix the engine-supply problems that Red Bull has created for itself.



HONDA "VERY KEEN" TO SUPPLY RED BULL

Christian Horner says the Japanese manufacturer is happy to do a deal for a 2016 engine supply, but McLaren continues to block it.

FORMULA 1'S OBVIOUS BUDGET ENGINE

In his latest column, ex-Formula 1 designer GARY ANDERSON explains how he would solve the current engine-cost dilemma.

the week



MOTOGP FINALE - LIVE

BT Sport 2

Sunday 0930-1400

MotoGP has to do something special to nudge into our TV recommendations, but this season isn't just special, it's sensational. Valentino Rossi's late-career resurgence was already a huge story before tensions with Marc Marquez reached their dark apogee in Sepang. Can Rossi beat Jorge Lorenzo to the title despite a back-of-the-grid start? BT Sport is showing it all live, including the Moto3 race in which Danny Kent should end Britain's 38-year wait for a grand prix motorcycle racing title.



CLASSIC F1 - DALLAS 1984

SkySports F1

Thursday 2100-2145

Celebrate one Rosberg winning a race somewhere in the Americas by watching another do the same 31 years ago. But while Nico's Mexico 2015 victory was significant in the Mercedes intra-team battle, it wasn't anywhere near as hard-fought as dad Keke's triumph over not only the McLarens and Lotuses, but a track surface coming apart in the heat. It was all achieved in a Williams made hard to tame by its Honda engine's aggressive characteristics.



RACE OF REMEMBRANCE - LIVE

Motors TV

Sat 1545-1920, Sun 0845-1600

Last year the Race of Remembrance endurance race received a one-hour TV review, but for its second year the event will receive a mammoth 10 hours and 50 minutes of live coverage on Motors TV. The race runs for three hours on Saturday afternoon, resuming on Sunday morning before a brief stoppage at 1100 for a remembrance service. Inspirational wounded veterans from Mission Motorsport are joined by British racing stars such as Jack Goff, Paul O'Neill, Adam Morgan and Dan Welch on a capacity 45-car grid.



HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube WRECKIN' IS RACIN' AS NASCAR STARS CLASH



SEARCH FOR: Kenseth wrecks Logano

Two weeks ago in Kansas Matt Kenseth (#20) looked all set for the race win, only to be punted out by Joey Logano (#22) – so it surprised no one when the favour was returned in spades at Martinsville. There's little doubt whose side the fans are on...

AUTOSPORT TWEETERS

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
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@m_glendenning |
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@glenn_autosport | Stuart Codling
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INTRODUCING

Reinis Nitiss

World RX ace is still chasing a second win, but is a household name in Latvia



As the 2015 World Rallycross season draws to a close, 19-year-old Reinis Nitiss is about to complete his second term in top-level rallycross.

In only his third Supercar event, Nitiss became a winner at world championship level and went on to finish third in the standings in 2014. The Latvian is still waiting for his second victory, but is unquestionably a podium contender at each round of World RX. However, four wheels wasn't his original plan.

"I rode a motorcycle in the beginning, but my grandmothers and mother said it was too dangerous, so I had to change," says the 19-year-old. "I started karting when I was six years old and raced karts for about 10 years. I'm still driving karts now, but just to stay sharp."

Having won domestic and international kart championships in 2009, Nitiss moved to autocross and rallycross, driving a Volkswagen Golf MK3.

"I won my class in the Estonian Rallycross Championship in 2011, then bought a Super 1600 Peugeot 206 to do the North European Zone Championship," he says. "We did the last three rounds of the European Championship in 2012, but the car wasn't good enough. We looked at which team was the most professional and we chose Set Promotion, run by Jussi Pinomaki. I needed to grow as a driver and we knew he could help."

At just 16, Nitiss dominated the 2013 European Rallycross Super1600 Championship, winning six races from nine in a Renault Clio, and moved straight to Supercar for 2014. "Everybody said I was too young, but we did it because it was the first year for world rallycross

– I needed to move then," he says. "Jussi helped me, he convinced [Olsbergs MSE boss] Andreas Eriksson to give me a chance."

In his first world championship event, Nitiss finished on the podium and qualified for the final at round two, but retired with mechanical problems. At round three in Norway, Nitiss beat Petter Solberg to claim his first victory and led the series by 20 points by round five. "At that time I thought, 'I'm the best, I'm young and fast and there is nothing more to do,'" he recalls. "But at that moment, I went downhill. I learned a lot, I grew up a lot and finished second in the last race in Argentina to get third in the championship."

Nitiss has again scored podiums in 2015, but has been kept off the top step by a range of reasons: driving errors, mechanical problems and getting caught up in other people's accidents. Most remarkable about Nitiss, however, is that he is a household name in Latvia. Next season he will be the main attraction as the country hosts a round of World RX for the first time.

"A lot of times I'm walking on the street and a stranger will come and say 'hello Reinis, good job', or 'we are supporting you'," he says. "That happens every day."

"We don't have a lot of media and when I won in World RX they all wanted to speak with me, so everybody saw me on TV. People see me as a big star in Latvia, but Latvia is small. It's very exciting [to have a World RX event in Latvia]. There will be pressure, but I'm stronger mentally."

Hal Ridge

CV

Age 19
Hometown Jekabpils, Latvia

2015

7th in World Rallycross (OlsbergsMSE Ford Fiesta)
2 podiums



2014

3rd in World Rallycross (OlsbergsMSE Ford Fiesta)
1 win, 5 podiums

2013

1st in European Rallycross Super1600 (Set Promotion Renault Clio) 6 wins

2012

1st in North European Zone Rallycross Super1600 (Peugeot 206)

2011

1st in Baltic Rallycross
1st in Estonian Rallycross Championship class (Volkswagen Golf Mk3)

2009

Latvian and Baltic karting champion



Nitiss is a regular podium finisher



Tough 2015 helped his mental strength

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An in-depth look at the making of the champion

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