

# NEUVILLE NAILS IT!

HYUNDAI MAN'S RALLY SWEDEN VICTORY P20



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# MOTORSPORT NEWS

# F1 2018

# GETS ON TRACK



## Wraps come off new-look challengers



By Rob Ladbrook

Red Bull became the first Formula 1 team to run its new challenger on Monday at Silverstone, with driver Daniel Ricciardo confident that it has the potential to overhaul Mercedes and Ferrari this year.

The British team unveiled its car at the start of this week, moments before taking to the track to conduct a filming day with Ricciardo at the wheel.

"There's a good intensity at this team right now," said Ricciardo. "We all know we have work to do to achieve what we want, but we all have a shared desire to attack this year."

New F1 cars unveiled, P2-3



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MOTORSPORT NEWS



# CAMMISH

## LANDS DREAM BTCC DRIVE

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# MELLORS

## MAKES HIS MARK

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**Milton Keynes team completes roll-out**

**RED BULLS**

**By Robert Ladbrook**

**Daniel Ricciardo believes that Red Bull Racing is well placed to take the fight to both Mercedes and Ferrari this year with its new RB14 Formula 1 challenger.**

The Milton Keynes squad unveiled its new grand prix machine via an online launch on Monday, before giving the car its first laps at Silverstone for a filming day as *Motorsport News* closed for press.

The new car was revealed in a striking new black and blue digital camouflage livery, but the team says its actual race colours will be unveiled at next week's first test in Barcelona.

The new car features "a bigger acreage for change" in the bodywork design than most years, said a Red Bull statement. Pointing out the "introduction of the halo and the new exclusion zones on the rear of the car that effectively remove shark fins, monkey seats and T-wings" as particular areas of change.

While early details are sketchy, the RB14 has a remodelled nose, largely different bargeboards and sculpted, high sidepods designed to tightly package the TAG-Heuer-branded Renault power unit.

The new aerodynamic tweaks are expected to suit Red Bull, which made the biggest inroads of any team in last year's development battle.

Having started the season over half-a-second adrift of both Mercedes and Ferrari, the team managed to address many of the



Verstappen (left) and Ricciardo can threaten the top spots

flaws in its RB13 and go on to win two of the last six grands prix and take third in the Constructors' Championship.

When asked about the mood in the team and whether he believed they can go head-to-head with Mercedes and Ferrari this year, Ricciardo said: "I feel there's a good intensity here. Everybody isn't getting too excited right now because we know we have a lot of work still to do if we are going to achieve what we want to be achieving this season. But we all know for sure that we have a shared desire to attack this season."

"I believe we can beat Mercedes and Ferrari. Last year we improved the car massively and, in principle, we should be able to carry that over from last year to this season as the rules aren't much different. Obviously we can't be certain that we can win from the start, as we don't know what everybody else has done. But I'm confident."

Dutchman Max Verstappen expressed his concerns over the new halo device, but said he was

hopeful the team could avoid the slow start that dented last year's campaign.

"The halo is very ugly, so I'm not looking forward to that," said Verstappen. "But hopefully the car will be strong from the start. If we can have a good platform from the beginning, and not be chasing the others like we were last year, that's the most important thing."

"Last year's car was great fun to drive, much better than before [the current rules cycle]. They're harder to overtake with so perhaps we should look at making a car less reliant on front and rear wings and with more mechanical grip, but I really enjoy driving these current cars."

"The mood is good within the team, and everybody is raring to go again. I always try to do the best I can anyway, so I haven't got any specific goals as every race to me is another chance to win. Last year we had some tracks that really suited us and some that didn't, so now we have to find out the strengths and weaknesses with the new car."



The FW41 features all-new aerodynamic direction

**New Williams aims to cease the team's slide down the Constructors' table**

Williams is confident that its new FW41 challenger can be a "step change" in performance over last year's disappointing chassis.

The team has adopted a different aerodynamic design philosophy for this car than its predecessors.

The new machine is the first to be designed under the eye of former Mercedes technical head Paddy Lowe and ex-Ferrari aerodynamicist Dirk de Beer.

The team hopes it can improve from last year's slump to fifth in the Constructors' Championship.

"We are trying to achieve an element of step change, and not just a progression," said Lowe.

"The new car has many features, and the team has pursued a very different aerodynamic concept, which has allowed us to make significant progress in aero performance."

"All F1 cars are an evolution of what has gone before to some extent, but the FW41 does involve a number of departures from the directions we've pursued in the past. The philosophy we are starting to see emerge is a new approach to the collaboration between aerodynamics and design to achieve optimum results."

The most notable differences on the Williams involve a remodelled

nose incorporating a Mercedes-style fin underneath to better split the air toward the sidepods. The bargeboards are heavily changed, and are coupled to Ferrari-style high, sculpted sidepods.

The cash injection from drivers Lance Stroll and Sergey Sirotkin is expected to come as a boost to Williams' development programme for the new car.

"Broadly we've hit the performance targets we set internally, but there are a couple of caveats," said Lowe. "We definitely want to see a lap time gain against the guys who were taking pole positions last year."

# HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: Red Bull Content Pool, Williams, Haas, Renault Sport

of its new F1 challenger

# MERC-BEATER

# 2018 F1 IS GO!



Striking livery will likely only be tested



RB14's new nose and heavily reworked sidepods

## Haas launches its 'evolved' F1 challenger

The Haas F1 Team has worked to make its new car a more stable platform for this year in an effort to cure the unpredictability of 2017.

The American squad was the first to release images of its new challenger, the VF-18, last week. The car is largely a carry-over in terms of design, with the main changes being the mandated shortening of the shark fin engine cover and the integration of the halo safety device.

The team says much of its design focus has gone into aerodynamic tuning, as well as addressing the handling deficiencies that hampered the old car throughout last season.

Team owner Gene Haas said: "We eliminated a lot of variables where we knew we were weak. We've

focused on what it's going to take to get our car to be consistent and close that gap to the top teams."

Team boss Gunther Steiner added: "The biggest part of the car's evolution was the halo. It took quite a bit of study by the aerodynamicists, but the designers had to work hard to modify the chassis so it could withstand the necessary loads.

"The total weight has increased, but there's a higher centre of gravity with the halo. But, everybody's in the same boat with it. This is an evolution of last year's car, less about reinvention and more about refinement."



Haas is a similar design to 2017

## Refreshed factory Renault squad aims to keep progressing after mass recruitment and development

Renault Sport F1 Team boss Cyril Abiteboul says the team has "everything to be positive about" after unveiling its new R.S.18.

The new machine will be raced by Spaniard Carlos Sainz Jr and German Nico Hulkenberg, and marks the team's biggest effort since Renault returned to F1 as a full factory team in 2016 after

acquiring the assets of the Lotus operation and returning to the Enstone technical facility.

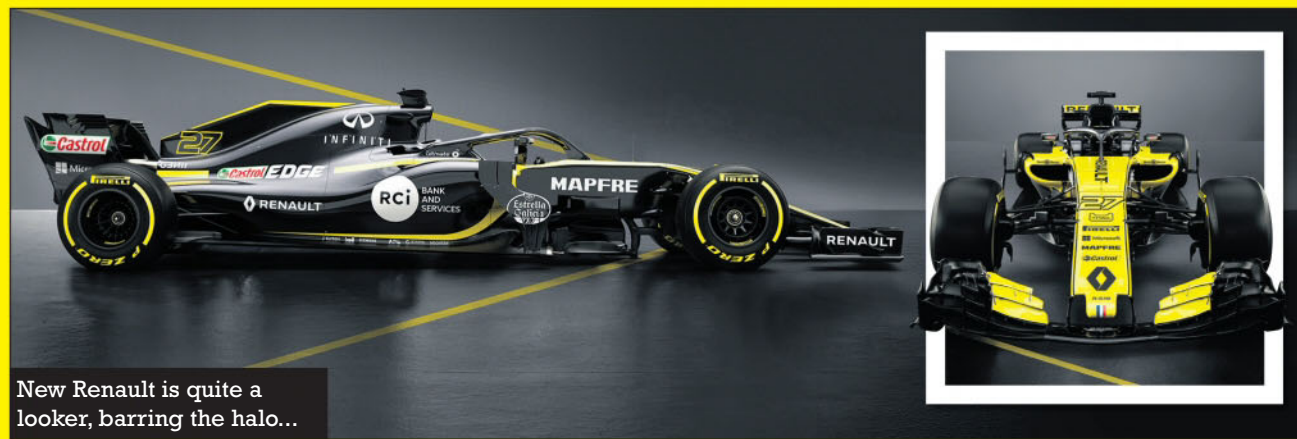
The R.S.18 is the first car to be developed by the team's new technical staff, of which more than 100 have been recruited since the start of the programme.

"We have everything to be positive about for this year," said

Abiteboul. "Last year we made a lot of progress. It was about rebuilding, recruiting, investing. Over the past year I've seen progression in so many areas; from ninth to sixth in the Constructors' and in many races we were fourth fastest on the grid. It's a testament to our drive, commitment and

adherence to an ambitious plan.

"Our headline target is to show continued progression through results. We want to be able to showcase our progression in every regard; power unit, chassis, operations, drivers. Everything must improve and we must continue to grow."



New Renault is quite a looker, barring the halo...



# RACING NEWS

Photos: LAT

## F1 ROUND-UP

### Robert's testing role

Robert Kubica has confirmed his programme with Williams for this year, which will involve the Pole driving in three practice sessions. Kubica lost out to Sergey Sirotkin in the hunt for the second race seat, but will be the team's reserve driver. He will drive in FP1 in Spain, Austria and Abu Dhabi. "I will do some pre-season testing and some in-season testing," said Kubica. "It was important to have the chance to drive. The simulator plays an important role, as I am part of this project it is important to build up a link between that and the real world."

### Bottas: Halo fine

Mercedes racer Valtteri Bottas says the halo device didn't prove a hindrance to him when he conducted his first race runs in the team's new car on its simulator. "In the sim I've already done a race simulation with the halo, and I have to say during the race I never noticed it," said Bottas. "Initially it's something new, it looks different – some people say it's not nice at all. But I think it's just a matter of time before everybody gets used to them. If it can avoid even one injury – big or small – then it's a good device."

### Verstappen: Not fine

Max Verstappen, on the other hand, isn't a fan of the halo. "It's quite heavy – over six kilogrammes or so – it's not favourable for me," he said. "Being a taller driver and also a bit heavier than most, it's not ideal. But I won't be changing my training to compensate as I'll likely feel unwell during the races if I do."

### No problems, Ric

Daniel Ricciardo reckons he needs to get better at driving through problems, rather than continually chasing ideal set-ups. The Red Bull ace outscored team-mate Max Verstappen last year, but was out-qualified by the Dutchman and finished second best to him in five of the seven races where they both finished. "I feel some of my strength is my ability to feel the car," said Ricciardo. "I'm quite sensitive to things, but sometimes that's to my detriment, where I would be better off just driving through something as opposed to being 'oh, we need to stop and change that'. Sometimes just throw the book out the window and just drive."

### Merc's threats

Mercedes will have to take McLaren and Renault seriously this year, with team head Toto Wolff tipping both to be potential title rivals. Renault's works operation has grown in stature since it took over the remains of Lotus, while McLaren now has Renault power after ditching Honda. "We are taking Ferrari, McLaren and Renault very seriously," said Wolff. "These guys can fight for a championship and some others might be surprising us."

# WILLIAMS HITS OUT AT 'UNFAIR' PAY DRIVER TAG

Sirotkin and Stroll were chosen on merit, not money, says team head



L-r: Lowe, Williams, Sirotkin, Stroll, Kubica

### By Rob Ladbrook

**Williams deputy team principal Claire Williams has hit out at anyone throwing the 'pay driver' tag at the team's drivers this season, saying it is unfair.**

Williams has come under fire – particularly on social media – since announcing the signing of Russian Sergey Sirotkin as its second race driver for this year.

Sirotkin, who beat numerous other drivers to the seat – including Robert Kubica – is reportedly bringing a financial package worth around £15 million to Williams to fund his drive, made possible by the backing of the Russian SMP Bank.

Sirotkin's arrival alongside Lance Stroll, who also brings healthy backing to the team via his father Lawrence's fashion empire, means the team has

the second least experienced driver pairing in F1 with just Toro Rosso's line-up having fewer starts.

Despite the criticism, Williams said at the team's launch event in London last week that people judging her drivers purely on the size of their wallets wasn't fair.

"It's nothing new that drivers come to F1 with money, and thank goodness they do," said Williams.

"It would be incredibly naive for anyone to make that statement, saying 'He [Sirotkin] is just a pay driver'. It's great a driver has financial interests from partners – it's great for the team, it's great for the driver.

"This is an expensive sport, not just F1, at grassroots level too. We'd miss out on so much talent coming into F1 if drivers didn't have financial backing supporting them through the junior formulae, and bringing them into F1.



Lance Stroll is Williams' most experienced race driver, with just 20 starts

"It's nothing unusual. Fernando Alonso is a prime example. Santander [bank] followed him around every team that he's been to. You could suggest that he's a pay driver – I wouldn't do such a thing.

"I think the terminology or vocab around pay drivers is wrong, it's inappropriate and it's unnecessary. It puts negativity around a driver

that we should not be doing in this sport anymore.

"There are commercial issues, of course, but we make our decisions based on talent, based on what Paddy [Lowe, technical director] and his engineering team needs in order to take this team forward, not about any potential financial backing that they have."



Ferrari's engineers are confident in their new engine

### Ferrari reports early boost in engine development for 2018

Ferrari has reported that its new Formula 1 engine has hit its reliability targets on the dyno, and it is understood that further combustion upgrades could arrive during this season.

With the FIA mandating that teams must now use no more than three engines per season without penalty – down one unit from four last year – Ferrari has focused much of its winter development on the new-spec unit on finding reliability while

avoiding a drop in power. It will begin the year with a developed version of last season's power unit.

It is also understood that Ferrari engine chief Corrado Iotti is leading a programme to introduce a new cylinder head later in the season, which will help the pre-combustion phase of the engine cycle and could especially help challenge Mercedes' advantage with qualifying modes. The engine

will not feature an alloy steel piston concept.

Work on Ferrari's new spec engine has been intense because of subtle tweaks to rules for 2018, which has included a further clampdown on oil burn. Teams are now limited in the types of oil they can use and must submit detailed readings of oil use to the FIA each weekend as the governing body's attempt to prevent teams using oil for power boost reasons.

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**'Cammish will take Shedden's place'**  
Dynamics swap, page 6



Photos: LAT



Shedden will drive an Audi in WTCR

# SHEDDEN: I CAN WIN WTCR TITLE THIS YEAR



Shedden leaves BTCC for 2018

Three-time British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden says that he can win the World Touring Car Cup in his maiden season in the category after confirming a deal with the Belgian WRT Racing team last week.

The Scot, who left the Team Dynamics BTCC squad last season, will drive an Audi S3 LMS in the revamped WTCR series, which will this year use TCR cars as the headline act. Shedden drove for the team as a one-off in the final rounds in Dubai last season and took pole

position and a second place as he played wingman to his title-chasing team-mate, Jean-Karl Vernay.

"I showed in Dubai what I can do and I feel very comfortable with the team already," said 39-year-old Shedden. "It is an exciting new challenge, but I feel ready for it. There will be some new tracks to learn, but they are only a sequence of left- and right-hand corners, surely?"

He said he was looking forward to getting to grips with the new Audi.

"I am very impressed with it. I went to Germany to see it in the flesh two weeks ago, and the level of engineering that's gone into it is superb," said Shedden. "I also think that it's great that it is a saloon shape. Most of the others out there are hatchbacks so the car will stand out. It has a nice silhouette."

Shedden is the latest touring car champion to commit to the series joining World Touring Car title winners Yvan Muller, Rob Huff and Thed Bjork.



Kubica is Williams F1 reserve

## Kubica tests Manor Ginetta LMP1 car

Robert Kubica was due to test with the Manor TRS LMP1 team in Spain this week as he nears a deal to join the World Endurance Championship.

The Polish star is part of the Williams F1 team as its test and reserve driver for this year, and will take part in selected F1 sessions (see story, left).

However, Kubica is known to be chasing a full-time race programme outside of that and was due to join Manor in a three-day test at Aragon to run in the team's Ginetta G60-LT-P1, which began on Monday as *MN* closed for press.

Should the deal come off, Kubica would join McLaren's Fernando Alonso on the LMP1 grid for the forthcoming WEC 2018/19 super season.

Manor will field two Ginettas in the WEC, and has already signed Formula 2 driver Oliver Rowland and Ginetta factory racer Charlie Robertson for the programme.

The WEC's controversial decision to move the date of its Fuji round to allow Alonso to contest all races also clears the way for Kubica to run a dual programme.

Kubica previously had a WEC deal in place for last season with the privateer ByKolles LMP1 team. However, he withdrew from the agreement before the start of the year after not driving in the prologue test at Monza. At the time he said the decision was "not a definitive goodbye" to the WEC.

## Dillon takes Daytona win but only leads one lap

Austin Dillon took a surprise win in the Daytona 500 last weekend – despite only leading one lap of what turned out to be a dramatic NASCAR Cup season-opener.

The Richard Childress Racing driver pounced on the final tour as he battled with Denny Hamlin and Aric Almirola.

Dillon tipped Almirola into a spin and charged clear of Hamlin – who was also passed by Darrell Wallace Jr – to take the victory.

"I did what I had to do there at the end," Dillon said. "I hate it for the number 10 [Almirola's] guys. We had a run, and I stayed in the gas."

"I said [after] my first win I couldn't beat it, but this does."

Ryan Blaney had dominated much of the race but a caution period with 10 laps to go put an end to his victory hopes.

Hamlin got ahead of Blaney on the restart and as Kurt Busch and Blaney contested second the pair collided, sparking an 11-car pile-up.

There had earlier been another large collision triggered by Brad Keselowski battling with Chase Elliott. It also eliminated Jimmie Johnson, Kevin Harvick and Danica Patrick, ending her final NASCAR race early.

## QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

**European Formula 3 frontrunner Maximilian Gunther will switch to F2 for this season. The 20-year-old German finished third in the F3 standings last year in his third season in the category but will now move to F2 with the Arden squad...** Carlin has confirmed a fifth driver for Euro F3 this season with Euroformula

Open runner-up Nikita Troitskiy the latest to commit. Elsewhere in the category, German squad Ma-Con has made a surprise return running what is expected to be a single car for ADAC F4 race winner Julian Haneses... **Sauber development driver Tatiana Calderon will switch to the Jenzer Motorsport team for her third season**

**of GP3 this year. The 24-year-old has claimed just nine points in her GP3 career to date, with the Arden and DAMS teams, finishing 18th in the standings in 2017...** Lexus will enter the full Blancpain GT Series for the first time this season with a pair of RC F GT3s with a driver lineup that includes ex-F1 racer

Christian Klien... **Paul di Resta will contest another two rounds of the IMSA SportsCar Championship this year with United Autosports. Di Resta made his debut with the team in last month's Daytona 24 Hours and will now contest the Sebring 12 Hours and the six-hour Watkins Glen race...**



Lexus will race in Blancpain GT



**The new Formula 2 car was shaken down for the first time at a snowy Magny-Cours last week. The car, which features the halo cockpit protection device, was delivered to teams at the end of January and they have spent the past couple of weeks assembling them. The F2 2018 has a 3.4-litre turbocharged V6 engine and a total of 325 laps were completed in the new machinery, despite the freezing conditions at the French circuit.**

## Cosworth in talks to supply IndyCar engines

Cosworth is in talks with IndyCar about becoming an engine supplier for the series.

Currently only Honda and Chevrolet supply IndyCar engines but category bosses are interested in getting a third company on board.

Cosworth is "constantly in talks" but admits that it would need the support of an original

equipment manufacturer to help fund the project. The company has not supplied an engine in top-line US open-wheel racing since the demise of Champ Car in 2008.

"We have a fantastic motor racing heritage and Cosworth is keen to go top-flight racing again with the right OEM partner," said Cosworth managing director of powertrains Bruce Wood.

"You can do it very economically, compared to other categories, and you don't need to own a team."

IndyCar bosses have previously said a third manufacturer would have to finalise its plans by the summer of 2018 to join the grid as soon as 2020.



IndyCar seeks new supplier

# RACING NEWS

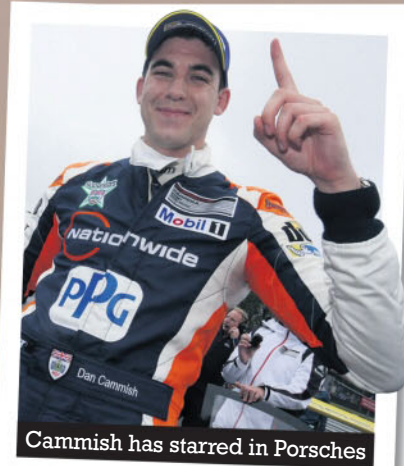
Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Cammish will join Neal at Team Dynamics

## CAMMISH LANDS TOP DRIVE WITH HONDA BTCC TEAM

Double Carrera Cup champion is chosen as Shedden's replacement



Cammish has starred in Porsches

By Matt James

**Double Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Dan Cammish will join Matt Neal in the Team Dynamics Honda British Touring Car Championship team this season.**

The 28-year-old will replace Gordon Shedden in the factory Honda team line-up. His deal to join the squad was announced on Thursday last week.

"It is a dream opportunity for me," said Cammish. "Chances like this don't come up every day."

It will mark Cammish's first racing campaign in a front-wheel-drive car, but the Leeds man says he is not daunted by that prospect.

"I am with one of the more experienced teams out there, so there will be data to pick over, and I have Matt Neal alongside me too. What he doesn't know about the BTCC isn't worth knowing," said Cammish.

"Also look at what [2017 champion] Ash Sutton did too: he was used to racing rear-wheel-drive, jumped into front-wheel-drive with Renault Clios and then the MG BTCC car and was a winner and then went back to rear-wheel-drive last year and took the title in the Subaru Levorg. It can be done and I will be giving it everything to try and make this a success."

Team co-owner and driver Neal said he was thrilled to have secured

Cammish's services for the season.

"This is a great signing for us, Dan has been very successful in every championship he has competed in over the years," said Neal. "He's incredibly difficult to pass and knows how to defend a position. We needed someone with his standing to help the team challenge for overall honours in all three championships this year. The goal is to come away with as much silverware at the end of the season as possible."

"Dan knows how to handle himself in this highly competitive championship. He conducts himself with professionalism and is good on camera, he really ticks all the boxes as a replacement for Shedden."

### IN BRIEF

#### Emson's bid

Ginetta Junior Winter Series racer Tom Emson will step up to the main series for the first time this year. He will again compete as a privateer having taken a best result of 12th in the Winter Series last year.

#### Mini switch

The Mini Challenge JCW Championship will support the DTM's return to Brands Hatch after securing a calendar change. The single-make series will hold two races on the undercard of the German touring car category's event on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix Circuit on August 11/12. The event will replace the series' originally scheduled races alongside the British GT Championship at Brands a week earlier. "Having the chance to run alongside DTM is a really rare opportunity and something we didn't want to turn down," said championship promoter Antony Williams.

#### Butel remains

LMP3 Cup racer Jack Butel will remain with the Speedworks Motorsport squad in the series this year. The 21-year-old took one win in his first season out of single-seaters last term and finished third in the standings.

#### Burns and BMR

Renault UK Clio Cup driver Bradley Burns will race in the series under the BMR Academy banner with Team Pyro this year. The 16-year-old contested the final three rounds of last season and impressed by qualifying second for the Brands Hatch finale. He will now benefit from BMR support, just like Ash Sutton did when he won the Clio crown in 2015.

#### Super Trofeo winners

British drivers Jack Bartholomew and James Pull won both races of the UAE Lamborghini Super Trofeo championship in Dubai at the weekend. Bartholomew now leads the championship by 14 points, and will team up with Pull once again for the final round at the Dubai Autodrome.

### Jackson and Motorbase Performance part ways after eight-year BTCC history

Mat Jackson has parted ways with the Motorbase Performance British Touring Car Championship team, despite having signed a deal to race with the squad in 2018.

Jackson was announced as a Motorbase Ford Focus driver at the Autosport International Show in the middle of January, but a statement issued by the team last week said that they had now split.

Team boss David Bartrum said: "Mat has been a fantastic driver for Motorbase Performance and I've enjoyed all of the years that

we have worked together. We've had some great times, but like all things in life, things move on.

"Motorbase has been around for 15 years and 2018 marks our 12th season racing in the BTCC, Mat has been a big part of that history, however, drivers come and go and good teams carry on racing. I wish Mat all the best in everything he does in the future. It's been great working with him and we shall all miss him."

Jackson said that the deal had been called off on Wednesday last

week, and he was now unlikely to feature in the championship in 2018.

"This has left me with very little time ahead of the new season and therefore I am highly likely to be a spectator instead," he said.

Motorbase Performance tested with its two remaining drivers, Sam Tordoff and Tom Chilton, at Brands Hatch on Monday.

The Motorbase statement said that Jackson's replacement in the Shredded Wheat Ford Focus RS will be announced soon.



Jackson expects to be a "spectator" in 2018 after the late separation



Jelley will handle BMW

### Team Parker Racing switches to a BMW for 2018 as Jelley stays on

Stephen Jelley will remain in the British Touring Car Championship this season, but his Team Parker Racing squad has switched from a Ford Focus to a BMW 125i M Sport.

Jelley, a former single-seater and Porsche racer, returned to the BTCC last season after seven years racing sportscars. However, he had a torrid season in the Focus and finished 34th in the standings.

"We knew things had to change for this year," said the 35-year-

old, who won two races while driving for WSR in a BMW in 2009. "I still had strong links with WSR and we started talking to them at the end of last season about a BMW. It was the only way I wanted to go."

Jelley will drive one of the team's 2017 machines, which will be fitted with a 2016-spec engine. WSR moved to the new B48 motor last year.

Jelley said: "The car fits like a glove already: everything is just

where you want it to be. The engine bay is spotless. It is a proper racing car.

"I just want to get back to the sharp end. Anything we do this year will be an improvement on last year, but this gives us a chance to be competitive and to battle where we should be battling. I simply can't wait to get out there in this new car."

Team Parker has always run a Focus since it first entered the BTCC in 2015.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Gary Hawkins, Road to Indy



BRDC British F3 drive for Chadwick

## Chadwick remains in British F3 with Douglas

Jamie Chadwick will remain in the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship this season, moving to Douglas Motorsport.

The 19-year-old, who won the British GT4 Championship in 2015, finished ninth in the points last year with Double R Racing – taking a best result of third.

She said: “I wanted to come back with Double R but all their seats were full so I had a conversation with Wayne [Douglas, team principal] and it seemed like a really good fit.

“He runs a really good team and I will work with my engineer from last year which is really important.

“It [the title] has got to be my aim, the whole point of doing two years is so I can have a big push for the championship.

“I beat Nicolai Kjaergaard [who is also returning for a second season with Carlin] last year so in terms of the second-year drivers I’m doing OK but there are some quick drivers coming up so it’s definitely going to be tough.”

Douglas believes that Chadwick will be challenging at the front of the series, which begins at Oulton Park on March 31.

“She should be one of the best second year drivers,” he said. “She’s worked hard on her fitness over the winter and we work alongside Double R so she will have the same engineer. I think she should be up at the front.”

## British F3 to “reward overtakes” with points

A point will be awarded to drivers in the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship for every position they gain following a rule shake-up in the series.

The points will only be awarded for the second race of the weekend, which will use a reverse grid based on finishing positions from race one.

Previously, only the top eight were reversed but all cars that finish race one – and set a fastest lap within 103 per cent of the overall fastest lap – will now be reversed.

The points will be awarded based on the number of positions gained between start and finishing positions, and have been introduced by ex-F1 driver Jonathan Palmer’s MotorSport Vision company – which operates BRDC British F3 – to promote overtaking.

Palmer said: “MSV has a history of being innovative to maximise the appeal of motorsport, and with the full reverse grid system, coupled with a carefully derived points system, the BRDC British F3 championship will produce some captivating racing for drivers, teams and fans to enjoy whilst adding to the learning value for drivers by giving them far more opportunities to overtake and reward them when they do.”

The grid for race three will remain based on the fastest lap achieved in either the first or second race.

# MAGICAL MONGER EYES

## BRITISH F3

### Double amputee set to return to racing



Monger has been using hand controls in testing

Billy Monger believes he is not “too far away” from securing a deal to race in BRDC British Formula 3 this year.

The 18-year-old has begun a testing programme with Carlin as he attempts to make a comeback after his horrific accident at Donington Park last April.

Monger suffered amputations to both of his legs following the crash in the final British F4 race of the weekend.

He completed his first test in a single-seater since the accident at a snowy Oulton Park earlier this month and has also been out at Brands Hatch last week.

“I don’t think we’re too far away, I’ve got a few more sponsors to find,” Monger told *MN*. “It’s a bit overwhelming to think how far we’ve come but I’m grateful for the team for giving me the opportunity to show what I can do. I’m back where I want to be.

“If you had told me last April that I would be testing in a British F3 car with Carlin this year, you would’ve had to pinch me. It’s a new car and new controls but I’m getting used to it.

“I’m braking with my [prosthetic] leg

still and the rest of it is on the steering wheel. The one thing that has really moved place is the throttle which is now on the left side of the wheel. Then on a normal car you would change [gear] up on the right side and down on the same side. We’ve been working with the series to make sure all the controls work and to make sure there’s no advantage.”

Monger targeted a race return as soon as he regained consciousness from the crash and has been working with Carlin on making a comeback since last July.

“I’ve been doing a lot of stuff with Carlin, going on the simulator and trying different forms of controlling the car,” he explained. “I think it was last July when my friend [British F4 champion] Jamie Caroline introduced me to the team. They said I could use their simulator whenever I wanted to and then we got talking about what I wanted to do [racing-wise].

“I’m doing more testing than I would’ve done if I hadn’t had my accident in terms of figuring out the controls.”



Carlin has tested Monger in British F3 car



Duo stay with Fortec for 2018

## Fortec retains Ericsson and Hoggard in British Formula 4

British Formula 4 drivers Hampus Ericsson and Johnathan Hoggard will remain in the series this year with Fortec Motorsport.

Ericsson won the Challenge Cup title last season, completing seven events, and *MN* reported last October that he planned to launch a title bid in 2018. This has now been confirmed while Hoggard, who only contested four meetings last term, will also be back for a full year.

“Last year my priority was to focus on my education and GCSE examinations,” said Hoggard, who took one podium in 2017. “This meant I was only able to compete in four meetings at the end of the season.

“Winter testing has gone exceptionally well. Fortec have given me fantastic support and guidance to ensure I am fully prepared for this season.”

## American adventure for 2014 Formula Ford Festival winner Raven

James Raven will compete in the Pro Mazda Championship in 2018 after agreeing a deal with DeForce Racing.

The 2014 Formula Ford Festival winner, 23, recently tested one of the squad’s F4 US Championship cars at the series’ official test, which Raven produced the fastest time at. The driver and team have been working on a deal since, and Raven will join fellow Brit Harrison Scott in the Road to

Indy affiliated Pro Mazda for the first two rounds, at St Petersburg (March 10/11) and Barber Motorsports Park (April 21/22).

“I’ve literally got nothing to lose, I know I have two, maybe three rounds at the most so I’m going to try and win and I’ll push for the win on every occasion,” said Raven. “Hopefully I can be quick in the test and that will give us an idea of where we stand.”

Raven will test for the first time this weekend at an official test at the Homestead Miami track.

Pro Mazda has a new Tatuus-18 chassis for this year which is expected to equalise the competition.

The winner of the championship earns a subsidised entry into the following year’s Indy Lights Championship, which is one rung below IndyCar.



Raven will race in Pro Mazda for the first two rounds

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# RACING NEWS

Photos: Mick Walker, Jakob Ebrej

## Just 12 teams at Mondello Fiesta race

The Murray Motorsport team of Michael Cullen, John Denning, Barry English and Hugh Grennan rebuffed constant attack from the Kellett Motorsport equipe comprising Alan and Keith Dawson, Sean Woods and William Kellett to take the honours in the Mondello Fiesta 6 Hour Endurance race last weekend.

The Murray team initially ran second as the sister car, driven by Formula Ford 1600 ace Niall Murray, sprinted away from the field.

Less experienced teammates and a succession of dramas meant they gradually dropped down the field, despite Murray lapping two seconds quicker than the rest at one stage.

Rallycross duo Ciaran Murphy and Vincent O'Rourke – running with Fiesta ST regular Simon Quinn – had run third initially but after some great battles had to give way to former Supercar champion Johnny Whelan, partnered by son Robert and Johnny Taylor.

Stryker champion Alan Auerbach, paired with 2015 World Hot Rod champion Shane Murphy, Mark Meenehan and Steven Ross gradually climbed the leaderboard, though, and clinched an impressive third place inside the final hour.

Despite plenty of demand for the event from competitors following the hugely successful November race, it was ultimately poorly supported, with only 12 teams competing in the event.

# KARTING CHAMP WARD MOVES TO GINETTA GT5

## W2R Motorsport will run 20-year-old in Challenge

By Stephen Lickorish

**World karting champion Brett Ward will make his car racing debut this season in the Ginetta GT5 Challenge.**

The 20-year-old won the Senior Rotax Max Challenge last season and also claimed the European IAME X30 Senior crown.

Ward will now compete for W2R Motorsport – the racing arm of the company that organises Ginetta's trackdays and the squad that powered Michael Cress to the G40 Cup crown last season – and has already impressed team boss Ben Hyland in testing.

"That [signing Ward] is a breakthrough for the team," said Hyland. "We've won everything at Am-level in GT5, G40 Cup and GRDC and I was really keen to find a Pro driver. The GT5 Challenge will be the one-make series to watch this year. Grids are full and it's looking exciting, so I wanted to be very much in the mix."

"Brett shone immediately and on track I've never seen a driver pick up going from karting into cars so well technically, and from a data point of view. He was two tenths off our Pro driver coach in testing so it's exciting times."

The team has also purchased a Ginetta G55 as it looks to move further up the ladder.

"An exciting thing for me is we have just bought a GT4 Supercup car and we're back from testing in Spain at Guadix," added Hyland. "Our intention is to do some GT Cup rounds."



Ward will race GT5 Challenge

## Huge grid and high-quality field means GT5 Challenge set for a strong year

MOTORSPORT NEWS says...

The Ginetta GT5 Challenge line-up just keeps getting better and better. Already a host of champions and race winners from the junior racing ranks have committed (there's two Junior Saloon Car champions and a regular winner, along with a Ginetta Junior frontrunner). Now it's attracting top talent from

karting too – a very important development.

Brett Ward may not be your average karting graduate. He's 20 years old for a start, but boasts an impressive CV with a host of titles ranging from national to European and even world crowns.

Clearly Ginetta has struck on an excellent formula for the GT5 Challenge. It has

always achieved good grids but it is the quality at the front of the huge entry for this year that really stands out. With it benefiting from both British Touring Car and British GT support slots, the series is showcased on the two most significant racing bills in the UK, so perhaps it's not hard to see why.

At this point, it features the best entry of any of the major racing series in the UK below the BTCC with an influx of drivers. Ward is just the latest in that long list.

There will be more on the success of the GT5 Challenge in *MN* next month.

Stephen Lickorish



XR Challenge, renamed ST-XR Challenge, is now open to more classes

## BRSCC's new ST-XR Challenge creates more classes and opens door for bigger grids

Three new classes have been added to the XR Challenge with Ford Fiesta STs set to feature on an expanded grid this year.

The British Racing and Sports Car Club series has been renamed the ST-XR Challenge to reflect the changes, which have proved popular with competitors.

Previously the series was open to Fiesta XR2 and Si models as well as the Escort XR3i but now new classes

have been created, including one for a budget ST – known as the XR4 in Australia.

"The changes have gone down very, very well," said championship coordinator Dave Fairclough. "We've got a class for the Fiesta ST but not in the same form as the national series – it's a very budget one. It has a fixed cage and a mandatory suspension kit. We wanted it to be cost-effective and we've got seven or eight cars in build."

"Another class is for XR2s that don't run limited-slip differentials, but we will allow them to run 30kg lighter. That is aimed to attract people from the 750 Motor Club [Classic Stock Hatch] and the Scottish XR2 series."

"Class F is for any front-wheel-drive Ford with a limit of 1800cc engine that is aimed to attract people who want to race a Ford Puma."

Fairclough added the rising

costs of XR2s led to the series looking at other cars to boost entries.

"If you want to build an XR2 you've got to pay £3000 now for a good bodyshell," he said. "But you can buy an ST now for £750-£1500 and it doesn't have any rust."

The category will also "spread its wings" in 2018 with the traditionally Oulton Park-based series visiting other northern tracks as well as Snetterton.

## Mini step up for Fiesta Junior champ Davidson

Fiesta Junior champion Jack Davidson will graduate to the Mini Challenge JCW series this year.

Davidson, who will be 16 in March, will stick with Jamsport as it moves into the JCW class this term. Davidson originally intended to spend a season in the senior Fiesta Championship.

"We were talking to the team boss and worked out that this would be the best move for development and [learning] better racecraft," said

Davidson. "Getting to grips with the car, and with slicks as well, this year's just a learning season. I won't be doing anything stupid. Hopefully next year will be the one where it'll all come together and we'll do well."

Davidson will test his ex-Jo Polley car for two days at Guadix in Spain this weekend before making his debut in the JCW Championship at Oulton Park on the weekend of March 31/April 2.



Ellinas will return to Porsche Carrera Cup GB in 2018

## Porsche Slidesports switch for Ellinas

Porsche Carrera Cup GB racer Tio Ellinas will move to the Slidesports team for his second season in the category.

The Cypriot, who was a race winner in GP3 and Formula Renault 3.5, finished sixth in the standings last term with JTR, taking a best result of second on his way to winning the rookie class.

"I'm really optimistic for this season and now is the time to go

for the overall title," he said. "With the new car it is a reset for all the drivers. There will not be as much testing available, so it will be like starting from zero for everyone."

"I'm looking forward to working with David [Fairbrother, the team's other driver] and the Slidesports team. I think we can really start the season on the front foot and go for the championship."

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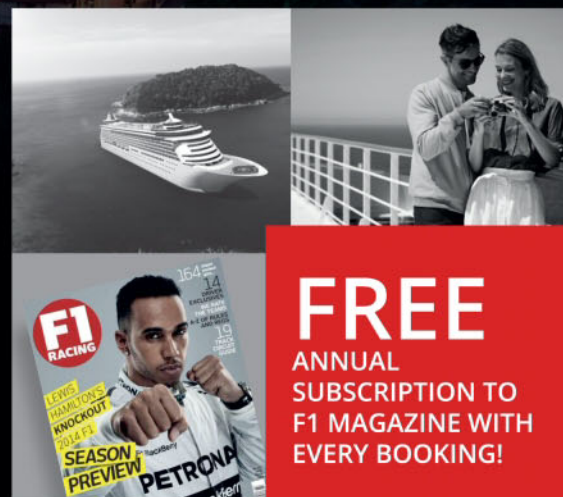
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# HISTORICS

'Ghinn's Ralt will star on HSCC display'  
Race Retro attractions, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence, LAT

## DOWN THE PUB WITH

**CHARLES BARTER**

Road Sports ace  
Age: over 65 Lives: Dorchester

### He came down from the hills

"I think I gave up hillclimbing in the early 1980s and at the time I thought that was going to be the end of my motor sport. But it's a bit like a drug and I acquired the Datsun 240Z towards the end of the 1980s and started racing it with the HSCC in the early 1990s. I've raced it for over 20 years in Road Sports."

### He grew up around the sport

"I have such wonderful memories of motor racing in the 1950s and 1960s, being dragged all over Europe with my parents to all sorts of wonderful events. The HSCC was the big attraction to me, probably before the car. I thought it would be fantastic if I could race an historic car of some description. Probably one of my biggest mistakes was suggesting that my son Julian drove the Datsun many years ago. He's quite a handy driver!"

### It's the ex-Win Percy car

"Once I was decided historics was where I wanted to go, I knew of the Datsun, which belonged to Win Percy. He competed with it once or twice at the time when he was racing 'Big Sam'. I know he did the six-hour relay at Silverstone in it and I thought it would be ideal for Road Sports."

### It needed a rebuild

"The car was sold via a couple of other owners in Dorset before being parked up in an orchard. I got it, along with a donor car, in a rather sorry state. But it was rebuilt around the original bodyshell."

### It has served him well

"I've raced it in 70s Road Sports every season since 1994, winning the overall title in 2001 and again in 2017. I've only missed occasional races in 24 seasons. It has been developed first with Tim Riley and more recently Dave Jarman. Dave's work on a fresh engine three years ago brought another step forward in performance."

### He is a championship chairman

"I just feel that you should put something back into the sport as you take so much out. I did that with hillclimbing as one of the founders of the Hillclimb and Sprint Association. I was very happy to become Road Sports chairman if that's what the grid wanted."



Barter: racer and chair

Gravett's Ford had been stored away



# RARE FORDS ARE SET FOR BIG MONEY

## Ex-Gravett Sierra and former McRae Focus go under the hammer

By Paul Lawrence

**Two landmark competition Fords from the 1990s are expected to sell for up to £200,000 each at the Silverstone Auctions sale at Race Retro on Friday.**

The 1990 Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500 raced by Robb Gravett is tipped to sell for in excess of £175,000 when put up for auction after spending the

last 20 years in storage. Meanwhile an ex-Colin McRae 1999 Ford Focus WRC has a target price of at least £120,000.

The 1990 BTCC-winning Sierra Cosworth was built and run by the Trakstar team for Gravett, but was also driven by team boss Mike Smith and Stig Blomqvist. It is now being publicly offered for sale for the first time. During a record-breaking 1990 season it took

nine wins, eight pole positions and eight fastest laps.

Experienced race and rally driver Nick Whale, MD at Silverstone Auctions, raced a BMW M3 against Gravett in the 1990 BTCC. He said: "The roll of honour for this Cosworth is truly impressive and it has cemented its place in BTCC history. Adding to the provenance of this car is that in 1991 the new two-litre

cars took over, making 1990 a great swansong for this title-winning RS500."

The Focus WRC chassis 68335 contested 11 rounds of the 1999 World Rally Championship, four of them with Colin McRae. It was also rallied by Petter Solberg and Thomas Radstrom. McRae and Nicky Grist used the car for Rally Catalunya the Tour De Corse, the Acropolis and Rally China.



Gurney raced McLaren

## Dan Gurney to be remembered with tribute at Race Retro Show

The late Dan Gurney will be honoured at Race Retro by the display of the McLaren Mk14A, the last Formula 1 car he raced. American Gurney, who died in January aged 86, won four grands prix, including the 1967

Belgian Grand Prix in his own Eagle chassis entered by his Anglo American Racers team.

After the death of Bruce McLaren in 1970 Gurney became involved with McLaren and drove the M14A in several F1 races. That

car will be on show from the renowned Hall & Hall squad.

Event director Lee Masters said: "Dan Gurney was a motorsport legend, and so to be able to honour him at this year's show is a real privilege."

## Goodwood to mark Porsche anniversary

Porsche race cars from the company's history will star at the Goodwood Festival of Speed (July 12-15) as the event celebrates the 70th anniversary of Porsche's first car, the 356.

Cars in action on the hill will range from early 356s via the stunning 917 Le Mans cars to modern day GT cars. In addition, Porsche cars will adorn the event's stunning Central Feature for the third time.

The event will showcase the range of Porsche's achievements in a dedicated batch within the Goodwood Hillclimb, while other cars will be on display. Alongside a strong GT and prototype contingent will be cars from Porsche's history in Formula 1, IndyCar and rallying.

## Pre-2006 touring cars welcomed into Super Touring Challenge

David Jarman, one of the founders of the Super Touring movement, believes that the next group of cars to come under the historic umbrella will be pre-2006 touring cars.

Super 2000 cars from the FIA WTCC and BTC-specification BTCC cars from up to 2005 are being encouraged back into racing in the Super Touring Car Challenge, and Jarman says the



Newer cars will be next step

cars are a good package.

"We feel this is the right way to keep grid numbers strong and

ensure an ongoing spectacle," said Jarman. "There are so many great cars out there from that period and there are cars at very reasonable prices."

To date the Challenge has focused on Super Touring cars made up to the year 2000, as well as earlier Group 2 and Group A cars, but the cut-off date has been extended to take in the next generation of touring cars.

## Pre-'66 saloon race at Combe to be used as tribute to Sanger

The life of Terry Sanger will be celebrated by a race for pre-'66 Touring Cars at the Castle Combe Autumn Classic on Saturday October 6.

The Appendix K race will be held in memory of Sanger, a local hero through the 1960s.

He died in 2013 aged 79.

Sanger did the Targa Florio in a factory Ford GT40 in 1969 and was famous for racing an early special saloon, a Ford Cortina Mk1 with a Ford V8 engine. He later drove the fast intervention medical car at the circuit.



Classic saloons as tribute



Rare Royale is up for sale

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Breen soared to second place



## BREEN: I WILL FIGHT FOR MY PLACE WITHIN CITROËN

Irishman faces a spell on the bench despite best-yet result



Breen was Sweden star

By David Evans

**Craig Breen is still facing two months on the bench at Citroën, despite taking his best-yet World Rally Championship result on Sweden last week.**

Citroën's Irish star, who currently sits three points ahead of senior team-mate Kris Meeke in the World Rally Championship, steps aside for the next two rounds of the WRC to allow Sebastien Loeb to return and compete on both Rally Mexico and the Tour de Corse.

"This result is just awesome," Breen told *Motorsport News* after his second place in Sweden. "It's the best of my career. You know the podium [third] in Finland a couple of years ago [2016] was special, but here we were right up there fighting, fighting consistently in that position, and that's something new for me and it's something I'm desperate to build on."

"When we got the podium in Finland I wanted to kick on last year, but for whatever reason it didn't quite happen and we didn't get any more podiums – we had the consistency, but not always the outright speed. I'd love to be able to move forward from here and that has to be the aim, but we're out for a while now."

Breen is not scheduled to return to the factory Citroën until Rally Argentina at the end of April.

"There's no two ways about it, I've got

to say I'm absolutely gutted not to be going to Mexico for the next round," Breen said. "I'd love to take the momentum we have built here – obviously it's not my choice. I hope Seb [Loeb] has fun."

Opinion is divided within Citroën about the return of the nine-time world champion in a deal which *MN* understands was brokered by PSA CEO Carlos Tavares before being implemented by former team principal Yves Matton.

Asked for his opinion on the policy of leaving their leading driver at home in favour of a man who has been away from the full time WRC for six years, Matton's replacement Pierre Budar said: "It was not my decision."

Asked if there was any chance it could be reversed, or another car found for Breen in Mexico, Budar added: "The plan will stay as it is, we will run with Loeb in Mexico. Of course, I will try to find some more testing to keep Craig in the car as much as we can. He has been brilliant here in Sweden and we like him, we want to build on what he has achieved. After his result in Finland, it looks like he has a love affair with rallies in Scandinavia!"

Breen won't complete the recce for the next round of the championship in Mexico, having done that last year.

"I've never competed in Mexico," he said, "it's the experience I need. I appreciate Pierre doing what he can and I'll do anything I can – I'm ready to fight for



Budar says Loeb will still return in C3

whatever I can get. This team is incredible and to see how hard those boys worked to get this car right, it's been a pure pleasure to drive. It's night and day the difference from where we were last year."

Sources close to the team are hoping there could be the chance to run a third car for Breen at round four, the Tour de Corse – where it's even more unlikely Loeb would be passed over in favour of Breen.

Citroën ran a third car in Sweden, with Mads Ostberg returning to his former employer. The Parisian manufacturer immediately felt the benefit of a third car after Meeke's C3 retired with day two turbo failure after ingesting snow; Ostberg finished the event in sixth place, adding to Citroën's points tally.

The chances of Ostberg returning to Citroën again this season are high, but the Norwegian will have to bring budget.

### Why Loeb might just be lip service for Citroën

Sebastien Loeb's a hero. We all know that. He won 78 rounds of the World Rally Championship, nine world titles; Nicolas Sarkozy knighted him with a *Legion d'honneur*. As Frenchmen go, this one's fairly worthwhile – especially as a marketing tool to make some noise about Citroën's World Rally Championship programme.

And Loeb will come to Mexico in the perfect place on the road, he'll likely lead after day one and create some more headlines, but after that, what? Can he win Mexico or Corsica? Possibly. More likely we could end up with a similar deal to when Michael Schumacher returned to Formula 1 – full of nostalgia, but short on the sort of cutting edge speed that only comes with regular seat time. Loeb's been out of a World Rally Car at the highest level for three years.

I was so, so pleased when Kris Meeke said he was delighted to see Loeb coming back – but it should be in an additional car, not at the cost of Breen's seat. Meeke called it right, but PSA CEO Carlos Tavares



Loeb: back in the Citroën fold

(with whom the Loeb deal was reckoned to have been done) couldn't have got it more wrong.

What does a mid-season publicity stunt say about the serious aspirations for Citroën? Leaving Breen on the bench for the next two rounds is crazy, particularly off the back of such a stellar, confidence-inspiring run like last week.

Yes, Loeb could raise morale in Versailles, but it seemed pretty high when I left Breen and Scott Martin being hugged by just about anybody and everybody in a red jacket on Sunday...

David Evans

HOW NEUVILLE KEPT HIS COOL ON THE SWEDISH SNOW

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*“Even in a straight line I have to fight like hell...”*  
Ogier's troubles in Sweden, p20



## CREWS WANT NATIONAL CHANGE

Leading drivers in the World Rally Championship have called for changes to the rules for national events running on the back of WRC qualifiers.

Last week's Rally Sweden Historic followed the modern cars into the stages and caused significant problems for the main WRC field on its second pass through the Friday and Saturday tests. The historic and national cars were running narrower tyres and that, allied to the fact that most were rear-wheel drive, meant deep ruts were cut into the ice for the second run.

Jari-Matti Latvala is a man with a foot in both camps, having competed in a historic event in his own Toyota Celica GT-4 at the start of the month, for him the answer is a simple one.

“On this event, they should change the rules and run the historic cars on the same size tyres we have,” he told *MN*. “This would make a difference for us.”

Latvala's Toyota team-mate Ott Tanak was second on the road, but he was more sympathetic, saying: “The conditions in Monte are easier than this. The national cars make it more difficult for us, but we can't [blame them], this is their rally as well.”

Their team principal Tommi Makinen was, however, emphatic. “This needs to change,” he said. “We cannot have these narrower cars doing this to the road. Why can't they run the national cars

after the WRC has been through both times?”

M-Sport's Sebastien Ogier was the man who suffered most, but he refused to blame the national crews, adding: “They are here to enjoy their rally, but it's so difficult with the conditions on the second pass of the stages.”

Having won the opening round in Monte Carlo, Ogier led the crews into the snow-filled stages and admitted he was frustrated by the lack of an opportunity to make a difference.

“It might have made a difference if we'd had a choice of tyres,” said Ogier. “Here we only have one tyre – it's the only event of the season where we don't have a choice. Even the Junior WRC cars have more choice than we do – they have two studs, that could have helped for us.”

The Junior WRC runners are allowed to select between two lengths of stud (7mm or 8mm) for Rally Sweden.

Former Rally Sweden winner Petter Solberg finished second in last week's historic event and he agreed with Ogier.

“If they'd had an eight millimetre stud, it would have made a real difference,” said Solberg.

“The guys running at the front would have taken the longer stud and found more grip. I'm not sure how much we are disturbing the ruts and the line for them, but having a choice of tyre is important for those guys.”



Historic cars made ruts

### Ogier plight supports rule change

The sight of Sebastien Ogier languishing at the bottom end of the top 10 at last week's Rally Sweden was enough to resurrect the running order debate – with a return of the qualifying stage appearing to be one of the most popular solutions.

Qualifying was scrapped at the end of 2013, but there's a growing demand for a return to two practice shakedown runs before and a third qualifying shot on a Thursday.

“I always liked the qualifying concept,” said M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson. “The cars

and drivers are all much closer than they were and after this event I think there's a good case to be made for it – we've got a world champion lying in 10th place because of the conditions. OK, he made one small mistake, dropping a bit of time on Friday, but that's disproportionate to his position in the classification. Certainly, qualifying is something worth talking about again.”

Ogier has always enjoyed the qualifying concept, but said: “You know my feelings, but it's not for me to make the rules.”



Toyota was favourite, but didn't shine

### Toyota drivers keen to move on from tough Sweden

Toyota drivers Jari-Matti Latvala and Ott Tanak have warned their rivals not to write them off after a below-par performance at last week's Rally Sweden.

Both Yaris WRC drivers suffered in the early road conditions last week, but Latvala pointed to Tanak's pace as an indication of what they will be capable

of as the season unfolds.

“At times Ott has been incredible,” said Latvala, “his speed has been really good. We understand what has happened here and we know that the speed is still in this car. We are still in the fight. Now we look forward to the gravel rallies.”

Tanak feels there is more speed to come from the car,

he told *Motorsport News*:

“I have my ideas and I share these with the engineers. There's nothing to do immediately, but we are looking at ways we can improve things with the [homologation] jokers later in the year. It helps to come from a different car to have some ideas of how to make things better.”

### Second winter WRC event could run

WRC Promoter's Oliver Ciesla has told *Motorsport News* that he's interested in investigating a second winter round of the World Rally Championship.

The WRC last ran two snow events in 2007, when Rally Sweden was on consecutive weekends with Rally Norway. Since then, the neighbouring Nordic nations have combined to form a cross-border rally with Norwegian roads on the opening day.

Canada has expressed an interest in hosting a winter rally, but admitted it's at least five years away.

Ciesla told *MN*: “To

drive on the snow and ice is a unique selling point in world-level sport for the WRC, it's a story the car and tyre manufacturers can tell nowhere else in the world. The pictures are simply amazing and it's absolutely not unthinkable to have a second [winter] event on the calendar.”

Ciesla praised the Rally Sweden organisers for overcoming the lack of snow and ice in recent years, adding: “After the more challenging conditions, this year I'm so pleased to see how everything has been prepared – every stage has been a joy to watch this year.”

### Kristoffersson keen on more rally outings

Johan Kristoffersson hopes his Rally Sweden entry will help his World Rallycross Championship title defence this season.

The Swede tackled his home round in a Skoda Fabia R5 and finished sixth in WRC2. He admitted he had been inspired to compete on rallies after watching Petter Solberg in his first season in WRX in 2013.

“When you could see what Petter could do on the joker lap back in 2013, that made me think about doing a rally,” he said. “In rallying, you get into situations that you can't plan for, you don't know what the grip will be and you come to some things blind. When you do the joker lap only once every four laps, the grip is different and being able to adapt to this very quickly is really important and something competing here in Sweden can help me with. Maybe it only makes the difference of something like two-tenths of a second, but in



Kristoffersson set good times

rallycross, that's a lot.”

Kristoffersson set himself the target of a top-three stage time ahead of the event, but achieved that and more on SS7, when he went quickest of anybody in the category.

“That was incredible,” he said. “I was really happy with that. It would be nice to do some more rallies, but already this season I am competing on 18 weekends, so the calendar is already quite full.”

“I knew the rally would be tough – there's a reason why we don't see a World Rally champion under the age of 30, this sport is so much about experience.”

## GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

# DAVID EVANS

*“The stories from the Safari Rally are legendary”*



**W**ill the Safari Rally be back? Who knows? But if the stories generated in the Rally Sweden service park are anything to go by, the World Rally Championship could do an awful lot worse than embrace Kenya once again.

The Safari was more than a rally. It was an adventure. The Uhuru Highway out of Nairobi pre-dawn was from another world and an unbelievable introduction to urban Africa; meeting a horse and cart (obviously unlit) in the outside lane was shocking enough. The real surprise lay in the fact they were coming in the wrong direction.

Then there was the Maasai, the madness and the mind-boggling sight of giraffes running alongside the car through the Rift Valley. It's fair to say there was (and is) nowhere quite like Africa to go rallying.

Safari didn't just provide some great stories, it wrote its own script.

Nineteen years ago this week, Colin McRae was in Kenya testing for what would become one of his most famous wins – his first World Rally Championship success with Ford. M-Sport's George Black was with McRae for that test. A test that began immediately after the Swedish Rally – an event which had ended prematurely after engine failure for the Scot.

“The morning after Sweden finished, we flew directly from Stockholm to Nairobi,” said Black. “We had a lot of testing to get through, but even then it wasn't quite the same – we were down there for a couple of weeks, but that was nothing like the months on end some of the other teams had put in during the 1980s and early 1990s.”

“When we got down there, Colin knew exactly where he wanted to test. Trouble is, he couldn't remember the name of the place, but he knew exactly where the road was and how to get there. The night before the test, Colin said: ‘You set off and take the trucks in this direction. I'll go in the helicopter, find the place and let you know where to go...’

“When we set off it was still dark, as soon as it started to come light, the helicopter came over with Colin in and a few minutes later he came on the radio with the rendezvous point. We met and started the test. Where else in the world could you do that?”

The stories kept on coming. Unfortunately, the vast majority of them are unprintable, but the fact is, they're all absolutely memorable. How many stories will be recalled with such ease two decades down the line from now?

This sport's never been faster, never been more exciting, more exhilarating or action-packed, but does it have the same sense of adventure? No.

It's simply not possible for three office-hour days in Wales to generate the same sense of exploration that five days and three nights up and down Britain managed.

Even in its most watered-down, 2002 form, the Safari still brought 60-mile sections taking close to an hour to complete. Granted, McRae won by almost a minute, but the tales to be told from those three days remain legendary today.

It's expensive, impractical and, let's be honest, unlikely, but, for me, the Safari would be welcome.



**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
letters@motorsport-news.co.uk

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

## AL-ATTIYAH PREPARES PART-SEASON IN TOYOTA IN WRC

### Qatari driver plans outings in a Yaris



Al-Attiyah (r) plans to return



Al-Attiyah is no stranger to Toyota

By David Evans

**Toyota Gazoo Racing will have a Yaris WRC prepared for Nasser Al-Attiyah at Rally Argentina – with the Qatari star tipped for six rounds of this year's World Rally Championship.**

Al-Attiyah is no stranger to Toyota, having driven a Toyota Gazoo South Africa Hilux at Dakar for the last two years – finishing second and winning four stages at last month's event.

The 47-year-old is, however, keen to return to WRC action, not having competed at rallying's highest level since he took the 2015 WRC2 title.

Toyota team principal Tommi Makinen told *MN* his team was ready to deliver a car for a second South American outing of the season for Al-Attiyah.

Makinen said: "We continue discussing with Nasser. It's not decided yet, but we have prepared to be ready for Argentina."

Makinen was quick to point out that, unlike Al-Attiyah's deals with Citroen in 2012 and M-Sport in 2013, he would not be running in factory colours.

"He is a private driver," said Makinen. "It wouldn't be a fourth official car – we

will still run three cars, but we would prepare and run his car. We try to organise to have his car next to our cars in the service park, this would help us with the logistics and the support needed."

Asked about the specifics of the programme, Makinen admitted those details were still being finalised. He said: "It is five or six rallies we are talking about, starting with Argentina and then Portugal and Sardinia and some more. It would be good to have Nasser with us, good from the commercial side and good for his experience. Is he the fastest driver, I don't know, but for sure he knows what he is doing in the sport."

Al-Attiyah has started 73 rounds of the world championship, with his best result being fourth place as part of the Citroen team at the 2012 Rally Portugal.

Away from his WRC aspirations, Al-Attiyah began the defence of his World Cup for Cross Country Rallies in fine style with a dominant victory at last weekend's Baja Russian Northern Forest Rally. He won the Karelia-based event by six minutes in his Hilux and was travelling from Russia when *MN* tried to contact him.

## Takamoto's surprise triumph in WRC2 could pave the way for him to land a drive with Toyota's top team in a Yaris WRC

Rally Sweden star Katsuta Takamoto's shock WRC2 win could fast-track him into a Toyota Yaris WRC.

Toyota Gazoo Racing junior driver Takamoto scored his maiden WRC2 win in Torsby last week and that result could be enough to convince team principal Tommi Makinen to give him a test in the team's Yaris WRC.

In the absence of a Toyota R5 car,

TGR's junior crews use Ford Fiesta R5s and Takamoto dominated the snow event from start to finish.

Makinen admitted he'd been impressed with what he'd seen, telling *MN*: "Absolutely brilliant drive, absolutely brilliant. This was the rally that built his confidence for himself. We have known he is doing well in the test and his co-driver [Marko Salminen] has

been with many fast drivers and he told us it's no question from driving skill, it's only a question of his trust for himself. He did well in Arctic, but to beat the local stars like he did here, is incredible – and he did this by going flat out."

Asked what this meant for Takamoto's future, Makinen replied: "We need to talk about this, but the original plan – we need to follow when

they go to the next rally. The original plan and most natural place would be 2019 Rally Japan, if this is going ahead, but you never know – if we can do something else, something sooner, then let's see."

Takamoto, who had started six snow rallies before last week, was delighted with the result: "I didn't expect this when I came here. Skoda factory drivers

are very fast and I have to go all the time pushing hard to win – even in the last stage, I knew Pontus [Tidemand] is so fast driver, I have to go to the maximum. This is incredible result."

As well as some asphalt rallies in Italy, Takamoto will contest the remainder of the European WRC rounds, with the exception of Rally Germany.

## Loubet Jr to follow in father's wheeltracks

French driver Pierre-Louis Loubet will look to emulate his father Yves by winning a second European Rally Championship for his family this season.

The 21-year-old will start his first ERC campaign 29 years after his father won the 1989 title. Loubet Jr will drive a Hyundai i20 R5.

"I had a good chance to do some ERC, so I took it," he said. "The objective is to be as close to the top as possible and if it's possible to win a rally we will try to do it. I don't know the rallies, but I hope to adapt quickly. Gravel is

my favourite surface because my first feeling in a rally car was on gravel. I can only do my best."

Loubet, whose first ERC outing will be next month's Azores Rally, showed promise with his maiden WRC2 campaign in a Ford Fiesta R5 last season and twice finished in the top five of the premier R5 category.

Loubet Sr started nine rounds of the 1989 ERC and finished on the podium on all but one of them and won four. His son will be hoping ERC success will do more to advance his career than it did for his father, who spent much of the rest of his career in the French Championship.

Loubet Sr was an ERC winner



**Fifty years on from his only Swedish Rally podium, 80-year-old flying Finn Rauno Aaltonen, better known as the professor, returned to drive a Cooper S at last week's Rally Sweden Historic**

## Jaeger to swap to the Hyundai hot seat

Hyundai co-driver Anders Jaeger's debut as a driver at Saturday's Numedal rally in Norway comes as a birthday present from his driver Andreas Mikkelsen.

Mikkelsen first made the offer to Jaeger in 2016, but this week it will finally happen with the pair swapping seats for the Norwegian Championship round close to Geilo. They will use Hyundai Motorsport's test i20 R5 for the snow rally.

"Andreas is the co-driver, so he is doing all the work for this," Jaeger told *MN*. "I was always interested to do a rally

as a driver, but it's not like I was constantly nagging at him. It was a big, big surprise when he offered me this in 2016 and now I accept, it will be really nice. Andreas has some experience of co-driving before, he did Monza Rally with Thierry [Neuville] last year and he did some [co-driving] earlier in his career. The question is, will he laugh at me..."

Ahead of the entry going in Jaeger tested a Subaru Impreza with Mikkelsen and the pair will complete a shakedown with the Hyundai later this week.

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Photos: Pro-Rally Photography, NI: Media

# RIPONIAN BOSSES AIM FOR CLOSED ROADS ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY RETURN

The Riponian Rally will return in 2019 for its 50th anniversary and bosses are chasing a closed-road permit to link some of its gravel stages together.

The event couldn't run in 2018, when the organising team found out late on in the planning phase that the Helmsley Forest – used for 20 years on the event – was unavailable for rallying. Bosses were unable to come up with an alternative with so little time.

A law passed in April 2017 by the British Government means events now only need the permission of the governing body of motorsport in the UK, the Motor Sports Association, and the event's local authority, to gain a closed-road permit. Previously it was necessary to pass an Act of Parliament which was costly and time consuming.

Event chiefs now plan to celebrate the landmark occasion by becoming one of the first events to link forest roads together.

"With it being the 50th anniversary of the first running of the event next year there's a big push to make it work," said Riponian clerk of the course Alan Hill.

"It is extra motivation. I was involved in the first one and I didn't want the last one to be the last either."

"I'm looking to close a small section of road to join two small

forests, to give us one longer stage rather than two little ones. Then we could go to the Cropton area to get the mileage there too."

The biggest issue to tackle for the Ripon Motor Club organising the event is locating a suitable hub for a service.

"We're trying to make it so we can go back to Thirsk because that works very well for us with the service area and everything and use the stages that we've always run there," added Hill.

Joining forest stages together to make a longer test has a number of benefits for event organisers.

The main benefit of being able to make one larger stage rather than two smaller ones is that only one set of start and stage marshals is needed, as well as it being less of a strain on safety crews.

Also, there are multiple stages in Yorkshire forests specifically that have been classed as public roads for a number of years, in some cases roads that have been rallied on previously but then broken up because parts of stages have been reclassified as a public road.

That means that they need a road-closing order, even if they are quiet roads in the middle of a forest.

The Riponian last ran in 2017 and was won by Ford Fiesta driver Stephen Petch.



Petch won 2017 Riponian Rally

## Edwards pace proves BTRDA challenge is on

Matt Edwards is confident of fighting for BTRDA wins in his R5-spec Ford Fiesta, after a strong showing against World Rally Cars on the Cambrian Rally.

Edwards went 16 seconds quicker than anybody else on the first stage of the rally, measured at 7.03 miles.

But on the second test he hit a protruding log, which forced him to retire. He used Rally2 to return for stage four, and of the five stages he completed, he was 58s fastest over the 32.16 miles.

"It looks good," said Edwards of his winning chances in the BTRDA. "There's quite a lot of things we want to work on, especially with switching to the Pirellis [from Hankooks]."

Edwards is using the BTRDA as seat-time for the British Rally Championship.

"The purpose of it is to get quicker overall, not just to win BTRDA rallies," he added. "Do you drive to win a rally or drive to improve? That's the dilemma."

M-Sport – who will run Edwards in the BRC this year – is expected to announce its return to the BRC for the Team's Championship, with Alex Laffey also set to confirm, this week.



Williams finished 19th despite lack of preparation in the Vauxhall

## James Williams runs his last minute Adam R2 on Cambrian

Prestone Motorsport News Junior British Rally Championship frontrunner James Williams secured a late deal to drive a Vauxhall Adam R2 on last weekend's Cambrian Rally ahead of a proposed return to the JBRC.

Williams finished as the highest R2 on the event in

19th spot, setting competitive times against last year's JBRC runner-up, William Creighton.

"The car only turned up on the Saturday morning at 0700hrs. We chucked all the stuff in it and went," said Williams.

"We had a puncture on the first and two slows on the second and third, then

I started getting more confident in the car."

The Welshman is planning a return to the JBRC this year: "My plan is to do the BRC, we're just waiting to tie a few things up and hopefully we'll be able to announce our plans soon."

His best finish in JBRC last year was third.

## Henry gets Fiesta for early part of Irish Tarmac bid

Desi Henry will campaign a Ford Fiesta R5 for the first two rounds of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship ahead of a potential switch to the car permanently in late 2018.

Henry has previously campaigned a Skoda Fabia S2000 and latterly an R5 variant, and is waiting to see if proposed updates for the Fabia arrive later in the year. For now he will use the latest Evo 2 version of the Fiesta R5.

"If I find that the Fiesta's to my liking and I gel with it then there's nothing to say I wouldn't stick with it [for the season]," said Henry. "We are a private team and we have no ties with anyone."

"Obviously, the end goal is to go out and try and win the [Irish Tarmac] title. That's something I believe we can do."

Henry will contest the Mayo Stages in the car to get up to speed before the West Cork Rally on March 17/18. Sam Moffett, reigning champion, and brother, Josh, plus Alastair Fisher and Stephen Wright have confirmed intent to contest the Irish Tarmac Championship.

## Pryce: no full UK championship in 2018

Osian Pryce is unlikely to return to the BTRDA or BRC full-time in 2018, after making a one-off outing in the former last weekend.

A cold car due to a delay meant Pryce started SS1 on the back foot and he had a spin on the Cambrian opener, although he recovered to fourth overall and took maximum Welsh Rally Championship points.

However, Pryce is still targeting WRC2, and is still committed to a bigger programme.

"I don't think I'll be back in the BRC, I'll probably just pick and choose events until we get something bigger sorted," said Pryce. "BRC is a bit quiet. I feel I need to push myself a bit if

I'm going to go forwards. You look at the guys in WRC2 now and we've been on their pace, most of them. Some of them were quicker than us but that would be a good benchmark: to have someone to chase."

Pryce was a BRC contender in 2017 until mechanical issues with his Ford Fiesta ruled him out of the Ulster Rally, ending his campaign. The Mitsubishi Mirage campaigned by Pryce last year could be seen in the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship in 2018.

Both Jamie Jukes and Phillip Hopkins are looking to use the cars – which have yet to be given blessing by Mitsubishi and are



Pryce's spin on SS1 cost him time, but he recovered

therefore not homologated R5 cars – in the series this year.

The team responsible for importing and selling the cars in the UK, Spencer Sport, is run by Charlie

Jukes. He said: "There's quite a lot of interest in hiring. Jamie and Phillip are looking at doing the Tarmac series. There's just questions as to whether they can fit it in with work."



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# RALLY NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Gary Hawkins

## SLOAN RETURNS TO RALLYING WITH CROWD-FUNDED CORSA FOR BTRDA

Scott Sloan has a rebuilt Vauxhall for the Scottish and UK series

By Jack Benyon

**A year and eight months after his car burned out in a fire on the DMACK Carlisle Stages, Scott Sloan has returned to rallying thanks to the help of a crowd funding campaign.**

Sloan visited a ditch on the 2016 event, when his exhaust dislodged, and at the end of the stage the car caught fire and burned out.

Crowd funding raised just over £1000 and Malcolm Proudlock of the Mabie House Hotel purchased the new Vauxhall Corsa bodyshell.

Engine problems hampered his return on the Snowman Rally on February 10, but he made the event and finished third in class. Last weekend Sloan started the Cambrian Rally but retired due to a number of further issues.

"I'm still just happy to be back," said Sloan. "We've had a lot of teething issues, things you only really find when you're on a rally. It's been way more difficult than I thought. Every job that's meant to take a few days has taken weeks."

Sloan had upgraded his Corsa for the 2016 season from 1400C to 1400S for the BTRDA Series.

The rebuilt car is also in 1400S-spec and Sloan has big plans for the year.

"I've entered the BTRDA and the Scottish Championship this year," he said. "I'm going to try and do as many events as I can. It's a massive push to get sharp again and improve on my driving."

"I need to say thanks to my sponsors and everyone who has helped put the car back together. I just want to go out there and make everyone who has helped me proud."



Sloan's old Corsa burned out on the DMACK Carlisle Stages

### Michelin backing secures MN prizes

The renewed backing of Michelin will ensure the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship continues to award a strong prize package to competitors in 2018.

The French tyre supplier has supported the championship since its introduction, and series bosses have confirmed that the company will remain on board as its main backer for a fourth season.

Series co-ordinator Darren Spann confirmed: "The series is going very well; even better now that we have just shaken on a new deal with Michelin, which we're delighted about. The loyalty in this championship is definitely a strong point."

The MN Championship runs the class-based Michelin Cup, which is free to enter and awards 12 tyres to the Cup winner, eight to second and four to third. That is among other prizes for competitors. The winner also receives a free entry to a round for the following year.

One registered MN series driver – drawn out of a hat – also receives a set of free tyres from Michelin at each round of the championship.



A Brampton centre finish remains in place for the Pirelli International Rally

### Pirelli International slims down to a single-day event

The Pirelli International Rally will be run over one day in 2018.

To accommodate the change, the service venue has been moved away from Carlisle and into the Kielder complex where stages take place.

This year's rally, on April 28, will allow for Historic and front-wheel-drive entries to compete first thanks to the Rally2 format, meaning those entries finish at lunchtime.

They can then rejoin for the afternoon stages as part of a

separate event if they choose.

The rally will begin at the Pirelli factory in Carlisle as usual, and visits the market town of Brampton, which returned to the event's itinerary after a lengthy gap, last year.

Last year's event was won by BRC driver Fredrik Ahlin driving for local squad CA1 Sport.

The event is a round of the British Rally Championship, British Historic and FIA Celtic Trophy.

### Easter Stages to offer highly challenging route

The organisers of the Easter Stages have revealed details about the event's route.

Taking place over the weekend of April 6/7, it features 12 closed-road special stages over 95 miles.

Crews from the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship will tackle both legs of the Ulster Automobile Club meeting, which is based entirely in County Antrim.

On the second day of the rally, a National B-type event will follow the main field with these tests dotted around the Ballymena countryside.

Clerk of the course Nigel Hughes said: "We are looking for a large entry and lots of spectators to help make this rally a roaring success."

"The first six special stages are located close to the rally headquarters in Templepatrick and are due to start around lunchtime on Friday.

"These classic stages are on fast and flowing Tarmac roads. They will present a real challenge for all the competitors and provide superb opportunities for spectators to enjoy closed-road rallying. Then just before dusk the rally is set to return to Ballyclare for the overnight halt.

"Additional crews will join those who participated on Friday to contest a further six classic stages around Broughshane before finishing in Ballymena around 1600hrs."

The event runs in place of the Circuit of Ireland.

### Engine woe hits Stone – again

John Stone's MN Circuit Rally Championship bid appears to be over after engine failure at Snetterton last weekend.

Stone had held second in the points behind Chris West and his Peugeot 306 Maxi Kit Car, but the 2.5-litre Millington-engined, Ford Fiesta S2000 chassis car let go. Stone doesn't have a spare.

"I'd love to do more of the events it's just a case of timescale," said Stone. "There's two events in close succession. We might have a chance of getting back for the Cadwell Park round [on April 8]."

The second event Stone



Stone has enjoyed circuit rallying, wants suitable car

refers to, which is the Lee Holland Memorial Rally at Anglesey on March 18, is sponsored by his Legend Fires concern. Even so he is unlikely to have the car ready in time. Stone believes his car isn't capable of challenging for honours because of excess weight.

"I was speaking to Chris

West at the weekend and he has around the same amount of power, but he's 400kgs lighter than us," said Stone. "It's difficult. I prefer pacenote events, but I have really enjoyed the championship. I've enjoyed it and we've had great battles but to win the title you need a light car."

# BTRDA CAMBRIAN RALLY

Reigning champ Petch stutters as Bird steals a march. By **Simon Gronow**



The new Iriz R5 is destined for WRC

## MELLORS WINS AS BIRD TAKES TOP BTRDA POINTS



Bird finished second overall to start title attack



Edwards topped stages he finished

### Lepley wins first R2 event

It wasn't a good start for George Lepley/Tom Woodburn when their Ford Fiesta suffered a punctured tyre on the first stage. They then settled into their stride and the next few tests went well only for the pair to suffer more tyre woes, when a large bulge resulted after hitting a rock, which affected their car's handling.

They were forced to do two stages before the tyre could be changed, but a good run on the final stage ensured victory on the first ever **BTRDA Rallye R2 Cup**, in a creditable 25th position overall.

Bob Vardy/Keaton Williams were happy with the early stages, holding second behind Lepley, but their Fiesta struggled for grip on SS3. At service, they decided not to change tyres and adopt a steady approach to the afternoon. That paid off as they just held on to the runners-up spot.

Catching cars on SS1 and SS5, and spinning their Peugeot 208 on SS2, proved costly for third-placed Jack Leese/Sam Spencer who finished just three seconds behind Vardy and were pleased with their day.

Not so happy were Charlie Barlow/Emma Morrison. Their Fiesta suffered throttle problems and cut out on the first stage. They got the car started, but four minutes had been lost, though times on the later stages were promising as they moved up to fourth.

**T**he late decision to contest the opening round of the 2018 BTRDA series proved to be a good one for Ollie Mellors/Max Freeman. The new pairing took the Proton Iriz R5 to a hard fought win on the Cambrian Rally.

They had a day-long battle with Paul Bird/Jack Morton in their Ford Focus WRC – who started off their BTRDA return with maximum BTRDA points – and rounding off the podium were last year's Gold Star champions Stephen Petch and Michael Wilkinson in their Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

On the first stage in Penmachno South, BRC regulars Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod blitzed the rest of the field, almost two seconds a mile quicker than the rest and 16s in total over seven miles. Edwards adopted a "less lairy" approach to SS2, only to clip a log on the inside of a right-hand bend taking a wheel off in the process.

He returned later in the day, and was fastest on every stage he completed but was out of the running for a good result.

Arriving at service after three stages, it was Mellors/Freeman who held an

eight second advantage at the head of the field. Freeman had originally been scheduled to compete with leading Group N runner Andy Davies, who was forced to cancel his entry following an arm injury.

As a result, Freeman teamed up with Mellors and the pair soon formed a good partnership with the Proton working well on the narrow slippery sections, moving into the lead following Edwards' stage two incident, and then setting fastest time on the 4.5-mile Crafnant test.

"Not too bad, though it's hard work on the tight slippery bits," was Bird's view of the first three stages. "We changed tyres after stage two as we were on the wrong type, but I've not made many mistakes yet," he added.

A fastest time through Surf Snowdonia 1 backed this up.

Getting off to a good start were Hugh Hunter/Rob Fagg, the pair Edwards' nearest competitors on SS1, their Fiesta RS WRC working to the driver's liking.

"The car is spot on," said Hunter at service. "We're only going to change the tyres."

Running their Fiesta RS WRC for the first time, regular BTRDA frontrunners Luke Francis/John H Roberts found

their new car very different to their previous Mitsubishi, and the pair lost time on the opening test when they couldn't demist the car's windscreen, which hampered visibility.

Their road position wasn't helping them, as they were running second, and they planned to change tyres and stiffen the suspension. Nonetheless, they held fourth place at service.

Second fastest time on SS4 showed that Francis/Roberts were getting to grips with their new car, but unfortunately they tore a wheel off on the following stage, ending their day in the process.

"Could be better," was Osian Pryce's view of the morning stages, as he tried to get used to the mixed conditions. The BRC frontrunner was another driver making a last-minute appearance. "It feels good, but it needs to be more progressive for the mud," was his view of things. Suspension and differential settings were being considered for the afternoon.

Reigning BTRDA champion Petch was having a "pretty average" time of things as he and Wilkinson held sixth position, their Fiesta RS WRC suffering a "horrendous misfire" on stage one, which cost about 20 seconds. "We've

changed the anti-lag system to a lesser setting which seems to have done something, we'll keep plugging on," he said.

Julian Reynolds returned after a year-and-a-half lay-off with Patrick Walsh in his new Ford. "It's a really good car, but I'm not driving [to its full potential] yet," admitted Reynolds as he checked the car over. A half-spin was the only issue and a change to tyres better suited to mud were planned for the afternoon.

Some suspension changes were being planned by 2016 Gold Star champion Charlie Payne, as he found the rear of his Fiesta WRC to be too hard and lacking in grip. Otherwise his car was handling well as he and new co-driver Ian Windress got used to each other, the pair having slowed to pass the stricken Edwards after his stage two incident.

After dropping three seconds to Bird on Alwen, probably the most popular stage of the day, Mellors regained the lost time on the following run through Penmachno South, before losing more time to the Focus driver on the penultimate stage in Penmachno North, reducing his lead to just four seconds going into the final stage.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Photos: Writtle Photographic

# SILVER STAR

## STAGE WINNERS

**SS1 Penmachno South 1 (7.03 miles)** Edwards/Garrold 6m 57s

**SS2 Surf Snowdonia 1 (5.09 miles)** Bird/Morton 7m 07s

**SS3 Crafnant (4.60 miles)** Mellors/Freeman 5m 38s

**SS4 Alwen (6.82 miles)** Edwards/Garrold 6m 19s

**SS5 Penmachno South 2 (7.03 miles)** Edwards/Garrold 6m 54s

**SS6 Penmachno North (7.18 miles)** Edwards/Garrold 7m 32s

**SS7 Surf Snowdonia 2 (4.10 miles)** Edwards/Garrold 5m 22s



Perry Gardner

## CLASSWINNERS



Debut class win in H3 for Rowlands in Avenger BRM

**Gold Star:** Paul Bird/Jack Morton (Ford Focus WRC07)  
**Silver Star:** John Rowlands/Glenn Latham (Ford Escort Mk2)  
**Production Cup:** Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy (Mitsubishi Lancer E9)  
**Historic Cup:** Ieuan Rowlands/Emyr Hall (Hillman Avenger BRM), Ernie Graham/Robin Kellard (Escort RS1600)  
**Rally First:** Sam and Liam Johnson (SEAT Arosa)  
**Juniors:** Johnson/Johnson  
**Seniors:** Ian Joel/ Graeme Wood (Escort Cosworth)  
**Fiesta ST Trophy:** Zak Hughes/Tom Wood  
**Rallye R2 Cup:** George Lepley/Tom Woodburn (Fiesta R2)  
**1400 overall:** Chris Powell/Jim Lewis (Talbot Sunbeam)  
**B14:** Bird/Morton  
**B13:** Dylan Davies/Llion Williams (Subaru Impreza)  
**B12:** Owen McMackin/Lee Taylor (Escort Mk2)  
**B11:** Rowlands/Latham  
**B10:** Lepley/Woodburn  
**NR4:** Thompson/Murphy  
**N3:** Hughes/Wood  
**H4:** Tom Coughtrie (Mitsubishi Galant VR4)  
**H3:** Rowlands/Hall  
**H1/2:** Graham/Kellard  
**1400C:** Perry Gardener/Toby Brick (Vauxhall Nova)  
**1400S:** Powell/Lewis  
**RF2.0:** Matthew Baddeley/Sean Hughes (VW Lupo)  
**RF1.4:** Johnson/Johnson

## Rowlands survives a massive moment to win

John Rowlands/Glenn Latham had a perfect start to the year as they took the B11 class and Silver Star honours in their Ford Escort Mk2.

However, the day hadn't started well as the pair had a big moment on the opening test and were lucky not to roll in the process.

They emerged from the stage with a puncture and the suspension needed checking at service. Thankfully, the afternoon run was less dramatic and the pair finished the day as the leading two-wheel-drive crew.

Following a problem-free run, Chris Powell/Jim Lewis put in a giant-killing run to win the 1400cc class in their Talbot Sunbeam,

finishing the day just 24 seconds behind Rowlands.

After running Escorts for some years now, Ieuan Rowlands/Emyr Hall made their debut outing in their newly built BRM-engined Hillman Avenger. They found the early going very slippery, but adapted well to their new car and held the Silver Star lead despite hitting a rock on SS3. Unfortunately, a puncture on Alwen dropped them to third place, though they did learn a lot about the car during the day and took the Historic category in the process.

Andy Davison/Tom Murphy had made a good start in their Talbot Sunbeam, lying only 20 seconds

behind John Rowlands at service. They found the stages tricky in the afternoon and had problems with the steering column before the final stage, which required strapping up.

Despite being slowed as a result, they just held on to second in class and fourth Silver Star by one second as Rob Dennis/Andy Boswell almost caught them in their Escort Mk2.

The long trip from Omagh proved worthwhile for Owen McMackin as he and Welsh co-driver Lee Taylor took the class B12 honours in their Escort Mk2.

Reigning Swift Shining Stars champion Zak Hughes won on his Fiesta ST Trophy debut.



John Rowlands survived to take Silver Star win



Zak Hughes debuted in the ST Trophy and took victory

## RESULTS

### BTRDA Rally Series, round 1/8, Cambrian Rally, Llandudno

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Ollie Mellors/Max Freeman	Proton Iriz R5	46m 47s
2	Paul Bird/Jack Morton	Ford Focus WRC07	+6s
3	Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+30s
4	Osian Pryce/Dale Furniss	Mitsubishi Mirage	+34s
5	Julian Reynolds/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5	+52s
6	Hugh Hunter/Rob Fagg	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+59s
7	Charles Payne/Ian Windress	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+1 m33s
8	Dylan Davies/Llion Williams	Subaru Impreza	+2m07s
9	Ian Joel/Graeme Wood	Ford Escort Cosworth	+2m34s
10	Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+2m41s

11 Pat Naylor/Ian Lawrence (Lancer E9); 12 Simon de Banke/Michael Gilbey (Fiesta R5); 13 Keith Parry/Eryl Evans (Impreza); 14 Paul Davy/Roger Allan (Impreza); 15 John Rowlands/Glenn Latham (Ford Escort Mk2); 16 Matthew Hirst/Declan Dear (Lancer E9); 17 Chris Powell/Jim Lewis (Talbot Sunbeam); 18 Ieuan Rowlands/Emyr Hall (Hillman Avenger BRM); 19 James Williams/Ross Whittock (Vauxhall Adam R2); 20 Harry Gardener/Elliott Graham (Impreza STI).  
**Gold Star points:** 1 Bird 30; 2 Petch 28; 3 Pryce 27, 4 Reynolds 26; 5 Hugh Hunter 25; 6= Davies 24; 6= Payne 24.

There were no dramas for Mellors as he beat his rival on the test to secure a six second win on a day of firsts – Mellors and the Proton's first BTRDA win, while for Freeman it was his first ever stage rally victory after winning regularly in the road rallying discipline. "It's been a textbook day," said a delighted Mellors. "It was all very last minute, the car has been absolutely fantastic and Max has done a great job on the notes."

As he waited to book into the final control, Bird thought about his day. "I'm happy enough with that, we gambled on tyres but it didn't pay off," he said.

With Mellors not registered for the championship, Bird had got his BTRDA campaign off to the best possible start with maximum points.

Following Francis' retirement, Petch moved up to third position. "It's been one of those days. We lost so much time this morning, we've been trying to catch up – we've been close but not close enough," he said, the intermittent misfire costing him time on SS6.

It was a happier Pryce who returned to Llandudno in fourth place, the Mirage driver having set second fastest time on the final stage – with "it all coming together at the end – too late unfortunately,"

he recounted as the morning's problems had been resolved, though he had lost time to the WRC cars through Alwen.

Going into Penmachno South 2, Hunter was ahead of Pryce, but was lucky to carry on after suffering two punctures in the stage, and this scare disrupted his rhythm over the final tests.

As a result he dropped to sixth position behind Reynolds who was starting to get the hang of his Fiesta. "No adjustments needed on the car, just to the driver," he laughed as he rounded his day off with third fastest time on the final stage.

Payne felt seventh place wasn't "too bad I suppose". A couple of moments and a half spin were his only problems, as eighth placed Dylan Davies/Llion Williams had a steady run in their Subaru Impreza, finishing ahead of Ian Joel/Graeme Wood's rare Ford Escort Cosworth.

After leading Group N all day, Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy had a scare when they went off in their Mitsubishi Lancer and got stuck briefly on some logs. Thankfully, they got back on the road with a reduced lead to win the category ahead of reigning champions Pat Naylor/Ian Lawrence who had suffered all day with front suspension problems in their similar car.

## STAR OF THE RALLY



The number of 1400cc entrants might be dwindling, but there is still one driver proving that a low capacity engine car can be competitive in the right hands: Chris Powell. With Jim Lewis alongside in his Talbot Sunbeam, the pair survived a few moments on SS1 but from then on had a problem-free day, as they took their highest BTRDA finish to date, an excellent 17th overall. Their nearest class challenger was almost four minutes behind.

## Pryce takes maximum Welsh series points

While he might not have finished on the podium overall, Osian Pryce had the satisfaction of taking maximum points in the MSA Welsh Forest Rally Championship, while the event-winning co-driver Max Freeman headed the co-drivers section.

Fiesta drivers Julian Reynolds and Hugh Hunter finished in second and third places.

After a steady start as they got used to each other, the first time pairing of Simon de Banke/Michael Gilbey found their confidence growing as the event progressed. Changing tyres at service worked well for the pair, who particularly enjoyed the Alwen stage and they were rewarded as fifth contenders home in their Ford Fiesta R5, behind Dylan Davies/Llion Williams' Subaru Impreza.

Sixth placed Keith Parry/Eryl Evans had a dreadful start to the day when a driveshaft popped out in their Subaru Impreza on the first test. They completed the stage



It was a surprise call-up for Osian Pryce which he used to win the Welsh

in two-wheel drive before repairs could be completed – an experience Parry isn't keen to repeat.

Paul Davy/Roger Allan were first of the Group N contenders in

seventh, the pair running on the same tyres all day, with class B11 winners John Rowlands/Glenn Latham leading two-wheel-drive runners in their Ford Escort.

# RALLY SWEDEN



BY DAVID EVANS

## Belgian Hyundai driver finally hit his stride in Sweden with a glorious win

**F**or a second, just a second, nobody breathed. At that same second, Nicolas Gilsoul looked up and found Thierry Neuville at a strangle angle looking down on him.

Another second, another note. Onwards.

And for a Hyundai team transfixed by the telly, a long, loud exhale. When the i20 Coupe WRC arrived at the end of the second run through the Vargasen stage on Saturday afternoon, there was spontaneous applause from the mechanics. Team principal Michel Nandan emerged from the command centre in search of a cup of coffee. A drop of something stronger wouldn't have gone amiss.

Heavy snow had altered the line through the famous Colin's Crest jump section of the stage, with drivers now needing to keep absolutely as far to the left on take off as possible. The #5 i20 did that, but then – mid-flight – scuffed the top of the head-height snowbank at 100mph. That tipped the car to an extraordinary angle.

Was it a moment, Michel? Yes. It was a moment.

After the stage, was it a moment Thierry, we asked?

"No," he said, deadpan. "I was careful here. The stage had gone well until then and I didn't want to take a risk. I only jump 32 metres or something..."

The last sentence was deployed as discernible proof that a moment simply wasn't possible on such a short flight.

That was Neuville's state of mind last week. Always full of confidence, Neuville delivered a ruthless drive through horrible conditions. Comfortable in the car, he took his Hyundai to places where others feared to tread and he did it quicker than anybody else.

Twelve months ago, he offered further evidence that his genius was flawed when he wrecked his car's left-front suspension against a tyre, needlessly trying to tighten a superspecial corner in Karlstad. Had that played on his mind.

"No. That was last year," he explained. "I look only forward."

But when he arrived back in service late Saturday night after facing down what had been considered a non-threatening nemesis, he grinned. "I took my revenge on this place."

Neuville led the event from the third stage onwards. The closest he came to being headed was when Craig Breen whittled his advantage down to 4.2s after the first run through Hagfors.

Breen's decision to run with only one spare wheel for the afternoon was, technically, where the event was decided. The Irishman knew he absolutely had to make his 20-kilo weight saving count on the first stage of the afternoon – thereafter he would be on the back foot as Neuville made the most of the sharper studs on offer from two spares.

The Irish Citroen was quickest in Torntorp, but only by 1.3s. It wasn't enough. From then on, Neuville edged

and eased away. Fastest on the afternoon's remaining two stages, the leader's confidence rose like that of a big wave rider. He backed himself.

This sort of result had been coming since the start of last year. From the moment Neuville set foot in Hyundai's 2017 offering, his ascendancy began. Arguably, he would have had the title last year had it not been for impatience and a determination to show the rest of the world he could round each and every corner quicker than they could.

Last weekend, he got those under control and drove one of the best rallies of his career.

Through Friday and Saturday, his rivals squirmed as their cars hopped in and out of the ruts, darting and diving in every direction. Neuville danced his car through those physical forces in some style. The grip and stability at the rear of the i20 was exceptional. And marked by comparison to the set-up of his team-mate Andreas Mikkelsen.

Mikkelsen and Hayden Paddon had joined Neuville on a provisional Friday night podium, but the other two Hyundais fell back. Mikkelsen chased too much time, running his car too hard for Saturday's faster stages. Paddon's first outing of the season was shaping up nicely – despite his continued inability to find the same pace on his first run at stages as he was doing in the afternoon. Ultimately, Paddon lost fourth to a charging Esapekka Lappi (Toyota) on the final stage.

Early on, Neuville and Mikkelsen had run 1-2.

"It's a bit like *Tom and Jerry*," joked the Norwegian. Hagfors first time was a certainly a comedy of errors for the pair as they both spun at the same corner.

That was the beginning of the end of Mikkelsen's challenge for the lead. For Neuville it was nothing more than a blip.

"When I spun, I saw some parts in the road," the Belgian told MN. "The snowbank was quite destroyed there. I knew it was him..."

By the finish, the gap to Breen was a shade under 20s, but the result, in all honesty, hadn't been in much doubt. Scott Martin's post-event press conference suggestion that he and his man had put the leader under pressure when they were just 4.2s down raised a wry smile from the man in the middle.

"What pressure?" he said. "It must have gone the other way. I didn't see it." It was a joke. But he meant it, all the same.

"The confidence was high in the car," said Neuville, "but I always felt like I had another gear if I needed it. This one was nice."

### 'Brilliant' Breen

Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday lunch. Same question, same answer: Tell us, Citroen team principal Pierre Budar, what do you think of Breen's work? One word: brilliant.

He got that right.

Now, there will be plenty out there who will point to the Waterford superstar running ninth on an opening day which kicked off with heavy snow still falling. Undoubtedly, he benefited from a cleaner road, but he'd earned it by running first through far worse between Agnieres-en-Devoluy and Corps on a Monte Saturday morning last month.

From the first stage in Sweden, things started to look good for Breen.

"There was a fast left-hander near the start of the stage," he said, "when we went into it I thought: 'Oh...' we were a bit hot in there and I was waiting to run wide. But the car stuck. After that I



Neuville (r) is now on top of the championship



Neuville had pace to spare in Sweden

pushed a bit more and a bit more and it kept on coming."

If the morning had been bad for the boys at the front, the afternoon was reckoned to be even worse. The national and historic cars had been through between the first and second loop of the WRC field. Narrower cars on narrower tyres wreaked havoc with the surface.

This would be a good opportunity to introduce five-time world champion Sebastien Ogier into the report. Remember him? Winner and hero of the Alps for a fifth consecutive January last month, he was nowhere in Sweden. He made one mistake and dropped some time in a snowbank in his M-Sport Ford Fiesta on Friday, but otherwise, he was simply sacrificed at the front of the field. Prior to a tactical time loss going into the powerstage, where he shipped four minutes in penalties for a better place on the road, he'd managed one top-three stage time.

"The ruts," said Ogier, "are 20cm narrower than my car. Even in a straight line I have to fight like hell to

stay on the road. The feeling is horrible – in every corner there is no way I can load the car and I hit virtually every snowbank. I just put my front wheels in [the ruts] like everybody else, but the rear is in 10 or 15 centimetres of loose. Car after car after car you see the times are getting faster and faster and faster. It's a joke."

Starting with Ogier, the line was progressively widened and the grip improved. Ninth in on Friday, Breen was... brilliant.

He rattled the C3 through the second run at Svullrya and Rjoden on the Norwegian side of the border faster than anybody. The violence of the lateral movement in the car was astonishing, the only answer being to bury the throttle, let the car pull itself through and hang on.

"It's bloody tricky," said Breen, "but we're in there and I'm giving it everything. We're throwing the kitchen sink at it and we'll keep doing that. You get it in those ruts and it's like *Cool Runnings*..."

Breen could certainly feel the

rhythm. The confidence continued to build as he hauled more and more time out of his team-mates Kris Meeke and Mads Ostberg. Fourth on the road on Friday, Meeke struggled to find form, favour or fortune in Sweden and paid the highest price of anybody when he nerfed a snowbank. He dropped a handful of seconds, but his Citroen had swallowed snow, which found its way into the turbo and cut the power.

Ostberg was a sensational second quickest at shakedown, but struggled to carry that pace forward into the event. He did, however, deliver a very, very much appreciated sixth-place to keep Citroen's manufacturer tally ticking over.

More importantly, Citroen has turned a page from the shocking inconsistency of Sweden last year – where the C3 looked like it had a mind of its own on more than one occasion.

Work on the suspension, rollbars and the torque split have shown an upturn in pace on gravel and there was huge relief when Breen showed this to be the case in the snow.



Paddon lost third place at the death

# NEU DELIVERS

*'This was Ogier's most lacklustre rally for a while'*  
 Champ's struggle in the ruts, p23

# ROUND 02



Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

# NEUVILLE ON THE PROMISE



Christophe Besse is a man who knows all about the technical advances of the car, but he was more than happy to give credit to Craig on this one. "I was not happy with the car in the test, and in the test, he was a bit lost without the direction," he said. "Then when we come to the event, I lost the confidence and he is very good. He didn't complain about the car, he said it wasn't perfect – I don't think anybody had the perfect car here. What was important was that he didn't change the car, he didn't change a lot, he kept the confidence and a lot of this came from him and his confidence. He did his job." "Those feelings were echoed from within the car, where Martin reported a perfect performance from the man on his left. "No spins, no nothing," he said. "Everything just came to him and we were able to just get quicker and quicker. You could feel the confidence in the car, it's so important to get to this place and now we need to come from here."

Continued on page 22



Craig Breen drove one of his best events to land second place

## STAGE TIMES



Early pace man Tanak

- **SS1 SSS Karlstad 1 (1.18 miles)**  
**Fastest Tanak 1m32.7s Leader**  
 Tanak **Second** Latvala +0.3s
- **SS2 Hof-Finnskog 1 (13.21 miles)**  
**Fastest Tanak 10m32.7s Leader**  
 Tanak **Second** Ostberg +6.8s
- **SS3 Svullrya 1 (15.46 miles)**  
**Fastest Neuville 13m16.4s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Tanak +2.7s
- **SS4 Rojden 1 (11.89 miles)**  
**Fastest Mikkelsen 10m18.5s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Mikkelsen +3.7s
- **SS5 Hof-Finnskog 2 (13.21 miles)**  
**Fastest Paddon 10m19.5s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Lappi +2.1s
- **SS6 Svullrya 2 (15.46 miles)**  
**Fastest Breen 13m17.3s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Mikkelsen +1.0s
- **SS7 Rojden 2 (11.89 miles)**  
**Fastest Breen 10m06.1s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Mikkelsen +4.8s
- **SS8 Torsby 1 (5.90 miles)**  
**Fastest Paddon 6m23.8s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Mikkelsen +4.9s
- **SS9 Torntorp 1 (12.43 miles)**  
**Fastest Tanak 10m02.0s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Mikkelsen +5.2s
- **SS10 Hagfors 1 (14.64 miles)**  
**Fastest Tanak 12m58.2s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +4.2s
- **SS11 Vargasen 1 (8.87 miles)**  
**Fastest Neuville 8m35.9s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +5.9s
- **SS12 Torntorp 2 (12.43 miles)**  
**Fastest Breen 9m55.3s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +4.6s
- **SS13 Hagfors 2 (14.64 miles)**  
**Fastest Neuville 12m44.5s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +14.0s
- **SS14 Vargasen 2 (8.87 miles)**  
**Fastest Neuville 8m28.2s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +18.8s
- **SS15 SSS Karlstad 2 (1.18 miles)**  
**Fastest Tanak 1m34.7s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +19.7s
- **SS16 Torsby Sprint (1.94 miles)**  
**Fastest Neuville 2m32.7s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +22.7s
- **SS17 Likenas 1 (13.17 miles)**  
**Fastest Tanak 11m11.8s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +14.8s
- **SS18 Likenas 2 (13.17 miles)**  
**Fastest Lappi 11m15.0s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +16.2s
- **SS19 Torsby 2 [Power Stage] (5.90 miles)**  
**Fastest Lappi 6m01.2s Leader**  
 Neuville **Second** Breen +19.8s

# COLIN CLARK

*"All Ogier did was play the rules as they are set out"*



**S**ebastien Ogier seems to have an uncanny knack of dividing opinion. Most folk seem to fall into one of two camps – those who love him for his battling, win-at-all-costs approach, or those who dislike him because of a perception that there might be a not too subtle lack of sportsmanship emanating from the mercurial Frenchman.

Let me tell you which camp I fall into: I'm 100 per cent behind Ogier.

So what is it that's divided opinion once again with regards to M-Sport's number one driver? Well, I see it as a clever use of the rules to salvage something from what had been a week to forget. He basically went into the powerstage late to secure a more advantageous road position, thereby allowing him to push on and pick up points that, previous to his little ruse, seemed highly unlikely.

Let's be clear about this – Ogier broke no rules, he merely used them very much to his advantage. Throughout history, competitive advantage in all forms of motorsport has to be gained by taking an interpretation on rules that are grey. That is exactly what Ogier did and, to be honest, I believe others would have done the same faced with the unusual set of circumstances that Ogier found himself in.

I really do find all this sanctimonious talk of unsportsmanlike behaviour unbecoming of a world champion a little bit cheap. There are those out there who just want to have a pop at Ogier, and with predictable regularity, pounce upon every opportunity to do so.

Ogier is a five-time world champion and has achieved greatness doing things his way. There is, without doubt, a ruthless streak in the man. Just ask his former teammates: I'm sure there are many stories to tell. But that is very much part of what makes him the formidable opponent that he is. Becoming a world champion with the level of success that Ogier has achieved is no easy task. It takes a special person with a special psychological make up to be able to dominate opponents as Ogier has. His willingness to take decisions, no matter how unpopular they ultimately make him, is a big part of his win-at-all-costs mentality. And in my books, unsportsmanlike behaviour is where you take advantage of an opponent for your own benefit. What Ogier did in Sweden was to take advantage of rules that, you could argue, should be more tightly defined.

So please, stop shouting at Ogier. If you really must shout at anyone, maybe try shouting at the rulemakers.

# RALLY SWEDEN



BY DAVID EVANS

## DAVID EVANS

"Solberg was on maximum attack"



**I**t was 1981 again. Standing at the side of a frozen runway in northern Sweden, the peace was shattered by the urgent, crisp bark of RS1800. The co-driver jumped out and shouted: "Ten minutes, boys."

Fuel, tyres, two sips of tea and Petter and Pernilla Solberg were back aboard the family Ford Escort and out of there. Still leading, still smiling. With last year's Rally Sweden Historic winner Mats Jonsson back in his Group A Mazda 323 and a good few other well-wheeled Audi quattros on the entry list, the Solbergs were expected to be blown away. They weren't.

In a beautiful Escort, period prepared to the final nut and bolt by Petter's former co-driver Phil Mills and his Viking Motorsport concern, the Solbergs were well and truly on song. Fastest on three of Friday's four stages, they just missed the win after slipping off the road on the ski slope section of the Hagfors stage on Saturday.

"It doesn't matter," said Solberg. "It was Pernilla's birthday yesterday, it was important that we came out and enjoyed ourselves and we did that."

They weren't the only ones to enjoy themselves. Standing among the thousands in the Torsby stage, the appreciation for the 2003 world champion was astonishing – not least because of the incredible angle the Escort came into view at. Previous four-wheel-drive cars had seen just one corner here; braking, turning, accelerating. To stand any sort of chance, Petter had to make a few more corners. He threw the car one way, then the other, he was on the throttle harder and earlier than anybody else. Commitment, self-belief and natural ability carried 37-year-old technology from apex to exit quicker than anything else.

No wonder the crowd went mad.

Not far behind, the clock was wound further back. It was 1967.

Welcome back Rauno Aaltonen. Half a century after his last start on the Swedish, the 80-year-old was back for another shot. Eighty... 80! And, in many ways, the former 1000 Lakes, Monte and RAC winner was in for the toughest and roughest ride in the narrowest car in the field.

Typically for a man who'd been right at the top of his game, each question was given the same consideration you'd have expected when he was fighting Erik Carlsson and Timo Makinen through the 1960s.

Talking about the conditions, the same frustrations were evident as for world champion Sebastien Ogier – even if they were expressed with slightly less vigour from the superstar octogenarian.

"All the stages were more difficult than expected," he told *MN*. "The ice was firm, but it wasn't firm enough and we had ruts. When the car was jumping out of the ruts, there was no traction from the snow on the outside – a couple of times we got the pendulum effect and we were approaching the snowbanks!

"I've really enjoyed this event and I'll certainly be back if there's another chance."

The man is pure class.

*Continued from page 23*

By the finish, Breen, typically struggling to keep his emotions in check, was delighted.

"In Finland a couple of years ago we were third," he said. "But we were a bit of a way away, this time we're here in second, but we've been at them for the whole event. We really turned a corner this time."

Unfortunately, that corner has led them into a two-month holding pattern as Craig and Scott step down for Sebastien Loeb to drive their car in Mexico and Corsica (see *Rally News*).

### And Toyota?

Last year, Toyota silenced the service park with an incredible maiden Rally Sweden win for the Yaris WRC. Last month, Tommi Makinen warned Ogier and the best of the rest about what they could expect when they stepped into his backyard on round two. Fourth, seventh and ninth probably wasn't what Makinen had in mind from last week.

With Ott Tanak and Jari-Matti Latvala running second and third on the road, the running order did for them on Friday, but the speed from the Estonian and Toyota's second Finn Lappi in more consistent conditions was extraordinary – and a demonstration that the Puuppola powerhouse remains.

Tanak led after the first two stages before slipping down the order and into a Hagfors snowbank after whacking Meeke while trying to pass the ailing Citroen. At that point, he knew this wasn't going to be his rally.

Despite that, his stock continues to rise within the team – as does that of



Lappi impressed with his pace



Meeke was hit by turbo problems

Lappi, for whom second became seventh when he got sucked into a Svullrya snowbank. Such misdemeanours are tolerated on your first visit to the event in a World Rally Car (and only your second ever Swedish...). Further tolerance comes when you leapfrog from sixth to fourth in a sublime final day charge that ended with maximum powerstage points.

The bigger question for the team is how Latvala deals with the speed his team-mates are finding. To begin with it was quite endearing as Latvala pondered whether Tanak had come from another planet after seeing his times. J-ML dropped time

with a transmission problem on Saturday afternoon, but he needs to look forwards – he's not going to find the answer to this question with his head in his hands.

Talking of heads in hands, there would have been good cause for some of that at M-Sport.

For the first time in 13 rallies, there wasn't a Ford Fiesta WRC on the podium. Ogier's misery is documented earlier and – just like on round one – an early puncture spooked Elfyn Evans' guns. Teemu Suninen showed some promise when the going was good for him on Friday, but his lack of experience of both car and

conditions told as the rally went on.

Hyundai went from bottom to top in the manufacturer standings last weekend, with M-Sport doing the exact opposite. There's no doubt this was a conditions thing and nothing fires the Cumbrrians up like losing.

Ogier left Sweden's WRC winter wonderland in a dark mood on Sunday. As well he might, 10 points down on Neuville.

The Belgian walked on water last weekend. If he emerges from running first on the road in Mexico in a similar position, he'll look like a man capable of doing the same when it's not frozen...

## A rising star from the rising sun

Those closest to the established WRC2 order smiled. Friday had been an interesting day, but if normal service wasn't resumed, the watching world was invited to return for an explanation on Sunday afternoon.

In the end, nobody bothered. Instead, they sought out Japan's all-new World Rally Championship hero Takamoto Katsuta for another word.

The Toyota Gazoo Racing junior driver had led WRC2 for all but one of the Rally Sweden stages in a result which shocked and rocked the world championship.

Third in WRC2 in Sardinia last season was as close as the 24-year-old had come previously, but that Italian result went largely unnoticed. The same can't be said for last week, when he shaded Sweden's defending WRC2 champion Pontus Tidemand and rising Norwegian star Ole Christian Veiby, on a rally which visits, er, Sweden and Norway.

There were those who were quick to point to an extra half-a-millimetre of stud length on

the Pirellis beneath the Japanese Ford Fiesta R5, but reaching for such an argument demeaned the speed and sure-footed nature of Katsuta's biggest win ever.

Throughout the event, no matter how his lead grew, he deferred in everything to Tidemand.

"He is," Katsuta said, "Pontus Tidemand... he is dangerous guy, he is fast guy. I have to push, push to the maximum to stay ahead."

Every time Taka uttered those words, you feared what might follow. In the end, there wasn't a mark on his motor. He deserved his win.

And Tidemand wasn't hiding behind anything, admitting with equal regularity that he was doing his bit, pushing his Skoda as hard as he could. He was second, by just 4.5s with fellow factory driver Veiby half a minute down.

There was similar joy at a maiden category win for Denis Radstrom, who collected the JWRC and WRC3 honours in his Ford Fiesta R2T.

The Juniors were running Sweden as the first round this year and, like WRC2, the result was



Denis Radstrom won both the Junior and WRC3 division in his Fiesta

close – with Emil Bergqvist just seven seconds away in the runner-up spot, but it was Radstrom who bossed the class pretty much all the way.

"This is the best day of my life," he grinned, emerging from the car at the finish. "The last stage was close, but I just tried to forget everything and drive."

Irishman Callum Devine picked up valuable points in sixth, despite never having set foot competitively on snow before shakedown. "I've certainly learned a lot here," he said at the finish. "It's been really tough, but we've made the finish."

Briton Tom Williams rolled on Friday morning but battled on and was rewarded with 10th.

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, LAT

## SUPPORTS

# ROUND 02

## DRIVER ANALYSIS BY DAVID EVANS



### SEBASTIEN OGIER M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

The conditions over the weekend simply weren't there for the Frenchman who suffered his worst WRC outing in ages in Sweden. Played a tactical blinder ahead of the powerstage and was paid back with second quickest.



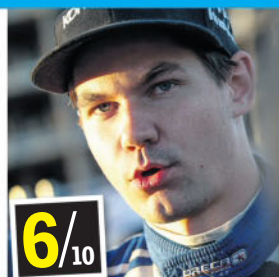
### ELFYN EVANS M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

A heartbreaking puncture on the opening day ruined the Welshman's rally and was rarely at the races thereafter – ironically set his best time when he couldn't see properly in the half-light of Likenas on Sunday morning in his M-Sport Ford Fiesta.



### TEEMU SUNINEN M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Top M-Sport Ford finisher is more of a reflection on the misery of his team-mates rather than the outright brilliance of the Finn. Targeted somewhere between fifth and eighth place, he achieved that. Just.



### THIERRY NEUVILLE HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

This was a perfect performance from the Belgian. The rally he'd threatened for so long. He never doubted it for one second, but the way in which he put this victory together really had to be admired. A strong result to move 10 clear in the championship.



### ANDREAS MIKKELSEN HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Mikkelsen looked racey enough early on in Sweden, but he just couldn't get comfortable enough to really challenge for anything more than third place (partly because he suffered from a 'snakey front' on the i20) as the rally progressed.



### HAYDEN PADDON HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Paddon would probably quite like mornings to be banned in Sweden. Struggled to find the rhythm and confidence on the first loop but was always there through the afternoon. Dropped a place when he stalled on the final stage.



### KRIS MEEKE TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

When it became clear the conditions weren't coming his way, he drove his own rally and made sure that he simply made it to the finish. Inadvertently put Tanak in a ditch in Hagfors, but ultimately sidelined after his turbo lunched itself on some snow.



### CRAIG BREEN TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

The Irishman simply didn't put a wheel wrong all weekend. Finishing in third place in Finland a couple of years ago was impressive, but this was on another level again. Made the most of what he'd got and drove like a champion.



### JARI-MATTI LATVALA TOYOTA YARIS WRC

Struggled with a front differential losing pre-load and not doing its bit to haul the Yaris through corners on Saturday afternoon. Friday conditions had, by then, already ruled out a repeat of last year's win.



### ESAPEKKA LAPPI TOYOTA YARIS WRC

Would likely have been in with a shot at the win had it not been for getting tangled up in a sixth-stage snowbank. Like Tanak, brilliant speed when everything worked in his favour. Deserved his fourth.



### OTT TANAK TOYOTA YARIS WRC

When he got some clear road, half-decent grip and there wasn't a Citroen to play bumper cars with, few could touch the Estonian for pace. That speed wasn't rewarded here. It will be.



### MADS OSTBERG TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

Loved being back with Citroen, but there was good and bad to that and admitted he struggled with aspects of the C3 in the same way he had with the DS3. A solid enough job in sixth, though.



## MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER



### TAKAMOTO KATSUTA

Nobody saw this one coming and when the story started to unfold, more than a few expected it to end almost as quickly as it began. It didn't. Taka drove brilliantly for three days to bring fresh hope to millions of Japanese rally fans that one day, they might celebrate regularly and often.

## MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON



### JARI HUTTUNEN

He's a Finn, therefore he really should be faster in snow than he was. And he shouldn't have rolled in his pre-event test. All in all, not the best of starts for Hyundai's chosen youngster.

## RESULTS

FIA World Rally Championship, round 2/13, Sweden Rally, February 15-18

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	2h52m13.1s
2	Craig Breen (IRL)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Citroen C3 WRC	+19.8s
3	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR)/Anders Jager (NOR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+28.3s
4	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+45.8s
5	Hayden Paddon (NZL)/Sebastian Marshall (GBR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+54.4s
6	Mads Ostberg (NOR)/Torstein Eriksen (NOR)	Citroen C3 WRC	+1m15.3s
7	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+2m04.9s
8	Teemu Suninen (FIN)/Mikko Markkula (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m52.2s
9	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+3m44.4s
10	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+8m45.4s
14	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+9m47.4s
19	Henning Solberg (NOR)/Cato Menkerud (NOR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+16m38.5s
R	Kris Meeke (GBR)/Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen C3 WRC	SS19/damage
R	Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA)/Michael Orr (GBR)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	SS19/withdrawn

## CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

### DRIVERS

POS	DRIVERS	PTS
1	Thierry Neuville	41
2	Sebastien Ogier	31
3	Jari-Matti Latvala	23
4	Esapekka Lappi	23
5	Ott Tanak	21
6	Andreas Mikkelsen	21
7	Craig Breen	20
8	Kris Meeke	17
9	Hayden Paddon	10
10	Elfyn Evans	8

### MANUFACTURERS

POS	TEAMS	PTS
1	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT	54
2	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT	53
3	Citroen Total	46
4	M-Sport Ford WRT	43

## NEXT RALLY

Can Meeke make it back-to-back wins in Mexico?

## RALLY MEXICO MARCH 8-11

# MN CIRCUIT RALLY

Photos: SMJ Photography, M&amp;H Photography

## CLASS ROUND-UP

**Class C** – for cars 1601-2000cc – honours were decided within the top 10 overall. Stephen Beck was fifth overall and held off Darryl Morris by three seconds to take the victory.

The dry conditions favoured the more powerful Class C machines. Five cars out of the overall top 10 were Class C Ford Escorts. Championship leader Dane Walker's Escort Mk2 was down on power in comparison to others; he also picked up an electrical problem late on that almost meant he did not finish. Cathy Sewart was another driver who could have benefited from the absence of Joshua Davey's Darran. She made good tyre choices and was quick on SS1 in her Talbot Sunbeam. A broken throttle cable then a gearbox oil leak that filled her car with smoke put her out of contention.

Paul Sheard maintained his position as **Class B** leader in his Mazda MX-5. Peugeot 205 driver Matthew Ockendon won on the day with a 20th place, but he is not registered for the championship, so did not affect Sheard's title challenge. Sheard himself had initially not been over-optimistic of his chances and thought that the fast, dry conditions would not suit his car.

Third and fourth in the class were two drivers with four previous rallies between them. Gavin Thomson, in a Peugeot 205, has recently switched from circuit racing and has really taken to rallying. Snetterton will be his last championship outing as he prepares for a comeback later in the year with a more powerful car.

Thomson split the two Mazda MX-5s. Ben Short, who is not registered for the championship, finished 28th.

Ashleigh Morris had a trouble-free run in her Ford Fiesta and is now third in Class B.

David McMullan was the star of **Class A** for up to 1400cc machinery. From the beginning, he was setting startlingly fast times approaching the top 20.

He found himself unable to engage reverse gear after a small spin on SS2, due to a snapped cable, but this was a minor setback.

Soon he was using the handbrake again with confidence and even a 20s penalty for starting SS7 late was overturned.

He was 25th overall, six places ahead of his nearest rival, Mark Blackmore in a green-and-yellow Vauxhall Corsa. Blackmore was not registered for the championship, so it was Aaron Rix in the Ford Ka McMullan had to worry about. Rix still leads the Class A championship and was happy with his smooth and safe performance.

Mark Annison was the third-placed championship driver and was happy to get his Ford Puma home. This was its first finish since the opening round at Oulton Park.

**Rachel Harris-Gardiner**



McMullan took a Class A win

# WEST MOVES CLOSER TO MN TITLE WIN

Peugeot driver excels as championship passes halfway point. By Dan Mason



West repeated last-minute 2017 win

**C**hris West tightened his grip on the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship taking a crucial second consecutive Snetterton Stages victory at the Norfolk circuit last weekend.

One year after snatching a last-gasp victory at the very same event, current championship leader West once again emerged victorious after locking horns with reigning champion Ian Woodhouse in yet another intense contest. John Stone was the man who left Norfolk with the biggest loss in the title chase however, as his Ford Fiesta S2500 Millington retired with engine failure.

West showed his intent early with two quick-fire stage wins to open the rally, the Peugeot 306 Maxi's advantage under braking enough to overpower the grunt of its Ford rivals.

A nine-second lead could have grown by a further five, but for an incident-strewn third stage, which was soon called off on safety grounds.

Mike English was the first culprit of the troublesome stage in question, forced into retirement when brake failure left him powerless as he ploughed into the wooden spectator fencing at the complex section.

"I had a choice of concrete or fence, so I chose the least painful," was his response as he emerged unscathed, as did John Marshall who exited the rally more spectacularly when his Subaru Impreza caught fire on the same stage.

With a rebuild not expected for his Ford Escort Mk2 until the end of the season, Woodhouse entered the meeting hopeful of a trouble-free outing meanwhile. It looked as though he would not get that luxury, initially battling a gearbox glitch that affected his first and second gear selection during the opening two stages.

The cancellation of SS3 gave

Woodhouse a fresh opportunity to attack West's lead however, and he instantly hit back on the fourth run of the day, moving seven seconds shy of the man who narrowly pipped him to victory on the final stage of the same event last year.

Gearbox gremlins quickly became less of a hindrance in the afternoon, Woodhouse added two further stage wins compared to West's bragging rights on the sixth. It set-up the possibility of payback for Woodhouse for 12 months ago, eight seconds the difference heading into the final run.

"I was leading until this exact point last year," said Woodhouse. "I've got to give it everything."

Try he certainly did, but a three-second victory on the final stage was not enough and West secured what he said was an unexpected second win of the season. "I thought he was going to beat me, so I was really on it," he said, citing the stopping power of the 306 as key to his success.

"I was almost too brave [under braking] sometimes! It's much more of a power circuit and I didn't expect to win here, so to beat the Escorts around here in the dry – I'm over the moon."

West's joy was compounded by the stage five retirement of main title rival, Stone. The Fiesta spluttered heading through Montreal, crawling to a halt with terminal engine damage.

Battling a bout of flu throughout the day, Stone initially channelled his energy into taking the fight to title rival West thanks to a raft of improvements bolted onto the Fiesta to help its cause on circuit rallies.

"We opted against putting the new engine in at this stage," he said, although dry conditions meant the Fiesta's new dampers could finally enjoy a productive run-out. His only saving grace was the retirement of class rival Marshall.

Inheriting third was the consistent Mark Kelly – who won the last event at Brands Hatch – in another Escort Mk2,



Marshall's chances went up in smoke

## RESULTS

Snetterton Stages, MN Circuit Rally Championship, round 5/8, Feb 18

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Chris West/Keith Hounslow	Peugeot 306 Maxi	46m07s
2	Ian Woodhouse/Jason Leaf	Ford Escort Mk2	+5s
3	Mark Kelly/Andy Baker	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m08s
4	Stephen Tilburn/Jack Tilburn	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m36s
5	Stephen Beck/Paul Brown	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m47s
6	Darryl Morris/Aron Rayner	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m50s
7	Robin Adams/Ray Keith	Ford Escort	+2m31s
8	Ian Hucklebridge/Steve McNulty	Ford Escort	+3m30s
9	Roland Brown/Terry Luckings	Ford Escort Mk1	+3m41s
10	Vince Sillett/Samm Keeley	Ford Escort Mk2	+3m45s

Class winners: David McMullan/Jamie Elston (Vauxhall Nova); Matthew Ockendon/Vicky Barry (Peugeot 205); Beck/Brown; West/Hounslow; Toni Carannante/Franco Carannante (Subaru Impreza).

albeit 1m08s adrift of the winner. An impressive fourth went to Stephen and Jack Tilburn, and completing a trio of Escort Mk2s in the order was Stephen Beck, Ford filling 14 of the top 15 places after Mike Taylor's Talbot Sunbeam Lotus dropped out late on with engine problems.

For the second year in a row, a much-fancied Darran was out of contention even before the start. Fifth-seeded Joshua Davey failed to make an

appearance in Norfolk after a replacement machine was not ready in time for the event, his regular T90 still missing a rare part for his gearbox.

Fresh from announcing his move to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB for 2018, Seb Perez sported Colin McRae's colours as he joined the field in a Ford Escort Mk2. The former Ginetta racer used the Snetterton Stages as a test session for a coming historic rally event in Majorca in Spain.

# INTERVIEW: CHRIS LLOYD

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, EDP Photo News

## HOW LLOYD IS BACK ON THE STAGES AND SLOPES



Lloyd competed on Nicky Grist

**A devastating crash hasn't stopped Chris Lloyd. By Jack Benyon**

**I**wouldn't drive a rally car or ski again, those words stuck in my head, and I wanted to prove them wrong." That's Chris Lloyd. Like many of you reading this feature, he's a rally competitor and a rally fan. But his life changed forever in 2011.

"It was at Caerwent [Patriot Stages Rally], it was a round of the MSA Asphalt Championship," he adds. "I can remember coming up to a corner flat out...and it wasn't a flat-out corner..."

"The car left the road and I remember holding on to the steering wheel. The car flipped for a distance that equated to about a rugby pitch and a half. When we were in the air we hit a tree, which caved the roof forcing it downward into my head, which broke my back and damaged my spinal cord."

Three-and-a-half months in hospital followed for the 43-year-old from Pontypridd in South Wales, where he was told he probably

wouldn't rally or ski again. He'd be lucky just to walk.

But, almost seven years on, it's a different Chris Lloyd on the phone. He's battle scarred but has come through with incredible modesty, as he chats to *MN* from Switzerland about his first love of skiing.

The injury caused a loss of use in his limbs, and he's had to work hard and train hard to regain usage.

What you probably don't know yet, is the timeline of his injury to present day ends with him being in next month's Winter Paralympics, representing Great Britain. He competes in Giant Slalom, Super Combined, Super-G and Downhill.

"Nothing was natural," says Lloyd. None of what he says comes across as a plea for pity. It's the most matter-of-fact manner of delivery.

"I was paralysed from the neck down after the accident, I had to learn to do everything again – to use my hands, my legs. Everything was new again to me.

"A year after being out of hospital I strapped some skis to my legs. I had

to learn to do that again as well. My muscles were a lot different and I had to start from scratch.

"I've been aiming for the Paralympics for a while. I went to Sochi in 2014 as part of a programme of people who were expected to make [the event in] 2018. It was the beginning of last year before I had any [sporting] injuries, the ligaments in my knee. But I had some good results and I was able to qualify."

Lloyd is driven by competition. It's what he loved about getting started and competing in rallying, and it's what drove him to prove the consultant wrong seven years before. They thought he would struggle to do all the things he did before the crash. But he treated that as a challenge.

"It's an amazing feeling to represent my country and to do my family proud," says Lloyd. "It's a privilege. There's been a lot of work to get from leaving hospital to get to where we are now, but it's all worth it. My family have been incredible and I've had support from friends."

OK, that's enough about skiing. What about the rallying?

"I had a friend who was into rallying and I went to a few events with him and took an interest in it," he adds. "I bought an old Escort Mk2 and did some forest events, I caught the bug from there. Probably the highlight of my career was my first closed-road event in Jersey."

"I think we started at car 60-odd and by the end of the first day we were fourth. That was probably one of the best memories I have as I didn't expect to be that close on my first ever closed-road event."

Despite the seismic shift in his life since his crash, Lloyd has always wanted to get back in the rally seat. And you'll be pleased to know he has. He returned in 2014, and while it took

a while to get back to it, he's competed ever since.

"Psychologically, it was scary getting back in a car," continues Lloyd. "After the first two or three events your love for the sport overcomes the fear you have. The adrenaline comes back. The nerves have gone once you get going."

"It's the buzz, trying to go as fast as you possibly can, whatever you're doing, it's a great feeling."

"I operate the car as normal. If you saw me now you wouldn't think there was anything wrong with me. I've gained back 50 per cent of the power back in my legs now, so it's not too difficult to operate."

Lloyd has always driven Melvyn Evans Motorsport Ford Escort Mk2s, and continues to do so, with a bright-yellow model getting a run out on the Nicky Grist Stages back in July. But there's been a hiatus from rallying while his assault on the Winter Paralympics takes shape.

"I won't do any rallying for a while, the focus is on the Paralympics in March," Lloyd concludes. "I still want to compete afterwards and that hasn't changed."

As a rally fan, and if you needed any incentive to keep an eye on the Brits at the Winter Paralympics, there really should be one man you're supporting above the rest. ■



Lloyd has now secured a place in GB Winter Paralympics team

Doctors said Lloyd wouldn't rally again

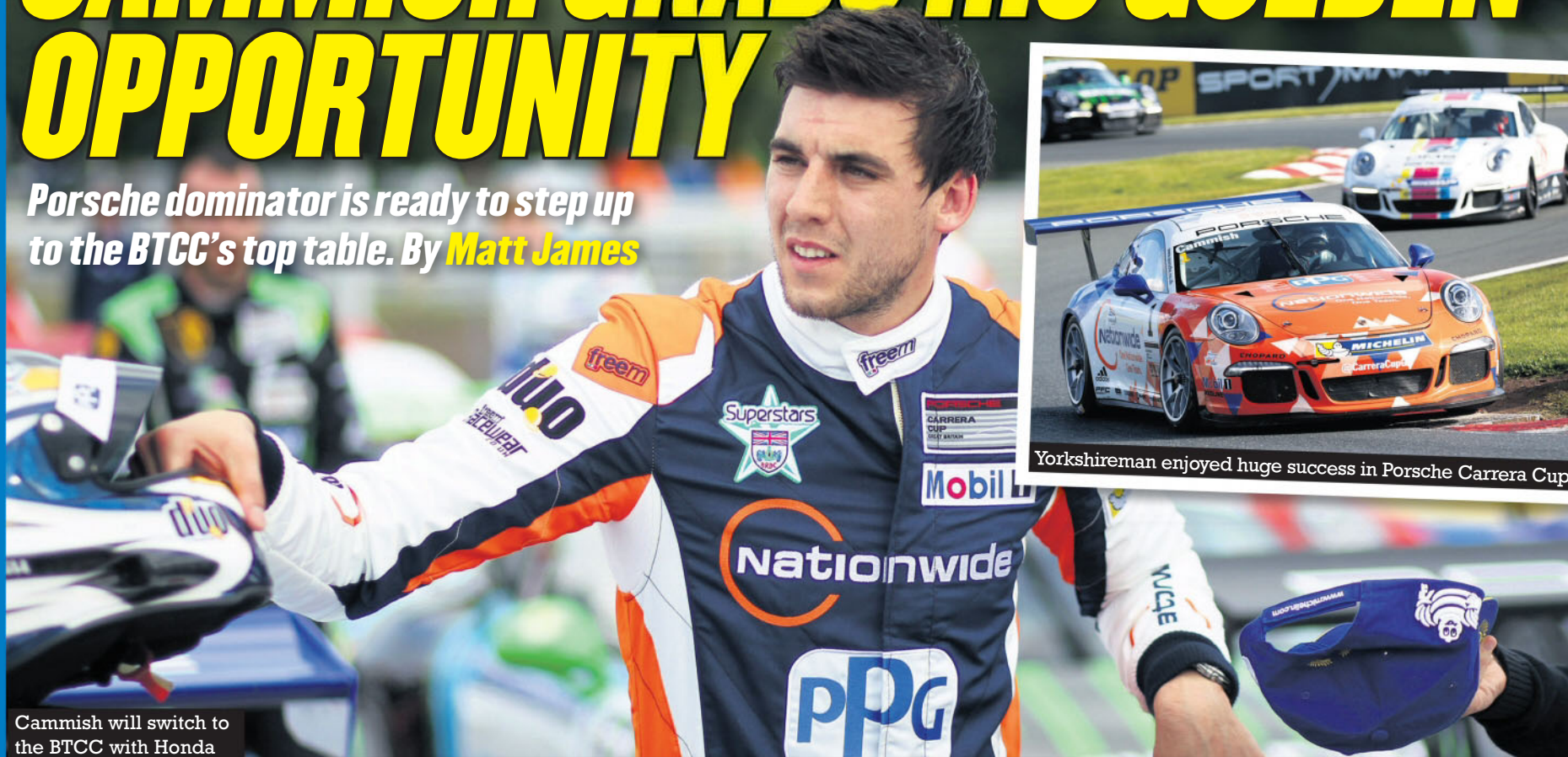


# INSIGHT: DAN CAMMISH

Photos: LAT

## CAMMISH GRABS HIS GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Porsche dominator is ready to step up to the BTCC's top table. By **Matt James**



Yorkshireman enjoyed huge success in Porsche Carrera Cup

Cammish will switch to the BTCC with Honda

**S**igning to drive a factory Honda Civic Type R in the British Touring Car Championship is another significant staging post in Dan Cammish's career. He will line up alongside Matt Neal in the Team Dynamics squad for 2018, and it represents a shift in his career trajectory.

Cammish had always been keen on a switch to the BTCC, ever since he first drove one of the tin-top racers as part of the Dunlop test drive prize for winning the British Formula Ford Championship in 2013. After sampling the Ford Focus, he then went on to test for WSR in one of its BMW 125i M Sport machines, but wasn't quite able to nail down a race deal, despite coming close over the last few months.

Then Team Dynamics and Gordon Shedden dropped its bombshell in late January: the Scottish racer, a permanent fixture with the Honda team since 2010, was leaving to pursue a drive in the remodelled World Touring Car Cup.

"I immediately sent a text to [Team

Dynamics co-owner and racer] Matt Neal," said 28-year-old Cammish. "He was very nice about it, but he said that although I had been on the shortlist, they thought they had it sorted out. Also, they assumed that I had a deal in place already."

While that was true – two-time Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Cammish had the option to return to the Porsche Supercup with the Lechner MSG Racing Team, the squad he drove for in 2017 – he knew Honda was a golden chance.

"Team Dynamics is one of the very top teams in the BTCC and this is a works drive: these options don't come around every day," says Cammish. "I thought I had missed out, but then about two weeks ago, I had a call from Matt to say there could be a chance. I went to the workshops and we got the deal done pretty quickly."

It is another change of focus for Cammish, who has been firmly plying his trade in sportscars for the last few seasons. His success in Porsches meant that his career was headed towards long-distance racing, and that was a decision he embraced in 2014. It is a sensible move for a driver without deep pockets who

wants to make a living by racing cars, and it is not an unusual route.

But Cammish says that it is a career option that is becoming increasingly difficult to conquer. "I am going to be 29 years old this year," explained the Yorkshireman. "I have only raced a pukka GT car once – you get to wondering if it is ever going to happen for you? Also, it is a path that is becoming increasingly congested. Look at the Porsche junior drivers – most of them are in their early 20s.

"Lots of drivers are dropping out of GP2 or GP3 and are looking to GTs. They have access to pretty good budgets too. That means that the marketplace is flooded, more so than it has ever been. You have to be realistic and the landscape has altered in GT racing."

And being realistic is something that Cammish will have to do in his opening experiences in the BTCC. The racing is hard, he will be at the controls of a front-wheel-drive car for the first time in his competition career, and Dynamics will be fielding a brand new, latest-spec Civic for 2018. There is plenty to learn.

"I know it's different, but I have been successful in everything I have done and I will be up to speed by the time we get to Brands Hatch at the start of the season," says Cammish. "Also, I am with one of the more experienced teams out there, so there will be data to pick over, and I have Matt Neal alongside me too. What he doesn't know about the BTCC isn't worth knowing.

"Look at what [2017 champion] Ash Sutton did: he was used to rear-wheel drive, jumped into front-wheel drive with Renault Clios and then the MG BTCC car and was a winner and then went back to rear-wheel drive last year and took the title in the Subaru Levorg. It can be done."

Cammish also has his mentor and friend, the 1992 BTCC champion and ITV commentator Tim Harvey, in his corner too. "I'll be chewing his ear off for advice," adds Cammish.

"As for the racing, people say that I'll have to be prepared for the BTCC but I have watched plenty of it. Also, the Porsche Supercup is always fierce too. While they don't bump into each other as much, it is still pretty tough going. I am used to it, and I have no doubts about my ability to race."

The reaction to Cammish's new berth has been highly positive, and it is something that the driver himself has noticed.

"This whole thing is a pretty big deal for me and my family," he explains. "I have been watching the social media reaction. I sent out a tweet to Matt Neal when the drive became available. Within a few minutes, it had about 200 likes! When I tweet about GT racing, I get about five responses. It is a different world."

It is a world that Cammish wants to buy into in the longer term, too.

"Lots of drivers have built successful careers in the BTCC that can last the distance," says Cammish. "I didn't think that option was there for me anymore in GTs, but it is in the BTCC. I want to be around for a long time and this is a great place to start."

"Sure, there will be pressure, but when isn't there in racing? That is the sort of situation I enjoy, and I have everything there in front of me to make the right kind of impression on the series. This really is a dream opportunity for me."

His first opportunity will be in Spain in a couple of weeks' time, when the new FK8 version of the Civic will be pounding around Parc Castellolli preparing for the new season. It will be the start of a new chapter in Cammish's life.



Record-breaking FFord title

CV

### Dan Cammish

**From:** Leeds, Yorkshire  
**Born:** April 10, 1989  
**2017:** Third in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB (Redline Racing) (missed two rounds); Porsche Supercup (Lechner MSG Racing Team), fourth  
**2016:** Porsche Carrera Cup GB (Redline Racing), champion; Porsche Supercup (Redline Racing), one round, Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup (Konrad Motorsport), one round  
**2015:** Porsche Carrera Cup GB (Redline Racing), champion; Porsche Carrera Cup Germany (Konrad Motorsport), four races, 23rd, Porsche Supercup (Redline Racing), one round  
**2014:** British GT4 Championship (Team Parker Racing), eighth; Porsche Carrera Cup GB (Team Parker Racing), two races  
**2013:** British Formula Ford (JTR), 24 wins from 24 races, champion  
**2012:** Formula Renault Eurocup (Atech Reid GP), two races  
**2011:** Formula Renault UK (Mark Burdett Motorsport), sixth  
**2010:** British Formula Ford Championship (Kevin Mills Racing and JTR), third  
**2009:** British Formula Ford (Kevin Mills Racing), sixth, Scholarship Class winner; ADAC Formel Masters (Neuhauser Racing), six races, 13th



Shedden is off to World TCR, meaning Cammish got an opportunity

# PROFILE: RICK PARFITT JR

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

British GT's champion is more than a rock star who went racing. By **Robert Ladbrook**

## RICK PARFITT'S RISE TO RACING FAME



Parfitt is British GT champion... twice

### CV

#### Rick Parfitt Jr

**Age:** 43 **From:** Nottingham  
**2017:** British GT3 (Team Parker Bentley), champion with Seb Morris, three wins  
**2016:** British GT (Team Parker Bentley), third with Seb Morris, one win  
**2015:** British GT3 (Team LNT Ginetta), with Tom Oliphant/Ryan Ratcliffe, 18th  
**2014:** British GT4 (Century Motorsport Ginetta), with Tom Oliphant, fourth  
**2013:** British GT4 (Optimum Ginetta), champion with Ryan Ratcliffe, three wins  
**2012:** Ginetta GT5 Challenge (Piranha Motorsport), ninth

**P**reconceptions can be a dangerous thing in motorsport. Often what you perceive from the outside, can be very different up close.

Rick Parfitt Jr is the perfect example. Let's look at the Parfitt recipe first. He's the son of a music idol, a talented and successful musician himself, he races a Bentley – heck, he even wears those big, reflective superstar-style sunglasses.

From a distance you could expect temper tantrums when things don't go his way, a general air of pamperedness and the unshakable tag of a racing diva.

But go speak to the man himself, and you'll find none of that. Despite the obvious labels you could throw at Parfitt, none of them stick.

In truth, he's a hard-working, self-made man, who also happens to have found his feet as a racing driver. And a bloody good one at that.

"You know, I still that get weird moment when I don't actually believe what's going on is real," says Parfitt. "Sometimes when I walk down the pitlane and see all the people, and then I go into the garage and see this amazing Bentley sat there with my name on it I still get the 'Nah! This can't be real... do I really get to do this?' It's so surreal sometimes, but I oddly hope I never lose that feeling."

It's part of what makes racing special for me."

And racing for Parfitt is special. He earned it. He wasn't always a rock star, and he certainly hasn't lived off the riches of his famous father.

Little-known fact, he used to sell advertising space in these very pages before heading off to chase his own musical aspirations. He was always a keen karter, but he finally got to make the move into car racing in 2012 when he joined the Ginetta GT5 Challenge. Just a year later and he was British GT4 champion. Five years on from his first race, he's made history by becoming the first driver ever to win both the GT4 and GT3 British GT Championship titles.

While the GT4 title was impressive, last year was Parfitt's best yet. He stood head-and-shoulders above a competitive British GT3 entry to claim a massive milestone alongside Seb Morris in the Team Parker Racing-run Bentley Continental.

It was just the pair's second year together, and Parfitt's third in GT3. He'd shown flashes of pace in 2016, so people expected a lot from him for 2017, but oddly Parfitt himself didn't.

"I've never entered a season seriously entertaining the thought of winning the championship, so last year was mind-blowing for me," he says. "At the end of the day I'm just a bloke that sings to entertain people, not a career-focused racing driver. I just go into each year aiming to do as well as I can. If I win, then that's

fantastic, but I never really expect to win. If I finish 10th and get out of the car knowing that I've done absolutely the best I could, then I'm just as happy. Racing is about enjoyment and exploring your own limits, and that's why I do it."

"The atmosphere and camaraderie at Team Parker has been really key to our success as well. It's like a big family. In Stuart [Parker] we have a team boss who's so good technically that we can leave him to make the big calls both in the garage and on the pit wall, that really helps you relax and focus on the racing."

Another big factor in Parfitt's rise has been team-mate Morris. He's unquestionably had a big influence on Parfitt's driving, but this year that partnership will be broken up as Morris heads to chase a drive in Europe.

"Seb and I had a long chat about it, as he was keen to defend the British title with me, but we ultimately want different things in the sport," says Parfitt. "He's a young, career-focused driver and he needs to be in Europe chasing factory drives. I'm comfortable and happy in British GT, so it made sense for us to go our separate ways this year."

"Seb's done a lot for me, and helped me to the point where I'm now driving better than I probably ever thought I could."

A byproduct of Parfitt's British campaign last year was winning an outing in the support race to the



Parfitt was the stand-out amateur racer in last year's championship

Daytona 24 Hours in a GMG Racing Audi R8 GT4. He impressed by qualifying fourth overall in a high-quality field, but a fuel issue ended his chances in the race.

If anything, Parfitt says any preconceptions of him have worked against him. "You can come across some snobbery in the higher levels of the sport," he says. "I've had it before, with one driver even telling me 'you're no racing driver, you're just in a tribute band'. It was quite ironic really as I raced against that driver recently and overtook him, just thinking 'who's the racing driver now, mate?' Now I'm the first driver to win both British GT titles and a full member of the British Racing Drivers' Club, which is just surreal."

For this year, Morris is replaced by

Welshman Ryan Ratcliffe alongside Parfitt in British GT. The duo are one of just two Bronze-Silver-graded driver pairings, with the majority of the grid being formed of a Bronze with a Gold or Platinum factory driver. "We wouldn't be entering British GT again if we didn't feel we could win it," adds Parfitt. "Ryan is like my surrogate brother – we've raced against each other since I started in GT5s, and we know each other so well."

"We might not have the outright pace of the factory guys, but British GT is all about consistency. Last year was like a dream, and it shows what you can achieve when you just keep plugging away and don't give up. There's no reason we couldn't have another year like that." ■



Ratcliffe (left) joint champ in '13



Daytona outing showed pace



Morris (left) and Parfitt won in 2017

## The battle with Crohn's disease that ambitious racer has to defeat every day, every stint

Rick Parfitt Jr has been living with Crohn's disease since childhood. Crohn's is a chronic condition of the gut which causes painful inflammation of the intestinal lining. It is incurable at present and requires careful management.

"Because it's a hidden illness, people might assume that I'm absolutely well, but I'm not,"

admits Parfitt. "Last year it was very much highlighted because of lots of stresses, and my schedule meant that at British GT I was in a lot of pain, and there were times when I was getting into the car absolutely buckled over in pain. But luckily, adrenalin helped with a little bit of it, along with a lot of painkillers."

In addition to being physically painful, Crohn's often affects energy levels, something that's challenging for a racing driver.

"You get to a point, and it just hits you," he says. "The team know that if we get to that point during the day when I am just becoming over-tired, I will just call it a day and I'll say 'I'm not getting back in the car

now', because that's when mistakes can happen. Mistakes at 180mph are not something that you really want to entertain. The most important thing is sleep."

"I'm the most un-rock and roll person in the world, ever! I'm always in bed early when I can, and even on race weekends I try and get as much sleep as I can."

Regardless, Parfitt still has designs on the Le Mans 24 Hours.

"It's just managing your stints. I don't think that would be too much of a problem," he says. "I think it would be immensely tiring, and I would be pretty much crucified at the end of it, but it's definitely something I have to get used to."

Rachel Harris-Gardiner



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# SPORTING SCENE

Photos: Ashley Mills, fiaworldrallycross.com

## Hansens target WRX return with Peugeot

Brothers Timmy and Kevin Hansen are closing on a deal to remain part of Peugeot's World Rallycross team for 2018.

The French marque announced in October that it would continue in World RX this season with nine-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb, but is yet to announce who else will drive for the squad.

Having run a programme in collaboration with Kenneth Hansen's Hansen Motorsport squad since 2014, Peugeot will take its rallycross operations in house for 2018, utilising resources from its now defunct Dakar programme.

"The fear last year was that I would be without a seat," Timmy Hansen told *Motorsport News*. "It was great news when Peugeot actually announced that they're continuing and then I've worked hard on trying to get that seat. We will present soon what's happening with me."

The Swede has five World RX wins to his credit and challenged Petter Solberg for the World RX crown in 2015. "There are three teams that are able to win and you want to be in one of those," he continued. "Seb is done for one of the seats and obviously the second seat is a very good one. Peugeot are putting in big effort and we have a good relationship."

Kevin Hansen won the European Championship title with Peugeot support in 2016 before moving to World RX last year in a third works-backed Peugeot 208, and appears set to continue with the squad for this season. "It's really difficult to get things done when you were eighth in the world championship [last season]," said Kevin Hansen. "It's not long until testing for everybody begins, so it would be very nice to have things sorted before then."

# RENAULT TO MAKE UK DEBUT IN OPENING BRX ROUND

## French machine developed at Silverstone

By Hal Ridge

**World Rallycross driver Guerlain Chicherit is set to race his G-Fors-built Renault Clio in the first rallycross event held at Silverstone next month in the opening round of the British Rallycross Championship.**

Chicherit will race one of two Megane Supercars built by British firm Prodrive for his GCK team in World RX this year, but will get up to speed on the new British circuit by racing the Clio on March 17.

"It's a good opportunity to drive in an actual race at the track, because nobody will really have had any chance to race on that track before the World RX round," the Frenchman told *Motorsport News*.

"This is just to test. Both the Clio and Megane are new, everything is new including the engines and both cars are a new design so we just need to drive and to test and see where we are."

As well as GCK, Chicherit is heading up the G-Fors

squad this season, which is building a trio of new Renault Clios to race in the European and French Championships.

It has already announced former Albatec Racing driver Jere Kallio as driving one of the Clios, but is yet to announce any additional drivers, including who will race the second Megane in the GCK squad in World RX.

"The second driver is signed, we will make an announcement on that," said Chicherit. "We are excited that everything is coming together after two years planning. We're going for a big plan. We have designed everything from scratch [on the Megane], even the engine, transmission, gearbox, everything. We took some risks because everything is new but we have this year for testing as much as we can."

"I hope we can make some results, I hope we can make some finals and show the potential and be focused on 2019, when I hope to drive for the



Clio will make its UK debut at Silverstone

## Hillard encouraged by South African attack

Briton Dick Hillard finished sixth in the Hot Rod final on his first appearance of what will be a full campaign in South Africa this year.

The veteran has decided to race overseas rather than in the UK this year. He was aiming to ship out his own Vauxhall Tigra to race and had planned to fit an upgraded 16v engine to the car, but delays in completion of the new motor meant the car was not ready in time, and is still in the UK.

Plans to borrow a locally sourced VW Corrado also fell through when that was struck by engine maladies too, so Hillard purchased another Tigra – fitted with a rotary engine – from a local to contest the races in Mahem, Pretoria.

"We had very little time to practice," said Hillard. "The track is the smallest on the tour – I would compare it to Aldershot in the UK. The rotary power was very powerful but in a



Hillard has raced in South Africa

different way to my regular motor. During the meeting, we had a misfire and some brake issues that were holding me back, but we still went and did quite well and got three finishes. The next rounds are over the Easter weekend."

Hillard was ninth in the opening heat and then went on to finish third in race two. In the final, he was sixth.

● British National Hot Rod racers were beaten by locals in the first South Africa versus the UK at Tygerberg Raceway near Cape Town last weekend. Brits Martin Heath, Paul Frost, Bradley Dynes and Scot Paul Carruthers took part. They will remain in the country to take part in the Hot Rod 2.1 series, which features unlimited 2100cc Hot Rods, this weekend.

## Trois-Rivieres bosses look to ice race series

Organisers of the Canadian round of the World Rallycross Championship are forming plans to host a winter rallycross event next January, similar to the RallyX on Ice events held in Scandinavia.

Grand Prix de Trois-Rivieres director general Dominic Fugere visited the opening round of RallyX on Ice at Ostersund earlier this month.

"I went with our director of operations Jacinthe Ayotte at the suggestion of Andreas Eriksson [OlsbergsMSE boss and RallyX on Ice organiser]," Fugere told *Motorsport News*. "He thought rallycross on ice could work well at our venue, since we share the same weather as Sweden and the same passion for motorsports. Ice racing had a huge following in Canada, drivers like Alex Tagliani, Andrew Ranger and Marc-Antoine Camirand all cut their teeth in the discipline before going on to road racing success."

The proposed event would take place within the Hippodrome section of the



Canada has an ice racing initiative

GP3R circuit, where the loose-surface section of the World RX circuit is located.

"It'd be great to bring another event to Trois-Rivieres using our organising team, our huge heated grandstands and the legendary Canadian cold weather," said Fugere.

"We're considering options for classes and competitors, to having a Supercar Open, snowmobiles, snowcross, side-by-sides and motorcycles."

## Tohill to join the stars of the World Rallycross Championship in Belgian series

Former European Rallycross champion Derek Tohill will join a number of World and European rallycross competitors by racing in the opening round of the Belgian Rallycross Championship at Mettet this weekend.

New EKS signing Andreas Bakkerud will make his debut in one of the squad's 2017-spec Audi S1 quattros, while Swede Peter Hedstrom and event team-mate Daniel Thoren will drive a pair of Volkswagen Polos. Guerlain Chicherit is also expected to debut the G-Fors

Renault Clio he will race at Silverstone.

Tohill, who finished seventh in the Euro RX Supercar category last season, is planning to race his OlsbergsMSE-built Ford Fiesta in the event, against the regular Belgian contingent.

"The car has undergone a full rebuild," Tohill, who's Fiesta is run by the C-Sport team, told *Motorsport News*. "As long as the final parts arrive this week, I'll dust down the cobwebs off myself and get some much needed seat time. We will run an interim spec car for the weekend

as some major parts won't be ready for a little while yet, but this gives us an opportunity to try to find a good set up on what I would consider to be my weakest venue in the 2018 Euro RX Championship.

"We plan to test at Mettet on Saturday and all things going well to race in the first round of the Belgian Championship on Sunday. Nothing beats competitive seat time. I think there are some front-running World Championship drivers competing on Sunday so it will be good for us to chase them."



Irishman Tohill to race at Mettet

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

## MN SAYS...

# When playing the rulebook is... fair play

There was outrage when Sebastien Ogier gave up time on Rally Sweden. But why?

All of Sebastien Ogier's worst nightmares came true on Rally Sweden. He knew that running first on the road would render his challenge useless, and so it proved. And, to cap it all, Thierry Neuville was throwing his Hyundai i20 around with great speed and went on to take an accomplished win – and the championship lead.

It was M-Sport driver Ogier's decision to clock in late ahead of the powerstage in an effort to get better road conditions that caused discussion. Surely that wasn't the actions of a true sportsman, they said. That's rubbish, it was a top sportsman gaining any advantage he could after a troubled weekend. It certainly wasn't illegal, and it helped him gain four points. Sure, it was *only* four points, but let's see how important they are at the end of the year...

**Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)**



## YOUR PICS



LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

Photographs must be of a good quality and please send no more than three images



Steve Wells caught Jason Leaf's flame-spitting Escort on an MN Circuit round



Tim Hall snapped an Audi quattro



Garrick Collier caught a sliding Ford



Trialling action by Ben Lawrence



Hannah Doran found Mansell's racer



Rich Cranston went to see testing



Neil Kirby's high-speed CN capture

## LETTERS

### Marshalling's a must

I read MN's State of National Rallying feature (Feb 14). I believe that each rally crew (driver and navigator) should have to marshal once per year and obtain a signature, or they would not be included in any championship results at the end of the year.

This would not only increase the number of marshals, but also give every competitor an understanding of the lot of a marshal so they do not abuse the people that allow them to go rallying.

If every championship from the British Rally Championship down made entrants marshal on one of the events included in the series, a lot of the number problems would be solved. Also, barriers to entry. I gave up historic rallying due to the continual changes to regulations for both safety and other reasons. Everything from bigger mud flaps, extra rollcage bars to new belts, seats, extinguishers and helmets with the HANS device.

The costs just became stupid. It seems the regulations are to create sales for the equipment companies, because crew injuries in rallying do not reflect the need for change.

**Rick Parker**  
Via email

### More communication

With regards to your State of National Rally investigation, I still think the governing body, the MSA, doesn't do enough to work with grassroots motorsport in general and rallying is no exception. It doesn't communicate particularly well with licence holders and those with a vested interest in the sport.

Rallying in the UK (and Ireland) faces some of the toughest challenges ever. As well as the political element (NRW for example), there is the increasingly environmental aspect. What was accepted 20 or 30 years ago nowadays just can't and won't happen. People have very loud voices, which with social media today are very easily heard. Throw in health and safety constraints, insurance issues in today's litigious society, if we are not careful, rallying in forests will cease to exist within the next 20 years.

With such challenges should come a siege mentality between all interested parties, but apart from a few glorious exceptions (Rally 4



Motorsport News, February 14

Wales and Rally 2WD being two), I don't see that. The MSA, under the cloak of 'safety' keeps making change upon change, many of which are unnecessary in many people's books. It alienates hard-pressed competitors, mainly clubmen, just like me. The lifed seats/belts charade being one such grievance as someone who only does two or three events a year in my Peugeot 206: last year I threw away perfectly good equipment that had done a dozen or so Tarmac rallies. It cost me £1500 to replace because, as someone who does take responsibility for my own safety, I buy the best I can afford, but I can see where others are coming from as why buy top quality stuff when you end up throwing it away?

Seeding order wouldn't stop me entering a forest rally, it's a rally car after all and in any case, that's how it used to be! Cars numbered in the 170s and 180s on the 1970s RAC Rallies didn't have a problem.

Finally, on the subject of 'conscription-type marshalling' whereby the onus would be on a competitor to bring someone with them, I see nothing but problems there. It's a specialist job that not just anyone can do.

**Larry Carter**  
Motorsport journalist and  
broadcaster  
Via email

### Where's the gravel?

If you were to draw a line from Humberside to Cardiff and look south, and you might well ask: 'What is gravel rallying?'

This huge part of the UK, and the most populated, is devoid of any major gravel events. Long gone are the Sunseeker Rally, the Tempest

Rally, Rally of Kent and London Rally, while the Somerset Stages is on a sabbatical (if ever to return) and the Wydean relegated from the BTRDA. That means there is more pressure than ever on finding slots in the timetable to revisit Wales for yet another mainstream championship rally.

Had the governing body, the MSA, the Championship committee and the Rallies committee stepped up some years ago and worked with the organisers of these events to ensure championship status, then they may still be running and pressure on the Welsh forests alleviated.

As it is, the treatment of the Sunseeker organisers in pulling the plug on their rally as a BRC round, and dropping the Wydean from the BTRDA series, suggests to me no coherent thinking for the longer term on the geographical spread of rallies for the wider benefit of all.

To those involved at the MSA HQ at Colnbrook, you've brought this on yourselves, start the remedy (assuming it is not already too late) by working with and supporting the organising clubs to get rallies traditionally held outside of Wales back into the fold and bring the sport to a wider audience.

**Martin Jackson**  
Via email

### Frustrations

In reaction to your State of National Rallying issue, I have a story.

I have a car sat in garage, ready to go. I am, however, self employed and very busy and I have family commitments to see to when I am not working. I do, though, have two or three weekends spare a year and I would like to do a couple of rallies.

Then I look into it: wait a minute, my seat and belts are now out of date. I might not get out this year at all now. I am spending £1500 on them to sit in the garage for the majority of the season and I'd have to get a bloody HANS device too.

Oh, and I also need a new helmet to fit said device.

Maybe next year...

I don't care about seeding if I'm only doing a few rallies, I can't expect to be at the sharp end I just want to go out and have fun. There must be hundreds of people wanting to do a few rallies a year. That's a lot of entries.

**James Orton**  
Via email

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### NASCAR: Atlanta

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NASCAR will race in Atlanta

## LISTINGS

### FRIDAY-SUNDAY

#### ■ Stoneleigh Park, Coventry

#### Race Retro

Starts 0930hrs Admission see website **Web** raceretro.com

### SATURDAY

#### ■ Guernsey, Channel Islands

#### Guernsey Rally

Starts 0900hrs Admission free **Web** gmccc.co.uk

### SUNDAY

#### ■ Knockhill circuit, Fife

#### Grant Construction Rally Stages

Starts 0831hrs Admission TBC **Web** borderecossecarclub.com



Audi quattro at Race Retro

## TV GUIDE



motorsport.tv



Ford and Porsche battled until the last lap at Le Mans

It's that time of the week where there's the latest instalment from **The Great History Of The 24 Hours Of Le Mans** series (Thursday, 1400-1500hrs). The 1969-running would feature the closest finish in the event's history as Jacky Ickx and Hans Herrmann battled for the lead in the closing minutes, as well as the final appearance for the Ford GT40.

Then on Friday continue watching the **2017 Super Formula** season with round six from Sugo (0700-0900hrs), as Frenchman Pierre Gasly attempted to take a hat-trick of wins and the championship lead in the penultimate meeting.

From the warm comfort of your living room enjoy the thrills and spills on the snow of **Rally Sweden** as Sebastien Ogier leads the way after his season-opening win in Monte Carlo (Friday, 2100-2200hrs).

There's the chance to once again watch highlights of the **Bathurst 12 Hours** at the iconic Mount Panorama circuit in Australia (Sunday, 0730-0930hrs).

And catch-up with the **Race of Champions** from Saudi Arabia, as former F1 driver David Coulthard beat strong competition from across the globe to record his second win in the event (Sunday, 2200-2300hrs).

## DVD REVIEW LE MANS 24 HOURS 2017

With Fernando Alonso set to take on the Le Mans 24 Hours this year and generating even more interest in the great race, there's no better time to look back at the 2017 running.

All the major moments are captured and relived in the official review DVD, including how Porsche and Toyota capitulated, how an LMP2 car almost took outright victory, and the fantastic GTE Pro battle that went down to the final lap.

There are several chapters including start, dusk and dawn, meaning you can break the race into manageable segments as at 240 minutes in length it's certainly a long watch.

At times it's also a little difficult

to follow what is going on as huge chunks are cut out and a run-down of the order could probably be shown a little more often to help with this.

Accompanying the fantastic pictures is live commentary that was provided by Radio Le Mans during the event.

This is both great and a little frustrating. It works well in that the excitement in the commentators' voices is not laid over the top weeks or months later in a studio.

A downside of this is the constant non-stop talking, which works fine for radio as the commentator 'paints a picture' in the listener's head. But in a DVD review it doesn't allow

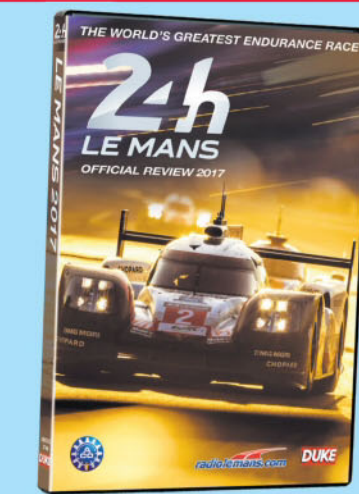
the pictures to breathe and in a review this long it starts to feel a little overwhelming come the end.

There are also moments where the commentary doesn't overlap with the pictures correctly or information said is incorrect, which again, does make it a little confusing at times.

There are also some bonus features on the DVD, the best of which is Toyota's Kamui Kobayashi's on-board qualifying lap-record.

As ever Duke Video doesn't disappoint and this is a solid addition to the collection for any motorsport fan.

Stefan Mackley



Le Mans 2017 review is available now

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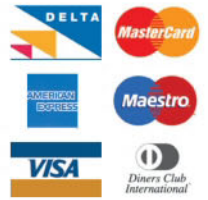
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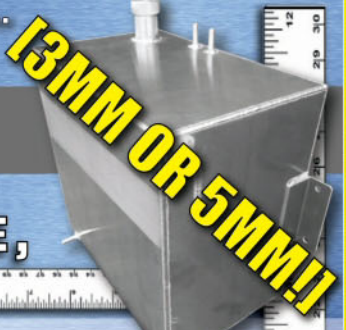
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Official fuel consumption for the New SEAT Leon Cupra R 2.0 TSI 310PS in mpg (litres per 100km): urban 28.5 (9.9), extra-urban 48.7 (5.8); combined 38.7 (7.3). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 170g/km. Standard EU Test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.