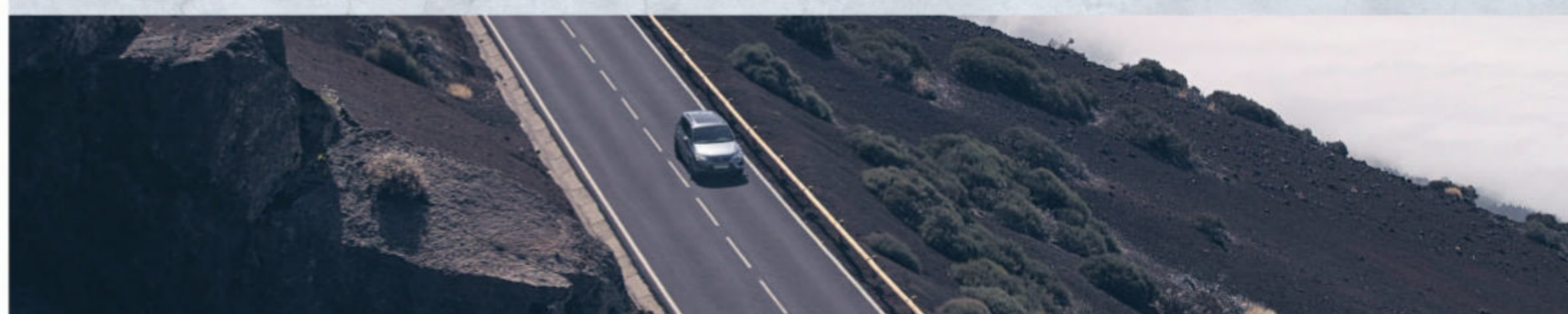


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ESTONIAN FLIES TO THE TOP OF THE WRC IN SWEDEN P20

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**Tin-top title winner signs up with Power Maxed Racing for 2019**

# PLATO

## JOINS VAUXHALL FOR BTCC PUSH



Plato will handle a Power Maxed Astra

By Matt James

Jason Plato has switched to Vauxhall to contest this season's British Touring Car Championship at the wheel of a Power Maxed Racing Astra.

The two-time title winner, who has won a record 97 races in the series, will begin his testing programme with the team next month.

"I am really excited and energised about what can be achieved at Power Maxed Racing," said Plato, who won the title in a Vauxhall Astra in 2001. "What is important is to be competitive every weekend. The focus is to win races. If we can do that, titles should follow."

Full story, p2-3



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# 2019 F1 CARS BREAK COVER!

TESTING SEASON GETS UNDERWAY IN BARCELONA P4



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**FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P33**

**The most successful BTCC driver ever is**

**PLATO:**



**By Matt James**

**Jason Plato will contest the 2019 British Touring Car Championship with the Power Maxed Racing team in a factory-backed Vauxhall Astra.**

The 97-time BTCC race winner inked a deal last week and will begin a test programme with the Warwickshire-based team early in March.

It means the double title winner will rejoin Vauxhall, the marque with which he took his maiden BTCC crown in 2001 as a factory driver in a Triple Eight Race Engineering Vauxhall Astra Coupe.

"I am really excited and energised about what can be achieved at Power Maxed Racing," said Plato. "I really like [team principal] Adam Weaver – we clicked as soon as we met and I know some key staff there from my days as a factory Vauxhall driver with Triple Eight in 2000 and 2001.

"From an operational point of view, I know Power Maxed

Racing is run in the right way and it was a quick, race-winning car last year. PMR was in contention in the teams' championship and it is a good, solid outfit. Adam and [team manager] Martin [Broadhurst] have got genuine well-thought-out ambitions.

"It is an exciting opportunity and one which, with all things being equal and providing we get a good run and we all work hard, we can be competitive."

A team-mate for Plato will be announced within the next two weeks.

**Making history**

Plato is the most successful BTCC driver in the series' history. He eclipsed Andy Rouse's long-standing benchmark of 60 wins at Brands Hatch at the start of 2011 and has gone on to reach the benchmark of 97.

The new challenge puts him firmly on track to land a further landmark number. "It would be lovely to get to 100 wins: there's just three more to go," said Plato. "But that's not the focus. The focus is to win races and the championship, and one will follow the other.

"What is more important is that each weekend we are competitive, and we are fighting at the front. The concept of winning a title by coming third at every meeting doesn't appeal to me though. It doesn't sex me up

– that's not what it is about for me.

"If the win is on, I want to go for it. I want to leave weekends with race wins under my belt. That is what gets me out of bed and that is what I am about. Yes, there is a bigger picture and had I been a percentage bloke, I would probably have won a lot more championships, but that is not in my make-up.

"If I get to 100 race wins, it doesn't mean I am suddenly going to stop trying. It is just a number and I will still have more races to win."

Plato has been in the championship for every season since 1997, apart from a sabbatical in 2002 and 2003. He has won at least one race in every campaign he has contested aside from last season, when he was at the wheel of a Team BMR Subaru.

**New partnerships**

Plato will join the factory-blessed Vauxhall attack, which took shape in its modern guise in 2017.

Weaver's Power Maxed Racing team attracted works backing for two brand new Astras, and Tom Chilton took a podium finish on the car's debut at Brands Hatch with Rob Huff adding another late in the 2017 season.

Last term, the front-wheel-drive car was a race winner in the hands of Senna Proctor and Josh Cook, with Cook finishing sixth in the overall standings. Power Maxed Racing finished joint second in



Title with Vauxhall in 2001

rejuvenated for 2019

# I WANT TO BE BACK IN THE TITLE HUNT



Two-time champ is "energised" by switch



The Power Maxed cars won three races during 2018

the teams' championship and also third in the manufacturer-constructors' contest.

The team will announce details of major new backing for this campaign within the next two weeks, and Plato says he is thrilled being an integral part of putting this deal together.

Plato explained: "I am proud of the fact that all of the deals that I have done since I came back to the championship after a sabbatical, have been manufacturer deals that I have either pulled together or have been pivotal to the funding stream.

"Very soon, the world will see that we have done it again. We have got a new exciting brand that we are bringing to motorsport and that doesn't happen by chance, that happens through hard work and graft and understanding the business that is motorsport. I am really chuffed that we have been able to pull this all together as a competitive programme."

## Back to the front

Plato aims to bounce back to the front this year with the Vauxhall after a struggle in recent seasons, and he said that he had even considered taking a year out of the BTCC in 2019.

He said that life changes in the background, as well as the struggle for results on track, had led him to study his options carefully before committing to the

Power Maxed Racing programme.

"I contemplated having a year out," he explained. "It was down to a mixture of things. I have got a lot of stuff going on away from motorsport. My daughters are moving schools, which means a move of house. I was nearly at the conclusion that things like that are so important and I should take some time out.

"While the BTCC is only 10 race weekends, it is not. It is 24 hours a day on my mind and in my system. I know how taxing that is to my wife, my girls and emotionally for me: it is a 24-7 gig.

"That, coupled with what had happened over the last two years and where I was, meant I was a bit bruised and beaten up to be honest. I thought it might be a good idea to spear off and just think about my family, get that sorted, recharge my batteries, recalibrate, and put something really great together for 2020. That was a very real idea.

"Ultimately my love of racing and seeing the passion my new team has, that has swayed me. I love motorsport and providing everything we put in place all works as we have planned it will be great. We have put the right sort of deal in place that works – if that hadn't been possible, I would have taken some time out."

## PMR delighted

Weaver, the team principal, first

became involved in the BTCC as a sponsor through his automotive brands, and Power Maxed purchased two Chevrolet Cruze cars to compete in its own right in 2015.

In 2017, the team switched to the Astra, and it was an immediate success. Weaver said that Plato's experience would be useful in pushing the entire programme forward.

"Jason has been around in the BTCC and he knows what he wants from a car, which will be an advantage," said Weaver. "The whole team is excited about having a driver with Jason's level of success in the squad.

"He brings with him a profile that we haven't had before, which will sit well with the current partners that we have. He is the most popular driver in terms of the reaction from the fans and he has a huge following on social media, which only goes to back up the results that he has already had on track.

"We have proved that we are a team capable of winning races and now we want to take the next step and go for overall titles. That is, of course, what every team sets out to do and it has to be our ambition for the 2019 season."

The British Touring Car Championship kicks off at Brands Hatch on April 6/7.

## JASON PLATO AT VAUXHALL

**WINS: 10 PODIUMS: 30 FASTEST LAPS: 16 (PLUS ONE SHARED) POLE POSITIONS: 9**

### WINS IN FULL

#### Plato's Vauxhall victories

DATE	TRACK	YEAR	VEHICLE
2000	Brands Hatch	April 9	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Vectra
2000	Snetterton	July 8	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Vectra
2001	Thruxton	May 7	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Astra Coupe
2001	Silverstone	June 2	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Astra Coupe
2001	Silverstone	June 2	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Astra Coupe
2001	Donington Park	July 1	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Astra Coupe
2001	Knockhill	July 22	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Astra Coupe
2001	Knockhill	July 22	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Astra Coupe
2001	Oulton Park	Aug 26	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Astra Coupe
2001	Brands Hatch	Oct 7	Vauxhall Motorsport Vauxhall Astra Coupe



Happy hunting ground: Snetterton win in 2000



PMR team boss Weaver



Plato's last BTCC win was in a Subaru at Knockhill 2017

# RACING NEWS F1 2019

Photos: LAT

## F1 ROUND-UP

### Ricciardo's move

Daniel Ricciardo has admitted the Red Bull Formula 1 team's handling of his Azerbaijan Grand Prix collision with Max Verstappen played a part in his decision to leave for Renault. Speaking about the factors that prompted his team switch, Ricciardo said: "I couldn't tell you how many little pieces made up the puzzle, the kaleidoscope, but I guess that was one of the little pieces. We both got a talking to, putting it politely, but in my eyes, I guess the incident itself was...I felt like I was not really in the wrong even though I was the one that hit him. I think most people saw the double move [Verstappen made in defence]. But it wasn't the deal breaker."

### Smedley's role

Former Williams and Ferrari engineer Rob Smedley will take on a technical consultant role with the F1 organisation. Smedley made it clear he was keen to remain in F1 after he gave up his post as head of performance engineering at Williams at the end of last year. He has now followed former colleagues Ross Brawn and Pat Symonds in agreeing to a role directly with the Formula One Group. "It's well-documented that I'd taken a decision to have a little bit of time away from the coalface in the teams," Smedley said. "But I still have a huge burning passion for Formula 1 and I hope that this is a way of me giving a little bit back to the sport."

### Monger's TV bow

Billy Monger will join Channel 4's presenting team for its Formula 1 coverage in 2019. BRDC British F3 driver Monger will work alongside grand prix winners David Coulthard and Mark Webber on the channel's highlights coverage. Speaking about his new role, Monger said: "I'm delighted to join the Channel 4 F1 team this season working around my own racing calendar. I've been watching the F1 coverage on TV since I was little and whilst my goal remains to be racing in one of the cars out on track one day, I am really excited to get broadcasting from the paddock this year."

### Brawn to be quizzed

F1 fans will have a rare chance to ask questions to Ross Brawn at a charity event in High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire on February 27. To be hosted by Steve Rider, 'An Evening with Ross Brawn OBE' will feature the former Ferrari technical director and Brawn GP and Mercedes boss talking about his career in the series – and the challenges he now faces as F1's managing director of motorsports. The event is in being held to raise funds for Horizon Sports Club, an organisation that encourages children and young people with disabilities to participate in sport. Tickets have been selling fast and cost from £18-£32.

# FERRARI ENDS FIRST TEST DAY ON TOP

## Vettel leads McLaren's Sainz Jr as pre-season testing begins



Ferrari also set the most laps on day one

### TESTING TIMES

#### Barcelona day 1 leaderboard

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME	LAPS
1	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	1m18.161s	169
2	Carlos Sainz	McLaren	1m18.558s	119
3	Romain Grosjean	Haas	1m19.159s	65
4	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	1m19.426s	128
5	Kimi Raikkonen	Alfa Romeo	1m19.462s	114
6	Daniil Kvyat	Toro Rosso	1m19.464s	77
7	Sergio Perez	Racing Point	1m19.944s	30
8	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	1m20.127s	69
9	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	1m20.135s	81
10	Nico Hulkenberg	Renault	1m20.980s	65
11	Daniel Ricciardo	Renault	1m20.983s	44

### By Jack Benyon

**Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari set the early testing pace at the first pre-season Formula 1 test at Barcelona, as MN closed for press, beating McLaren driver Carlos Sainz Jr to the fastest time.**

Vettel set a 1m18.161s in the morning session on the C3 tyres – the middle compound in Pirelli's testing range – to end up 1.783 seconds quicker than his nearest rival, Racing Point driver Sergio Perez.

While he did not improve on that time in the afternoon, Vettel did extend his lap count

to 169 by the end of the day, which also left him comfortably ahead in that tally.

Vettel's deficit over the field was reduced in the afternoon. Haas's Romain Grosjean was the first driver to get within one second of the benchmark time, with a lap on the C3 tyre in the last half hour of the session helping him snatch second from Sainz.

But Sainz took the position back with an impressive 1m18.558s lap to end the day 0.397s slower than Vettel.

Sainz had earlier brought out the first red flag of the afternoon when he stopped

at the exit of the pitlane at the beginning of the afternoon running. He blamed a loss of power for the issue, but the car appeared to run smoothly thereafter.

Grosjean had to settle for third, but Haas had a much better afternoon than the morning. Grosjean's car had ground to a halt entering the final chicane with fuel pressure issues earlier in the day.

After a slow start to the first test, the beginning of the Red Bull-Honda relationship received a boost in the afternoon as Max Verstappen took his tally up to 128 laps

and set the fourth-fastest time.

Kimi Raikkonen kept Alfa Romeo in the top five, having set the fourth fastest time earlier on in the day. Alfa Romeo was still one of five teams to complete more than 100 laps, despite Raikkonen's visit to the gravel bringing out the first red flag of the morning session.

His car then stopped with about a minute left in the afternoon, bringing out the red flag again.

Toro Rosso's Daniil Kvyat and Perez set the sixth- and seventh-fastest times respectively, but both teams would likely have wanted more running.

Kvyat needed to bolt the C4

tyre on to set his best time, while Perez only added 10 laps to the 20 he completed in the morning, with his team finishing bottom of the laps-completed order.

After taking over the Mercedes in the afternoon, reigning champion Lewis Hamilton could not wrest Valtteri Bottas's eighth place in the order by the end of the day, but he did complete more laps than his team-mate – ending the day with a tally of 81.

Behind the pair of Mercedes drivers, Renault had a disappointing day in terms of times as its drivers rounded out the order.

## Mercedes has worked to make new car "kinder" on its tyres

Mercedes says it has worked hard to ensure its new W10 Formula 1 car is "much kinder" to its tyres than its predecessors.

Although Mercedes made significant progress last year in improving on the 'diva' characteristics of its tricky 2017 car, the W08, the team was still not satisfied with how well its '18 challenger was able to look after its tyres.

Technical director James Allison says Mercedes has put a lot of effort into ensuring there

was a step gain in tyre management for 2019.

"The handling of the W09 was a big improvement over the rather idiosyncratic W08," said Allison. "However, notwithstanding this improvement, we were still not as good as some of our competitors at preserving the performance of the rear tyres.

"We have worked hard on the suspension and aerodynamic characteristics to deliver a car that will be much kinder to its

tyres – enough, we hope, to allow us to be competitive at all phases of the race and at each track on the calendar."

One of the team's other areas of focus was on reducing the weight of its car, as Mercedes' long-wheelbase concept has made it difficult for it to hit the minimum weight limit in recent years.

Allison said an "aggressive" weight reduction programme had been undertaken on all areas of the car.



W10 also benefits from "aggressive" weight reduction

"Even though the minimum weight limit was lifted by 10kg for 2019, weight reduction remains a real challenge on the current generation of F1 cars," he said.

"Components that we felt were stripped to the bone in 2018 have been taken, one by one, and subjected to a further round of aggressive analysis to shave further weight from them."

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**'Fittipaldi's crashed Lotus F1 car restored'**  
Historic news, p11



Photos: LAT

# WILLIAMS IN DISARRAY WITH CAR DELAYS

Only a show car was present at test on Monday



The Williams Formula 1 team was expected to miss the whole of the first two days of pre-season testing, as MN closed for press on Monday.

The squad finished bottom of the constructors' standings last year and its 2019 campaign got off to a bad start with the new FW42 not expected to start testing until today (Wednesday) "at the earliest".

Williams was racing to finish the build of its new car and had to cancel a planned pre-test shakedown, before announcing last weekend it would miss the opening day of testing.

The car was still being finished back at the team's Grove headquarters on Monday morning, with only a show car in the 2019 colours present at Barcelona testing.

Williams "disappointed"

The initial delay announcement led to doubts Williams would be able to get the car to Barcelona in time to belatedly start testing on Tuesday morning as hoped.

Deputy team principal Claire Williams has now admitted the team doubts it will run on-track before Wednesday.

"It is looking more likely than not that we will now not be in a position to run on track until Wednesday



at the earliest," she said. "This is obviously extremely disappointing, but it is unfortunately the situation we are in."

"We will be getting the FW42 on track as soon as we are able."

The news means Williams is poised to miss at least half of the first test and 25% of the total amount of pre-season track time. It also limits the seat time for Williams' inexperienced line-up of F1 debutant George Russell and returnee Robert Kubica – who last raced in the series in 2010.

When the first delays were announced, Claire Williams said: "Our absolute priority is to always ensure we bring a car to the track that is the best that it can be and sometimes that takes longer than you'd anticipate or like. It's clearly not ideal, but equally it's not the end of the world."

RB15 is first to feature Honda powerplant



## Toro Rosso boss believes Red Bull will win with Honda power

Toro Rosso boss Franz Tost is convinced Red Bull will win races with Honda in the 2019 Formula 1 season because the engine has improved so much.

Tost has been a huge supporter of Honda since his team changed to its engines last season, and his views

played a part in convincing Red Bull to switch from Renault power for 2019.

He said he was "very happy" about Honda's progress and predicted great things from its tie-up with Red Bull for this year's RB15.

"All the expectations I put

into them, they delivered," said Tost.

"And I am quite sure that they will close the gap to the top teams, and that RBR will be able to win races with them."

"And we will also gain a lot of advantages out of this cooperation."



The Racing Point Formula 1 team unveiled a new title sponsorship with SportPesa when its car was launched last week. Racing Point's RP19 car will race in a largely pink livery that reflects ongoing support from BWT, with blue flashes. To mark its new title sponsorship with African sports betting company SportPesa, the company's logo appears with blue and white branding on the front wing, engine cover and rear wing.

## McLaren defends its decision to enter British American Tobacco partnership

McLaren has defended its decision to form a partnership with British American Tobacco for the 2019 Formula 1 season.

BAT, which owned the BAR F1 team from 1999 until it morphed into Honda's works operation in the mid-2000s, appears on the 2019 McLaren MCL34 via 'A Better Tomorrow' branding and has made clear it will not be promoting any tobacco products via the deal.

BAT's return to F1 sponsorship comes shortly after Philip Morris – another tobacco company moving into new areas – increased its visual presence on Ferrari's cars via its Mission Winnow project, which has prompted an investigation in Australia.

McLaren chief executive Zak

Brown said the BAT partnership should not be seen as a traditional 'tobacco' sponsor.

"BAT is an outstanding corporation that has a long history in motorsport," he said. "Our partnership's one that is technology based with their newer generation products. We don't have any relationship with the tobacco side of the business."

"Their industry is one that's

McLaren has BAT support

transforming and is technology driven. So we think there's areas where we can work with them and help them in their transformation journey around technology. They're a great company to be working with."



Renault optimistic ahead of 2019 season

## Renault claims it has made "substantial" engine gains

Renault says it has made a "substantial" step forward with its 2019 engine as it bids to close the gap to Formula 1's top three teams.

At the RS19's launch, Renault F1 managing director Cyril Abiteboul was particularly bullish about the progress made on the engine front.

"No figure – but it is substantial," said Abiteboul,

when asked about the scale of the power step made. "The furthest I will go is that it is the biggest we have ever done since the V6 [turbo-hybrid engine] introduction."

Abiteboul said Renault's engineers had learned lessons from the spec C engine that was raced by Red Bull last year, but that its 2019 design is a new one.

"It is very much new, and it is just pushing further the concept that we introduced and tested successfully with Red Bull – the C-spec that we elected not to run," he said.

"But it is OK, because we had enough information and feedback by getting it on the Red Bull. It has really been pushed much further with this year's engine."

The "final part" Alfa Romeo needed to shake down its 2019 Formula 1 car last Thursday was collected from the airport in the morning by race driver Antonio Giovinazzi, according to the team. The former Sauber team's car was decorated in a special 'love' livery to mark the run commencing on Valentine's Day, and driven by Kimi Raikkonen – ahead of the main 2019 livery of the Alfa C38 being revealed at Barcelona on Monday. A press release documenting the first on-track run for Alfa Romeo Racing since it took over the Sauber team's entry name stated that at the start of the day Giovinazzi "made his way to the airport to retrieve the final part needed for the team to assemble the car".



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## Hamlin takes NASCAR's showpiece amid chaos

Denny Hamlin held his nerve through a messy final part of the Daytona 500 to win the NASCAR Cup Series' premier event for the second time.

The Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota driver had declared his determination to win the event to pay tribute to late team co-founder JD Gibbs, who died last month, and ended up leading team-mates Kyle Busch and Erik Jones in a JGR top three sweep.

Hamlin and Busch had held their own at the front throughout a chaotic conclusion to the race that featured two red flags and an overtime finish inside the final 20 laps.

Paul Menard triggered a 21-car pile-up and the first race stoppage by tapping Matt DiBenedetto into a spin that collected most of those behind them.

Another red flag followed soon after the restart, when Clint Bowyer kicked off an eight-car crash by clipping Michael McDowell and firing himself into polesitter William Byron – whose Hendrick Chevrolet received a second heavy hit from Landon Cassill as the chaos unfolded.



Hamlin came through the chaos

## Formula 2 graduation for Ferrari's Ilott with Charouz

Ferrari Driver Academy Brit Callum Ilott has moved up a step on the ladder to Formula 1, taking a seat with Czech outfit Charouz Racing System in Formula 2.

The 20-year-old Brit had a top seat in GP3 last year with ART, finishing third in the championship behind team-mates Anthoine Hubert and Nikita Mazepin. He scored two wins and seven podiums.

Czech outfit Charouz were new to F2 in 2018, but showed strong race pace with drivers Antonio Fuoco – who took two victories – and Louis Deletraz steering it to sixth in the teams' championship.

"In one year, coming into the championship, Charouz showed really good pace," Ilott told MN.

"They did a really good job with few mistakes, and I was really impressed with them.

"And they were interested in me which is always nice.

"To give me the seat is a privilege. In the environment which I'll be working in, everyone is pushing to go forward and pushing me just as much. That's an environment that I like.

"Also having only one other team-mate rather than three, it's quite personal.

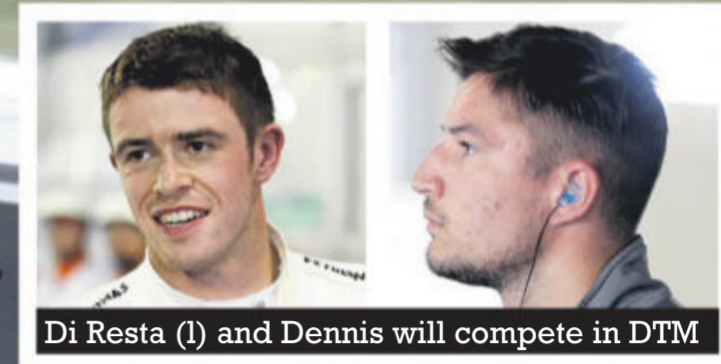
"It's more like the F1 style. I think that's also a nicer as well."



Ilott raced in GP3 with ART in 2018



Newer Vantage will be used



Di Resta (l) and Dennis will compete in DTM

# ASTON MARTIN SIGNS DI RESTA AND DENNIS FOR DTM

## British marque will make debut in German championship

By Marcus Simmons

**Ex-Formula 1 driver Paul di Resta is to spearhead the Aston Martin attack on the DTM this season and will be joined by Blancpain GT star Jake Dennis.**

Di Resta, who won the 2010 DTM title with the HWA-run factory Mercedes team, has long been expected to be part of the R-Motorsport-run Aston squad. The Scot returned to the

HWA Mercedes fold in 2014 when his F1 options ran out.

HWA has formed a technical alliance with Swiss team R-Motorsport and is building and developing the Aston Martin Vantage on behalf of the team.

R-Motorsport will run four new Aston Martin Vantage cars in its maiden DTM season.

Di Resta met R-Motorsport chiefs Florian Kamelger and Andreas Baenziger at a DTM round during

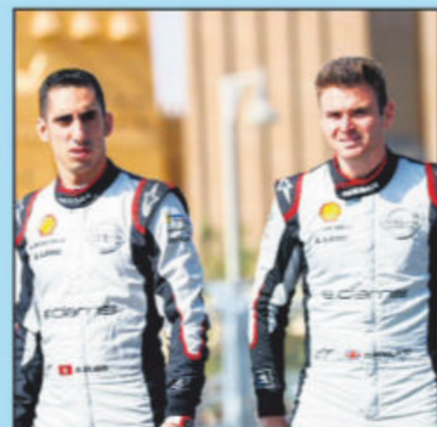
2018, and was immediately convinced about the project.

"We had a 20-minute chat over a cup of coffee in the paddock last year, and I was immediately convinced of their ambition and passion for this project," said di Resta.

"It's worth remembering that I've also worked with HWA since my Formula 3 days [he won the 2006 F3 Euro Series with an HWA-tuned Mercedes engine], and I strongly believe they're the

standout organisation in every series they contest – they were one of the big reasons behind Mercedes' DTM success, and I've got absolute trust and belief that R-Motorsport can do the job."

Dennis, the 2012 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner, joins the squad after he played a starring role in R-Motorsport's inaugural Blancpain GT Endurance Cup campaign in 2018 with its Vantage GT3.



Buemi (l) together with Rowland

## Miscalculation leaves Buemi 'speechless' after battery goes flat in Mexico City

Sebastien Buemi was left "speechless" after the Nissan e.dams team's dramatic energy loss in the Mexican ABB FIA Formula E race, which he put down to a strategy software miscalculation.

Buemi and his Nissan team-mate Oliver Rowland were running fourth and third at the start of the final lap of Saturday's race, just behind

Pascal Wehrlein and eventual race winner Lucas di Grassi.

But both Nissan drivers hit 0% energy just after the start of the final lap and ended up 20th and 21st overall, with Rowland, who had run second for most of the race, ahead.

When asked what had happened after the race, Swiss driver Buemi said that the team "didn't calculate the amount

of laps right, basically".

"We underestimated by one lap so we ran out of energy earlier," he continued.

"It's a software issue on the strategy software we have.

"It basically tells you how many laps you need to do and then you use the energy according to that. So we've done a mistake there and paid a big price.

"I'm a bit speechless, to be honest. I don't want to find any excuse or whatever, it's just a shame because to do an extra lap, if you start from the beginning if you have it right, it's peanuts [in terms of energy] because we are doing so many laps.

"It's a short lap, to do an extra lap really costs nothing, maybe a tenth per lap."

## QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

**Ex-Formula 1 driver Brendon Hartley looks set to return to the Le Mans 24 Hours two years after winning the race with Porsche. The two-time World Endurance Championship title winner, who raced for Toro Rosso in Formula 1 last year, appears on the verge of a deal to drive the British RLR Msport team's LMP2 class ORECA-Gibson 07... LMP1 refugee Alex Brundle is set to race for the United Autosports squad at this year's Le Mans 24 Hours. The 28-year-old, who drove for the Ginetta LMP1 team at Le Mans in 2018, will race one of**

**United's LMP2 class Ligier-Gibson JSP217s... Macau Grand Prix podium finisher and former Renault junior driver Sacha Fenestraz is to contest the Japanese Formula 3 Championship title this season. The 2017 Formula Renault Eurocup champion will dovetail this with a programme in the Super GT series, where he will drive a Nissan GT-R in the GT300 class with the Kondo Racing squad... Highly rated New Zealander Liam Lawson has won a place on the Red Bull Junior programme and will race in Formula**

**European Masters this season. Lawson, who recently won the Toyota Racing Series in his home country, will line up with fellow Red Bull protege Yuki Tsunoda at Motopark in the DTM-supporting series... Formula 4 racer Olli Caldwell is to remain with Prema Powerteam to contest the new Formula Regional European Championship. The 16-year-old British driver finished third in the Italian Formula 4 Championship with Prema last year – his first full season in car racing – and will contest the Italian-run FRegional series... The**

**GreenGT LMP2HG experimental hydrogen fuel-cell prototype that broke cover last year could race this season. The Swiss-based group behind the car, which was demonstrated at the Spa European Le Mans Series round last September, has expanded its partnership with Le Mans 24 Hours organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest to create H24Racing, an initiative designed to take the car into competition... The winner of each Extreme E series will not be known until months after the championship has finished because of its 'docu-sport' broadcast format.**

## Carlin moves into sportscars and ELMS

Top single-seater team Carlin will expand into the sportscar ranks for the first time this season.

The British squad has entered the six-race European Le Mans Series with an LMP2 class Dallara-Gibson P217 and intends to do the Asian Le Mans Series next winter.

Jack Manchester, who is moving over from the Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup, is the first confirmed driver.

"For us, it's another opportunity to hold onto and work with some great former Carlin drivers who are now at the professional level," said team boss Trevor Carlin.

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# RACING NEWS

## IN BRIEF

### GT4 Supercup movers

Britcar Endurance runner-up Tom Barley will be one of three drivers to contest their first full season of the Ginetta GT4 Supercup this year with Team Hard. Fellow Team Hard Britcar driver Darron Lewis will join Barley in switching to the GT4 Supercup – Lewis was fourth in the Britcar standings last year and runner-up in 2017 – and will run in the Am class. Multiple VAG Trophy and 2006 Volkswagen Racing Cup champion Paul Taylor will partner Lewis in the Am category.

### Taylor continues

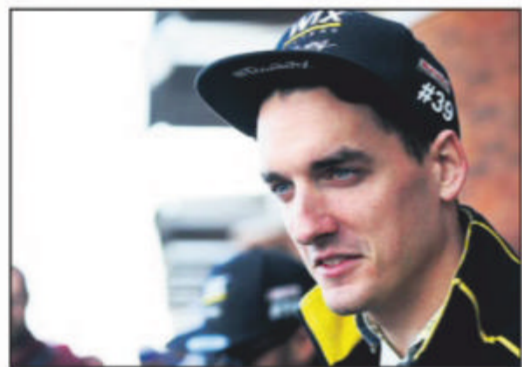
Ginetta Junior driver James Taylor will remain in the series this year and will be the highest-placed driver from the 2018 standings to play in the category. The 2018 Ginetta Scholar finished sixth in the points last year, taking three podiums, and will continue with the Richardson Racing squad. He'll be joined at the team by Casper Stevenson, who made his car racing debut in the Ginetta Junior Winter Series last November with Elite Motorsport.

### Robinson to Clio

Michelin Clio Cup Series driver Finlay Robinson will graduate to the main Renault UK Clio Cup this season with the Westbourne squad. Robinson, 18, was sixth in the Michelin series last year in his first season in the top Race class and had also previously raced in the Junior Saloon Car Championship, also with Westbourne.

### Frederick to Carlin

American Kaylen Frederick will contest this season's BRDC British Formula 3 Championship with Carlin. The 16-year-old claimed nine podiums and two pole positions over the last two years in USF2000 and competed in two rounds of Euroformula Open last term, taking a fastest lap at Monza.



Maximum Motorsport driver: Smith

### VW Racing Cup move for former BTCC driver Smith

Brett Smith will tackle the Volkswagen Racing Cup this season driving a Maximum Motorsport VW Scirocco.

Smith was a podium finisher in the British Touring Car Championship last season at the wheel of a Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R, a team that was owned by his father Jeff before it was sold at the end of 2018. Smith Jr finished 20th overall in the points.

However, he has now signed up to contest the one-make category for organiser Stewart Lines' team.

The 26-year-old, the Mini Challenge UK title winner in 2017, said: "It was tough to get back into the British Touring Car Championship with the budgets, and I was looking around for something competitive to do. Stewart offered me a great deal.

"I know it is a competitive championship and that is what appeals to me. You want to know that you've worked hard for a title. I hope I can be near the front, but I am not just expecting to walk in and be at the front."

Smith said that there was a chance that he could also race one of Lines's Maximum Motorsport TCR UK SEAT Leons in some long distance events during the year.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Andrew Lofthouse



New second-generation Bentley Continental GT3 which Geddie and Ratcliffe will drive

# GEDDIE GETS READY FOR BRITISH GT

## Former champion rejoins Team Parker Racing

By Stefan Mackley

**Former British GT champion Glynn Geddie will return to the championship with Team Parker Racing in the new second-generation Bentley Continental GT3 alongside Ryan Ratcliffe this year.**

Geddie, who most recently competed in two rounds of the

British Touring Car Championship last season with AmD, rejoins Parker having raced for the squad in the past, primarily in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB.

He was crowned Pro-Am 2 champion in 2008, Pro-Am 1 champion a year later and finished fourth overall in 2010.

"It's good to be back with Team Parker Racing as it's where we started together in the Carrera Cup," said the 2011 British GT champion.

"I've not raced a GT3 car full-time since 2012 so to come back with Stuart [Parker, team boss] is good because I know the team well and it will help me re-acclimatise. The Bentley has been a good car over the past few years and hopefully the new car will deliver for us.

"It's a bit of a risk coming back after so long out but I'm looking forward to the challenge. I'll be testing the new

Continental GT3 for the first time on the Media Day [at Donington Park on 5 March].

"It is not ideal but we've got a number of test days lined up before the start of the season so we should be in good shape by the time we get to Oulton Park."

Ratcliffe will remain with the Parker squad this term, having raced for the team last season alongside 2017 British GT3 champion Rick Parfitt Jr.

## Cook hoping to find ingredients for success after switching to BTC Racing squad

Two-time race winner Josh Cook will switch to the BTC Racing team to drive one of its Honda Civic Type Rs in the 2019 British Touring Car Championship.

The 27-year-old, who claimed the rookie-based Jack Sears Trophy in 2015, took victories at Donington Park and Thruxton last term on his way to sixth in the overall standings in a Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra.

Bath racer Cook said: "The Honda

Civic is a car that I've wanted to race for some time and BTC Racing is a team that has made an impressive entry to the BTCC in the last two years.

"Having met with [the new team partner] Steve [Dudman], Bert [Taylor] and the team at their impressive new facilities in Brackley, it's already very clear that we all share the same objectives and desire to succeed this season. They have all the personnel and resources to

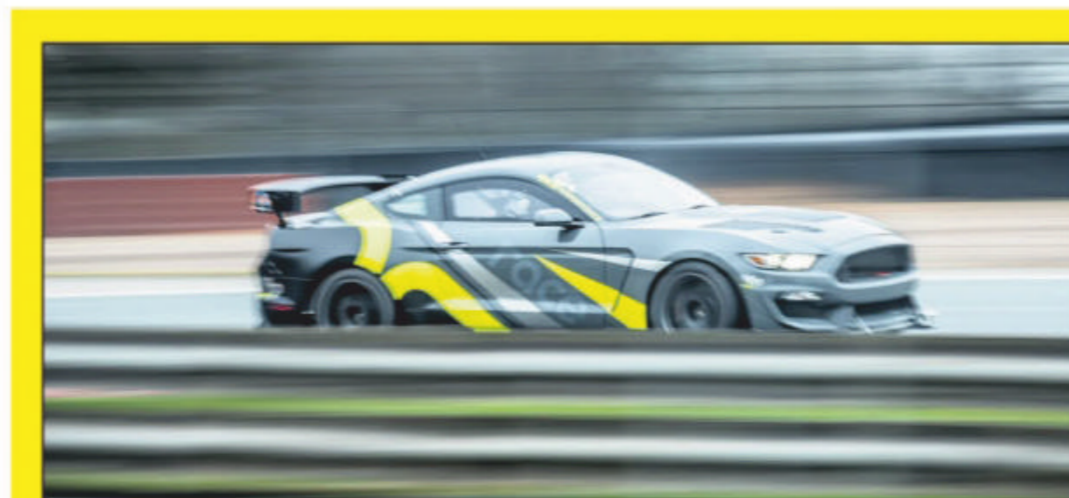
give me a great chance to be fighting for championship honours."

Cook will line up alongside Chris Smiley, who is remaining with the team.

Team boss Taylor said: "I've known Josh from day one of his touring car career. He has consistently shown the same passion and desire that we have at BTC Racing to succeed. He's already a proven race winner and signing him for this season fits the team's ethos."



Cook will switch to BTC Racing



RACE Performance's Ford Mustang GT4 will be driven by Taylor-Smith

## Taylor-Smith moves from Blancpain into British GT

British Touring Car Championship race winner Aron Taylor-Smith will switch to British GT driving the RACE Performance Ford Mustang GT4 alongside already-confirmed BTCC refugee Sam Smelt.

The Irishman, who claimed four BTCC victories between 2012 and 2016, returns to the UK after a frustrating debut season of sportscars in the Blancpain Sprint Cup last year, when he managed a best finish of 15th with one Silver Cup class win in a previous-

generation Bentley Continental GT3 run by Team Parker Racing.

Following a two-day test at Oulton Park, Taylor-Smith was upbeat about the team's prospects: "It was clear that Ryan [Connolly, team principal] has brought together an extremely talented group of people and what I like most is their hunger and drive to win. I can't remember the last time that I was this excited for a season to start as I see great potential to mount a championship fight."

## British GT4 welcomes KTM X-Bow entry, taking different manufacturer total to six

KTM will become the sixth brand represented in the GT4 division of British GT this season.

Cheshire-based Track Focused will step up from Britcar to run a Reiter Engineering-built X-Bow GT4 coupe for team director Sean Cooper and Mike McCollum.

It marks the first time a KTM

has competed in British GT since 2011, when ABG Motorsport pair Peter Belshaw and Marcus Clutton took the title in the previous generation open-top X-Bow GT4.

Cooper, the 2017 Britcar Sprint champion, had been a strong contender for the Britcar Endurance title with McCollum last year, but

the KTM pair were forced to withdraw from the final round at Brands Hatch due to McCollum suffering from appendicitis. They eventually finished third.

Track Focused, which has also run cars in Lotus Cup, Fun Cup and GT Cup, will enter Cooper and McCollum in the Pro-Am class.



Cooper and McCollum will drive KTM

## Meyrick's first BRDC SuperStars revealed

The latest batch of drivers to join the BRDC's SuperStars programme have been revealed – the first new members since GT racer Andy Meyrick took over as its director.

Formula Renault Eurocup champion Max Fewtrell, British F4 title winner Kiern Jewiss, British GT4 champion Jack Mitchell, McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Tom Gamble, Asian Le Mans Series LMP3 star Phil Hanson and BRDC British F3 podium finisher Billy Monger have all joined the programme.

A number of drivers have graduated from SuperStars for this season, including new F1 drivers Lando Norris and George Russell. Meyrick believes this shows the success of the programme under previous director Tim Harvey.

"There will be a bit of natural evolution but it speaks volumes it doesn't need to change much because Tim has done an amazing job," said Meyrick, who will drive a Bullitt Racing Mercedes in the GT4 European Series this year. "They've got a very good existing programme and my role is to continue that job. There's a lot of pressure! It seems like an easy job but I've got a lot to live up to."

"We've got a fantastic group of drivers and all the support we need from the BRDC to continue with the programme and I really, really enjoy working with them."

"Having been through the process of being on the SuperStars programme when I was younger I understand how it works. I can relate to the drivers and how meeting someone as part of SuperStars can have a tangible impact on your racing career."



Carrera Cup move for 2019

# ROB BOSTON RACING MOVES INTO CARRERA CUP GB WITH ROCHE

Ginetta GT4 Supercup race winner Tom Roche will graduate to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this season with Rob Boston Racing as part of a planned two-year campaign.

The 32-year-old won three times in Ginettas in 2018 on the way to finishing fourth in the standings, and will remain with RBR to lead the team's multi-car move into the Carrera Cup.

Former British GT racer and multiple Mazda MX-5 champion Roche told MN: "I thought 'what can I do this year?' I had the opportunity to do Porsches, so I thought 'let's try and do it'."

"The plan is to have a two-season campaign at it. I think it's going to be tough to beat the guys at the top in the first season. Maybe we can get near them sometimes, learn a lot and see what we can do next year."

"There's some really top level drivers in the championship who have been doing it for a few years already so I'm sure it's going to be a real test."

RBR is expected to field a three-car team for its debut season in the Carrera Cup. One driver is signed for the Am class and also a Ginetta driver who "people will definitely know" will enter if a car can be sourced. The squad will also continue to

run a four-car outfit in the GT4 Supercup.

Team boss Rob Boston, who raced alongside Roche in MX-5s, added: "The aspiration for the past few years was to fill some cars on the Carrera Cup grid but we've been very successful with the Ginettas so moving on wasn't a priority for the business."

"We'll be dovetailing [Ginettas and Porsches] on the same weekend. It'll be a big effort from us."

"I would consider Tom a formidable pilot. He didn't really show his full colours last year to be quite honest. He'll be very good. I'm buzzing about it."



Roche had success in Ginettas



Sharp drove Niall Murray's FF1600 last season at Anglesey

## Switch from F4 to FF1600 for Sharp with leading squad Team Dolan

British Formula 4 driver Jamie Sharp will switch to the National Formula Ford 1600 series this year with the frontrunning Team Dolan squad.

Sharp, 17, has spent the past two seasons racing in F4 with his family Sharp Motorsport team taking a best result of seventh. But he made his FF1600 debut at Anglesey last November with

Bernard Dolan, taking a podium, and will now race alongside fellow ex-F4 driver Ross Martin and Ginetta GT5 Challenge racer Morgan Quinn in the series.

"I think it will be good for him," said Sharp's father Joe. "Bernard Dolan's is a top team, you can't beat his knowledge. Jamie's done F4 for two years and this will be a good learning year for him."

"If he does well he might do the Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy as well. He's really excited about it and used to race Ross in karts and they should work well together."

Sharp Motorsport may still run other drivers in F4 this year but will be testing a couple of young racers ahead of a possible campaign in 2020.

## Motorsport now closer to Vnuk exemption

A second key vote on an amendment to European insurance law has gone in favour of motorsport, moving it a step closer to being exempted from a directive.

The 2014 Vnuk court case set a precedent that all vehicles on private land – from lawnmowers to cars – must be insured.

But a key vote was won last month, when the internal market committee decided to exclude motorsport from the wording of the new Motor Insurance Directive – a document that acts as a guideline for EU member states to create their laws on vehicle insurance.

MEPs then voted on Wednesday and the European Parliament backed the amendment to exclude motorsport.

Conservative MEP Dan Dalton, the son of a club motorsport volunteer, operates in the internal market committee and has been key in pushing through these changes.

"I am delighted that MEPs have agreed to exempt motorsport from the EU's new motor insurance rules," said Dalton.

"This vaguely worded proposal was totally unnecessary and has left teams, drivers and fans in the dark for months."

"I hope EU governments and the European Commission will stick with what we have agreed in the European Parliament, which is a victory for common sense regulation."

Now the process goes into a phase called trilogues, where the MEP responsible for the law will then negotiate the exact wording of the text with the EU governments and the European Commission.

## Quartet of British drivers reach final Volant Winfield selection

Four British drivers have made the final 18 selected to enter the Volant Winfield at Paul Ricard this weekend from an initial 71 applications.

X30 world champion Joe Turney, 17, who became the first kart racer to win Motorsport UK's Young Driver of the Year in 2018, will be joined by karters Callum Bradshaw, 17, Clayton Ravenscroft, 16, and Ginetta Junior racer Emily Linscott, 16, in the competition staged by the Winfield Racing School.

First held in 1972, the Volant is open to 14-17-year-olds who have not contested a full season of single-seater racing, with a fully-funded campaign in French Formula 4 on offer to the winner after three days of evaluation by an expert judging panel including Volant Winfield founder Mike Knight and 2004 Monaco Grand Prix winner Jarno Trulli.

Past Volant winners include the likes of Alain Prost, Didier Pironi and Patrick Tambay.

The British quartet's rivals include 2018 junior world karting champion Victor Bernier, 14, and 16-year-old Hugo Le Henaff, a member of the French-based Race Clutch sim racing team, the first Esports racer to be accepted for the contest.

The 2018 winner, Brazilian prospect Caio Collet, dominated the French F4 title taking seven wins last season and has since been signed to the Renault Sport Academy.



Prize on offer to drivers is a fully-funded season in French F4



Kent driving Hyundai i30N

## TCR UK confirms first drivers for 2019 campaign as Kent and Wilson remain in series

Lewis Kent has become the first driver to confirm he will compete in the TCR UK series this season.

The 19-year-old will return to the championship aboard his Hyundai i30N run by his family team Essex and Kent Motorsport, having taken two podiums and fifth in the standings in 2018.

TCR UK held its inaugural season last year as grid numbers fluctuated, but Kent was always keen to return to the fledgling series.

"It was always our plan to have one learning year and the second year give it a good go," said the former Fiesta

Championship driver.

"Last year was a big learning curve jumping out of a Fiesta which was basically a road car into a fully-fledged race car."

Kent also confirmed he would be competing in the first round of TCR Iberico, a merger of the series from Spain and

Portugal, next month.

He may contest the remaining three rounds of the championship with 30,000 Euros (£26,275) on offer for the overall champion.

Darrelle Wilson will also compete in TCR UK again this season with the DW Racing squad in a Vauxhall Astra.

# GRASSROOTS MOTORSPORT'S BEST KEPT SECRET



## GROVE AND DEAN 2018 TOP 5

1	Michelle Hayward	Clubmans Sports Prototype Championship (BARC)	100.05
2	Jamie White	Fiesta Championship (BRSCC)	100.06
3	Steven Dailly	Nankang Tyre BMW Compact Cup (BRSCC)	100.12
4	Ben Short	Davanti Tyres MX-5 Cup (750MC) / MX-5 Super Series (BRSCC) / MX-5 Championship	100.13
5	David Graves	Toyo Tires Production BMW Championship (MSVR)	100.14



Starting its third year in 2019, the Grove & Dean National Driver Rankings is something you really ought to know about. Its function is to calculate results from a range of different championships to prove, once and for all, who is the best driver in club motorsport.

While the scoring system is complicated, put simply, the best lap time in qualifying and races over the course of the weekend is given 100%. Drivers are then measured against that best time.

The format was set-up by Grove & Dean Motorsport Director Andy Hancock, an established racer himself and so dedicated to the rankings that he painstakingly works out the results by hand in what can only be described as an incredible piece of self-commitment to the idea. Of course, Grove & Dean expects to use it to convert club racers to buy insurance. But this is also a grassroots club motorsport prize system, from clubbies to clubbies.

"I raced in the [British Racing and Sports Car Club] Alfa Romeo Championship for the last five years and I can see from some of the competitors I was racing with at the time that there could be a way to compare, how does the Alfa Championship stack-up against the Mazda MX-5s for

example," asks Hancock.

"The Sunoco Challenge again caters for the higher level, but there was nothing really done for the club racer to see how we stack up."

As it happened, it was a tight battle for the win in 2018 but British Automobile Racing Club Clubmans class champion Michelle Hayward came out on top, ahead of Jamie White (BRSCC Fiestas, right) and last year's winner Steven Dailly (BMW Compact Cup).

Hayward (above) has won a test in a Radical for taking top of the rankings. Depending on the driver's current circumstances and level of experience, a different car is chosen each year.

There has been a lot of attention on women in motorsport in recent months thanks to the introduction of the women-only W Series but Hancock reckons the rankings prove that club motorsport offers the perfect even playing field.

"It shows that anyone has the chance to win it," he adds. "Everyone starts on an equal footing. Talking to people in and around club racing, she's a very well respected driver. She's clearly very quick and does a good job, a very worthy winner."

It was Hayward's first Clubmans title this year after many years of trying. But the rankings prove her speed and consistency, over 1459 other competitors.

"I got plenty of congratulations and words of encouragement when I posted on Facebook that I'd won the award," says Hayward.

"Especially within the championship [Clubmans], the reaction there was good. I'm trying to piggyback off the back of this now and try to attract more local sponsorship and interest from the local press.

"It's nice to come top of anything, however they work it out."

Hayward will receive her test drive in a Radical SR3 in the coming months before kicking off her season – which is likely to be in Clubmans again although it could be in the higher-powered category.

"The prize has almost become second to it really," Hancock adds, explaining there's more to the rankings than a blast in contemporary machinery.

"It's meant quite a lot for the winners in terms of obtaining sponsors for the following year. A lot of these championships don't have TV coverage, so you need something that bit more tangible, to show to sponsors. "The ones who do well at the top of the rankings do actually use them to try and get more sponsorship in."

It's free to enter, helps to attract sponsors, and offers a test in contemporary machinery. What more could you want as a grassroots competitor?



## ELIGIBLE CHAMPIONSHIPS

- 2CV PARTS.COM Classic Racing Championship (BARC)
- 5Club Davanti MX-5 Cup (750 Motor Club)
- Aim Technologies Bikesports Championship (750 Motor Club)
- Alaco Motorsport Logistics Caterham 270R Championship (BRSCC)
- Alfa Romeo Championship (BRSCC)
- Avon Tyres National FF1600 Championship (BRSCC)
- Avon Tyres Caterham 420R Championship (BRSCC)
- Avon Tyres Caterham Roadsports Championship (BRSCC)
- Canons Motorsports Tin Tops Championship (BARC)
- Carbon8 Hyundai Coupe Cup (BARC)
- Caterham Graduates Championship Classic (BARC)
- Caterham Graduates Championship Mega (BARC)
- Caterham Graduates Championship Sigma/Sigma VCT/Sigma VCT (BARC)
- Caterham Graduates Championship Sigma (BARC)
- Civic Cup (BRSCC)
- Classic Fuel Solutions MG Trophy Championship (BARC)
- Classic Touring Car Championship (BARC)
- Clubmans Sports Prototype Championship (BARC)
- Cockshoot Cup Championship (MGCC)
- Demon Tweaks/Yokohama Classic Stock Hatch (750 Motor Club)
- Demon Tweaks/Yokohama Locost (750 Motor Club)
- Drayton Manor Park MG Metro Cup (MGCC)
- Dunlop TVR Challenge (BRSCC)
- Endurance Financial RGB Sports 1000 Championship (750 Motor Club)
- Heritage Parts Centre Formula Vee (750 Motor Club)
- Gala Performance Toyota MR2 Championship (750 Motor Club)
- ITC Compliance Caterham 310R Championship (BRSCC)
- ITC Compliance Caterham Supersport (BRSCC)
- Kerax Hyperdrive ST-XR Challenge (BRSCC)
- K-Tec Racing Clio 182 (750 Motor Club)
- Kumho BMW Championship (BARC)
- Lancaster Insurance MG Owners Club Championship (MGCC)
- Lotus Cup UK (MSVR)
- Lotus on Track Elise Trophy (MSVR)
- Luna Logistics Classic Formula Ford 1600 Championship (BARC)
- Max5 Championship (BARC)
- Mazda MX-5 Championship (BRSCC)
- Mazda MX-5 Super Series (BRSCC)
- Mazda MX-5 Supercup (BRSCC)
- Michelin Clio Cup Series (BARC)
- Mighty Minis/Super Mighty Minis (BARC)
- Milltek Sport VW Racing Cup (BRSCC)
- Mini Championship (BRSCC)
- Motorsport News Saloon Car Championship (BARC)
- Nankang Tyre BMW Compact Cup (BRSCC)
- Peter Best Insurance MG Cup (MGCC)
- Pickup Truck Championship (BARC)
- Porsche Club Championship (PCGB)
- Protech Shocks Sport Specials (750 Motor Club)
- Quaife Fiesta Championship (BRSCC)
- Quaife Modified Saloons (BARC)
- Raceparts 750 Formula (750 Motor Club)
- Radical SR1 (MSVR)
- Royal Purple Hot Hatch Championship (750 Motor Club)
- Scrapco Metal Recycling Avon Tyres Intermarque Championship (BARC)
- Smart 4Two Cup (BRSCC)
- Speed Group F1000 Championship (BRSCC)
- Speed Group OSS Championship (BRSCC)
- Sport 2000 Championship (SRCC)
- Teekay Couplings MK2 Production GTI Championship (BRSCC)
- Teekay Couplings MK5 Production GTI Series (BRSCC)
- The College Motors MG Trophy Championship (MGCC)
- Toyo Tires Porsche Championship (BRSCC)
- UK National Legends Cars Championship (BARC)

# HISTORICS

'Historics gather  
in Carlisle'

June showdown, below



Photos: LAT, Paul Lawrence, Kevin Money, Russ Otway

## DOWN THE PUB WITH

**ANTON  
GONNISSEN**

Rallying adventurer  
Age: 58 Lives: Belgium



The Mototri Contal

### He's off on the Peking-Paris

"We're going to compete on the Peking to Paris Motor Rally this summer in a 112-year-old Mototri Contal three-wheeler. The first Peking to Paris ran in 1907 with five competitors. Amongst them was a French three-wheeled Contal piloted by Frenchmen Auguste Pons and Oscar Foucauld. They didn't finish the event so we are trying to put that right on the 8500-mile rally."

### They want to finish

"With my navigator Herman Gelan, we are attempting to rewrite history by starting the 2019 Rally in a rebuilt second Mototri Contal."

### First run disaster

"The story for Pons was a short one. Stranded without petrol early in the race they couldn't be rescued by the other competitors as they were ahead of them. They ended up drinking the water out of the radiator, and then started their long walk back to Peking. They nearly died and the Contal is out there covered by sand..."

### He wants to complete the project

"Pons and Foucauld were the only men not to make it back to Paris, so we intend to lay that ghost to rest. Pons was the bravest of the competitors in the race, as he attempted the impossible. He lost everything in the Gobi Desert, even his 1906 driving licence was left when the Contal was abandoned."

### It is a rare three- wheeler

"As it is one of the few original Mototri Contals, we have tried to keep as many original parts as possible. In some cases, we have simply had to beef up the chassis with the endurance rally and the finish in mind."

### It is a big challenge

"We are nearly ready to start testing which has to be ready to be shipped to China in March. We want to be prepared but I am not underestimating the formidable challenge ahead."



Gonnisson: big challenge

# EX-FITTIPALDI LOTUS 72 TO RUN AGAIN

Crashed 1973 tub has  
been fully repaired



The Lotus 72 car has  
been fully restored

By Paul Lawrence

The Lotus 72 crashed by Emerson Fittipaldi at Zandvoort in 1973 could be running again this summer after a five-year restoration by Classic Team Lotus.

After the tub, chassis 72/5, was damaged in the accident in qualifying for the Dutch Grand Prix, the remains of the monocoque spent four decades at the back of the Team Lotus stores.

Eventually Clive Chapman, son of Lotus founder Colin and boss of CTL, decided to start a restoration project and the bare tub was shown at Autosport International in 2014. Finally, two weeks ago, with DFV engine number 130 reinstalled, the car was fired up for the first time in over 45 years.

"It is extraordinary that the car survived for so many years and it was very lucky that it was not thrown into a skip," said Chapman. "I think that is a mark of the sentimental attachment that my father had for the car, given his constant focus on the future and the team's perennial battle for more space."

"We've been restoring it gradually and it was really nice to get it fired up. It should be ready to run in a couple of months and Emerson keeps asking about it, as he's keen to come and drive it. But I don't think we'll ever race it."

Chassis 72/5 was raced almost exclusively by Fittipaldi and he won in Gold Leaf colours in the 1970 US GP and then in JPS colours to win the 1972 Austrian and Italian races.

## Jemison Jr to follow in his father's footsteps in Chevette HSR



Jemison Sr in full flight

Ben Jemison followed in his father Ian's footsteps when he made his rally debut recently on the Riponian Stages in North Yorkshire.

The Vauxhall Chevette HSR that the Yorkshireman has been building up over more

than five years has been almost ready for 18 months.

"We kept having mechanical problems though, but we ran it at the Lombard RAC Rally Bath and had a test at Tong," said Ian.

Jemison junior has previously

raced radio controlled cars.

"If you roll those you can just pick them up and put them back on their wheels, this is a bit different," he said.

He finished 14th in class after a manifold problem and further outings are now planned.

## Escort-only rally to return to Chimay

The Escort Rally Special will run for a second time in September, based in the town of Chimay in Belgium.

The Ford Escort-only special stage rally ran for the first time last year to mark 50 years of the Escort Mk1 and is now to be repeated to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Escort Mk2 winning the World Rally Championship with the late Bjorn Waldegard.

New for the 2019 edition over the weekend of September 14/15 will be two new special stages and a show stage on Saturday evening.

The central service area will be next to rally HQ on the Chimay race track.

Entries will be open to



Escort-only event will run for a second time in September

Escorts in three categories: historic, modified and demonstration and a 50 Euro deposit will reserve a place

on the entry list. Places are limited due to timing constraints on the multi-use closed road stages.

## Grant to team up with Pearson in a Marcos

Double Historic FF1600 champion Callum Grant will share a Marcos 1800 GT in the Guards Trophy this season.

Grant will split driving duties in the Marcos with Ian Pearson, who has raced against Grant in Historic FF2000.

"It will definitely be a change, they're meant to be quite quick," said Grant.

"The Elva Mk7s of Max Bartell is the only thing I've driven with bodywork on it.

"We'll do the Guards Trophy, maybe a few Masters races, and I think eventually he wants to do Spa Six Hours but I don't think that will be for a few years."

Grant isn't planning a full HFF1600 campaign this season but may contest selected races.

## IN BRIEF

### No Devils Own

Kirkby Lonsdale Motor Club has confirmed that the very popular Devils Own Rally will not run this October due to the lack of an organising team. The historic road rally, based in the Lake District, was due to be the final round of the Motorsport News HRCR Clubmans Championship but will not run this year.

### Fack's new Cannon

Seasoned sporting trials driver John Fack has recently completed a total restoration of a Cannon trials car, which he plans to use in Historic Sporting Trials. The immaculate historic car was not quite ready in time for the recent Sywell event but is expected to be out competing over the coming weeks.

### Carlisle is go

The 2019 Carlisle Stages (Saturday June 8) will bring together the British Historic Rally Championship and the Northern Historic Rally Championship, as well as modern and 4WD cars. The rally will use 45 miles of top quality stages in the Kershope region, with some single-usage and some double-usage. None of the stages have been used since the 2018 event.

### R.A.C. regs out

The regulations and entry forms for the Roger Albert Clark Rally have been published. This is the catalyst for the next instalment of the entry fee for the 165 crews who currently have reserved places for the November 21-25 event. To retain their place, depositors need to send a further £500 and an entry form by April 30.

### McFormula Ford

Fifty years of Formula Ford in Scotland will be marked at Knockhill (July 20/21) with the David Leslie Trophy race for Formula Ford 1600. Leslie was Scottish Formula Ford champion in 1978 to join drivers like inaugural title winner Tom Walkinshaw. To mark the occasion, Knockhill will stage a celebration of iconic Formula Fords from across the decades.

### Innes' cup is back

AMOC Racing has re-instigated the Innes Ireland Cup, after a short break, for pre-'66 GT and touring cars, running to Appendix K. Cars will be limited to a maximum of 3000cc and the series will run at Donington Park (April 20) and Brands Hatch (June 8), sharing a grid with the Jack Fairman Cup for 1950s Sports Cars.

### Jaguar Challenge

The 2019 Jaguar Classic Challenge will feature at five high-profile race meetings as well as taking in an invitation race at the Dijon-Prenois circuit in France (June 8/9). The HSCC-managed season starts at the Donington Historic Festival and includes a debut visit to Croft for the Nostalgia Weekend in August.



Jaguars will have five outings



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# HISTORICS RACE RETRO PREVIEW

'Metro to be celebrated'  
35 years of the 6R4



Photos: LAT, Paul Lawrence

# F1 ACE WATSON TO STAR ON LIVE STAGE

## Former McLaren driver to meet the fans at Race Retro

By Paul Lawrence

British Grand Prix winner John Watson will be the star guest at Race Retro when he makes his debut at the show alongside former touring and sportscar racer John Fitzpatrick.

The two British legends will share the live stage with rallying's Rauno Aaltonen, a regular guest at Race Retro which runs at Stoneleigh Park from February 22-24. As well as interviews, all three will take part in autograph sessions.

Outside the halls, a massive entry of more than 120 rally cars will tackle the demonstration rally stage. Due to work on the HS2 railway project the rally stage has moved back to where it ran in the early years of the show, in an area beyond the main halls.

Importantly, the fresh location will allow two demonstration stages to operate at the same time and spectators will be able to see the action on both stages.

Rally stage organiser Tim



Five-time GP winner

Foster from Rallying with Group B says the new layout will be good for participants and fans: "There is a bit more character in the new stage and running two stages has allowed us to take more entries. We had over 200 enquiries!"

Cars spanning 60 years of rallying history will take part, ranging from Mini Coopers and Lotus Cortinas to recent World Rally and R5 cars. Some former Peugeot Challenge cars and drivers will be on hand as the event celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Challenge and fans will have the chance to take a passenger ride in one of the rally cars. The live stage will run from 1000hrs to 1330hrs and 1400hrs to 1600hrs on both days.



Watson won the British GP in 1981

## IN BRIEF

### Icon in the spotlight

The 35th anniversary of the MG Metro 6R4 will be marked at Race Retro on the stand of 6R4. The stand will feature several examples of Austin Rover's Group B rally car project as well as a comprehensive display of scale model and memorabilia collections. The prototype 6R4 made its competition debut on the York National Rally in March 1984.

### Smith to meet fans

Famous lady rally driver Rosemary Smith will be among the star guests at Race Retro. Dublin-born Smith, now 81 years old, was a works driver for the Rootes Group and will be interviewed on the live stages about her rallying career in the 1960s and 1970s and will be signing copies of her book *Driven*.

### Rare Mini Marcos

The TransXL Mini Marcos Modsports car raced by Steven Roberts and a rare 1956 BMW 502 V8 prepared for racing at Goodwood are among the cars being offered for sale by Silverstone Auctions during its annual Race Retro sale. A BDG-powered Ford Escort Mk1 rally car, initially built for the 1993 London-Sydney Marathon, will be offered with a guide price of £50,000 to £60,000.

### HERO training

HERO, the Historic Endurance Rally Organisation, is offering hour-long training sessions for co-drivers interested in learning more about classic rallying. The sessions will have something for novices as well as those with some experience. Topics to be covered include event regulations, timing, plotting and regularity sessions and visitors can book one or more training sessions via [heroevents.eu](http://heroevents.eu)

### Gates open

Race Retro is held at Stoneleigh Park near Coventry and is open from 0930hrs to 1730hrs on Friday and Saturday and from 0930hrs to 1630hrs on Sunday. The Live Action rally stage runs on Saturday and Sunday only. More details about the show are at [raceretro.com](http://raceretro.com)

### Karting action

The British Historic Kart Club will be in action over the weekend with demonstration sessions on part of the live action rally stage. Karts from up to 1998 will be taking part, including the 1963 Fastakart of Eric Atkinson and karts for former British champions Bob Phair and Robert Cooper. Karter and BTCC champion Chris Hodgetts has taken over as BHKC patron following the death of Barrie Williams.

### Triumph on show

Helping to mark the event's celebration of Le Mans is a recreation of a Triumph TR3S as raced in the 1959 24-hours. Owned by Paul Hogan, the former works car was reconstructed using as many original parts along with its original chassis number.

### Gwynne honoured

To honour the life of Bill Gwynne, who died last September, his former Vauxhall Chevette HSR will be on show at Race Retro on the Rallying with Group B stand. The BGMSport team, headed by his son Ian, will field five cars on the live rally stage including an ex-Colin McRae Subaru Impreza.



Tony Worswick's gorgeous Ferrari 308GTB will be tackling stage



Several of the iconic Audi quattro machines will play to the crowd

## Mouth-watering motors to tackle rally stage

The biggest rally stage entry to date, both in terms of quantity and quality, will be one of the major draws at Race Retro as the revised venue layout hosts rally car action on both days this weekend.

A great deal of interest will centre on the anticipated public debut of the TEG Sport Skodaru, the team's new prototype that mates a Skoda R5 with a Subaru Impreza WRC engine. The Lancashire team has been working flat out to try and complete the exciting new project in time for Race Retro.

Star performers will include Dave Wright (ex-Sainz Ford Focus WRC), Geoff Jones (Subaru Impreza), Jimmy McRae (Vauxhall Firenza

Chevrolet), Tony Worswick (Ferrari 308GTB), Jason Pritchard (Ford Escort RS1800), Rauno Aaltonen (Mini Cooper) and Steve Harkness (Escort RS1800).

The latest Hyundai R5 of young Meirion Evans will join a gaggle of older cars, with the Metro 6R4 of Yorkshire veteran Warren Philliskirk marking the 35th anniversary of the model's debut. Opel Ascona 400s for Chris Birkbeck and Paul Kynaston will be crowd pleasers alongside more than 20 Ford Escorts.

Other rarities include Craig Pennington's unique VW Polo and Dave Kedward's rare Opel Calibra 4x4 as well as a gaggle of Audi quattros, Renault 5 Maxi Turbos and Opel Mantas.

## Event's tribute to Barrie Williams

The life of Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams will be celebrated at Race Retro with a minute of applause at 1100hrs on Friday morning. Williams died in September aged 79.

Williams was a popular star guest at Race Retro and entertained fans with stories and tales on the live stage. To mark his passing, a minute of applause will be held at the live stage.

Lee Masters from Race Retro said: "Barrie was one of the long-term stars of Race Retro, and you could see from how the visitors reacted to him that he was as respected as he was loved."

## HSCC plans to demonstrate series versatility with racer displays

The Historic Sports Car Club will showcase its 2019 racing season with an eight-car display at Race Retro.

The cars on show will demonstrate the variety of the club's racing programme, which opens its 53rd season at Donington

Park in late March.

Cars from starter-level categories will include the 70s Road Sports Marcos 3000GT of Nic Strong and a Historic Formula Ford 1600 Merlyn Mk20A from the Speedsport team.

Classic Formula 3, Historic

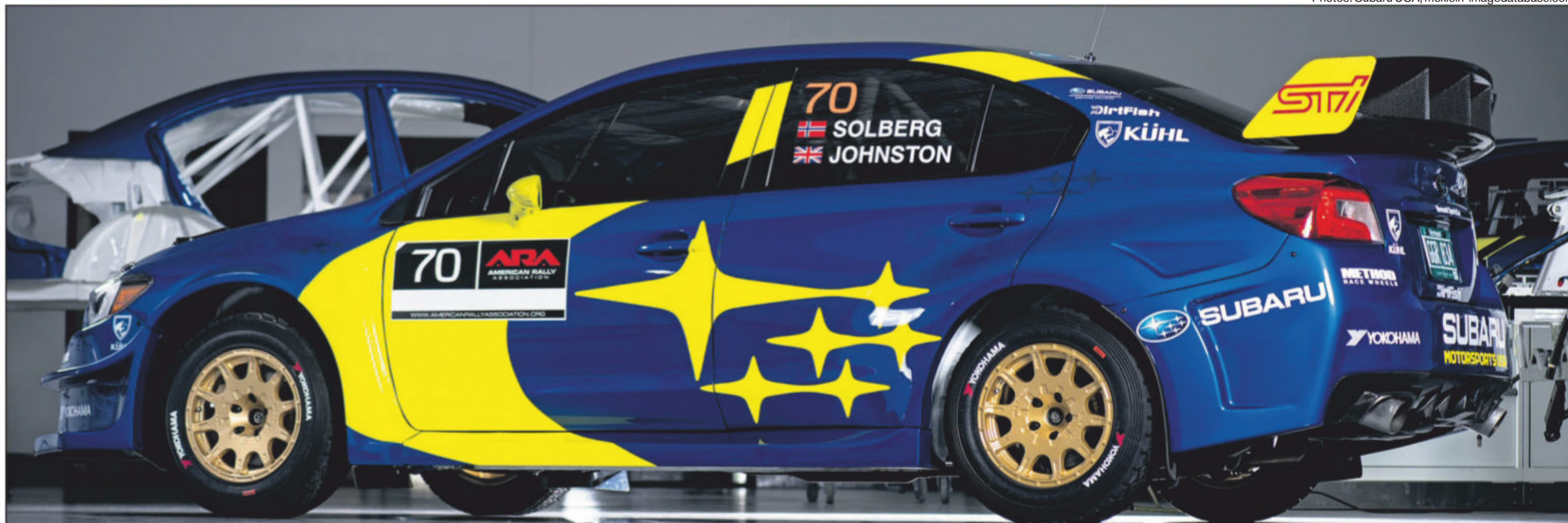
Formula Junior, Classic Clubmans and the Guards Trophy will all be shown along with the Ford Sierra RS500 of Mark Wright, representing the new Dunlop Saloon Car Cup. At the opposite end of the spectrum will be the Cannon trials car of Trevor Wood.



Mark Wright's RS500 on show

## NEWS INSIGHT

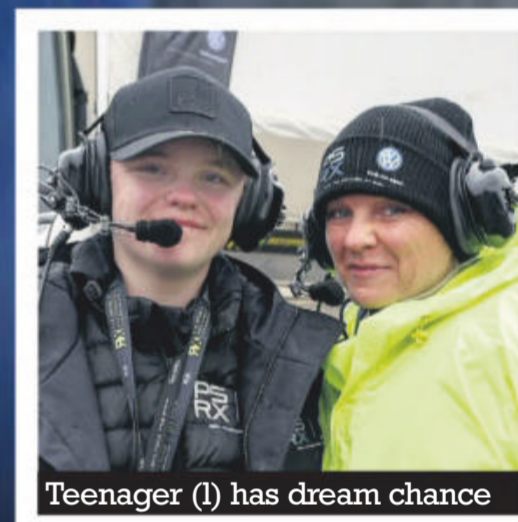
Photos: Subaru USA, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Solberg Jr will carry the iconic colours

# SOLBERG JR SECURES SUBARU DEAL FOR AMERICA

Petter's offspring will get a chance to carry famous colours



Teenager (l) has dream chance

By David Evans

**Oliver Solberg was just a one-year-old when he first sat behind the wheel of a factory Subaru Impreza WRC. He can't remember it. His father Petter will never forget it – certainly not now his 17-year-old son will be donning the same blue and yellow race suit to become the second Solberg to drive a works Subaru.**

Solberg Jr has been announced as a driver in the Subaru Motorsports USA squad for six rounds of this year's American Rally Association (ARA) series, where he will team up with Britain's all-conquering stateside star David Higgins. Higgins has won America's premier rally title for the last six years.

For Solberg Jr, his debut at next month's 100 Acre Wood Rally in Missouri can't come soon enough. The 2003 World Rally champion Petter is looking forward to that one as well. "I tell you," Solberg Sr told Motorsport News, "there will

be some emotion from Pernilla [Solberg's wife] and me when we see Oliver drive over the start ramp in that car and in those colours. You know me, and your readers know me, and know what Subaru means to me – we were all part of that journey a few years ago and I never forget this. To have Oliver driving for Subaru now is incredible.

"The most amazing part about all of this for me, though, is that he has done this whole deal for himself. He's done all the work, all the meetings, everything. It's fantastic for him."

Solberg, who is co-driven by Britain's Aaron Johnston, has made a great start to his four-wheel-drive rally career, winning the first two rounds of this year's Latvian Rally Championship at the wheel of a Volkswagen Polo GTI R5.

Solberg Jr knows, however, that the roads in America will be something else – and going up against team-mate and defending champion Higgins will give him the perfect marker.

"I have seen some of the pictures from the events in America and the roads look amazing," said Solberg Jr. "David knows the team and the championship so well, it's going to be fantastic to work with him and with Travis [Pastrana], who will drive the car on the rounds I'm not doing."

Talking to MN in his native Sweden – his mother Pernilla is Swedish – and between a succession of domestic and international television interviews, Solberg Jr admitted his life had been something of a whirlwind since last Thursday's announcement.

"Honestly," he said, "I tell you, I can't believe how much interest there is in this. For me, you know it's massive, just massive. For all of my life I have remembered my dad competing in the blue and yellow of Subaru – my earlier memories are all of what he was doing in the car and the championship. You know, I even still have the blue and yellow sheets for my bed!"

"OK, it's different because this isn't the WRC, but ARA is a really

big deal and rallying is really growing out there and for me to be with Subaru Motorsports USA, the best team in America is brilliant.

"But, you know all this talking is making me want to drive. At the bottom of this new deal is the chance to go and drive one of the best rally cars in the world on some of the best roads in the world. I want to go now!"

The Vermont SportsCar-prepared WRX STI Solberg will drive on six rallies this season is actually more powerful than the version his father used to clinch all five of his Wales Rally GB wins and his 2003 world title.

Higgins said: "It's very cool to have a Solberg driving a Subaru again. A generation of rally fans grew up watching Petter doing incredible things in a blue and yellow car with gold wheels – to see that Solberg name on the side of one of these cars will be mega.

"We did Wales Rally GB in a Subaru liveried the same as Colin McRae's 1995 title-winning car in 2015 and the response to that was

## CALENDAR

Oliver Solberg's American Rally Association programme

RD	RALLY	DATE
1	100 Acre Wood Rally, Missouri	Mar 15/16
2	Olympus Rally, Washington	Apr 27/28
3	Idaho Rally, Idaho	Jun 22/23
4	New England Forest Rally, Maine	Jul 19/20
5	Susquehannock Trail Performance Rally, Pennsylvania	Sept 13/14
6	Lake Superior Performance Rally, Michigan	Oct 18/19

## TECH SPEC

### Subaru WRX STI

**Engine:** 2000cc turbo, 34mm restrictor  
**Power:** 330bhp  
**Torque:** 400 lb-ft  
**Gearbox:** Sadev six-speed sequential

**Transmission:** Sadev diffs  
**Suspension:** Reiger  
**Brakes:** Alcon calipers, Endless pads  
**Hydraulic handbrake**  
**Wheels:** 7in x 15in  
**Weight:** 1315kg

huge. People have such fondness and affection for these colours; when I heard we were going back to the blue and yellow livery for this year I was delighted."

The Subaru Motorsports USA team has won 13 of the last 14 American titles.



Solberg Sr and son

▶ HOW PETTER ROLLED BACK THE YEARS IN SWEDEN

▶▶▶ PAGE 22



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*"Thorburn held on for BTRDA win"*  
Cambrian Rally, p27



The Fords flew in Sweden



British team's young Finn showed speed

## M-SPORT BUOYED BY SUNINEN'S SWEDEN PACE

Teemu Suninen's rally-leading performance in Sweden is a warning that M-Sport's rivals shouldn't discount the British squad, according to team principal Richard Millener.

The 25-year-old Finn led the Torsby-based event at the end of the first day, but his hopes of a maiden victory were spoiled when he slid off the road on Saturday's second stage.

Millener says the Swedish performance makes up for a disappointing season-opener in Monte Carlo, where both Suninen and team-mate Elfyn

Evans went off the road.

Millener told MN: "After a bad Monte Carlo, I think some people were saying: 'I hope this isn't the future...' So to have this result here is perfect. We've been able to bounce back straight away and show people immediately what we're capable of doing. This has motivated and pushed the team on even more – and it's shown everybody that we're not here to be discounted. 'We're here to get in the fight and push for the wins and that's what we're going to do. In the days before Seb [Ogier] came, we

were perhaps seen as the team that was not fighting for the victories. We got the odd podium here and there, but they came through misfortune. Then we upped the game and won three championships – what we've done in Sweden is demonstrate that we are still a threat.

"We want people to look at the line-up before rallies and say, 'Yes, Elfyn and Teemu are a threat...' We don't want to be the team that might have a chance of the win if everybody else has a problem."

Before the season, M-Sport managing director Malcolm Wilson insisted there would be no let-up in the effort or investment in performance from the Cumbrian team.

Finn Suninen said his pace – and that of his Welsh team-mate Evans – last week was testament to that policy. While Suninen went off the road again, forcing a replacement bar in the Fiesta's rollage before he returned on Sunday, Evans set three fastest times, went third quickest on the powerstage and placed the sister Fiesta fifth.

While Suninen went off the road again, forcing a replacement bar in the Fiesta's rollage before he returned on Sunday, Evans set three fastest times, went third quickest on the powerstage and placed the sister Fiesta fifth.

Ultimately, the fantastic organising team behind Rally Sweden point out that no stages were lost to the conditions last week. But anybody watching at Saturday night's superspecial in Karlstad might have felt it a close-run thing. In an ideal world, the trotting track on the outskirts of the town which has hosted the event since its inception is an ice rink. Last week it was a swimming pool.

## GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

# DAVID EVANS

**"It rained on Saturday. How is that right?"**



**N**ot writing about them. Not writing about them. Not writing about them. Writing about them.

So, the conditions at Rally Sweden last week.

After the sunshine comes the rain; after last year's snow, came this year's rain. With mounting pressure on European rounds of the World Rally Championship, there was a feeling around the service park last week that the promoter was missing a rather obvious trick.

We all agree Japan needs a round of the world championship and, next season, it's going to get one. I have a suggestion. Let's not bother with the asphalt affair being talked about on the main island and let's head north again. WRC Promoter, take us back to Hokkaido and kill two birds with one stone.

When Japan's round of the championship was based in Obihiro, there was a charming place on the route called Rikubetsu. I loved it. It was fabulously quaint and otherworldly, full of the sort of oriental colour that puts the world into a world championship.

Last week, like Torsby, the weather got warmer in Rikubetsu. From Thursday morning until Saturday afternoon, the mercury shifted from -30°C to -19°C. In Torsby, it went from -2°C to 6°C. That's plus six.

Ultimately, the fantastic organising team behind Rally Sweden point out that no stages were lost to the conditions last week. But anybody watching at Saturday night's superspecial in Karlstad might have felt it a close-run thing. In an ideal world, the trotting track on the outskirts of the town which has hosted the event since its inception is an ice rink. Last week it was a swimming pool.

Most likely, the superspecial was the least likely to get cancelled, because it doesn't run on public roads, so any damage to the surface was a matter for the organisers and the track owners.

And, as we saw in 2016, the visual impact of a winterless winter rally isn't a deal-breaker. The no-no comes when the ice is gone and drivers start shredding and shedding studs on rocky roads. That's why nine stages were cancelled three years ago.

Some argued the point that dealing with the conditions is part of the game and I agree with that everywhere except Sweden. Like everything in the World Rally Championship, the winter round of the WRC must be at the very pinnacle of our sport.

It must be about a consistent battle with the elements. It should be about plugging your car in every night to keep the oil from freezing. It should be designed and drawn on deep frozen lakes. It should be about concern for anybody going outside in anything other than an industrial-spec animal fur-lined body suit.

And, when you lean into a rally car on the WRC's winter round, you shouldn't get dirty. We won't do mud at minus 30. Or rain. It rained in Torsby on Saturday. How's that right on what should be the best winter rally in the world?

And the irony is, as a Japanese colleague and I stood waiting for the cars just after lunch on Saturday afternoon, rain dripping from our noses. He said: "Hokkaido, today? Too much snow. Too much."

And what was it the advertising banners in Sweden said?

Oh yes: "A warm welcome to Rally Sweden." Oh dear.

## Ogier happy with Citroen's loose-surface potential

Sebastien Ogier says he can take confidence in the Citroen C3 WRC's loose-surface ability for the season ahead, despite retiring from the opening day of Rally Sweden.

Ogier won last month's largely dry asphalt Monte Carlo Rally – but the real test for the Frenchman's new car came in Torsby last week. Craig Breen finished second in Sweden last year, but Kris Meeke struggled to make the car work in

the snow in 2017 and 2018.

Since then, Citroen has worked extensively on the transmission, suspension and geometry – and, while he was disappointed with the result, Ogier was encouraged with the feeling from the C3.

"Honestly, I think the car was not too bad," he told MN. "The speed was pretty decent when we were first on the road. I think there is some positives in this side for us. It can be positive

looking forward into the season. I don't have any regrets. It's just like it is. I will look forward and that's what it is. This [rally] is not miles away from gravel [set-up], so we could work on the car and take some data. There's still some interesting work to do in this condition."

On the subject of Tanak moving to the top of the table, Ogier said: "He did the best move, but we are only at event number two."



World champion said form was decent

## Rally Sweden heads will still defy Historic advice

Rally Sweden looks set to continue to ignore the advice of the FIA and the world's leading drivers and continue to run its historic category between the first and second loops of stages.

The leading drivers were united in their efforts to get this changed following last year's event, while FIA safety delegate Michele Mouton recommended a rethink for the 2019 itinerary. But still, the historic remained and still, according to Ott Tanak and his fellow drivers, they made a mess of the road and compromised the competition.

Tanak repeated calls from last year for the historic to be run after the main field had passed through the stages twice – even if that meant them running into the dark.

The Toyota driver told MN: "If it [Rally Sweden Historic] would run after the second loop there would be no issue for us – I don't understand why they don't do this. When you look back in the history, everything happened in the night! It hurts the road and the competition and everything."

Even ardent historic fan Jari-Matti Latvala added his weight to the argument, echoing the

sentiment of his Toyota team-mate. "It makes the road really difficult," he said. "It's not good, it's so hard to hold the rear of the car in the line when the conditions are like this after the historic. I love these cars, but we have to do something."

Rally Sweden CEO Glenn Olsson was adamant there wouldn't be any change for 2020: "If we take away the historic, the WRC cars are still behind the Juniors and they don't take the same tracks. If the historic were going to damage the road or if there was a safety issue then we would have taken them away."

## No plans for new winter event

WRC Promoter Oliver Ciesla said the mild conditions in Sweden were acceptable for the championship's winter rally and refuted suggestions that the time had come to look for an alternative event.

No stages were cancelled on the Torsby-based rally, but the lack of snow and ice compromised Rally Sweden Historic and forced organisers to drop four tests for the event which ran between the morning and afternoon loops of WRC action.

Temperatures rose to six degrees in the service park with rain falling on Saturday.

"The volatility with the weather, let's say as long

as it stays within a certain bandwidth, we are happy to stay here," said Ciesla. "This weekend we were not at all near the limits of that bandwidth. We want a winter rally, we want to drive on studs on ice and we need to make sure that happens. But, if the climate forces us to look into alternatives, we will do that. But that's not [the case] this year."

Rally Sweden CEO Glenn Olsson admitted there would be changes to the route next year, with roads further north being the ideal solution. There is, however, no chance of shifting the event's base north of Torsby or running a remote service to take the route to more snow-sure stages.

**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
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# RALLY NEWS



Williams was happy with pace

## Williams delighted with 'perfect start'

British Junior WRC driver Tom Williams says last week's Rally Sweden result was the perfect start to his second season in the World Rally Championship's feeder series.

Williams finished 10th in JWRC in Torsby last year, but topped that with fourth on the 2019 opener last week. The 20-year-old Englishman expects his year to go from strength to strength after laying solid foundations in Sweden.

"I feel we're in control of the year now," Williams told MN. "Sweden was the event [score] I was always going to drop, it's the trickiest one for me. I made so many small mistakes last year, but not this time – I almost felt comfortable!"

"The year gets better and better for us now: the Tarmac on the next round in Corsica is better than Sweden, then Sardinia and Finland are better than Corsica and then we go to Wales. I think we can build and build from here."

"Phil [Hall, co-driver] and I worked hard on the pacenotes, really working on consistency, and that's paid off here."

## Singing star Sheeran lured by rally outing

Ed Sheeran could be making his first steps in a rally car in the coming months after fellow musician John Newman and colleagues spent time working with British Junior WRC star Tom Williams.

Williams spent time tutoring Newman at the Forest Experience Rallyschool in Wales and there's potential Sheeran could join them at the gravel venue in the future.

Williams told MN: "I teach John Newman and Cigale at the school. They've got Subaru rally cars and when they're not singing or at concerts they just enjoy rallying. They go up there and go around and around, they just love rallying, they can go up there and do it and there's nobody around."

Asked if Sheeran would be interested, Williams added: "They're all in the same group of friends and John said, he's not sure about Ed, but he'd like his friends to come in the rally car with him. We'll find out in a few weeks [if Sheeran can make the trip]."



Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

The JWRC Fiestas ran faultlessly

# OVERNIGHT DASH SAVES JUNIOR WRC FLEET

## Last-minute electrical glitch nearly derails season opener

By David Evans

Motorsport News has learned how M-Sport's Polish arm worked through the night to prevent the opening round of the Junior World Rally Championship in Sweden last week from being cancelled.

The Krakow-based firm discovered an electrical glitch on the new Ford Fiesta R2, which is used as standard in the one-make JWRC, after cars had already departed for Rally Sweden.

Junior WRC manager Maciej Woda told MN he feared the worst for the first event of the new season.

"The problem came with a software change in the body control module," said

Woda. "Obviously our cars are based on the road car which comes with so many sensors and actuators that we don't need, so we strip some of them out. The problem came with our second batch of cars which were manufactured after August last year – which was when the software change came. The first batch, which included the test cars we'd done thousands of kilometres of running with were manufactured in July, so we ran those cars with no problem at all."

Had it not been rectified, the issue would have affected various electrical components in the cars, including powersteering, lights and windscreen wipers.

"We tried to fix the problem through

Thursday [the week before the rally]," Woda explained, "but in the end, we flew to Ford in Cologne first thing Friday morning and took all the parts with us. We landed back in Krakow at midnight on Friday and went directly to our factory to fit the parts. But still, they didn't work. That night, I did not sleep."

Woda heaped praise on Ford Performance in the UK and their colleagues in Cologne for the effort in fixing the problem.

"Honestly, they were fantastic," he said. "We couldn't be here without them. Basically, because we were quite tired, we'd made a small mistake in fitting the parts in the early hours of Saturday morning. After talking to Cologne, we

realised this – refitted them and we haven't had a problem since. This was the scariest moment of my career. I kept thinking: 'How can I have put myself – and the company – in this position when we could not start the rally?'

"In the end, it all worked and we had all 13 cars running on every day of a very difficult rally. That's an achievement of which I am really, really proud. You know the tight timeframe we were up against anyway, but then when we have this late issue as well, what M-Sport Poland has done is fantastic. The success of this opening round of the JWRC comes from us, but it also comes from Ford – we can't thank them enough for the excellent support and co-operation."



Ostberg admitted to being concerned by the Citroen's handling

## Ostberg declares Citroen C3 R5 still needs 'plenty of work'

Mads Ostberg admitted he felt afraid and uncomfortable on his Citroen C3 R5 debut in Sweden last week.

The Norwegian star won the WRC 2 Pro class, but he struggled to match the pace of the fastest R5 cars on the rally.

"We have to try to make the car driveable," Ostberg told MN. "The car is not set-up for slippery conditions. I fought on every corner for the whole event. We tried changing the

stiffness at the front, at the rear or both – it's not easy.

"The car needs a lot of work, it's not defined yet to work on different stages or with different grip levels; the window is very small to find the set-up on the car.

"We are changing many different parameters to find positives, but for sure it's not easy and not enjoyable. I have done this event 12 times before and this is the first time I don't

enjoy it. I feel so uncomfortable and afraid when I'm driving."

Citroen team principal Pierre Budar told MN: "We have some test planned with Mads for gravel. This was the first rally on snow and we had a short time to make the set-up – and we did this set-up on the wrong tyres! We will see where we are on the gravel and we will see what's needed to be done to improve."

WEST TIGHTENS HIS GRIP ON MN CIRCUIT CHAMPIONSHIP

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Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Kevin Money

Town centre service park was popular

## CAMPBELL BACKS CAMBRIAN'S LLANDUDNO SERVICE AND CONSIDERS USING IT FOR GB

British Rally Championship manager Iain Campbell has praised North Wales Car Club for its efforts to bring the Cambrian Rally service park into the centre of Llandudno.

Cambrian organisers "wanted to bring rallying to the people" and Campbell believes "it's something that should be carried on across the UK" because the Cambrian example proved it can work.

"We've been chasing this for three years, and it's fantastic that the car club and Conwy Council have supported it, the work that has gone in has been tremendous," he said.

"Everything when it comes to a route

is a compromise as to where the stages and the road sections are, but this has been really, really good."

Campbell, who is also Wales Rally GB clerk of the course, is considering something similar for Britain's WRC round later this year.

"We're in discussion with Llandudno because you saw the support they gave us in 2018 through the stage, so we're looking at how to incorporate the town into the event for this year," he added.

"Hopefully in the next three to four weeks we'll have some news."

The overwhelming majority of competitors were also full of praise

for the town centre street service format.

"It's brilliant," said R5 driver Alex Laffey. "All rallies should be here [in a city centre], I don't know why other people don't do this as this is what it should be. It's a much better atmosphere like when we go to Belgium, it's the same thing."

Junior BRC competitor James Williams added: "It's nice, I like it. Traffic-wise it's okay as it's like a big square, and it's nice for the fans to see what's going on and see the guys working on the cars."

"But also it would be nice to have a stage come nearer, so some people can see some cars because they don't really want to venture out to the stages or the woods,

like the Great Orme to finish because they have used that on the Cambrian before."

EDSL Sport team manager Alex Waterman was also pleased but expressed some concerns with space.

"We were a bit further down the street so I imagine it was busier on the main street, but there was still people coming down here and taking photos," he said.

"The only thing is it's a little bit cramped; 7x7 for each car isn't a lot."

Campbell accepted that argument, but reiterated: "It's about compromise. If nothing else they've all got a cafe and a restaurant for lunch time as opposed to going to find a sandwich somewhere."

## White seeks maiden Irish National win

Former Irish National Rally champion Roy White is aiming for a maiden series win on this weekend's season-opening Abbyleix-based Birr Stages Rally.

The Ford Fiesta WRC driver, who claimed the title in 2016 without actually winning a round, is eager to secure that elusive first win, but faces stiff competition – with Scottish ace David Bogie a late entry.

"Of course, it's a situation that I would like to redress," said White. "With this year's championship based on the best seven from eight rounds, a strong start is essential.

"The opposition is strong again especially with Declan [Boyle] and Josh [Moffett]. My pace is getting quicker and I would be confident of that first national round win."

Bogie is a late entry in his Skoda Fabia R5 as he prepares for next month's trip to Ireland for the BRC West Cork Rally.

Other leading contenders are reigning champion Declan Boyle, Josh Moffett and 1992 champion Peadar Hurson. All three will be in Fiesta WRCs.

Clonakilty's Cal McCarthy will drive the ex-Aaron MacHale Citroen DS3 R5 as a shakedown for his home West Cork Rally.

## New rally tracker to be trialled

A new rally tracker will be trialled in Ireland on multiple events during 2019.

The system from Italian firm Sporttraxx, will be used on the first three rounds of the Irish National Rally Championship; the Birr Stages, Midland Stages and Monaghan Stages.

The system uses GPS to track speed and status of cars on and off stages. The data is relayed to a command centre, and there is a function by which messages can be passed from rally control and in some cases vice versa.

Motorsport Ireland president John Naylor said: "This is another milestone towards improved safety for our competitors and even though we are only trialling this over three events, the ultimate goal is to include safety tracking on all of the rallies run under the Motorsport Ireland banner."

"Motorsport Ireland is fully committed to improving safety throughout all disciplines and this in one of many steps we will take. The introduction of safety tracking will of course impact on how we have run our rallies but we must all embrace change and grow with it."



Late Cambrian deal for Williams came in old-spec Fiesta

## Williams wants 2019 Fiesta if he's to continue JBRC campaign

Junior British Rally Championship frontrunner James Williams says "it wouldn't make sense" for him to continue in this year's series unless he's driving a brand new Ford Fiesta R2.

Williams struck a deal with EDSL Sport to drive a 2017 R2T just three days before last weekend's Cambrian Rally, by which time Ruairi Bell had secured one of the team's two 2019 cars. Last year's Cadet champion Jordan Reynolds

drove the other in Wales.

"It would've been nicer to be driving the new car but circumstances meant we couldn't," Williams said.

"I think British championship-wise the only real reason for me to be involved with it is for the Ford prize [£60,000 subsidy for Junior WRC], so unless we can get a new car I don't think there's much chance in us carrying on in an '18 car."

"It doesn't make sense

coming from last year where we came second, we should really be giving ourselves the best chance to win."

Bell "would like to do a full season" but is unsure if he'll do any more BRC rounds, while Reynolds described the new car as "awesome".

Finlay Retson was the highest Fiesta finisher, bringing his '19 example home sixth ahead of Bell but this was some three minutes down on class winner James Wilson's Peugeot 208.

## Lindsay disappointed to go from "hero to zero" on Jack Frost Stages

Last year's surprise Jack Frost Stages Rally winner Barry Lindsay couldn't replicate his heroics of 2018 as the snow and ice of the previous event was replaced by the unseasonably mild and dry conditions on this year's event held at Croft Circuit.

Once again using the SGP Motorsport-supplied Ford Fiesta S2000 normally campaigned by Steve Petch –

as his prize for winning the ANECCC Rally Championship, which Petch's company sponsor – Lindsay and co-driver Caroline Lodge led the rally for a couple of stages before they were sidelined at half-distance with gearbox issues.

"It started well enough, but I've gone from hero to zero today after last year's performance," admitted

the Cumbrian builder.

"We made a mistake in one of the tight hairpins and something broke as I selected reverse gear and that was it, game over. I'd like to try to win the SG Petch ANECCC Championship again this year, but I know it's going to be tough, but we'll give it a go and see what happens."

The Croft event was won by Peter Smith in his ex-Ott Tanak Ford Fiesta RS WRC.



Last year's winner Lindsay used Petch's regular Fiesta S2000 but suffered gearbox issues at Croft

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# RALLY NEWS

## Original Paul Bird in rally return

Rally driver Paul Bird will return to competition after a gap of 21 years, competing in the new BimmaCup UK championship for BMW 318 Compacts.

Bird is the namesake, but in no means connected to, Ford Focus WRC07 driver Paul Bird, who was recently banned from competition for eight years for being found guilty of evading a drugs test.

The Paul Bird who will return to competition runs the LMS Events and Entertainments company, and heard about the series from East African Safari Rally winner Ryan Champion, who contested the first round of the new series at Blyton Park earlier this month.

"I'm the wrong end of the spectrum to be looking for glory, I'm out looking for fun," said Bird of his rally return. "I heard about it from Ryan, I've been friends with him for years. I actually used to service for Rick [Champion], Ryan's dad.

"It was just too short notice for the first round at Blyton. But the car should be ready, we've just got bits and bobs to do for April. I'm planning to do the rest of the rounds.

"I think it's a brilliant idea for a championship, hopefully by next year we'll have 11 or 12 cars. Anyone who wants to know more or compete should get in touch with Rob Brook [rob@rb-motorsport.co.uk] or Ryan Champion."

Bird has bought the sister car to the one which won the BRSCC BMW Compact Cup racing series in the hands of Steven Dailly last year.

The series visits the Lookout Stages (April 7) Abingdon Car-nival (June 9) Pendragon Stages (August 25) and the Harold Palin Memorial Rally (October 10).

The title winner gets a subsidised trip to the Barbados BimmaCup finale in November.

# REID AND McRAE TO PEUGEOT EVENT

## Series celebrates 30th anniversary



Reid will attend Peugeot celebration

Colin McRae drove 309 in 1988

By Jack Benyon

**Robert Reid and Jimmy McRae will headline the Peugeot Challenge 30th anniversary celebration, which runs alongside Race Retro this weekend, while the event will also raise money for Down's Syndrome Awareness.**

The series began in 1989 and has helped to directly or indirectly launch the careers of Colin McRae, Richard Burns, Kris Meeke and Jonny Milner. It has run in various guises over the

years, and cars and personalities from all eras will be present at Race Retro. Rallying with Group B has organised period machinery to be demonstrated at the Stoneleigh Park venue, which was a popular test facility for Peugeot UK.

Another highlight of the event is an auction for the Rallying for Down's Syndrome Awareness group. The winner will receive a passenger ride in a Ian Gwynne Subaru Impreza WRC with East African Safari winner and charity co-founder Ryan Champion.

"Ryan's son Finley has down's

syndrome and, when I was asked, I was really happy to provide a car for Ryan to drive," said Gwynne of BGMsport.

The auction can be entered by making pre-weekend offers to event organiser Kev Furber (07850 732867), or at the evening dinner.

The evening dinner headlines the off-track activity, which is where McRae Sr will talk of Colin McRae's Peugeot stint, while Robert Reid won the junior section of the challenge in 1991 alongside Richard Burns. Over 300 people are expected to attend the event

at the Ramada Hotel, Kenilworth.

Already confirmed are long time Challenge coordinators Keith Baud and Stella Boyles, along with the original winners, Paul Frankland and Furber. Many works cars will be demonstrated and displayed, while a number of current drivers including Under27 European champion in 2017, Chris Ingram, and Burns's Godson and Junior World Rally Championship entrant Tom Williams will attend.

Places at the event are still available by contacting Furber.

## Barbados Brits bring fundraising power for pre-event test to help support drivers injured during last year's rally

British drivers competing on Rally Barbados later this year have helped to raise over £5000 for two competitors who suffered a serious crash at the event last year.

Ford Escort WRC driver Nigel Worswick – co-driven by Sophie Louise Buckland for the first time on his ninth

visit to Rally Barbados – last year's event runner-up Rob Swann and another UK regular Ray Clough, have been instrumental in raising money for Daryl Clarke and Russell Brancker. They were both hospitalised after injuries sustained while competing.

Worswick auctioned his co-driver seat

for two runs of the King of the Hill event, which precedes Rally Barbados. Swann has conducted a similar auction.

"I contacted the Rally Club to see if I could use my first two runs to take different passengers, thereby maximising the funds raised, before my actual co-driver would step in; as always, they

were more than helpful," said Worswick.

"It looks like the service area will be busy, with three different co-drivers in the first three runs."

Ex-F1 engineer Andrew Costin-Hurley has confirmed he will make his 12th appearance at the event in his self-engineered Ford Puma.

# RALLY REPORTS

## Smith keeps it in the family with Croft win

Jack Frost Stages Rally

By Larry Carter

**Organiser:** Darlington & District Motor Club **When:** February 17 **Where:** Croft Circuit, North Yorkshire **Championships:** SG Petch ANECCC Stage Rally Championship; AS Performance North of England Tarmacadam Rally Championship; ANCC Stage Rally Championship **Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 69.

Three years on from son Guy winning the Darlington & District Motor Club-organised Jack Frost Stages Rally at Croft Circuit, this time it was the turn of his father Peter Smith to claim the honours following a titanic scrap throughout the day.

Along with co-driver Patrick Walsh in their Ford Fiesta RS WRC, their winning margin at the end of eight stages was just seven seconds over Scotsmen Alan Kirkaldy/Cameron Fair (Ford Fiesta) with former National champion John Stone,

with son Alex on the notes, taking third a further nine seconds back.

With unusually dry conditions prevailing, it was last year's winners Barry Lindsay/Caroline Lodge who were fastest on SS1 before a single second separated the top four crews after SS2.

Kirkaldy took over the lead and by half way, his advantage over Stone was three seconds with Smith a further two back in third.

But the crucial stage, as it turned out, was SS5 as Smith stopped the clocks seven seconds ahead of Stone with a spin dropping Kirkaldy 17 seconds to scupper his bid. From there, Smith was never headed and, although Kirkaldy set fastest time on the final two stages, it wasn't enough to wrest victory from Smith with Stone in third.

The returning Tony Bardy/



Fifth stage performance was crucial to Smith's victory bid

Tony Walker (Ford Focus WRC) posted fourth ahead of the best 2WD runners Paul/Jessica Swift (Ford Escort) with Lee/Cole Hastings (Subaru) in sixth.

**Results**

1 Peter Smith/Patrick Walsh (Ford Fiesta RS WRC) 53m 55s; 2 Alan Kirkaldy/Cameron Fair (Ford Fiesta) +7s, 3 John Stone/Alex Stone (Ford Fiesta

WRC), 4 Tony Bardy/Tony Walker (Ford Focus WRC), 5 Paul Swift/Jessica Swift (Ford Escort), 6 Lee Hastings/Cole Hastings (Subaru Impreza), 7 Peter Stephenson/Antony Jones (Subaru P2000 WRC), 8 Joe Cunningham/Marc Fowler (Subaru Impreza), 9 Alistair Hutchinson/St John Dykes (Renault Clio), 10 Mark Thompson/Jordan English (Peugeot 206 GTI). **Class winners:** Andrew Fawcett/Chris Purvis (Vauxhall Nova); Chris Platt/Mick Robinson (Vauxhall Tigra); Hutchinson/Dykes; Swift/Swift; Smith/Walsh

## Last stage drama as McCullagh wins

Fivemiletown Rally

By Jason Craig

**Organiser:** Omagh MC **When:** February 16 **Where:** Fivemiletown, County Tyrone **Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 47.

A final stage upset allowed Niall McCullagh to record the first win of the new season in Northern Ireland.

It looked as though Cathan McCourt was on course to spray the champagne going into the last test having led from the word go – but he crashed just 500 yards from the finish line.

McCullagh and team-mate Ryan McCloskey made it safely through with a fastest time that was good enough to move them in front of Michael Carbin and Conor Mohan to snatch top spot by 8 seconds.

Martin Cairns – one of two World Rally Car starters – persevered with early brake

and set-up issues to round out the podium positions. On the second loop Cairns clawed back five places on the loose.

In the modified battle, Adrian Hetherington was the pacesetter in his Ford Escort Mk2 and deservedly came out on top, while Keith McIvor and David Burns won the Historic class in their Ford Escort.

**Results**

1 Niall McCullagh/Ryan McCloskey (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) 29m57s; 2 Michael Carbin/Conor Mohan (Lancer) +8.3s; 3 Martin Cairns/Peter Ward (Ford Fiesta RS WRC); 4 Adrian Hetherington/Gary Nolan (Ford Escort Mk2); 5 Eoghán Rogers/Paddy McCrudden (Lancer E9); 6 Paul Britton/Liam McIntyre (Lancer); 7 Shane McGirr/Pierce Doherty Jnr (Escort Mk2); 8 Joe Hegarty/David Turkington (Lancer E9); 9 Stephen Dickson/Tommy Hayes (Lancer E9); 10 Robert Woodside/Allan Harryman (Lancer E10). **Class winners:** Michael McDaid/Jordan Murphy (Lancer); McCullagh/McCloskey; Drew Chambers/Wendy Blackledge (Talbot Samba); Ruairi Maguire/Grace O'Brien (Vauxhall Corsa); Hugh McQuaid/Chris Melly (Ford Escort Mk2); Paul McElean/Paul McGahan (Escort Mk2); Hetherington/Nolan; Carbin/Mohan; Cairns/Ward; Keith McIvor/David Burns (Escort).

# RALLY SWEDEN



BY DAVID  
EVANS

## A dominant display puts Estonian on top of the world in the Swedish 'winter'

**K**ris Meeke and Elfyn Evans stood and stared at the enormous television screen which dominated the far end of the Rally Sweden service park. It took a moment to sink in. The immediate prospect of conversation was lost to fireworks, helicopters and the hordes of ecstatic Estonians standing just the other side of the barrier.

Both drivers had just completed their run at the powerstage and were waiting and watching the progress of their rivals. Evans had provided the benchmark for the Torsby test until Thierry Neuville went nine-tenths of a second quicker. The M-Sport man smiled thinly as the final meaningful time hit the screen.

"I feel a bit sh\*t now," he said. "I was quite chuffed before."

Ott Tanak had arrived at the finish. And he'd arrived in some style. Some style being 3.5 seconds faster than anybody over a 5.54-mile winner-takes-all stage.

Twelve months ago, Tanak departed Sweden, heading east, heading home across the Baltic Sea in the darkest of moods. Two rounds into 2018, he sat sixth in the championship. He'd bounced off Meeke's Citroen into a snowbank and invited Rally Sweden organisers to "screw themselves" after they failed to plough the snowfilled roads. They left that job to him and his Toyota Yaris WRC.

All was not well with Ott. There had been far too much winter in the WRC's winter rally, with him and Sebastien Ogier the highest profile victims of FIA's running order regulations.

This time around, with winter all-but traded for an early Scandinavian spring, Tanak set the record straight and did what his friend and mentor Markko Martin had so wanted to do.

Except Tanak didn't just win Rally Sweden. He realised the collective fears of his rivals. He and co-driver Martin Jarveoja dominated the rally. Or at least the weekend.

M-Sport man Teemu Suninen was the only driver capable of holding a candle to Tanak. And the Ford Fiesta WRC-driving Finn actually led overnight on Friday.

Suninen's not one to talk the talk and he succeeded in looking genuinely underwhelmed at the news that he was ahead on a WRC round for the first time in his career. It was nice, but there were no prizes on Friday night. His confidence was boosted, but he remained a weekend away from turning a leg one lead into a maiden first victory.

And key to anybody's victory would be the ability to second-guess the conditions. In the fortnight between the season-opener in Monte Carlo and round two, everybody had headed north in search of snow, ice and the key to Sweden. Everybody except Citroen found exceptional conditions.

Minus 15, solid ice and perfect, lean-on-me snowbanks were the order of the day. Then, as Ogier said: "winter melted."

And that made things just a little bit complicated.

Friday's roads straddled the Norwegian-

Swedish border and, running at higher altitude and latitude, offered the best of the conditions. At least they did in the morning.

Third on the road and there was still plenty for Tanak's studs to bite into. The Toyota man rocketed into the lead.

Then, the combination of rising temperatures softening the stage and the passing of a 50-strong historic field, muddied the ice and rutted the road. The advantage was passed to those running further down the field; the front men: Ogier, Thierry Neuville and Tanak were left to clear the line of mud, slush and meltwater from the ruts.

Seventh in, Suninen cracked on, won Svullrya (for the second time) by 5.2s and jumped into a similarly-sized lead.

Asked how his pace was possible – and with speculation of some eureka moments in terms of the Fiesta's Swedish set-up after a dismal 2018 showing – Suninen considered his options when explaining the upturn in pace to Motorsport News.

"How should I answer that one?" he said. After more thinking time, he pulled himself forward on the steering wheel. I leaned in.

"Rear bumper," he said.

What?

"Rear bumper. Look at rear bumper." It wasn't really there.

"Exactly! That's the difference." With that, he fixed a grin, pulled first and headed to bed in P1.

For the uninitiated in Swedish rally speak... anybody coming in without a rear bumper has clearly been on a charge and left that particular body part embedded in a snowbank somewhere.

Friday night, M-Sport was the place to be. Richard Millener headed to the end of day press conference as a rally-leading team principal for the first time. But surely this early lead brought the complication of a strategic approach to the weekend.

Not a chance. The only strategy was to keep oiling the gears he wanted Suninen to throw at the job.

"We're not here to finish second," he said. "Our priorities are different this year. We're not really chasing the championship, we want rally wins.

Teemu's already achieved one objective for a season – to lead overnight – so we might as well try to tick another box..."

Saturday morning's opener in Rammen would be a real test for Teemu. On a level playing field, could he keep Tanak behind? No. But he was only 1.8s down going into the next stage.

"I have to keep the throttle open all the time," he said. "And no mistakes."

On reflection, he'll be wishing he'd shut the taps fractionally earlier going into a tightening medium left in Hagfors. He slipped into a snowbank. His dream done.

"Snowbank," said Suninen. "It sucked us in. We took too much speed to the corner." The staccato, stare-straight-ahead statement was pure devastated Finn. This could so easily have been a devastated Juha Kankkunen in a broken Lancia or a heartbroken Hannu Mikkola aboard a punctured Audi.

By lunchtime service, the response was slightly fuller.

"The spectators were pushing in different directions," he said. "We needed Finnish spectators, they lift the car. We could have dropped 10 seconds..."

Instead, it was a minute and a half before the locals got themselves together and hauled the motor back to the road.

"All that work," said Suninen. "The perfect test and weeks' of work... all gone in one corner."

With the Finn finished, Tanak's lead ballooned to half a minute. And Toyota's man moved into safety mode, middle of the road, in the ruts and well away from



Toyota's man was out of reach in Scandinavia

the increasingly soft snowbanks.

Now, here's the bit which should concern everybody except Toyota team principal Tommi Makinen. In the next eight stages, Tanak was fastest on two, but still built his lead towards the minute-mark. And then came the powerstage. What would be the tactic?

"I won't take risks," he said. "If there's a couple of points there, I'll take them, but I won't take a risk."

And then he set the time. That stunning 3.5s powerstage hammerblow.

And then, given what had just happened had destroyed the opposition, he followed that up with the perfect line.

"Once Teemu was gone, there wasn't so much of a fight... it was actually a little bit boring. The only time I pushed to the maximum was really in the powerstage."

So, in the five and a half miles where everybody pushed and chased the five-pointer as hard as possible, Tanak was 0.63s per mile faster.

Granted, the road evolved and got quicker with each passing car. But 0.63s

per mile. That's a concern for the best of the rest with 12 rounds to go.

But not for Tanak.

"I know how hard Markko tried for this one," said Tanak. And, were it not for a freak broken wheel aboard a Ford Focus WRC04 15 years earlier, Tanak would have been the second Estonian celebrating in these parts.

As it was, he's the first. And the first Estonian to lead the championship.

Andreas Mikkelsen held second for much of Saturday, but was forced to share it with Esapekka Lappi ahead of the final day. With Mikkelsen's Hyundai teammate Neuville just 2.3 further back and Elfyn Evans in the picture too, there was plenty to play for on Sunday's repeated Likenas test with a Torsby powerstage to conclude proceedings.

Mikkelsen was the big loser on the first test, dropping from joint second to fourth as he struggled with an 'unreactive' i20.

That time loss did, however, save the potential for management blushes, had they needed to ask the Norwegian to step

aside for title-chasing Belgian Neuville.

For the second time in two 2019 rallies, the powerstage would decide far more than the direction of the bonus points. A missed braking point, a fudged apex and second could easily become fifth and vice-versa. In the end, nothing changed. Tanak massacred everybody, Neuville got fractionally closer to Lappi and Evans closed up to Mikkelsen. Kris Meeke rounded out the top six, delivering the second sensible point-scoring drive he'd sought at the season's start. The fun starts in Mexico for the Northern Irishman.

But what of the old boys? What of Sebastien Loeb and Marcus Gronholm? Given that we'll be seeing the Frenchman (he was an undramatic seventh, by the way) six times this season, let's focus on the veteran Finn.

Much was made of Marcus Gronholm's return to the series in a Toyota Yaris WRC. It's fair to say the two-time world champion's belated – by one year – 50th birthday present to himself didn't quite go to plan. It was, in fact, hard to argue with



Evans was top British finisher in fifth

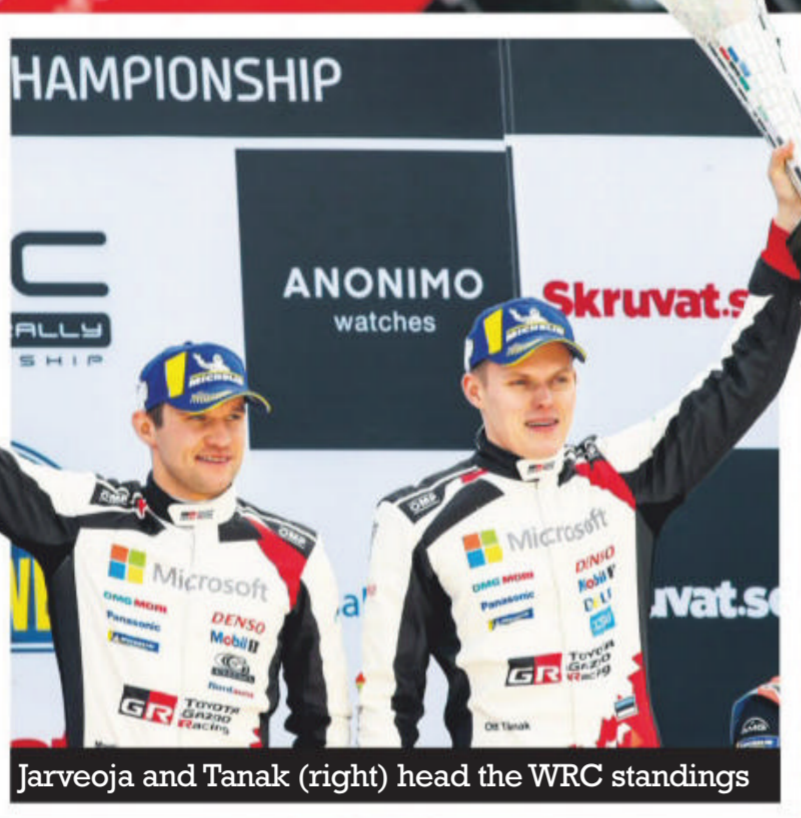
*'Solberg gave his wife best birthday present'*  
Rally Sweden Historics p22



# ROUND 02

# CONFIDENTIAL

Photos: Baudin-Austral, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Jarveoja and Tanak (right) head the WRC standings



TV's Jon Desborough, who...  
sted he might have preferred a...  
e of pints and a curry instead.  
onholm's misery started early, when...  
as 11s off the pace in the four-mile...  
edown stage. Sitting in front of the...  
ision screen in Toyota's mission...  
rol, he stared at the times.  
on't look," he said. "You can just about...  
e. I'm at the bottom of the screen."  
ormer rival grinned. "On the upside...  
re seventh quickest in WRC 2."  
e next morning, Gronholm reverted...  
at he'd known best throughout an...  
otional career at the top of the sport,  
ding five Sweden wins. He threw...  
at it and drove harder and faster.  
at wasn't the answer this time.  
om the first metres of the first stage, I...  
my pacenotes were too slow," said...  
holm. "And then a corner comes and...  
you out."  
spun on Friday's opener. Again on...  
econd stage and then went off into a...  
n the third.



Suninen led at the end of a leg for the first time but it didn't last

## STAGE TIMES



Neuville claimed third

- **SS1 SSS Karlstad 1 (1.18 miles)**  
Fastest Neuville 1m34.9s Leader  
Neuville Second Ogier +0.8s
- **SS2 Hof-Finnskog (13.21 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 10m09.1s Leader  
Tanak Second Ogier +3.0s
- **SS3 Svullrya 1 (15.46 miles)**  
Fastest Suninen 12m47.0s  
Leader Tanak Second Suninen  
+3.5s
- **SS4 Rojden 1 (11.25 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 8m42.5s Leader  
Tanak Second Suninen +5.5s
- **SS5 Hof-Finnskog 2 (13.21 miles)**  
Fastest Evans 10m02.8s Leader  
Latvala Second Suninen +1.8s
- **SS6 Svullrya 2 (15.46 miles)**  
Fastest Suninen 12m43.9s  
Leader Suninen Second Latvala  
+5.7s
- **SS7 Rojden 2 (11.25 miles)**  
Fastest Evans 8m41.7s Leader  
Suninen Second Latvala +5.0s
- **SS8 Torsby 1 (5.55 miles)**  
Fastest Huttunen 5m50.0s Leader  
Suninen Second Tanak +2.0s
- **SS9 Rammen 1 (14.37 miles)**  
Fastest Latvala 11m23.1s Leader  
Tanak Second Suninen +1.8s
- **SS10 Hagfors 1 (14.54 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 12m33.1s Leader  
Tanak Second Mikkelsen +34.2s
- **SS11 Vargasen 1 (8.83 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 8m14.9s Leader  
Tanak Second Mikkelsen +33.8s
- **SS12 Rammen 2 (14.37 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 11m21.4s Leader  
Tanak Second Mikkelsen +40.4s
- **SS13 Hagfors 2 (14.54 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 12m36.8s Leader  
Tanak Second Mikkelsen +51.7s
- **SS14 Vargasen 2 (8.83 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 8m20.1s Leader  
Tanak Second Mikkelsen +54.3s
- **SS15 SSS Karlstad 2 (1.18 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 1m36.0s Leader  
Tanak Second Mikkelsen +56.4s
- **SS16 Torsby Sprint (1.74 miles)**  
Fastest Neuville 1m56.8s Leader  
Tanak Second Mikkelsen and Lappi  
+54.5s
- **SS17 Likenas 1 (13.17 miles)**  
Fastest Latvala 11m06.3s Leader  
Tanak Second Lappi +53.4s
- **SS18 Likenas 2 (13.17 miles)**  
Fastest Evans 11m22.0s Leader  
Tanak Second Lappi +48.8s
- **SS19 Torsby 2 (Power Stage) (5.55 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 5m15.1s Leader  
Tanak Second Lappi +53.7s

# COLIN CLARK

*"Ott Tanak will dominate the rest of the season"*



**I** said before Rally Sweden that I thought Toyota would dominate this event. Well I got that completely wrong with three different manufacturers on the podium. But never one to be put off, I'm going to make another domination prediction. I predict that Ott Tanak will dominate the remainder of the season.

And by that I mean that he will win at least another five events and become Estonia's first world rally champion without the need for a Decider Down Under come Rally Australia.

Such is the potency of the Tanak/Toyota partnership that unless the man makes a mistake, or the car breaks, he looks like he can win every time he takes to the start.

Tanak has a self-assured swagger about him these days that speaks volumes for where he's at. He knows he's good. Actually, he knows he's the best. He knows the others fear him and he knows he has the best car. He's driving with an intelligence these days that hasn't always been obvious in the past.

The Toyota boys have worked hard to iron out the gremlins that plagued Tanak's championship challenge last year. Since the introduction of the new engine in Finland last July, the car has been simply sensational.

And the scary thing for the boys in hot pursuit is that both Tanak and the Toyota will only get better as the season goes on.

Now there is one very big caveat that I have to add to my slightly bold prediction and that is road position.

Neuville's title hopes hit the buffers last year almost the moment that the Hyundai-driving Belgian hit the front of the championship. One podium in the second half of the season was an awful lot to do with his inability to cope with the demands of running first on the road.

How will Tanak cope? Well his title aspirations may well depend upon him getting to grips with front-running on the loose, and that, as we've seen, is a notoriously difficult situation to master.

But the new Tanak, the bold, brave, brash, intelligent Tanak has all the tools in the box necessary to get the job done. He just has to work out which tool best fits the job in hand.

Mexico will be the real litmus test for both Tanak and Neuville. Running one and two on the road will be mighty punishing and the likes of Ogier and Meeke will be very much looking to capitalise from their better starting positions.

Ogier has shown in the past that winning from the front in Mexico is possible. It really shouldn't be, but the greatest champions have shown time and time again the ability to defy logic and seemingly master the impossible.

Well I firmly believe that Tanak is a great champion in the making and he could well prove that to us all by taking a gloriously credential-affirming victory in Mexico in a few weeks' time.

Continued on page 22

# RALLY SWEDEN



BY DAVID  
EVANS

## RALLY ESSENTIALS

Friday was very much a snowbank or spin day, with **Sebastien Ogier** the first major casualty. The defending champion slid wide on a right-hander, the left rear of his C3 WRC connected with the wall of snow and turned the nose directly into the bank. The car speared into the slushy stuff and stayed there. The nearest spectators were a kilometre away and by the time they'd been persuaded to come, the game was up. Ogier's countryman **Sebastien Loeb** fared slightly better in seventh place, but the Hyundai star found his first Sweden since 2013 hard going. "Everybody has their onboard videos from last year to help them check their notes," Loeb told MN. "All I have is the onboard from the recce at 20mph or something like that. I watch that speeded up, but it's not the same – it doesn't give you much of an idea of how much the downforce will work on this event. It's been tough." Asked if he fancied a trip to Mexico to make it three rounds from three, he replied: "No, I fancy a holiday." Fair enough. **Pontus Tidemand** made his second consecutive outing in a factory Fiesta WRC in Sweden. Ahead of the event, the Swede talked about everything being geared around his home round of the world championship. A dodgy throttle sensor hindered his progress on the first morning, but a solid fourth quickest second time through the Finnskog test was a great way to bounce back. That was as good as it would get for the former WRC 2 champion. He spent the rest of the event in ninth and ultimately eighth place, talking about how epic the M-Sport car was to drive. **Janne Tuohino** and **Lorenzo Bertelli** were both similarly quick to sing the praises of the Cumbrian Ford. Tuohino, a man who gave up his sixth place for fellow Ford driver Colin McRae on the 2002 Swedish, stepped up to a current-generation World Rally Car after driving a Skoda Fabia R5 to a credible fifth in WRC 2 on last year's event. The 43-year-old Finn admitted, however, that, as good as the car undoubtedly is, it might have got the better of him as he struggled to take the thing to the limit and get the best out of the Fiesta WRC. Bertelli's event was spoiled by a number of close inspections of the snowbanks for the returning Italian. **Takamoto Katsuta** was a name on everybody's lips this time last year, when the Japanese sensationally won his maiden WRC 2 round in a Ford Fiesta R5. Once more equipped with Pirelli's finest Sottozero Ice covers, the Toyota Gazoo Racing junior driver was all at sea in conditions entirely dissimilar to those he'd mastered 12 months ago. Buoyed by the third fastest time in WRC 2 on the second shot at Likaen on Sunday morning, he dropped it on the following Torsby finale.

### Day one: 86.56 miles; 8 stages

**Weather:** overcast -1° - 5°C

**End of day one:** Suninen/Salminen 1h11m05.3s; 2 Tanak/Jarveoja +2.0s; 3 Mikkelsen/Jaeger +17.8s; 4 Evans/Martin +28.6s; 5 Lappi/Ferm +42.0s; 6 Loeb/Elena 48.8s.

### Day two: 78.40 miles; 8 stages

**Weather:** overcast -3°C - 6°C

**End of day two:** 1 Tanak/Jarveoja 2h19m31.7s; 2 = Mikkelsen/Jaeger; 2 = Lappi/Ferm +54.4s; 4 Neuville/Gilsou +56.8s; 5 Evans/Martin +1m08.7s; 6 Meeke/Marshall +1m36.5s

### Day three: 31.88 miles; 3 stages

**Weather:** overcast 0°C - 6°C



Loeb found Sweden comeback tough

*Continued from page 21*

"My driving," he sighed, "was not good. After the first spin, I said to Timo [Rautiainen, co-driver]: 'How much did we lose with the spin?' He gave me this look and said: 'It doesn't matter...'"

At the same time, Gronholm admitted the shape of the latest generation of World Rally Car had also worked against him.

"I remember when I was in this rally the last time," he said. "I could put the front bumper of the car to the snowbank and slide right around the corner. But now, all this aero goes into the snow and suddenly zip, we are around again."

An afternoon off and Gronholm was back with a more tempered approach for the weekend.

"I was off so many times yesterday I don't want to push anymore," he said.

In an effort to tame the Japanese beast, Gronholm was working his left foot hard on the middle pedal, regularly lighting up the discs.

By Saturday night, he admitted he'd seen the full extent of the progress of the World Rally Car across the last decade. Having driven more familiar stages in Sweden, he knew what sort of speed he'd carried through some corners in the past. The present day was a scary place.

"I can see from my notes," he said. "Before I would have to lift to come through a corner. But in this car, with all this aero, bam – you just go. I would say it is a little bit scary when I don't have the confidence in the notes or in the aero."

"I think this comeback thing was tougher than I thought it would be."

Surely not, surely there's time for a Finland?

"Finland? What? Oy, oy, oy... no! No to Finland. No to this. I'm done."



Gronholm's return didn't go to plan

Pah, I'm finished now."

Ahead of the event, Gronholm's former rival Petter Solberg reckoned Bosse had told him he was going to win.

Gronholm's riposte was rapid. "Petter, I told you I would win the Grandpa class!"

In that respect, he delivered on his promise. But 38th place wasn't what he came for. Best remember the big man in his pomp; cutting corners, getting away with it and winning Sweden for fun.

Winning for fun brings us neatly back to Tanak, who did just that on

Sunday. The best of the rest tried and failed to slow the Estonian express – next month we'll see whether he can master the champion-elect's next trick: can he ride the Mexican wave and win from the front on the loose-surface gravel in Leon?

## Perfect Petter's perfect present

Petter Solberg gave his wife and co-driver Pernilla the best birthday present possible with an entirely dominant run on Rally Sweden Historic.

The 2003 world champion wheeled out his Viking Motorsport-built Ford Escort RS1800 to win a shortened event for the fourth time in five attempts.

The biggest threat to a Solberg victory was the cold he was suffering when the event started. "I was sweating like hell," he said. "I thought about not starting, but once we were there, everything was good. Driving the car was a lot of fun and it was a nice birthday present for Pernilla."

"This rally has reminded me how much I like power steering though. It was bloody hard work at times!"

Two-time Rally Sweden winner Mats Jonsson was the Solbergs' nearest rival, with the Mazda 323 driver finishing just over a minute behind in second place.

With Sweden being just his second snow rally, repeating his heroic Monte Carlo WRC 2 Pro class win was always going to be tricky for Briton Gus Greensmith. But he did the next best thing. He landed a second successive podium with third place aboard his M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5, a result which was enough to retain his place at the top of the table. Greensmith suffered gearbox problems on the second

day, but was generally baffled at the indifferent grip beneath him.

"Reading and feeling the grip is one of the things I'm best at," he said, "but one in three corners, I don't know what's going to happen. I think it's probably an experience and a conditions thing, but when you consider I could win Monte, where the grip was changing all the time, this hasn't been the best."

Mads Ostberg won WRC 2 Pro despite feeling ill-at-ease in his Citroen C3 R5, with Kalle Rovanpera a distant second after putting his Skoda Fabia R5 in a snowbank for three minutes on Friday's second stage.

Ole Christian Veiby was the event's fastest R5 car and won WRC 2 in his Volkswagen Polo. The Norwegian turned in arguably the drive of his career, demonstrating both pace and consistency to bring the car home ninth overall. His Volkswagen Sweden team-mate Johan Kristoffersson had featured at the sharp end of the leaderboard and posted similarly strong times, but his hopes were dashed with a Saturday afternoon trip to a snowbank.

Four minutes in a Vargasen snowbank interrupted what had been a sensible and constructive Swedish debut for WRC 2 challenger Rhys Yates in his Skoda Fabia R5. The Derbyshire driver did, however, achieve his goal of



Despite illness, Solberg scored a fourth Rally Sweden Historic win

levelling a steep learning curve by slashing the gap between himself and the R5 benchmark to a second per kilometre on some stages.

ERC Junior graduate Tom Kristensson collected a debut JWRC victory after long-time leader and pacesetter Dennis Radstrom went off the road late on Saturday. Despite going off, Radstrom's 12 stage wins ensure he sits fourth in the table, one place

ahead of Britain's Tom Williams.

Williams was classified a career best fourth (edging a brace of sixth place JWRC scores last season) in the Junior standings with series new boys Roland Poom and Jans Solans, the Spanish R2 champion, second and third respectively.

Williams told MN: "This was a great result for me. I can't believe how much I've learned from when I was here last year."

## SUPPORTS

# ROUND 02

## DRIVER ANALYSIS BY DAVID EVANS



### SEBASTIEN OGIER 4/10 CITROEN C3 WRC

Lost out in the snowbank lottery and paid a high price for letting the rear of the C3 WRC run slightly wide in Finnskog. Bounced back with fastest times and a sizey, tree-dodging moment on the Vargasen stage.



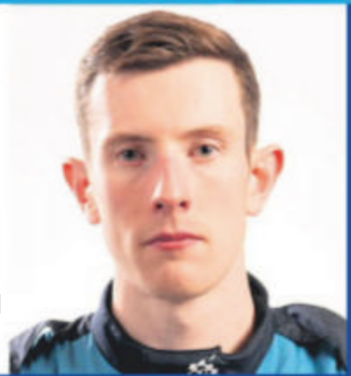
### ESAPEKKA LAPPI 9/10 CITROEN C3 WRC

Forget the fact that he looked like Timo Salonen or Pentti Airikkala (neither were particular fashion icons, but both were fairly handy Finnish wheelmen...), this was one of Lappi's strongest ever drives. And if you haven't seen his moment, do so now.



### ELFYN EVANS 7/10 FORD FIESTA WRC

Probably deserves an eight as well – especially as he scored more fastest times than his team-mate... Without that spin on Friday morning and a slightly livelier start to Saturday, he'd have been on the podium. Probably second. Praise this better, stronger and faster Elvis.



### TEEMU SUNINEN 8/10 FORD FIESTA WRC

We could talk about him leading the rally. Or we could talk about how his hopes turned to a nightmare when he slipped off the road in Hagfors. Or... we could talk about how he bounced back from the biggest low of his career. How? Third fastest in Vargasen. Hence the eight.



### PONTUS TIDEMAND 4/10 FORD FIESTA WRC

Throttle problem made his start to the rally a bit of a nightmare, but once he'd got his hands on a fully functioning Ford Fiesta WRC, he didn't really make the best of it. Real shame for the likeable Swede. Hard to know where he goes from here career-wise.



### THIERRY NEUVILLE 7/10 HYUNDAI i20 WRC

Couple of spins, including a tasty 360 in Vargasen, but last year's winner seemed to struggle to find the rhythm which came so easily 12 months ago. Once again finished top Hyundai and was best of the non-Ott Tanaks in the powerstage.



### ANDREAS MIKKELSEN 6/10 HYUNDAI i20 WRC

Escaped a couple of moments and ran second for much of the event, but found his Hyundai to be lazy and unresponsive at times. Good to see the Norwegian at the finish and with a strong result, but he needs to use this a springboard back to the big time.



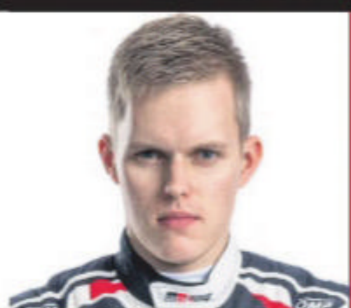
### SEBASTIEN LOEB 6/10 HYUNDAI i20 WRC

Must have wondered why he'd gone for this one, when he was being spat out of the ruts at 100mph. But he's not a nine-time world champion (and former Rally Sweden winner) for nothing. Built his experience and quickened his pace when he was comfortable.



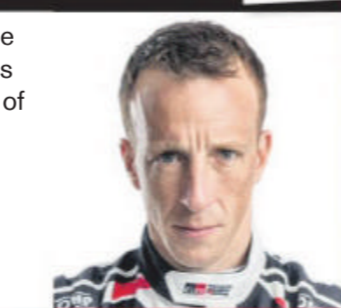
### OTT TANAK 9/10 TOYOTA YARIS WRC

That powerstage run has to go down and one of the finest single-stage efforts in recent memory. He probably had the best of the worst conditions, but still... Made no mistakes and fully deserved the result mentor Markko Martin should have had in 2004.



### KRIS MEEKE 6/10 TOYOTA YARIS WRC

Generally endured some of the worst road conditions and was frustrated to be on the fringes of a podium fight. But... he wanted points and progress from the first two rounds and he's delivered both. Goes to Mexico a solid fourth in the championship.



### JARI-MATTI LATVALA 2/10 TOYOTA YARIS WRC

After taking the time to tell Motorsport News precisely what's needed to succeed in Sweden (MN, February 13) the four-time winner did precisely what he said must be avoided at all costs and hit the snowbank on Friday. And Saturday.

### MARCUS GRONHOLM N/A TOYOTA YARIS WRC

We simply can't sully the memory of one of the world's greatest rally drivers with a mark out of 10 on this one (especially not when we've already given him the wooden spoon). Suffice to say, Gronholm's belated 50th birthday party wasn't the bash he hoped for.

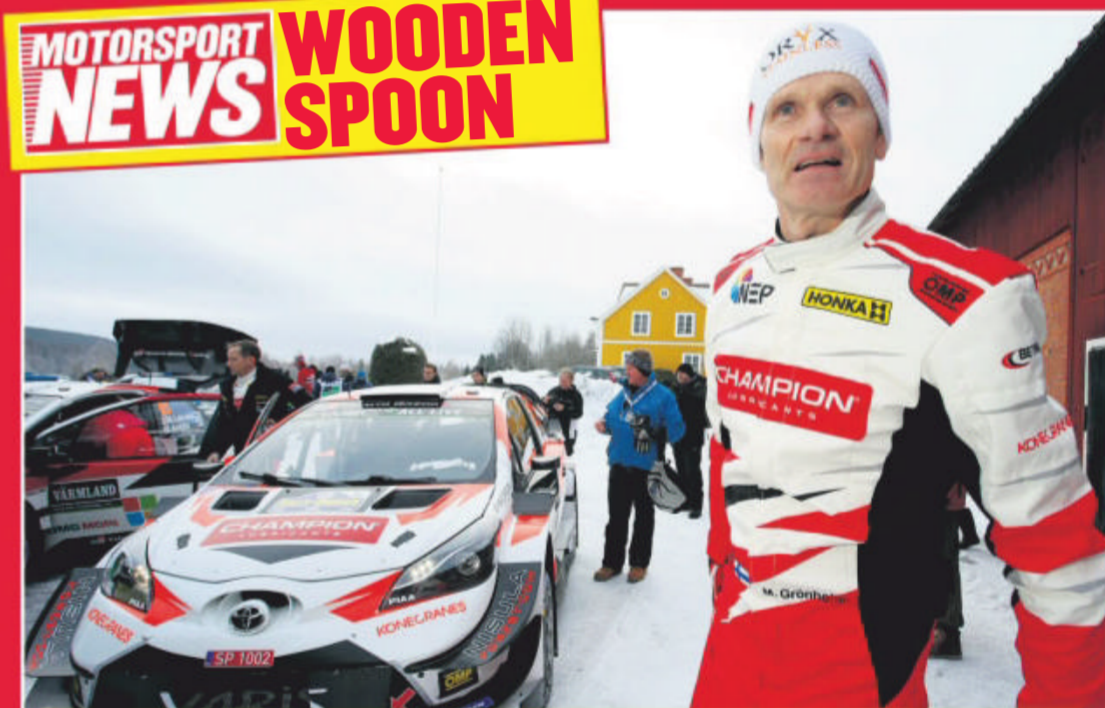
## MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER



### ESAPEKKA LAPPI

Did you see that fifth-stage moment? Pinging his Citroen C3 WRC off a snowbank sent it into a lateral cartwheel. "I thought: 'OK, now it's finished...'" That monster moment dropped the Finn to ninth, but top three times on half of the remaining stages elevated the former European champion to a brilliant second place and a deserved podium finish.

## MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON



### MARCUS GRONHOLM

We can't do that, can we? How hugely disrespectful. Sorry Marcus. Equally, by his own high standards, I think he'd be expecting this. Enormous respect for coming and giving it a go and even more gratitude for being at his charismatic and entertaining best.

## RESULTS

Round 2/14, 67th Rally Sweden, February 14-17

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Toyota Yaris WRC	2h47m30.0s
2	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/Janne Ferm (FIN)	Citroen C3 WRC	+53.7s
3	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+56.7s
4	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR)/Anders Jager (NOR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m05.4s
5	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m08.2s
6	Kris Meeke (GBR)/Sebastian Marshall (GBR)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m38.8s
7	Sebastien Loeb (FRA)/Daniel Elena (MCO)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m49.7s
8	Pontus Tidemand (SWE)/Ola Floene (NOR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+3m37.7s
9	Ole-Christian Veiby (NOR)/Jonas Andersson (SWE)	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+6m34.0s
10	Janne Tuohino (FIN)/Mikko Markkula (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+8m21.4s
20	Lorenzo Bertelli (ITA)/Simone Scattolin (ITA)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+13m25.3s
21	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Mikko Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+14m44.4s
23	Teemu Suninen (FIN)/Marko Salminen (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+16m24.5s
29	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Citroen C3 WRC	+24m19.0s
38	Marcus Gronholm (FIN)/Timo Rautiainen (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+42m27.1s
R	Eerik Pietarinen (FIN)/Juhana Raitanen (FIN)	Skoda Fabia R5	SS19 accident
R	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Ford Fiesta R5	SS19 accident
R	Jari Hutunen (FIN)/Antti Linnaketo (FIN)	Skoda Fabia R5	SS18 accident

## CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

### DRIVERS

POS	DRIVERS	PTS
1	Ott Tanak	47
2	Thierry Neuville	40
3	Sebastien Ogier	31
4	Kris Meeke	21
5	Esapekka Lappi	19
6	Sebastien Loeb	18
7	Elfyn Evans	13
8	Andreas Mikkelsen	12
9	Jari-Matti Latvala	10
10	Gus Greensmith	6

### MANUFACTURERS

POS	TEAMS	PTS
1	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT	58
2	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT	57
3	Citroen Total WRT	47
4	M-Sport Ford WRT	30

## RALLY MEXICO MARCH 7-10

### NEXT RALLY

Can Tanak win again in the Mexican hills?

# BRC CAMBRIAN RALLY

# EDWARDS WINS HOME EVENT

Reigning champ is challenged, but unsuccessfully. By **Luke Barry**

**BRC**  
British Rally  
Championship



Edwards (r) and new co-driver Walsh (l)

Edwards' first Cambrian win

**I**t's the sweetest one yet." Those are big words from a man who won both the BTRDA and British Rally Championship titles last year. But for Matt Edwards, a Cambrian Rally win wasn't just the perfect start to his BRC title defence; it was a win on his home rally that he's been chasing for one-and-a-half decades.

However, Edwards' job was not made easy. Any fears that the new season would be dominated in the same fashion as 2018 were quickly quashed when David Bogie grabbed the first scratch time of 2019, albeit by 0.8 seconds.

The next stage was even tighter, with Edwards and the returning Tom Cave both setting an identical fastest time through Alwen, which elevated

Edwards into a 1.9s lead as Bogie slipped to second. Elsi would belong to Edwards outright as he began to get into his stride, opening up a 5.1s advantage over Cave at first service.

Hyundai rival Cave wasn't worried though. "It's been solid," he said.

"The first stage was incredibly slippery, I had a big moment on the first corner which kind of woke me up. We're building it up slowly, but it's good fun and a great battle."

After working on the set-up to try to find more traction, Welshman Cave promised that there was "definitely more to come."

Bogie found himself back in third after the first three stages, 6.6s off Edwards' lead and only two seconds ahead of the charging Skoda of Marty McCormack. But the Scot knew where he was losing out.

"To be honest the first stage felt very scrappy," Bogie admitted. "I was surprised that the time was quickest.

"At the end of the stage we checked the tyre pressures and realised we had a punctured tyre. So we did the

next two with no spare and that played on my mind too much."

McCormack meanwhile was the only man in the same league as the leading trio, despite his Fabia dropping out of stage mode briefly on stage three.

Battling on stages he hadn't competed on regularly, he joked: "I think that's why I'm so fast, I don't know where I'm going!"

Reigning Irish Tarmac champion Josh Moffett's return to the BRC wasn't "going too bad", but he admitted he couldn't keep up with the "hot and heavy pace" out front. So much so that fellow BRC returnee Desi Henry had overhauled Moffett's Fiesta to pinch fifth.

"We had a good enough few stages getting back into gravel again, we haven't been on it for a long time now," Henry said.

The afternoon consisted of four more classic Welsh tests; visits to Crafnant and Gwydir before a repeat of Alwen and Clocaenog.

The battle at the front showed no signs of letting up either, with the top

three still only covered by 17.7s as they brought their cars to Llandudno for the second of two services.

Bogie and Cave were both fairly relaxed about the prospect of challenging Edwards after the first three tests, but the reigning champion underlined his credentials by taking a clean sweep on the afternoon loop, extending his stage win tally to six out of seven.

And, alarmingly for his rivals, Edwards wasn't exactly sure where the pace was coming from.

"To be honest I thought I'd lose a bit of time in those last two, I didn't quite hook it up as I'd like in some of the corners," was Edwards' initial assessment of his afternoon's work.

He was relishing the tussle up front though: "We have to try and repeat what we've done this afternoon this evening. It's really good to have the battle though, it's what you do it for so to have those two guys at it flat out is something else."

Cave had started the loop as Edwards' closest challenger, but dropped 12.3s throughout the afternoon to drop to

third in his new-for-2019 Hyundai.

He returned to Llandudno in a dejected mood, having failed to cure the issue that also bothered him in the morning.

"We are struggling for traction and grip," he said. "We're pushing hard but when there's no grip or traction there's not much you can do."

Cave opted for soft compound tyres for the final loop of stages in his efforts to keep hold of second, albeit to no avail.

Bogie was more than happy to take advantage of Cave's woes and stole the runner-up spot after stage seven, but the Fabia R5 was now 14.4s behind Edwards' leading Fiesta.

"He's going very well," said Bogie of his rival. "We're pushing 99 per cent. We're not making mistakes which is good, we have a wee bit left in the tank but that's how you get caught out.

"It's just so tight. Just half an overshoot, half a spin and you're out of contention so maybe in the longer rallies if you were to make a mistake there's time to get it back but here there's not."



Bogie took a strong second in Wales



Wilson scored a narrow victory late on in Junior BRC



Wilson (r) and Kierans (l) celebrate their triumph

## Wilson takes a mighty JBRC win

The Cambrian Rally was all about an epic battle between a trio of Peugeot 208 R2s, with 1.9 seconds splitting first-time winner James Wilson and series regular William Creighton after 10 gruelling special stages.

Josh McErlean was on top in the morning by winning Clocaenog and then repeated the feat on Alwen. But a "tricky" stage three, where he "took it steady", resulted in McErlean losing 11 seconds to stage winner Creighton.

That allowed Creighton to creep ahead of McErlean overall and take the lead, but only by a slender 1.6s.

"They were pretty clean stages for us, I suppose that's the main thing," Creighton said afterwards.

"In the first two we were maybe a little off the top but the third one was good so we'll go out and try to do it again this afternoon," he confirmed.

Undeterred by his loss of time, McErlean declared: "We'll go for a push in the second loop."

Recent Billy Coleman Award

winner Wilson had also snuck his way up to third in class after a strong time through Elsi.

"We had an off-road excursion on stage one, and dropped maybe nine or 10 seconds," he revealed. "It was a lot more slippery than I anticipated."

Creighton continued his charge into the afternoon with a scratch time on stage four, but a "rock left in the middle of the road" punctured his front-right tyre on the following test and cost him 35s.

That left McErlean and Wilson free up front, and the pair were scintillatingly close all afternoon. Wilson overtook his rival on stage four to lead by 0.3s, with that gap never reaching more than a second as the duo returned to service separated by a mere 0.1s.

The final three stages belonged to Creighton. He began the loop 21.9s adrift of Wilson but took 20s back through the darkness to fall just short of a superb victory.

McErlean's challenge faltered when

he picked up a puncture, allowing Marty Gallagher to steal the final podium place after Jordan Hone suffered with a car set-up "too low" for the rutted final stages. He fell from third to fifth.

"It's a bit surreal," enthused Wilson. "It was definitely a tough day but we're happy to get the first win and the £2,500 prize money."

Creighton was reflective: "When we found out we were second we were very happy with that as we left service fifth, but to lose by 1.9s is frustrating. But I don't think we could've done any more."

Finlay Retson, whose gearbox was flown in from Poland the day before the rally after the first broke in a shakedown, Ruairi Bell and Bart Lang were the remaining JBRC finishers.

James Williams failed to make it past stage three. First, the boost pipe on his Fiesta R2T split and then a wheel hub broke, dislodging one of the wheels.

John Morrison won the National Cup in his Mitsubishi Lancer E9 ahead of Richard Phillipson's Honda Civic.

### RESULTS

#### British Rally Championship, Cambrian Rally, round 1/6, Feb 16

POS	DRIVER/NAVIGATOR	CAR	TIME
1	Matt Edwards/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5	54m58.7s
2	David Bogie/John Rowan	Skoda Fabia R5	+26.5s
3	Marty McCormack/Barney Mitchell	Skoda Fabia R5	+1m08s
4	Desi Henry/Liam Moynihan	Skoda Fabia R5	+1m17.5s
5	Josh Moffett/Keith Moriarty	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m51.5s
6	Alberto Heller/Jose Luis Diaz	Ford Fiesta R5	+2m31.7s
7	Meirion Evans/Jonathan Jackson	Hyundai i20 R5	+2m48.5s
8	Pedro Heller/Marc Marti	Ford Fiesta R5	+2m54.3s
9	Brendan Cumiskey/Ronan O'Kane	Skoda Fabia R5	+3m23.9s
10	Thomas Preston/Andrew Roughead	Skoda Fabia R5	+4m08.5s

11 Alex Laffey/Stuart Loudon (Ford Fiesta R5); 12 James Wilson/Arthur Kierans (Peugeot 208 R2); 13 William Creighton/Liam Regan (Peugeot 208); 14 Marty Gallagher/Dean O'Sullivan (Peugeot 208 R2); 15 Josh McErlean/Ger Conway (Peugeot 208 R2); 16 Jordan Hone/Aileen Kelly (Opel Adam R2); 17 Enda McCormack/Paul Sheridan (Ford Fiesta R5); 18 Finlay Retson/Tom Hynd (Ford Fiesta R2T); 19 Ruairi Bell/Darren Garrod (Ford Fiesta R2T); 20 John Morrison/Peter Carstairs (Mitsubishi Lancer E9).

Class Winners: BRC 1: Edwards/Walsh; Junior BRC: Wilson/Kierans; National Rally Cup: Morrison/Carstairs.



John Morrison won the National Rally Cup



Thompson won six out of seven stages in his Mitsubishi Lancer E9

## Welsh championship honours to Russ Thompson

Russ Thompson put his considerable experience to good use to take victory on the opening round of the Welsh Rally Championship.

Piloting a Group N Mitsubishi Lancer E9, Thompson was mixing it as high as fourth in the National B event in the morning, and would go on to win six out of the seven Welsh-counting stages, missing the clean sweep of fastest times by 5.9 seconds in the final test.

Elsewhere, Scott Faulkner (Lancer E9) and Richard Hill (Subaru Impreza) enjoyed a superb scrap

throughout the day for the remaining podium places.

Hill was fastest first but was quickly overhauled on stage two, before another quicker time through Elsi lifted Faulkner's advantage to 4.6s.

"Those last few stages were very rough, we haven't done such rough stages in a while so it's not going as well as it could be at the moment," Hill commented at service.

Hill responded in stage four by going 0.8s quicker and then 9.8s quicker in five, but the final two tests belonged to Faulkner and

a scratch on stage seven meant he took second overall by just 1.6s.

Chris Powell (Talbot Sunbeam) and Dave Brick (Vauxhall Nova) contested a similarly close battle for 1600 honours. In the end the battle swung Powell's way, finishing fourth by 7.2s.

Tom Llewellyn landed a fine ninth overall in the National B event, and top Welsh Junior in his historic Ford Escort Mk2, while Matthew Hirst never made it out of stage one due to an alternator failure on his Mitsubishi.

Leading the next all-Irish gaggle of cars was still McCormack, but his grip on fourth had weakened from 20.8s to 9.6s.

This was, in part, because of a half-spin on stage four and "trying not to be wild" but losing some time as a result, plus a spirited drive from Henry who "surprised" himself with his pace, overcoming a gearshift issue to claim a third fastest time on stage five.

As darkness fell, it was Cave that made the brightest start by taking his first outright stage win on stage eight. That lifted him back to second ahead of Bogie, but Edwards hit back with a commanding stage win on the penultimate test.

He held a 23.8s lead going into the final Elsi test and emerged with a 26.5s lead over Bogie. Cave's Hyundai was eliminated from proceedings thanks to two punctures meaning, although he made it out the stage, he wouldn't get back to Llandudno.

"I was lying at the start [when he said he'd just take the points]," Edwards beamed.

"Obviously I wanted to win but I just

thought 'come on you've got Cave and Bogie and whole host of others' and thought it may be a bit much to ask after not a great feeling on Rally GB, but I can't believe it.

"It's so good to get that monkey off my back to win my home rally. All my local club lot have been winding me up for weeks about it."

Bogie conceded defeat and was upbeat about the rest of the season: "Second is a great start. There's a lot more to come and we'll go to West Cork and push like hell to try and fight for the win."

McCormack was chief beneficiary of Cave's demise, climbing to third on a rally he'd never started before. His margin over Henry in fourth was 9.5s, with Moffett completing the top five. Meirion Evans debuted his Hyundai i20 R5 on gravel and sandwiched his car in between the two unregistered Heller brothers, with Alberto finishing sixth and Pedro eighth.

Brendan Cumiskey took ninth in his right-hand-drive Skoda Fabia R5. Thomas Preston's similar car rounded out the top 10.



McCormack took third in late drama, ahead of fellow Fabia driver Henry



Cave showed his pace in BRC return but punctures proved costly

### STAGE WINNERS

#### SS1 Clocaenog 1 (4.86 miles)

David Bogie/John Rowan (Skoda Fabia R5) 4m16.8s

#### SS2 Alwen 1 (6.52 miles)

Matt Edwards/Patrick Walsh (Ford Fiesta R5); Tom Cave/Dale Bowen (Hyundai i20 R5) 6m06.5s

#### SS3 Elsi 1 (4.81 miles)

Edwards/Walsh 6m14.2s

#### SS4 Crafnant 1 (4.82 miles)

Edwards/Walsh 5m25.4s

#### SS5 Gwydir 1 (4.85 miles)

Edwards/Walsh 5m12.3s

#### SS6 Alwen 2 (6.82 miles)

Edwards/Walsh 6m11.5s

#### SS7 Clocaenog 2 (4.86 miles)

Edwards/Walsh 4m17.4s

#### SS8 Crafnant 2 (4.82 miles)

Cave/Bowen 5m26.5s

#### SS9 Gwydir 2 (4.85 miles)

Edwards/Walsh 5m11.2s

#### SS10 Elsi 2 (4.81 miles)

Edwards/Walsh 6m29.2s

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# BTRDA CAMBRIAN RALLY

Photos: James Ward

## THORBURN'S WELSH TRIP REAPS REWARDS

Scottish driver takes the win in new Focus on BTRDA opener. By **Simon Gronow**



Focus pair survived late event car scare

**T**he long journey from Scotland proved worthwhile for 2013 Gold Star champions Euan Thorburn and Paul Beaton as they took their new Ford Focus WRC to victory on the opening round of the 2019 BTRDA Rally Series. They were fastest on five of the seven special stages in the North Wales forests and, despite a late technical issue, they held on to win by just over three seconds in a close finish.

Despite this being their first outing in their Focus WRC, Thorburn and Beaton got their day off to the best possible start with fastest times through the opening stages in Clocaenog and Alwen, before storming through the five-mile Elsi stage, taking 10s out of their nearest rivals. They returned to the service halt in Llandudno with a 14s lead.

"It's been good so far," admitted Thorburn, who was pleased with his progress, before joking, "though the car's driving me at the moment".

Holding second place were Charlie Payne/Carl Williamson, the Yorkshire driver saying that they were off the pace. "We had a problem on the Riponian Stages with the rear brakes, and they're still not right," Payne admitted. "I think it's a caliper sticking on." Even so, the pair had been second quickest on each of the stages.

In third place were Niall Henry/Damien Duffin, the Ballymena driver bringing his Citroen DS3 R5 to Wales for the first time. Despite a lack of familiarity with these forests, Henry was happy with his performance. "The stages are good, though the last one was a bit tricky," he said. Three top three stage times ensured he held a podium position at this point.

Pat Naylor/Ian Lawrence held fourth in their Mitsubishi Lancer E9, the pair happy that differential problems on the eve of the event appeared to have been resolved and that Naylor, who had been unwell in the days preceding

the event, was feeling better. They also held the Production Cup lead ahead of rivals Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy. "We've had no problems really," said Thompson, "we just need to be a little quicker."

Already out of the event were Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson, whose Fiesta WRC had rear differential issues, Ian Joel/Graeme Wood whose Ford Escort Cosworth hit a stage two culvert, while Sam Bilham's first BTRDA run in a Fiesta R5 ended with a damaged radiator.

Thorburn maintained his 100 per cent record of fastest stage times on the fourth stage at Crafnat, taking 16s out of the field. A slight misfire in Gwydir only cost him a second of his half-minute lead, but the second run through Alwen proved far more worrying. The Focus stopped on the stage at one point, before emerging with a lead of under three seconds. Thankfully for Thorburn, he managed to take another fastest stage time on the final test, albeit by less than a second to secure the win, Thorburn being pleased with the performance of the new car.

With his brake problems persisting in the afternoon, Payne decided not to take any chances and settled for second position, the final gap to the leader just over three seconds.

It was a repeat of the morning's run for Henry as he set top three fastest times on every stage, the Citroen being problem-free, though he did confess "I would like some more power" as he compared his R5 to the WRC cars. Third overall was a good reward for his efforts.

A couple of warning lights that kept coming on distracted Naylor over the latter stages, though he didn't need to worry as his Lancer made it to the end, taking fourth and the Production Cup, as rival Thompson took second in class despite dropping down the leaderboard late on.

Before the event, Ian Bainbridge/Daniel May had been hoping to be among the leading B13 runners in their Subaru Impreza and, despite some



Suspected caliper issue thwarted Payne's Cambrian victory bid

### RESULTS

#### Cambrian Rally, BTRDA Rally Series, round 1/7, February 16

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Euan Thorburn/Paul Beaton	Ford Focus WRC	39m52.0s
2	Charles Payne/Carl Williamson	Ford Fiesta WRC	+3.3s
3	Niall Henry/Damien Duffin	Citroen DS3 R5	+58.6s
4	Pat Naylor/Ian Lawrence	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+1m39.2s
5	Ian Bainbridge/Daniel May	Subaru Impreza	+1m45.4s
6	Mark McCulloch/Michael Hendry	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m53.8s
7	Stephen Simpson/Mark Glennerster	Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m00.1s
8	Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+2m01.5s
9	Scott Faulkner/Gareth Parry	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+2m30.4s
10	Richard Hill/Patrick Cooper	Subaru Impreza	+2m32.0s

11 Richard Sykes/Simon Taylor (Lancer E9); 12 Petr Krizan/Lukas Sintal (Lancer E9); 13 George Lepley/Arwel Jenkins (Hillman Avenger); 14 Chris Powell/Jim Lewis (Talbot Sunbeam); 15 Dave Brick/Toby Brick (Vauxhall Corsa); 16 Damien Pratts/Jonny Tad Evans (Ford Escort Mk2); 17 Hugh Hunter/Rob Fagg (Escort Mk2); 18 Craig Cameron/Rhys Stoneman (Impreza); 19 Andy Williams/Andy Darlington (Impreza); 20 Owen McMackin/Lee Taylor (Escort Mk2).

Class winners: Joseph Keen/Paul Barbet (MG ZR); Alan King/Michael Jones (VW Lupo GTi); Rob Richards/Wendy Gibson (Peugeot 106); Powell/Lewis; Zak Hughes/Tom Wood (Ford Fiesta ST); Naylor/Lawrence; Damien Thomas/Paul Bevan (Peugeot 206); Ivan Roberts Jnr/Steve Griffith (Ford Escort G3); Pratts/Evans; Bainbridge/May; Thorburn/Beaton; Lepley/Jenkins; Hunter/Fagg; Perry Gardener/Keaton Williams (Ford Fiesta R2).

niggles with the car's gearbox, the pair enjoyed the stages and were delighted to win the class and finish fifth overall.

Following the cancellation of the Snowman Rally, Mark McCulloch/Michael Hendry were another crew to travel from Scotland for the event to try out their new Fiesta R5. Not only

was the car new, it was McCulloch's first time on the Cambrian and first time in a left-hand-drive car. Apart from the driver suffering a headache, he had a good day, as he became accustomed with his new car, which he described as "brilliant" as he moved up to sixth at the finish.

### CLASS ROUND-UP



Powell topped close 1400cc fight

Once again, there was a good battle for the **1400cc** honours between Chris Powell/Jim Lewis in their Talbot Sunbeam and Dave and Toby Brick. Driving his son's Vauxhall Corsa rather than his own Nova, Brick held the lead at service, despite going off briefly on SS3. Powell, meanwhile, felt his performance had been "rubbish" over the first three tests and promised to attack the afternoon's stages. Despite catching a car on the Gwydir test, Powell managed to overtake his rival, finishing just over seven seconds ahead of Brick, who had a "scrappy afternoon", which included a puncture on stage four.

Over the early stages, Bobby Mitchell/Shannon Turnbull opened up a lead of almost seven seconds to top class **N3** ahead of fellow Ford Fiesta ST crew Zak Hughes/Tom Wood, who had backed off on the rougher sections of Elsi. Over the afternoon's stages, Hughes was happier with his driving and he went on to win the category for the second year running, as Mitchell unfortunately suffered two punctures and dropped to second. Third went to Will Corry/Brynmor Pierce, who also suffered a puncture during the day.

On his first outing in his new Fiesta R2, Perry Gardener, partnered by Keaton Williams, eased himself into left-hand drive with a sensible pace early on, before speeding up as the day progressed. Despite a lack of tyres, the pair went on to win the **R2** category, overtaking Ed Fossey/Will Rutherford, the latter crew adopting a steadier approach over the rougher sections, before finishing second on their first gravel outing in their Peugeot 208 R2. Tommi Meadows/Emma Morrison were pleased to pull back to third in their Fiesta after suffering a puncture.

Last year's R2 winner George Lepley swapped to a Hillman Avenger for this event, and he and Arwel Jenkins adapted well to the slippery conditions to win the **historic** category. On his first Escort Mk2 drive Hugh Hunter, with Rob Fagg co-driving, took class **H3** honours, despite spinning on the same hairpin on both runs of Alwen.

Former Trial 2 world champion Iwan Roberts Jr swapped to four wheels for the day, sharing a Ford Escort G3 with Steve Griffith and, despite early brake issues and losing sixth gear, the pair took class **B11**, as Damien Pratts/Jonny Tad Evans overcame a stage three puncture in their Escort Mk2 to overhaul Owen McMackin/Lee Taylor's similar car to win class **B12**.



Gardener won the R2 category



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# MN CIRCUIT RALLY

Photos: SMJ Photography

## WEST MAKES IT A HAT-TRICK OF WINS

Dominant display for championship leader. By **Dan Mason**

**MOTORSPORT NEWS** CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MSVR



West/Hounslow were unstoppable

**C**hris West has made a habit of winning the Snetterton Stages in recent years, but his third consecutive victory in the event last Saturday was arguably his most dominant display yet.

The reigning MN Circuit Rally champion completed a perfect weekend with a whitewash of the day's eight stages in Norfolk, finishing 45 seconds clear of nearest rival Mark Kelly.

West and Kelly made up just a few of the regular frontrunners to make the trip to Snetterton, John Stone opting instead to head further north to participate in Sunday's Jack Frost Stages Rally at Croft.

Despite absentees, runner-up Kelly admitted afterwards that even the best opposition on hand would have struggled to beat West's ever-improving Peugeot 306 Maxi on the day.

Progress was clear to see in the final results when compared to West and co-driver Keith Hounslow's first Snetterton triumph two years ago; the pair completed the rally almost three-and-a-half minutes quicker than they did in 2017.

"I don't think we could have beaten them today, even without our troubles," said Kelly, who spent the majority of the day recovering from an incident-strewn opening stage he later described as "shocking".

Cars travelled the wrong way around the traditional 300 circuit in the morning stages and the greasy surface caught out several drivers on the opening run, including Kelly on two occasions.

The rear end of his Ford Escort Mk2 kicked out too ambitiously accelerating out of Riches and spat him into the barriers, the damage merely cosmetic in comparison to the time lost. "The track conditions felt weird there, because normally I'd catch those sort of slides," he said, as a second moment later in the stage left him a disheartening

21s adrift of his target man West.

West took an eight-second lead into stage two ahead of fellow Smith and Jones engine customer Nigel Mummery (Ford Focus WRC). The Peugeot man then quickly extended that cushion to 18s with a rapid second run.

The trend was set, and it would continue throughout the day as West and Hounslow ticked off the stage wins one by one. Their only scare came in the afternoon when Hounslow clocked rattling noises in the 306 on stage five. It was a driveshaft related problem, but the troublesome bolts were swiftly tightened.

It took Kelly just two stages to jump from fifth back to second place, although he was left with a 37-second deficit to West after stage four.

A change to the circuit's usual direction for the afternoon loop made Kelly much more comfortable, he was now feeling the added grip from years of rubber left on the traditional racing line through the faster sections.

Over the final four stages, the Escort surrendered just eight seconds to West, unlucky not to steal a stage win when baulked behind Steve Finch's Fiesta R5. The real damage had been done in the morning however, and West was able to see out a third win of the season with the aid of Hounslow's reassuring advice. "I'm really pleased for all of us, it's a big team effort," said West. "Keith keeps me right and knows when I should be going for it. I still think there's more to come, I don't want to stop until I've proved this is one of the best cars in the country."

Hounslow's calmness was in stark contrast: "Sometimes I'll say 'we can take it a bit easier now', but then he gets the red mist!"

Mummery's Focus retired on stage four with its power steering locking, leaving a tense duel for the final podium spot between Steve Tilburn and Finch.

Now "getting the most" out of his Escort, Tilburn benefited from following West to gain vital seconds, usurping Finch on stage six to deny



Joshua and Tamsyn Davey's Darran T90 returned to action and took fifth

### RESULTS

Snetterton Stages, MN Circuit Rally Championship, round 5/8, Feb 16

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Chris West/Keith Hounslow	Peugeot 306 Maxi	52m 14s
2	Mark Kelly/Chris Williams	Ford Escort Mk2	+45s
3	Steve Tilburn/Jack Tilburn	Ford Escort RS2500	+1m 55s
4	Steve Finch/Sam Fordham	Ford Fiesta R5	+2m 00s
5	Joshua Davey/Tamsyn Davey	Darran T90	+2m 09s
6	Anthony Robinson/Ross Forde	Proton Satria Milington	+2m 48s
7	Pete Rayner/Aron Rayner	Ford Escort	+3m 29s
8	Ciro Carannante/Simon Coates	Porsche Cayman	+3m 36s
9	Robin Adams/Ray Keith	Ford Escort RS	+3m 48s
10	Mike Bayliss/Richard Wood	BMW Compact	+4m 14s

Event class winners: West/Hounslow; Finch/Fordham; Davey/Davey; Mark/Matt Blackmore (Vauxhall Corsa); Paul Sheard/Bruce Lindsay (Mazda MX-5). MN class winners: Dale Lawson/Andrew Lawson (MG ZR); Sheard/Lindsay; Davey/Davey; West/Hounslow; Ray Read/Stuart Anderson-Peters (Audi quattro).

the latter a debut podium in an R5 he bought the week prior.

Joshua and Tamsyn Davey returned in their Darran T90 for the first time since Knockhill last season, finishing fifth ahead of Anthony Robinson's Proton Satria Milington.

Pete Rayner's Escort was next up ahead of Ciro Carannante's Porsche Cayman, the top 10 completed by Robin Adams' Escort RS and the flying BMW Compact of Mike Bayliss. Leaving with an 83-point

championship lead, West's title defence was boosted by Mike Taylor's consistent run coming to an abrupt end. Taylor's Talbot Sunbeam Lotus suffered persistent throttle problems throughout the morning, sticking open on the third stage and spitting him through the wooden paddock fencing.

Former British GT racer Nigel Greensall made his debut in a rally-prepared Toyota GT86, finishing seventh in Class C and 22nd overall.

### CLASS ROUND-UP

Mechanical gremlins left Paul Sheard's latest win in **Class B** in doubt for much of the rally.

The greasy opening two stages caught out the Mazda MX-5 driver on several occasions, handing a comfortable advantage to Abi Mahmood in a Suzuki Swift, now utilising gear ratios adapted for Tarmac rallies.

The Suzuki's run would be halted by mechanical issues of its own when engine mount problems caused its retirement, having run as high as 15th overall. Sheard crawled home for overall class spoils and maximum MN points.

"We almost didn't make that one," said Sheard. "I considered taking a maximum stage time at the end but you want to carry on. We don't know the problem yet, but we got the job done again – somehow!"

Sheard's team-mate Steve Dolman crashed his MX-5 into a concrete block exiting a tight hairpin, while Ashleigh Morris was hindered by a broken gearbox mount in her Ford Fiesta.

Snetterton has often been kind to Mark and Matt Blackmore, the pair sealing a fine victory in **Class A**. The Vauxhall Corsa duo held the lead from the start, and finished over two minutes clear of nearest rival, Dale Lawson, in 17th overall.

Second was enough for Lawson to seal maximum MN points and close the gap to Craig Aston – who finished fifth – in Class A, his MG ZR benefitting from a new Metro engine previously used for hillclimb events.

Joshua Davey returned in style to grab **Class C** honours for the repaired Darran T90.

Relieved to finish the rally after engine and misfire problems kept him out of action for over a year, Davey beat the Ford Escorts of Robin Adams and the returning Aaron Rix to also take maximum MN points in the class.

No longer racing in his mother's Ford Ka, Rix enjoyed a maiden run in his father's Ford Escort Mk1. "It's a very different beast," he said. "It flows much better, but at the start I was actually quite nervous. It's a beast, but such a fun car."

Steve Finch and Sam Fordham may have missed out on third overall, but the Ford Fiesta R5 comfortably won **Class E** ahead of Anthony Robinson's Proton Satria Millington. Maximum MN points went to the venerable Audi quattro of Ray Read in third, entered for the remainder of the season.

Chris West and Keith Hounslow's unbeaten **Class D** form continued thanks to a third consecutive overall victory.



Sheard took Class B victory

# FORMULA E: MEXICO

How a scintillating race from Mexico City unravelled. By Tom Errington

## DI GRASSI WINS DRAG TO THE LINE TO DENY WEHRLEIN



Di Grassi swerves around Wehrlein

Just 10 metres would have made the difference, reckoned Mahindra Racing's Pascal Wehrlein.

Picking up where he left off at the previous round in Santiago, it was a cruel twist of fate that again he would lose a chance of victory at the death.

Double so, when it is considered Mahindra lost a win at Mexico City last year too: Wehrlein's predecessor Felix Rosenqvist was the victim then.

This time, Mahindra's victory slipped away when Wehrlein, fresh off the back of on-the-limit defending against Audi driver Lucas di Grassi, coasted towards the finish line when his car shut down with no energy remaining.

Wehrlein believed that would never have happened if he had lifted once into a corner, despite his early season claims energy management was "quite easy".

It was the culmination of an unorthodox and chaotic race. The weekend build-up began with complaints from the likes of reigning Formula E champion Jean-Eric Vergne that the Gen2 car had lessened the skill of energy management in favour of flat-out sprints.

Vergne would also become the reason for those predictions proving false. But for that to happen it required a frightening collision between the DS Techeetah driver and Nelson Piquet Jr when the Jaguar driver closed in heading towards the final chicane on lap three.

Piquet clipped the right-rear of Vergne's car and launched into the

air before the sliding Jaguar side-swiped Alexander Sims ahead.

"Yeah it was aggressive, I was committing to the corner, but when you start defending you expect the guy to brake deep, he's not going to brake in the point where he's coasting or on a saving lap," said Piquet.

"So, that caught me by surprise, it was closing the door and I thought he'd brake deeper and he braked way too early. When I hit him I was still accelerating."

Vergne countered: "I closed the door and I kept my line. I did nothing wrong and I braked on the normal point and he just went flying over me."

Significant debris from that clash caused a red flag and a frantic reassessment of energy and attack mode strategies before the race resumed.

While the likes of Venturi's Felipe Massa and Nissan e.dams were caught out by incorrect calculations, Wehrlein still looked untouchable, as he had when he began the race from pole.

But a Nissan mistake began Wehrlein's demise. Oliver Rowland, enjoying his best weekend in Formula E, had worked as a buffer to the advancing di Grassi.

Yet Rowland took his second attack mode late on, with di Grassi right on his tail, and slid wide as he went off-line losing the position.

That opened up a five-lap sprint to the flag as di Grassi reeled in Wehrlein as the Mahindra driver pulled off a defensive masterclass.

But the pressure and early excessive energy use finally told on the final lap. Di Grassi looked to the

inside at Turn 1 before pulling side-by-side with Wehrlein approaching the Turn 3/4 chicane

Wehrlein stayed ahead only by cutting the chicane but di Grassi was relentless and the wasted energy played into the Audi driver's hands. When Wehrlein's energy was sapped, di Grassi dived to the inside against the pitwall to take the narrowest of wins.

Di Grassi argued Wehrlein was "more than aggressive" in his defending: "I knew he was running out of energy."

"I was putting pressure on him, trying to overtake him all of the last five laps."

"And then, in the chicane coming out of Turn 3, I could see every corner he left he was defending, closing the door, and was going to the outside."

"On the last lap I was behind him and pretended to go to the outside and he left a door small enough to go down the inside between the wall and the kerb and I went there."

"I went side-by-side with him and then he cut the chicane. Probably he would get a penalty anyway, but that was the move [that was key]."

Wehrlein insisted he wasn't disappointed by his finish, although angered by a five-second penalty for his chicane cut that dropped him to sixth overall. But he did hit out at di Grassi.

"All the time I am close to him we either crash or touch each other," said Wehrlein. "It seems [to be] the way he likes to drive. [But] for me it's fine."

Wehrlein's misery was matched by Nissan's race also getting derailed on the last lap. A software issue caused a

### RESULTS

Round 4/12, Mexico City (MEX), February 16.45 laps – 58.451 miles

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi Sport Abt / Audi e-tron FE05	1h13m15.422s
2	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	BMW / BMW iFE.18	+0.436s
3	Edoardo Mortara (CHE)	Venturi / Venturi VFE-05	+0.745s
4	Jerome d'Ambrosio (BEL)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M5Electro	+1.159s
5	Andre Lotterer (DEU)	DS Techeetah / DSE-Tense FE19	+1.785s
6	Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M5Electro	+5.210s*
7	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-TYPE 3	+5.800s
8	Felipe Massa (BRA)	Venturi / Venturi VFE-05	+8.084s
9	Sam Bird (GBR)	Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE05	+8.356s
10	Daniel Abt (DEU)	Audi Sport Abt / Audi e-tron FE05	+8.438s
11	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE05	+9.044s
12	Oliver Turvey (GBR)	NIO / NIO 004	+11.252s
13	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Techeetah / DSE-Tense FE19	+19.153s
14	Alexander Sims (GBR)	BMW / BMW iFE.18	+20.471s
15	Tom Dillmann (FRA)	NIO / NIO 004	+20.871s
16	Gary Paffett (GBR)	HWA / Venturi VFE-05	+23.272s
17	Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-3	+41.542s
18	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	HWA / Venturi VFE-05	+43.425s
19	Felipe Nasr (BRA)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-3	+1m56.160s
R	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Nissan e.Dams / Nissan IM01	44 laps-out of energy
R	Sebastian Buemi (CHE)	Nissan e.Dams / Nissan IM01	44 laps-out of energy
R	Nelson Piquet Jr (BRA)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-TYPE 3	2 laps-accident

\* = five-second penalty for cutting the track. Winner's average speed: 47.872mph. Fastest lap Wehrlein 1m01.112s, 76.611mph. Superpole: 1 Wehrlein 59.347s; 2 di Grassi 59.653s; 3 Massa 59.695s; 4 Rowland 59.808s; 5 da Costa 59.819s; 6 Buemi 59.949s. Qualifying: 1 Rowland 59.593s; 2 Wehrlein 59.604s; 3 Massa 59.719s; 4 di Grassi 59.739s; 5 Buemi 59.763s; 6 da Costa 59.778s; 7 Sims 59.782s; 8 Vergne 59.802s; 9 Mortara 59.935s; 10 Turvey 59.936s; 11 Piquet 59.959s; 12 Lotterer 1m00.050s; 13 Dillmann 1m00.192s; 14 Nasr 1m00.210s; 15 Lopez 1m00.293s; 16 Paffett 1m00.340s; 17 Frijns 1m00.375s; 18 Evans 1m00.424s; 19 d'Ambrosio 1m00.455s; 20 Vandoorne 1m00.844s; 21 Abt 1m00.936s; 22 Bird. Championship: 1 d'Ambrosio 53; 2 da Costa 46; 3 Bird 45; 4 di Grassi 34; 5 Wehrlein 30; 6 Lotterer 29; 7 Frijns 28; 8 Vergne 28; 9 Evans 28; 10 Mortara 27.

miscalculation on energy management by just one lap as Rowland and Buemi fell from third and fourth to 20th and 21st.

For the chasing Antonio Felix da Costa and Edoardo Mortara, who managed their energy better, they were rewarded with second and third respectively.

A welcome gift for Mahindra is

that it left Mexico on top of the championship and Jerome D'Ambrosio's recovery drive from 19th to fourth ensured he returned to the top of the drivers' standings.

He toppled Virgin Racing driver Sam Bird, whose weekend was derailed by a driveshaft failure in qualifying before an impressive damage limitation drive to ninth.



Last-lap pass gave di Grassi victory



Red flag came after Piquet Jr and Vergne crash



Wehrlein led every lap until the final tour of race

## SPORTING SCENE

Photos: mkpics.net, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Alexander's Boardley Vauxhall

## Scot plans National move in new Tigra

Oval racing multi-champion Gordon Alexander will move into National Hot Rods this year, driving an ex-Bradley Dynes Vauxhall Tigra built by four-time world champion Carl Boardley and last raced by Northern Irishman Thomas Dilly.

Alexander, the 2017 two-litre Hot Rod world champion, will initially race in the Scottish series, but anticipates switching to the English qualifying campaign when the new season begins after July's World Final. He is targeting becoming the first Scotsman to win the world championship.

"It would be nice for somebody to do it," said Alexander. "We conquered the two-litres.

"I had a practice at Lochgelly and, looking at the lap times, we were definitely on the pace. After the World Final, we might go and start doing the English rounds – give ourselves a chance to compete with the faster cars. We did that with the two-litre. We were getting nowhere and I said: 'We need to go and race against them.' So we raced in England, went and raced in Ireland and competed until we got to the top end. We ended up winning it."

Alexander's first chance of major honours in the formula will come on his home track at Lochgelly in April's European championship.

## Harris makes more US history with A-Main start

Tom Harris made more US history at the All Star Circuit of Champions series at Volusia, Florida, becoming the first UK driver to qualify for an All Star Circuit of Champions A-Main feature.

He finished seventh in his heat, which was won by Tony Stewart, before lining up on the front row of the 15-car B-Main feature. He finished third in that event, which was enough for him to progress to the A-Main feature.

"The car has to be perfect and Sammy Swindell definitely knows how to get it right," said Harris. "I still can't believe I made the show."

In the 30-lap A-Main, with his car tightening up as the race developed, Harris finished 23rd behind Brad Sweet.

"The car got pretty tight in the A-Main as I lost three inches of stagger," Harris explained afterwards.

The following evening Harris and his team struggled to find pace in the car during the first round of the World Of Outlaws series.

As a result he finished last of eight in his heat behind Sweet and eventual feature winner Daryn Pittman, before taking ninth of 12 in the B-Main, eventually finding some speed late on.

"We struggled to get the motor to run," said Harris. "But we got it going by the B-Main."

Unfortunately for Harris, that race would be his last of the week. He was forced to withdraw the following day after blowing his engine during his hot lap session, the V8 unit dropping a piston.

A further engine failure during practice at Bubba Raceway in Ocala curtailed Harris's US adventure for good.

Harris was also the first UK driver to qualify for the Chili Bowl Midget Nationals A-Main feature last year.



Breen enjoyed rallycross power

# WRC STAR BREEN UP FOR RALLYCROSS START

## Supercar run fuels interest but testing vital



Irish Rallycross Championship 2019 is launched

By Hal Ridge

**World Rally Championship refugee Craig Breen is considering trying rallycross this season following a first Supercar test at Mondello Park in his native Ireland last week.**

Breen drove double European champion Derek Tohill's Ford Fiesta Supercar at the Irish Rallycross Championship launch and completed around 10 laps at the County Kildare venue.

"I just did a handful of laps but it was definitely something different," Breen told Motorsport News. "I didn't do

enough to get completely into how exactly everything works, but the power is like something I've never driven before. The car felt nice, I could do everything I wanted with it."

The two-time WRC podium finisher and former Junior world champion says he has opportunities to compete in rallycross this season. "I do have some options to do something in rallycross this year, but it wouldn't be my number one priority," he said. "Obviously I want to go back rallying again, that's my first love. But definitely I'd like to try [rallycross], I enjoyed driving a Supercar and I'd like to have a race in

one. If it works out, it would be great."

While the 29-year-old hasn't revealed where he could race, he says a testing programme will be a must before any competitive outing.

"It doesn't make sense [not to] especially if I don't have any experience in a car like that to just land on a race weekend," said Breen. "Because of the limited amount of time in the car you get in a race weekend it would take nearly the whole time to get my head around it."

Breen also sampled Tohill's Euro RX title-winning rear-wheel-drive Ford Fiesta at the IRX launch.

## NEW LAYOUTS IN 2019

Mondello Park's rallycross circuit will be run in a number of configurations, in both directions, for the 2019 Irish Rallycross Championship season, which was launched at the Naas venue near Dublin last week.

The IRX series will get underway at Mondello next week, while the Pallas circuit in Tynagh, County Galway will host round two. A double-header weekend will be held back at Mondello in July for the fourth and fifth rounds, with the seven-event calendar being concluded at the end of November.

## CALENDAR

### Irish Rallycross C'ship

RD	VENUE	DATE
1	Mondello Park	Mar 3
2	Tynagh	Apr 7
3	Mondello Park	May 19
4	Mondello Park	Jul 20
5	Mondello Park	Jul 21
6	Mondello Park	Oct 20
7	Mondello Park	Nov 24

## Sarrazin is latest Global Rallycross recruit

Motorsport all-rounder Stephane Sarrazin will compete in the Global Rallycross Europe series this year.

Ex-Formula 1 driver Sarrazin has competed in Formula E and endurance racing of late, finishing second at Le Mans four times, while he's also contested several rallies.

He will pilot a new single-make Pantera RX6 in the GRC Titans class this season.

"I am always looking for new challenges and when I learned about GRC Europe from Alex Wurz, who is totally hooked on rallycross now, I had to find out about it," said Sarrazin.

"It looked very exciting from the start, particularly in bringing my off-road and Tarmac skills together in a single race. To my great surprise, it was not



Versatile Frenchman is well suited

too hard to find the sponsors due to the lower costs and here I am looking forward to testing the brand-new PanteraRX6 car by MJP Racing."

The first round of GRC Europe will be held at former European Rallycross Championship venue Dreux, France, in late June.

Sarrazin, 43, added: "Rallycross is new to me but it is cool imagining how competitive racing [will be]."

## Collard's restored Renault for Retro Rallycross

Former Supernational rallycross driver Phil Collard will return to the discipline this season competing in the Retro Rallycross Championship.

Collard will campaign a Renault 5 in the series, a machine originally built by Kevin Stones in the late 1980s.

He has spent the last 14 months working on the rear-engine, rear-wheel drive hatchback.

"Almost every mechanical part has been renewed or replaced," said Collard. "The car has had a new rear chassis fully updated to current safety requirements and it's running a two-litre period engine, which would have been used in Division Three back in the day."

After being campaigned by owner Kevin Stones in period, the Renault 5 was subsequently bought by Mike Bourner, who raced it until 1994. After years in



Renault 5 has been overhauled

storage, the car was bought by Michael Boak's MB Motorsport team, where restoration work was undertaken before Collard bought the machine. He is hoping to debut the Renault in the first round at Silverstone next month.

"I cannot wait to use it at my first event," Collard added. "Hopefully we're going to do a full season of Retro Rallycross at long last. We've got a month to do some testing and set the car up but it should be competitive."

## Motorsport With Attitude show event to return in 2020 after successful maiden edition in Peterborough

Motorsport With Attitude, a new show headlined by oval racing formulas, will return to Peterborough's East of England Arena on February 8/9 next year after a successful first edition last weekend.

The event featured cars from all forms

of short oval racing including BriSCA Formula 1 and National Hot Rods, as well as autocross, rallycross and even the British Touring Car Championship. In addition to static displays, around 300 machines took part in demonstration

races at the venue's outdoor arena.

Star guest Barry Lee, the four-time Hot Rod world champion, treated show-goers to rides in Kenny Purdie's Ford Escort Mk2 Classic Hot Rod and regaled stories on stage of his past antics. Further

attractions included Oliver Bennett's Xite Sport rallycross team and its simulators.

Organiser Dave Rennie said: "The feedback has been very good; it's definitely got legs. There's a good vibe which I think is key – people are enjoying it."

## Orders received for Smith's new Ford Fiesta Hot Rod

A new Ford Fiesta National Hot Rod broke cover at the Motorsport With Attitude show in Peterborough.

Simon Smith, a past Hot Rod driver who has more recently competed on circuits in the Intermarque series, is the man behind the project.

"My dream was always to get a hatchback back onto the ovals again," said Smith, who has been developing the new car with his Autocross firm for two years.

"As much as the Ginetta, Vauxhall Tigra and Mercedes SLK are lovely looking cars,

they're not a true Hot Rod – they're not what your local boy drives about in.

"We looked at the Audi A1, we looked at the Volkswagen Polo, but I always wanted to do a Fiesta."

The finished bodyshell retains a Fiesta silhouette but has been lowered by 20cm. Smith has two confirmed orders already and aims to complete the first chassis to have a Hot Rod on track by the end of April. He plans to race an example himself in the circuit-based Super Silhouettes championship later in the year.



Smith's Hot Rod Fiesta on show

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*MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters*

### MN SAYS...

# Tanak and Toyota lay down a marker

## The Estonian's easy win on Rally Sweden should worry his WRC rivals

It was inevitable that Ott Tanak and Toyota would be among the favourites for this year's title given the pace and skill he showed throughout the 2018 campaign. He knew it, and his rivals knew it. And now, after his seventh win at the top table, everyone else knows it too.

He has been able to comfortably outpace his team-mates so far, and is leading the Japanese firm's attack. And, given the dominance he showed on Rally Sweden, the portents for a competitive season seem to have taken a very serious knock.

While reigning champion Sebastien Ogier is struggling to get to grips with his new mount at Citroen and Thierry Neuville unable to put together a consistent threat for Hyundai, the only worry for Tanak should be coming from his own team. However, Kris Meeke and Jari-Matti Latvala are nowhere near him – so far. It was only a cruel twist of mechanical fate that stopped Tanak from being in the heart of the title fight going to Rally Australia last season. Given the performances so far, that is a place he seems certain to be in this year.

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



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



Paul Trueman visited last weekend's Cambrian Rally



South Downs Stages fun, taken by Mike Bouts



A Ford Escort Mk2 pushing on, sent in by Ben Forrester

**ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S  
FAVOURITE OF  
THE WEEK!**



Gary Hill took this photograph of a gorgeous Vauxhall Chevette preparing for the season at a Brands Hatch test



The BARC Big Night Out, sent in by Bruce Grant-Braham



The Launceston Classic trial, taken by Duncan Stephens



Tim Hall snapped this Darrian at Goodwood



Legends battling at Knockhill, captured by John Henderson

**GOT AN OPINION?**

**LET US KNOW: LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK**

## TV GUIDE

The 2019 Formula 1 season is officially underway as **pre-season** testing is taking place at the Circuit de Catalunya this week. Watch the live action on Wednesday and Thursday (1300-1700hrs, Sky Sports F1) for days three and four of the first test.

On Friday, you can relive the very best moments from last year with a **2018 season review** and witness all the twists and turns as Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel battled for the title (1700-1800hrs, Sky Sports F1).

Elsewhere, watch highlights from round four of the 2018/19

**Formula E** season from Mexico City as championship leader Sam Bird attempted to extend his points advantage (Friday, 1230-1330hrs, BT Sport ESPN).

On Saturday you can also see the best moments from the second-ever **Jaguar I-Pace eTrophy Series** race also from Mexico City (0800-0830hrs, BT Sport 2).

And finally, enjoy the thrills and spills from the second round of the World Rally Championship from the snow-covered stages of **Rally Sweden** (Sunday, 0500-0600hrs, BT Sport ESPN). Who would master the conditions best?

## LIVE TV

### NASCAR: Atlanta

■ **Race:** Sunday, 1830hrs, Premier Sports 2



NASCAR visits Atlanta

## LISTINGS

### RALLY FRIDAY/SATURDAY

■ **Guernsey, Channel Islands Resolution IT Guernsey Rally Starts** 1730hrs  
Admission free  
Web guernseyrally.com

■ **FRIDAY-SUNDAY Stoneleigh Park, Coventry Race Retro Starts** 0930hrs

Admission see website  
Web raceretro.com

■ **SATURDAY Kirkistown circuit, Co. Down Pacenotes Rally Magazine Stages Starts** 0930hrs  
Admission TBA  
Web namcc.com

■ **SUNDAY Abbeyleix, Co Laois Abbeyleix Manor Hotel Stages**

Starts 0905hrs  
Admission TBA  
Web birmotorclub.com

■ **Knockhill circuit, Fife Grant Construction Rally Stages Starts** 0831hrs  
Admission adult £10, under 12 free  
Web borderecosseclub.com

*Details correct at time of press but please check before travelling*

## FAVOURITE LIVERIES 1980s MATT KEW'S TOP THREE PICKS



### Group 5 Lancia Beta Montecarlo

Stopping short of towing the Colosseum down the Mulsanne Straight, Jolly Club's Lancia Beta Montecarlo couldn't have looked anymore Italian at Le Mans in 1980. The country's national flag was draped over the bodywork, and with the black wheels it looked downright brilliant. It's a shame the outfit played it much safer when it took the 037 rallying.

### Group A BMW 635CSi

My general rule is that no predominantly black or white livery can ever be the greatest. If it's black, it won't look good in photos. If it's white, then it simply isn't finished. Martini colours are massively overrated. But to have the internals of the 635CSi painted on the bodywork of Schnitzer's Spa 1986 challenger (and on what looks like graph paper) is just inspired. All is forgiven.

### Wildcat 8B

The STP colours are more closely associated with Richard Petty plus NASCAR. But, to my eye, the paintjob looks infinitely better-suited to Gordon Johncock's 1982 Indianapolis 500 winner. Thanks to the dayglow running over the haunches and front and rear wings, it only serves to emphasise that the 8B looks fast even at a standstill.



## NEXT WEEK

## OUT WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

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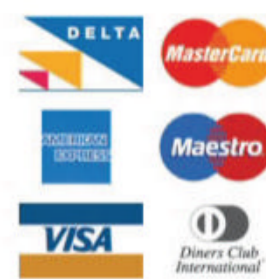
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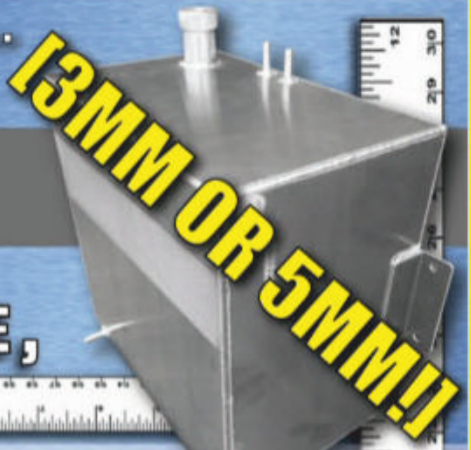
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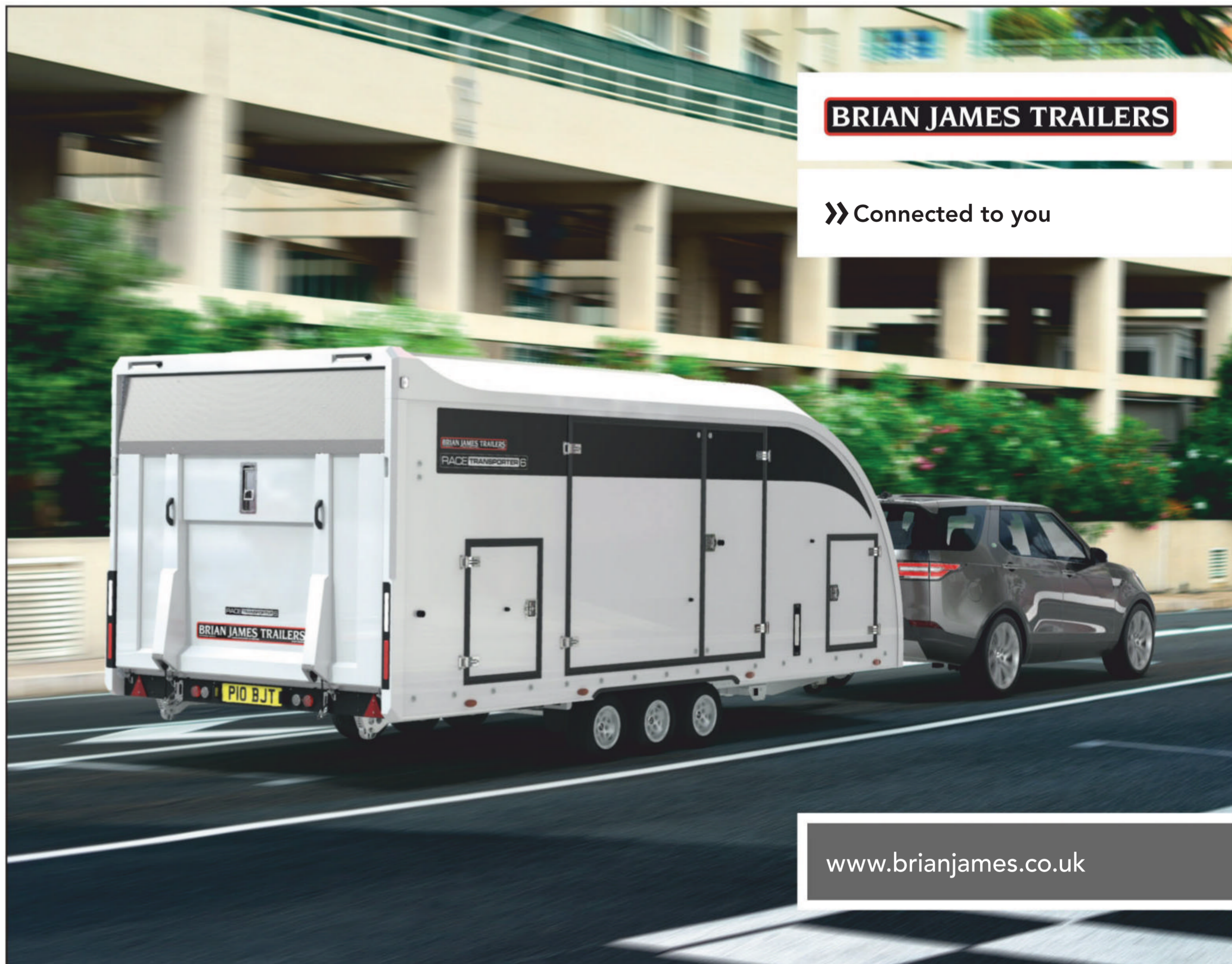
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