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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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TICKETUM



LANDS THE BIG ONE

BRIT IS NAMED AS MCLAREN AUTOSPORT YOUNG DRIVER P24

Pole convinces team with Abu Dhabi test pace

KUBICA



NEARS WILLIAMS F1 DRIVE



By Rob Ladbrook

Robert Kubica staked his claim for a sensational Formula 1 race return with Williams after wowing the team during a key test in Abu Dhabi last week.

The Polish ace was a stand-out performer during the two-day test at Yas Marina, and is now squarely in the frame to land the second Williams berth alongside Lance Stroll – six years on from almost losing his right arm in a horrific rally crash.

“It’s a great example of his character that he’s come back from his accident and fought to get back into F1,” said Williams’s Paddy Lowe. “There were no problems in the test. Everyone in the team is very happy with Robert.”

Full story, p2

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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SOLBERG'S DYNASTY



MOTORSPORT NEWS ISSUE **MJ3107** DECEMBER 6 2017

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Polish hero shines on make-or-break test

KUBICA

CLOSING



Kubica says he drove with no limitations on his test outing



By Rob Ladbrook

Robert Kubica moved a step closer to sealing a fairytale return to Formula 1 after impressing in what was likely to be a make or break test in Abu Dhabi with Williams last week.

The Polish star handled the current Williams FW40 for a day and a half during Pirelli's two-day end of season tyre test at the Yas Marina Circuit.

The 32-year-old completed 100 laps on his first day before handing across to Lance Stroll for the final few hours last Tuesday. Kubica then got a further few hours' running on Wednesday afternoon, after taking over from Sergey Sirotkin.

Kubica finished the test seventh fastest of the group, and best of the three Williams drivers – 0.4s quicker than Sirotkin, who was only running the soft compound tyres as opposed to Kubica's hypersoft covers. He was almost two seconds off Sebastian Vettel's fastest time of the session.

The test marked Kubica's third outing with Williams, but his first in its current-spec car. The former Canadian GP winner, who suffered life-changing injuries in a rally accident back in 2011, has driven a 2014-spec car for the Grove team at both Silverstone and the Hungaroring recently.

Kubica's F1 test programme has been ramped up as Williams evaluates his suitability for a full-time F1 return. Kubica had previously tested both a 2012 and current car with Renault, but with the team choosing Carlos Sainz Jr for its second seat, that particular avenue was closed to him.

Kubica is one of the favourites to land the race seat vacated by the retired Felipe Massa for next year, but he faces stern competition for

it, meaning his Abu Dhabi test was a crucial one for his hopes.

Williams' technical head Paddy Lowe said no decision on the team's driver line-up would be made imminently, but admitted Kubica had performed well and without issue in the tests.

"I'm not going to talk about speed," said Lowe when pressed on Kubica's times. "I'm sure you want me to give some answers about that, but it's not something we are going to discuss."

"Performance and speed are complicated, so to read a timesheet is quite misleading. We haven't even analysed it [the data]."

"Robert drove the 2014 car twice before, so we have lots of good information and Robert did a fantastic job. He's a very, very professional guy, very knowledgeable, very experienced, and that was a great benefit during these evaluations. We wanted to see Robert drive a current car, on current tyres, so of course it was interesting to see how he got on."

"There were no problems at all."



Renault test earlier this year

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: LAT, FIA/ERC.com

with Williams

ROBERT KUBICA ON F1 RETURN



Kubica was quick, and had a positive impact on team

He's absolutely fine. Good driving, no complaints, no issues – it all went well. But we'll take the decision [on the team's driver line-up] at the time we are ready. When we have all the information we will declare it."

Injury no issue

Kubica's return has been a long and rocky road since his accident on the Ronde di Andora Rally in February 2011 (*see sidebar*).

That crash led to a section of barrier piercing his car and partially severing his right arm. Multiple operations and six years later, and Kubica is back driving a grand prix machine.

Kubica had undergone speculative F1 tests shortly after he returned to driving after his rehabilitation. He conducted simulator work, but a race return was ruled out by the limited movement of his injured arm.

Kubica addressed the matter head-on in Abu Dhabi, confirming such issues didn't hinder him.

"There is someone saying I'm driving one-handed, I'm not

driving one-handed," he said. "I think it's actually impossible to drive a Formula 1 car one-handed.

"Have some limitations, so in some way my body used some compensations, which is not wrong. We are human beings and our brains are used to help our bodies overcome disabilities. Honestly, I have more limitation in my daily life.

"Physically I think I have done great work in the last six months. It hasn't been easy, it was not like I have been lying in my bed. Probably I'm in physically my best shape, by far better shape than when I was racing in 2010 [for Renault]. The motivation is there and my body is reacting in a good way. My limitations are much less than it looks like. My driving is 90 per cent the same as it was [before his accident].

"The biggest difference is the brain. It's incredible how big potential the brain has and how it can adapt to different situations. I learned to live with them [his injuries], how to drive an F1 car with them, and I'm quite

surprised by the results I saw.

"Of course I'm starting nearly from scratch again because F1 has changed so much in the last seven years that it's nearly like starting from zero. But my experience which I gained in the years I was racing in F1 helped me to get on top of the learning process quicker than it used to be in the past."

Impressive test

Lowe added that Kubica impressed the team on several levels, but would not be drawn on whether he had done enough to secure a full-time berth next year.

"Robert is a driver that we've admired and it's a great example of his character that he considered coming back from his accident and fighting away just seeking to be back in F1," he said. "We were happy with the job he did. He's got great experience and is very knowledgeable in his work.

"His feedback is very good and you can feel it in the garage that everybody [in the team] is very happy with Robert."

Kubica is now the favourite to partner Lance Stroll. Williams' reserve driver Paul di Resta is still in the frame, as is Renault-backed Sirotkin and Daniil Kvyat. Mercedes-supported Pascal Wehrlein is an outside bet. It is understood that Mercedes attempted to leverage a deal for Wehrlein by offering incentives through its engine supply deal with Williams, but Silver Arrows head Toto Wolff admitted recently that Wehrlein's chances of securing the seat were only "tiny".

"The drivers we brought to this test doesn't mean that it's the drivers under consideration for racing next year," added Lowe.

"This was a tyre test, which is an opportunity to look at two different drivers, as well as for Lance to look at the new tyres. That was the purpose.

"Of course it gives us some valuable new information about drivers, but it's not setting a definition from the pool from which we pick our race drivers. We'll regroup and make our decision on next year."

KUBICA'S VARIED ROAD

Since his life-changing accident on the Ronde di Andora Rally in Italy in February 2011, Robert Kubica has gradually re-immersed himself in motorsport, and has never lost sight of achieving a fairytale Formula 1 comeback. Here are some of his milestones.

2012

After an initial plan to return to rallying full-time for 2012 was scrapped after Kubica re-broke his right leg – allegedly due to slipping on ice at home – he finally returned to competition late

in the year, winning on his comeback on a club event in Italy aboard a Subaru Impreza S12B WRC. Kubica ended the year in a Citroen C4 WRC on Rallye du Var, but crashed out of the event on the opening stage.



2013

Kubica landed big-budget support from Polish oil firm Lotos for a combined ERC and WRC2 campaign in a factory-supported Citroen DS3 RRC. He was leading on his debut in Gran Canaria until he crashed, and while his ERC campaign was packed with incident, he won the WRC2 crown. A step up to a works DS3 WRC for Rally GB was compromised when his season-long co-driver Maciej Baran pulled out at short notice and he failed to click with stand-in Michele Ferrara. They rolled on stage four and crashed for good on stage 11. He also tested a DTM car with Mercedes as he evaluated a circuit racing return. However, F1 was ruled out after simulator tests with Mercedes exposed weaknesses with his damaged arm.

2014

His second full season of rallying began with a spectacular final-stage charge to win the ERC-counting Jannerrallye in Austria in an M-Sport Fiesta RRC, the prelude to a full World Rally Championship campaign in the big-brother WRC version. After leading the Monte Carlo Rally, his year unravelled somewhat after a spate of accidents. Wins at the end-of-season Monza Rally Show and Bettega Memorial Rallysprint provided some relief, however.



2015/16

Now at the helm of his own RK World Rally Team for a reduced schedule of WRC qualifiers, eighth place on his home event in Poland proved a highlight. He's managed six rallies since then, including a crack at the 2016 Monte Carlo Rally, where he crashed out of third place three stages in. He also entered the Mugello 12 Hours in a GT3 Mercedes, but retired after suspension failure.



2017

Kubica 'officially' sealed his return to racing with a deal in the FIA World Endurance Championship. After some encouraging tests with the privateer Kolles LMP1 team, Kubica agreed to race for the team in 2017. However, he did not drive in the pre-season test at Monza and withdrew from the deal. He also tested a Formula E car at Donington Park before switching his focus back to F1. He tested a 2012-spec Renault in Spain before handling the team's current car in an official test at the Hungaroring. He has since been running with Williams.

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Aston man in

Aston Martin appears to have taken another step toward entering F1 as an engine supplier from 2021 after recruiting ex-Ferrari engine chief Joerg Ross to start working on a concept. The British firm will be title sponsor to Red Bull Racing from next year, and is eyeing an F1 engine project, but wants costs to be reduced significantly. Ross joined Aston in August and is known to be working on a concept engine design. He will work with fellow ex-Ferrari man Luca Marmorini, who's role as an engine consultant has now been made permanent.

Ham's troubles

Lewis Hamilton has admitted to battling a personal dilemma over his F1 future. The four-time world champion has a contract with Mercedes until the end of next season, but is expected to start talks on a fresh two-year deal within the next few weeks. While Hamilton is expected to agree terms with Mercedes, he did admit to the lure of life without F1. "It's like the weather," he said. "It's about trying to find a balance. I'm at a point when there's that question. Whatever happens, you're going to miss F1 when you finish. There's a saying that you stay as long as you can, but I'm not sure on that, as there is a lot of life beyond it. There are things I've missed in life."

Logo bashing

F1 bosses admit that they expected a reaction from fans over the new logo, which was launched after the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. The new design stirred up much debate among fans of the sport, and even Lewis Hamilton publicly said he preferred the old one. Twice as many fans hit the 'dislike' button on F1's official YouTube logo reveal video as hit the 'like' option. F1 commercial head Sean Bratches said: "There are difficult changes – especially when you change a corporate mark, and particularly one around a passionate brand. The old logo seemed dated but everyone has an opinion in F1. I didn't think we'd sneak away unscathed on this one."

Free lunch

Chase Carey says teams need to realise there are no "free lunches" in F1 amid uncertainty over a drop in prize revenue. F1's grid will share a prize pot of \$273m (£202m) this year, down \$43m (£31.8m) for last year. "There are no free lunches," said Carey. "We had to invest in many things – things like the Trafalgar Square demo, to do things at broader fan fests, requires investment. However, all are investments in the future of the sport."

SAUBER-ALFA ROMEO TO FIELD LECLERC

F2 champion and Ericsson to form partnership



The Alfa Romeo brand will be back on the F1 grid



Sauber-Alfa Romeo and its two drivers

By Rob Ladbrook

Sauber has signed both Formula 2 champion Charles Leclerc and Marcus Ericsson to lead its new era with Alfa Romeo next season.

The Swiss team unveiled both its drivers and its initial livery concept at an event near Milan last week. Next year's car will feature heavy branding from the Italian manufacturer, and signifies an increased partnership with Alfa's parent firm, Ferrari. Sauber's multi-year deal

with Alfa will include strategic, commercial and technological cooperation with the brand, as well as access to the most current-spec Ferrari power units.

The team's customer engine deal was believed to include an agreement for Sauber to take one of Ferrari's junior drivers, with Leclerc's stand-out performance in F2 this year making him the favourite to join the team.

The Monegasque driver won seven races on his way to the F2 crown with the Prema team this year. During 2016 he won

the GP3 Series crown, making him the first driver to win both F1 support categories, a feat made all the more impressive by the fact he took both titles in his maiden seasons.

"I am very happy to be entering Formula 1," said Leclerc. "I would like to thank Ferrari for their support, and Sauber for their trust and confidence in me as a driver."

"It was great experience getting to drive in some of the free practice sessions and tyre testing for Sauber this year, during which the team welcomed me straight away. It

is a great working environment and I feel confident and comfortable here. My aim is to gain experience, and bring as much value to the team as I can."

Sauber has also retained Swede Ericsson for his fourth term with the team.

Team boss Frederic Vasseur said: "We're delighted with our cooperation with Alfa Romeo and with Marcus and Charles we have a strong driver duo for the debut season with the brand."

"Marcus is experienced and knows the procedures of the

team well, after having worked with us for the past three years. He's a team player with a positive attitude.

"Charles has proven his talent and he convinced us with his professionalism and charisma when he tested for us this year. I'm convinced both drivers will compliment each other well."

Antonio Giovinazzi – another Ferrari junior – will be the team's reserve driver. The deal leaves little space on the grid for Pascal Wehrlein, with Williams the German's only outside bet for a race seat.

Red Bull boss Horner pushes Renault to help close the power gap

Red Bull Racing is "desperate" for engine performance in Formula 1 to close up next season, according to Christian Horner.

The Milton Keynes team has been third-best all season, only having a chance to fight for race wins at circuits that place more of an emphasis on downforce than outright engine power.

Horner said his team needed engine supplier Renault to make significant headway in reducing

the deficit to both Mercedes and Ferrari next term if his drivers – Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen – were to have any shot at the world title.

"Reliability is a key issue next year, but it is also about maintaining the chassis development that we have had during the second half of the year, and we desperately need the engine to concertina in performance," said Horner.

"Places like Brazil are power sensitive, and in Abu Dhabi you could see Mercedes were in a class of their own. If you listened to their radio content, when they turn their engines up, you only had to look at the middle sector. They would go half-a-second quicker or slower depending on what engine mode they choose."

"Hats off to them – they are doing a great job, but engine performance is a key differentiator."



Red Bull has floundered on power circuits

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'Oliver looks to follow in Petter's footsteps'
The Solberg dynasty, p20



Photos: LAT



Button loves the GT category



Full season of racing for Button in Super GT

BUTTON WILL CONTEST 2018 SUPER GT SERIES WITH HONDA

Formula 1 world champion Jenson Button has signed a deal to drive for Honda in the Japanese Super GT series in 2018. Button will race a Honda NSX-GT in the GT500 category, the top class in the series which also has a GT300 series. The 2009 F1 champion took part in Super GT's showpiece Suzuka 1000km race in August – finishing 12th after penalties for an unsafe release and overtaking under the

safety car – and will enter the 2018 season, which begins on April 7/8 at Okayama. Button's announcement was made official at the Honda Racing Thanks Day festival at Motegi, although no information was made available regarding his team or the co-drivers. "I'll be racing for Honda and have a contract to race with Honda in Super GT in 2018," Button said.

"It's been a dream for the last couple of years, I love the category. I did one race in Suzuka this year, and it got me very excited. "I'm also very excited about the new season. There's a lot of testing to be done to feel comfortable and hopefully improve the package and go out next year and be competitive." Button competed in 306 grand prix from

2000-2017, taking 15 wins and the 2009 title with Brawn GP. His most recent F1 race came this season at Monaco with McLaren, in place of Fernando Alonso who was contesting the Indy 500. Honda is one of the three manufacturers in the top class alongside Nissan and Lexus and currently supports five single-car teams on the grid. Hondas won two races in 2017.

BTCC 32-car entry list full

All 32 slots on the British Touring Car Championship entry list have been filled as the deadline for registrations closed last week and all licences were taken.

The licence system for teams was introduced in 2014 and all cars are required to have a TOCA BTCC Licence (TBLs) in order to compete.

The teams have 30 licences while two of them are held by the championship organiser, TOCA, which has loaned out its licences meaning there will once again be a full grid.

One of the commitments of holding a TBL is that teams must contest every round of the season.

Series director Alan Gow said: "It goes to show the strength of the BTCC that we are able to fill up our grid before we've even got to the new year."

The championship will be launched at the series's media day at Donington Park on March 27, while the first meeting of the 2018 campaign is on the Brands Hatch Indy circuit on April 7/8.

The series will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2018, including an extended double-points race at Snetterton.

THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



Thed Bjork clinched the 2017 World Touring Car Championship in Qatar in the final race of the season. The Volvo driver beat Norbert Michelisz by 28.5 points after finishing fourth, handing third place to team-mate Nicky Catsburg – who'd acted as a rear-gunner throughout – on the line. Esteban Guerrieri took victory, while Tom Chilton won race one... Louis Deletraz (MP Motorsport), Arjun Maini (Russian Time) and Alexander Albon (DAMS) all took top spot across the three days of Formula 2 testing in Abu Dhabi last week. Brits Lando Norris and



Bjork won 2017 WTCC title in Qatar

George Russell finished day one in sixth and seventh... **MP Motorsport set a clean sweep of fastest times at the three-day GP3 test in Abu Dhabi last week. Outgoing Red Bull junior Niko Kari topped the times on the first two days, while European Formula 3 frontrunner Ferdinand Habsburg was fastest on the final day...** IndyCar will not visit Mexico City in 2018, but talks are continuing to host a

race in 2019. Mexico last hosted top-level American single-seater racing when Champ Car raced at Mexico City from 2003-07 and Monterrey from 2001-06... **Ford has announced an unchanged GTE core line-up of drivers for the 2018/19 World Endurance Championship 'superseason': Andy Priaulx, Harry Tinncknell, Olivier Pla and Stefan Mucke will remain...**

Mazda and Joest eye US success

Brits Harry Tinncknell and Oliver Jarvis will contest the IMSA SportsCar Championship next year with Mazda, which has engaged multiple Le Mans-winning outfit Joest Racing to run its cars.

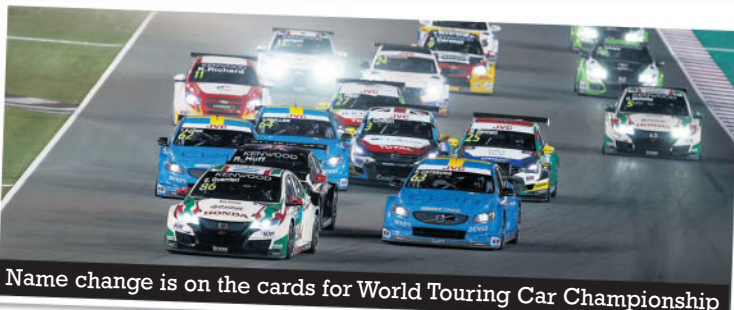
Tinncknell and Jarvis, a former Audi Team Joest factory driver, will join Mazda regulars Jonathan Bomarito and Tristan Nunez in the team, with DTM champion Rene Rast and Spencer Pigot added to the roster for the four endurance races at Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Petit Le Mans. "Mazda have had a very



Tinncknell, Jarvis and co will drive Joest-run Mazdas

successful history in the US and Team Joest has won Le Mans 15 times, so it's a very strong partnership, there's no weak links," said Tinncknell, who will combine his IMSA schedule with Ford's GT effort in the WEC. "There's a going to be a lot of competition, so there's going to be no hiding place and we've got to get up to speed quickly," he added.

After four victories with Porsche machinery, Reinhold Joest's team won the Le Mans 24 Hours 11 times with Audi between 2000 and 2014. It had been without a programme since Audi's departure from the World Endurance Championship, prior to announcing a deal to field the Multimatic-built cars.



Name change is on the cards for World Touring Car Championship

WTCC set to adopt TCR regulations, including weekend format change, for 2018 season

The World Touring Car Championship looks certain to undergo a name change as part of a deal to adopt TCR technical regulations for 2018. The series is set to become known as the WTCR in an arrangement that will result in the end of the TCR International Series, *MN's*

sister publication *Autosport* has learned. The FIA and the owners of the WTCC are understood to have agreed a licensing deal to use both TCR's regulations and its name. The plan is due to go before the FIA World Motor Sport Council today (Wednesday)

for ratification. The 2018 WTCR calendar is set to be made up of 10 races across four continents. It is likely to retain the majority of the existing WTCR fixtures, but will switch to a new format of three races per weekend. The adoption of the TCR

rules gives the WTCR organisers access to a large pool of cars and manufacturers. Eight major car makers have so far developed cars for the budget tin-top category, which has spread around the world since its inception ahead of the 2015 season.

RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

T-Sport test

Former Formula V8 3.5 champion Tom Dillmann tested a T-Sport LMP3 Ligier at Silverstone last week. T-Sport contested a part-campaign in the LMP3 Cup this year and team boss Russell Eacott said: "He doesn't have a drive at the moment, so if a gentleman driver comes along and says 'would you mind sharing my car' and he can do it, then I think he'd drive it."

Young rolls Clio

Ryan Young, the elder brother of the inaugural Renault UK Clio Cup Junior champion Jack, took over his title-winning MRM Racing car at Donington Park last week – but rolled it. With two-time BTCC champion Colin Turkington in the passenger seat, he managed to roll the Clio on the first flying lap. Turkington said: "It's [the damage] just cosmetic really, it happens to us all sometimes but is a bit embarrassing."

Super-Sycamore

Mazda MX-5 racer Jack Sycamore will contest the MX-5 SuperCup next season. Sycamore, who finished third in the Mk1 MX-5 Cup standings in 2016, had sporadic outings this year but plots a full SuperCup campaign with the AB Motorsport squad that is run by John Miles Award winner Ali Bray.

Browning stays

Ginetta Junior racer Luke Browning will remain with Richardson Racing in the series next year. The former Junior Saloon Car driver was 11th in the standings in his rookie season. "It was a late call to join Ginetta Junior this year and we knew early on it would be a season to learn the ropes and master the style of driving that was needed to be competitive," he said.

Photos: LAT

TICKTUM SIGNS UP FOR EURO F3 WITH MOTOPARK

Macau Grand Prix winner confirms F3 switch after winning big award



Ticktum (inset) won in Macau with Motopark

By Jack Benyon

Newly crowned McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Dan Ticktum will race for Motopark in FIA European Formula 3 in 2018.

The 18-year-old raced in the Formula Renault Eurocup this season with series newcomer Arden, finishing seventh in the standings. He also scored a podium in five starts in GP3 with DAMS and won the prestigious Macau F3 Grand Prix with the Motopark team.

"I have a lot to live up to next year with Motopark as they were top two last year [with Joel Eriksson]," said Ticktum. "I think it is winnable next year, if the car is as good as it was this year, which I'm sure it will be if not better, it should definitely be possible."

The Red Bull junior is familiar with the team as he tested with Motopark while he was banned from motorsport for crashing into 2015 MSA Formula rival Ricky Collard during a safety car period.

"Timo [Rumpfkeil, Motopark team boss] is a great bloke, he's another person who has always believed in me," added Ticktum. "He has been phoning up all year trying to get me to drive for him, which is a very nice feeling as a driver,

to have someone that experienced in the sport who has seen some incredible drivers like Valtteri Bottas come through his team, and he wants me that bad, it's a very nice feeling."

The Red Bull junior driver is confident that his performances at DAMS and in Macau have given him a launchpad for next year.

"At DAMS they gave me a good car and I performed relatively well there. Timo gave me a great car at Motopark and we won in Macau and at the MABA test I was good there too.

"If the kit is there or thereabouts then I think I can always get the most out of it and win. It's been a tough year in Formula Renault overall but to have a firework ending to the year is great."

For winning MABA, Ticktum earns the opportunity to test a McLaren Formula 1 car and take up paid simulator work, an Arai helmet and full BRDC membership.

He beat BRDC British F3 champion Enaam Ahmed, Euroformula Open champion Harrison Scott and top FR Eurocup rookie Max Fewtrell.

The four drivers were tested in McLaren GT3, DTM Mercedes and F2 cars on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit, and had their fitness levels assessed by McLaren.

AUTOSPORT AWARDWINNERS

International Racing Driver of the Year: Lewis Hamilton
Racing Car of the Year: Mercedes W08
Rally Driver of the Year: Sebastien Ogier
Rally Car of the Year: Ford Fiesta WRC
British National Driver of the Year: Lando Norris
British Club Driver of the Year: Enaam Ahmed
British Competition Driver Award: Lewis Hamilton
Rookie of the Year: Charles Leclerc
Gregor Grant Awards: Derek Warwick/Nelson Piquet
John Bolster Award: Automobile Club de l'Ouest
Williams Engineer of the Future Award: Martins Zalmans
Rider of the Year: Marc Marquez



Warwick: Gregor Grant

New venue and cars for the Mazda Road to Indy Shootout finale in the US

Formula Ford 1600 racer Oliver White believes American drivers could have an advantage in the Mazda Road to Indy Shootout after a venue change.

This weekend's event – where a \$200,000 (£148,000) scholarship to compete in USF2000 is up for grabs – will take place at Bondurant Racing School with Formula Mazda cars being used by the finalists.

White, who reached the final stage of the Shootout last year – when it was held at Laguna Seca – and was awarded a place for this year based on his performances in 2017, believes that

some drivers may have already driven the track.

"Some of the Americans might have driven it [the track] before which might make it harder for the foreign drivers," he said. "I didn't manage to do any simulator work, I don't think any of the places have it [the track] on them and that's because it's a driving school. In the end I just had to stick to YouTube, which is not perfect."

Kyle Kimball, manager of operations at Mazda Motorsports, said: "It offers a level playing field with cars and a circuit where no one has a big

advantage over the others. Part of what we will be judging is how well these young drivers adapt to an unfamiliar track in an unfamiliar car."

Last year's winner Oliver Askew – who won the 2017 USF2000 championship – will be on the judging panel alongside IndyCar race winner Scott Goodyear and Mazda representatives.

The original group will be narrowed down into an unspecified number of finalists, who will then be evaluated on a 30-minute race. The race winner isn't guaranteed to win the shootout.

ENTRIES FROM THE UK AND IRELAND

Luke Williams
 Niall Murray
 Ross Martin
 Jamie Thorburn
 Keith Donegan
 James Raven
 Matt Cowley
 Oliver White

Oliver White earned his second successive Mazda Road to Indy Shootout entry



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'Tough times for di Grassi and Buemi in Hong Kong'
Formula E report, p19



Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Steve Jones, Roy Dempster



HHC will continue to use Ginetta car

NEW DRIVER LINE-UP FOR HHC IN BRITISH GT4 HUNT

HHC Motorsport will push for the clean sweep of British GT4 titles next season after expanding to field two cars in the championship. The team won the GT4 teams', drivers' and silver/silver titles in its maiden season, running Will Tregurtha and Stuart Middleton in a single Ginetta G55 GT4 in 2017. With that pairing expected to move on, HHC has recruited GT Supercup champion Callum Pointon, 23, to share alongside European GT racer Patrik Matthiesen, 19 in its silver-graded entry. To couple that, HHC has also signed British Touring Car convert Will Burns, 27, and GT regular Mike Newbould, 47 to run in a Pro-Am car. Team boss Charlie Kemp told MN:

"We're really excited about British GT for next season and we've definitely got two driver line-ups that can impress. "In Callum we have a very proven young driver, who's coming into British GT knowing the G55 inside-out, but from a sprint race format. We ran Patrik in the Ginetta Jr Rookie title in 2015 and we know his pace. He's bringing endurance racing experience, so together they should be right at the front. "In Will and Mike we have a developing Pro-Am partnership with good experience. They won on their debut in the GT Cup [at Snetterton in October] and will be out for the Pro-Am title. "This year went better than we

could have wished in British GT, so it was natural to take our commitment a step further and run two cars. We've stuck with the Ginetta because it's a proven car that we know well and gives us a nice continuity. Winning all the titles would be a dream." Pointon, who scored two wins on his way to the GT4 Supercup crown this year, added: "I felt I proved something with the GT4 Supercup title this year and I've improved as a driver again. Consistency is what paid for me this year and that's key in British GT - bringing the car home. "I've still got things to learn, and the full GT4 cars have a bit more torque but less overall aero and grip, so there will be an adaption."



Pointon: Recruited



Burns: Man for the job



Tregurtha claimed accolade

MSA Young Driver award for Tregurtha

British GT4 champion Will Tregurtha won the MSA Young Driver of the Year award last week, entitling him to a winter testing programme at iZone at Silverstone.

Tregurtha, who steered a HHC Motorsport Ginetta G55 to British honours with Stuart Middleton this year, was chosen by judges at the iZone facility after excelling in a kart simulator at Whilton Mill and PF International, a Formula Renault sim at Brands Hatch Indy including eye-tracking exercises, a custom-built track using a VW Scirocco and a presentation and physical work out.

Tregurtha won the Ginetta Junior title in 2016 in his second year of car racing.

"I really enjoyed it, driving cars I haven't driven in real life is really good fun," said Tregurtha, who is set to announce his plans for next year in the coming weeks.

"[The prize] will be invaluable, I can use the sim, gym and work on the mental side of things through the winter to prepare for next year."

Tregurtha beat GT5 Challenge driver Angus Fender, karter Dan Seager and Renault UK Clio Cup Junior race winner Max Marzorati. The four made the final after being put forward from the MSA-endorsed AASE course at Loughborough college.

TCR UK series "serious option" for Renault UK Clio Cup champ Bushell

Two-time Renault UK Clio Cup champion Mike Bushell says TCR UK is a "serious option" for him next season after testing a Honda Civic TCR car last week. The 28-year-old had the test as part of the TCR UK taster day at Brands Hatch with the Team Pyro squad - the outfit he has won both Clio titles with - and was impressed by the car. Bushell had one season in the British Touring Car Championship in 2015 in a Ford Focus and said the TCR car was quicker than the

BTCC machine. "I went in with an open mind - there's been a lot of talk about TCR," he said. "To me it was straightaway easy to drive at 90 per cent. But that 100 per cent lap gave me such a thrill. In terms of lap time, I was actually quicker than I ever went in qualifying in 2015 with only three degrees track temperature. "It's a serious option [for 2018]



Bushell enjoyed TCR UK taster

and the beauty of it is the car can be raced anywhere. With World Touring Cars [set to be] adopting TCR regulations and the European Trophy I can race in all of those three [including TCR UK] with the same car and for me that's exciting." Drivers were able to sample cars from Audi, Alfa Romeo, Hyundai, Opel, SEAT and Volkswagen, as well as Honda, during the taster day and reigning BTCC champion Ash Sutton and current racer Mike Epps were among over 30 drivers attending

Combe changes to help track limit problem

Castle Combe circuit bosses will make changes for 2018 in a bid to stop track limits being exploited following an end-of-year protest. The Formula Ford 1600 Carnival race was delayed by several minutes in October as the majority of drivers got out of their cars on the dummy grid to protest track limit penalties, which had been issued in an earlier race. The Wiltshire circuit has now installed rumble strips on the entrance to the second chicane to deter drivers from cutting. A Castle Combe statement said: "In May this year, rumble strips were installed at the Esses [first

chicane] and immediately proved effective to negate any unfairly gained advantage and we will now complete the job and install similar measures at Bobbies, [allowing] self-regulating at both these complexes and removing the human element of line judgements, previously made by a driving standards observer." Team owner Kevin Mills - whose drivers Michael Moyers and Michael Eastwell lost a 1-2 finish because of post-race track limit penalties - believes the change is a positive one. "This year since the National Formula Ford round they have



Moyers and Eastwell penalised

had some sort of sleeping policemen or rumble strip at the first chicane: they've got them on the left," he said. "They seem to be working and if they do the same sort of thing in the second chicane it will probably be a step in the right direction." The circuit also confirmed the FF1600 championship will feature nine rounds next season, of which three will be double-headers.

Thumbs up for BRSCC National Formula Ford's return to Kirkistown for 2018 round

A return to the Kirkistown Circuit as part of the British Racing and Sports Car Club's National Formula Ford 1600 Championship next season has been hailed by teams and drivers. The series will join the new-for-2018 TCR UK package at seven rounds throughout the year but a separate eighth venue had yet to be decided.

Kirkistown in Northern Ireland was finally announced last week after being put to a vote by teams and drivers. "I'm absolutely 100 per cent delighted we're going back," said team owner Cliff Dempsey. "I was the one that wanted to go back not just because it was my local track but because of the way they looked after us,

the great work Richard Young [track manager] and Robert Barr [who looks after the finances] did. "I'm over the moon for them, I know they wanted it back." Kirkistown had not been visited by the National Formula Ford series for several years until earlier this season, but is already now a firm favourite.

Ian Smith, BRSCC National FF1600 co-ordinator, said: "It's just wonderful and people were saying after [this season] we would come back here again, even though it might be more expensive because of the ferry. "Someone even asked can we have the whole championship here. It was basically a no-brainer."



Teams and drivers enjoyed the visit to Northern Ireland



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RACING NEWS

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CSCC PLANS MAGNY-COURS TRIP IN 2018

Club to visit French track as well as Spa next year



Classic Sports Car Club's Open Series will go to France

By Rob Ladbrook

The Classic Sports Car Club will hold an event at Magny-Cours Circuit in France next season, as well as its traditional European fixture at Spa-Francorchamps.

The club will take its Open Series to the former French Grand Prix venue on October 19-21, allowing 51 cars to take part in a series of races. It will be the first time the CSCC has run there.

"We wanted to do something different and the fact that no other British club offers its members a race at Magny-Cours is exactly why we went for it," said the CSCC's Hugo Holder.

"You can only do so much to vary the calendar in the UK and we got offered this chance and decided it would offer something different. It's a great circuit with superb facilities and we've already had great feedback as well as people already trying to book their place, despite it being a year away!"

The CSCC will also be part of the 3 Hours of Spa on the Summer Classic Festival on June 22-24.

The club will also run on Snetterton 200 – instead of 300 – for its opener on April 7/8, make a return to Mallory Park after a three-year break and its Donington Park fixture will use the Grand Prix loop on September 15/16.

Wendy Wools back after 30 years

Wendy Wools will return to sponsoring the CSCC's Special Saloons and Modsports series from next year after 30 years away from the sport.

The wool company, named 'Wendy' after the Peter Pan character, backed the BARC's Special Saloons series from 1978-88 and became one of the iconic sponsors of club racing in that era.



CSCC's Hugo Holder said: "It's very nostalgic and David Smitheram [CSCC director] put in a huge amount of work to track down the right people. Wool and motor racing was an odd mixture, but that's why it became so famous. People still reproduce stickers."



MAK Racing won in Portugal

Portimao Fun Cup wins are shared

Racelogic and MAK Racing shared the victory spoils at Fun Cup's Portimao away weekend.

In race one Racelogic's Julian Thomas, Jon Tomlinson and David Denyer had the lead from lap three, only briefly losing it during the pitstops, before taking victory by a lap. JPR Giti Tyres' Martin Gibson and Kristian Rose emerged from a terrific early scrap to claim second. Having wrestled third from Team Viking's Nick Nunn/Mark Holme/Colin Kingsnorth with four laps to go, the Track Focused trio of Sean Cooper/Neil Smith/Mike McCollum were excluded for a rear-wing infringement, handing the place back to Viking.

Nobody was more surprised than MAK's Michelle Hayward to take the race two victory.

Andy Kirk had shared a number of exchanges with Jason Kennedy Racing's Andrew Bentley in the last hour, but when Hayward took over, she ousted Charlie Kennedy from the lead to secure their maiden win.

Track Focused's Cooper grabbed a late second from Kennedy, while race one winners Racelogic were classified 10th after manifold problems.

F1000: new rules and TCR support slot

F1000 will appear on the TCR UK support bill at two rounds next season and a number of regulation changes will be made aimed at encouraging new competitors.

The one-make series, previously Formula Jedi but renamed earlier this year, will join the TCR UK support package for the Castle Combe (July) and Croft (September) events forming part of a 19-race calendar in 2018.

The changes to the series' draft 2018 regulations include a new invitation class for older Jedi cars.

Championship manager Frazer Corbyn said: "Following interest, we

decided to offer an invitation class aimed not only at Jedi-manufactured cars of older specification, but also those cars that may fall just outside the full championship regulations. It means those who own older-spec Jedi that are not far off regulation can be a part of F1000 and be competitive in their own class."

Another proposed change is that drivers will be allowed to enter the category in pairs. The drivers would share one car, therefore splitting costs and races, and qualifying will be extended to allow both drivers to set times.



Drivers will be able to pair up



Traditional season-closing event attracts a large entry

Second Fiesta endurance race to open Mondello's 2018 season

A second Fiesta endurance race will be held at Mondello Park next season and will run as the season-opening event.

The traditional six-hour enduro is a popular fixture at the end of the Irish racing calendar and attracted 32 teams for the 2017 edition last month.

"There was an interest in doing another event," said Mondello's Ian Beatty. "After last year's race, quite a few

people said they wanted to do a championship or series. But when we put this out the feedback was that people didn't want to do it because if they wanted to race in the main championship, they wouldn't be able to do the endurance races too because it would be too much for the cars."

But with the extra 2018 event proposed for February 18, Beatty said this would be well before the main season begins,

allowing teams to repair any damaged cars.

"There's a gap before the season starts and there's good interest in it," Beatty added. "There's a good few teams who are only building cars to do endurance races. We had 32 teams at the race a few weeks ago and it's too early to say how many we'll have for this but we would like the mid-20s. It's a great atmosphere and the racing is good."

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HISTORICS

'Coughtrie looks to a mixed programme'
Mitsubishi man's outlook, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE PUB WITH

KIM GRAY

Age: 29 Lives: Chesterfield
Roger Albert Clark class winner

The first day didn't end well

"We snapped the camshaft on Friday but I didn't realise and it still drove. So I got it back to service in Leominster and they told me it was pretty terminal. My husband Andy, our Welsh service guy Bryn and I drove home to Chesterfield, while the service crew took the car to Carlisle and started taking the engine out. However, the service van broke down on the M6."

They worked all night

"We got a new cam and took it to Carlisle and put it in. Most of us didn't go to bed at all on Friday night. We fired it up just after 0700hrs on Saturday morning, ready to restart at 0930hrs. Everything was OK in the morning but then the alternator started playing up just as it was getting dark. We did Ogre Hill and Harwood on just two spot lamps. It was nice to go to bed on Saturday night and, of course, Andy was driving as well in his Peugeot 205GTi."

Then the gearbox failed

"On Sunday morning in Scotland I started struggling to get second gear. We thought it was the clutch as we'd had the engine out but by the time we got to the last three stages I couldn't get any gears other than third. We did the entire last stage and the run back to service in third. We then changed the gearbox."

More drama on Monday

"On Monday we flew through Newcastleton but I couldn't get the car moving at management service and thought the rear brakes were stuck on. But the crown wheel bolts had all come out. We managed to get that sorted and got to the long 20-mile Kielder stage just in time. In Falstone we caught and passed the Lancia Fulvia and managed to move up the running order for the second long stage, but we still caught three cars."

They finished!

"We finished and won the class and didn't quite make the top 20 overall, and I'd quite like to have done that for a third time. It was four days of rallying and just mental. Everyone comes together so much more than on a small event. Everyone wants everyone else to finish as it is such a big commitment. We had help from no end of people and it was great."



Gray had big R.A.C. fight



Champion shared the win in Kenya

CHAMPION STUNS WITH SAFARI VICTORY

Porsche 911 driver becomes first Brit to win classic event in Kenya

By Paul Lawrence

Yorkshiremen Ryan Champion and Richard Jackson are the first British drivers to win the world's toughest historic rally, the East African Safari Classic.

After eight days of competition in Kenya and Tanzania in their Porsche 911, they were declared joint winners of the event with the Triumph TR7 V8 of

local driver Carl Tundo. On an event only previously won by Kenyan and Swedish drivers, it took a ruling by the event stewards to declare joint winners after most of the field got stuck in a mud hole on day seven.

At the time, Jackson/Champion were leading by two minutes but the mud hole halted all but four cars. Tundo rerouted around the section and gained about an hour.

After lengthy deliberations and with the approval of both crews, the results were later amended to produce joint winners for the first time in the event's history.

"On the first day we got stuck in a river and the locals pushed us out," said Champion. They lost seven minutes in a 55-mile stage but still ended the day fourth. On day two they lost all the brakes for 50 miles and on day five they broke a shock

absorber after 60 miles of a 100-mile stage. Despite the dramas, their Tuthill-entered Porsche led the rally until the penultimate-day dramas.

"That's been eight days of the toughest rally in the world," said Champion. "It was an amazing rally and an amazing experience and mentally draining. We came to an agreement and were declared joint winners after the issues on day seven."



Jardine: huge challenge

Jardine set for his biggest driving test yet with Le Jog outing

Motorsport presenter Tony Jardine will widen his rallying experience this weekend when he tackles Le Jog, the Land's End to John O'Groats reliability trial.

Jardine and his navigator Nick Cooper will compete in one of

HERO Events' 'Arrive and Drive' fleet, a 1970 BMW 1602. The annual event starts at Land's End at 0730hrs on Saturday and is due to finish from 1015hrs on Tuesday after 1450 miles.

Jardine said: "This will be a very

different challenge: the toughest classic rally in Europe. I've competed in 24-hour races, seven Arctic rallies and Camel Trophy adventures, in jungles and across deserts, but Le Jog is set to be the toughest test for me so far."

Bailey builds up a Mk1 for Silver Fern

Former BMW M3 rally driver and sometime Aston Martin GT4 racer Jerry Bailey will contest the 2018 Silver Fern Rally in New Zealand.

Bailey has had a 1600cc Ford Escort Mk1 built up for the trip, rather than use his regular BDG-powered Escort Mk2. The new car was built by Bob Downen Rally Services. "We built it for the Silver Fern next November but we got carried away and finished it in



Bailey: New Zealand assault

time for the Roger Albert Clark Rally," said Bailey, who had not driven the 1600cc cross-flow car before the start.

Although sidelined by engine issues, Bailey will run the car a couple of times early in 2018 before shipping it to New Zealand.

Jenkins gets back into the rallying hot seat

Dave Jenkins will take a break from preparing historic rally cars to return to the driving seat for Rally Barbados next June.

Forest of Dean-based Jenkins has built a reputation for his work, notably on Ford Escorts, and has been building a fresh Escort Mk2

for the Weir family. Now, Rob Weir has invited Jenkins to contest the Barbados event and Ross, son of Rob, will co-drive. "I last drove on a rally about four years ago on the Wydean," said Jenkins, who won his home event back in 1996 at the wheel of an Escort Cosworth.

Dozens of crews up for Rally 2WD campaign

Pledges of support from 50 crews have been received for Rally North Wales, which will be the first rally to be organised to the new Rally 2WD format next March.

The team behind Rally 2WD now has 50 commitments from the historic fraternity with more expected, including at least 15 cars from Category 1 (pre-1968).

Wolverhampton and South

Staffs Car Club has planned its event in the Welsh forests around R2WD, the new initiative designed to rekindle support for gravel rallying for all two-wheel-drive cars, both modern and historic.

Guy Weaver, chairman of WSSCC, said: "This is very encouraging news and there should be a good contingent of modern 2WD cars in the entry as well."



Crews are getting behind Rally 2WD ahead of its 2018 launch

IN BRIEF

Mansell's trophy

Andrew Mansell has been awarded the Historic Sports Car Club's Lola Trophy for the Clubman of the Year. Mansell, the championship chairman for Historic Formula Ford, was honoured for his role in the club's 50th anniversary celebrations for the category. As planned, he stood down at the end of the season and will be replaced by David Wild.

Tony Preston

MN is sad to report the death of Tony Preston from the Classic Touring Car Racing Club. Preston was taken unwell at home 10 days ago. He had only recently won the club's Pre '66 Touring Car title in his familiar Morris Minor and was widely respected as a popular member of the close-knit racing community.

AGBO split into two

The popular AGBO Stages at Weston Park will be split into two events with a dedicated historic rally on Saturday, March 17, followed by a modern event the next day. The historic event will feature rounds of the HRCR Old Stager and Mini Cup series along with a round of the Welsh Historic Championship. The event has been massively over-subscribed in recent years as a one-day rally.

Galant Coughtrie

Tom Coughtrie plans to campaign his Historic specification Group A Mitsubishi Galant VR4 on a mix of events next season, including some rounds of the BTRDA Historic Cup and the Midnight Sun Rally in Sweden. The Scot is looking for a suitable co-driver for the Darell Staniforth built car, which recently made its debut on the Roger Albert Clark Rally.

Deja vu's benefit

After their 'Deja vu' Killarney event last Easter, Dr Beatty Crawford and Alan Tyndall presented a cheque for €5,000 (£4,400) to the Irish Cancer Society. The rally reunion recreated the glory days of Group B rallying in the 1980s by bringing together a valuable collection of cars and well-known drivers including Stig Blomqvist, Jimmy McRae and Billy Coleman.

Jack Murrell

Jack Murrell, founder of the DRW range of sports-racing cars, died in Spain recently at the age of 83. Murrell joined Colin Chapman's fledgling Lotus operation as a mechanic in 1956 and later formed DRW Engineering to build cars. He enjoyed success as a driver, notably in a DRW Clubmans car in the late 1960s, but later folded the company.

Peter Auto dates

The French-based Peter Auto organisation has confirmed five major race dates for 2018. For the first time the season will start at the Espiritu de Montjuich event (April 6-8) at the Barcelona track in Spain, while the Imola Classic (October 26-28) marks a return to the Italian track. The 2017 foray to the Hungaroring is not being repeated next year.

RALLY NEWS

WRAPS COME OFF VW'S R5 POLO



Volkswagen Motorsport revealed its Polo GTI R5 in Mallorca earlier this week. The car will start testing in Wales this week before making its competitive debut sometime in the second half of 2018.

M-SPORT BOSS WILSON PREDICTS TIGHTER WRC FIGHT

British team head says competition will ramp up in 2018

By David Evans

World Rally Championship-winning team principal Malcolm Wilson has admitted he expects the competition to be even tougher as he seeks to defend M-Sport's title in 2018.

Interviewed for an *Autosport* podcast to be released later this month, Wilson also talked Ford's input into 2018 – a move which was key in Sebastien Ogier's decision to re-sign for the British squad next season.

Wilson pointed to the driver changes late this season and over the closed season as an indicator of just how competitive he expected 2018 to be.

"There's going to be serious competition, there's no question about that," said Wilson. "Every manufacturer is going to be out there and definitely challenging to take that crown away from us. Hyundai has strengthened its line-up

with Andreas [Mikkelsen]; we know Kris [Meeke] is very, very quick when things are right and we've lost one of our drivers in Ott [Tanak to Toyota] and we know how quick he is.

"The good thing is that we have some good, tight technical regulations, which should preclude any one team making a massive step – at least I hope they do! I'm sure the teams will find small things here and there, but it's going to be tight. But I am really confident that our team will step up to this challenge, but it's going to be a very big ask for us to retain both titles."

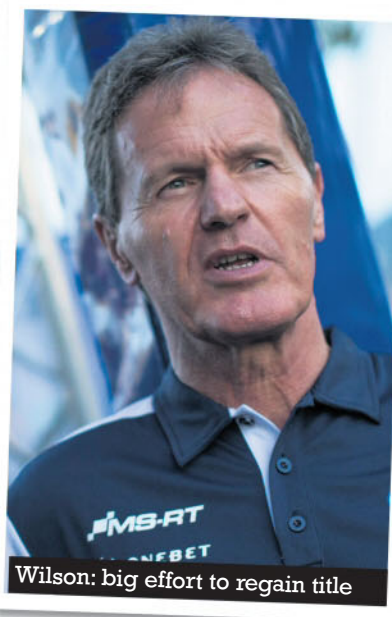
This year has been one of the most competitive seasons in the history of the sport, but Wilson expects next season to go above and beyond.

"I'm willing to have a bet here and now," he said, "that the championship will go down to the wire next year. It's going to be one of the most exciting seasons ever.

And this can only be good for the sport – and especially for the sport in the UK. I've been doing this job for 20 years and before that I was driving and not since the days of Group B have we seen these sort of levels of popularity. For us here in Britain and Ireland, we have the Colin [McRae] and Richard [Burns] impact again with Elfyn [Evans], Kris [Meeke] and Craig Breen. Everything is going in a positive direction. But, like I said, I know, sitting here, we're not going to be able to win next year by the same margin we did this time. It's going to be tough, but we'll be right there and fighting."

Asked to outline Ford's involvement and what it means, Wilson added: "Sebastien [Ogier] made it very clear that he wanted to see Ford involvement and I do as well. I would love to think we could get back to the budgets our competitors have, but, at this point in time, that's not going to happen.

"Ford Performance is controlled from America and we will be working closely with them on the technical side. Seb has met the people from Ford Performance, he met [global director, Ford Performance] Mark Rushbrook in Rally GB. The great thing for me is that we'll have more technical support to keep us right at the very sharp end and that needs funding – but a lot of that stuff they can do in-house in America. The aero is one example where this is working, they have the facilities to really help us. There's no question we had great technical support from Europe – and we shouldn't forget that we were actually rallying a car in January this year that wasn't even on sale to the public until May or June! But now we're getting it from America where all the GT stuff comes from, there's some really important aero-specific work being done with them, that kind of input and help is invaluable."



Wilson: big effort to regain title

Photo: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

FORMER CHELSEA MANAGER FOR DAKAR CHALLENGE

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'West took first overall
victory of the year'

Peugeot man tops Knockhill, p27



RALLY BACKLASH OVER MAHONEN'S COMMENTS



Are World Rallies too long?
Many think that they aren't

FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen's plans for shorter stages in the World Rally Championship caused a significant stir in the sport, with *Motorsport News* being inundated with calls following our story last week.

Mahonen wants more formulaic events which visit the service park three times each day and run stages of around six miles – he sees no future in the endurance element of the sport.

Hyundai team principal Michel Nandan disagreed with Mahonen, saying: "Rally is rally. Each event needs to be a little bit different. For the organisers it's difficult to do a stage that's more than 30 miles because of the number of marshals you need. But if we only do six miles then I don't know if it's really good. If you want this short discipline then there is rallycross or circuit racing. I agree rallying has to be adapted to society like it is now and maybe we need less of the past, but each event has to have its own particularity."

"It's true that when you have more stages then you have more to talk about during the day, but to say we need 10 stages of six miles or less, then this is not in the DNA of rallying. I don't say don't have six-mile stages, yes, have them, but mix them with eight milers, 12 milers and 18-mile stages. And I don't think it's a good idea to have all of the events the same, this isn't good for the sport."

Nandan's feelings were – almost – universal among the team principals, with only Toyota's Tommi Makinen agreeing with Mahonen.

The Finn echoed the rally director's thoughts entirely, telling *MN*: "These cars are more like race cars, I don't think they are built for endurance and long stages in places like Mexico. More shorter stages means more social media and more coverage for the sport."

One leading driver in the championship told *MN*: "This makes no sense. Ten kilometre stages? What's the point? I take his point about the 80km stage in Mexico, but the problem with that was that it ran at the wrong point in the event – it ran on Sunday morning, when everything was decided and nobody needed to push. If we'd run that stage on day one, everything could have happened in there."

"I think Jarmo is completely wrong, endurance is a real part of this sport and it always will be."

WRC Promoter's Oliver Ciesla said he could see both sides of the argument and he felt there remained room in the championship for diversity.

"Both sides of this argument are relevant," Ciesla told *MN*. "What we have been trying to push for in the last few years is a certain regularity that helps people recognise the WRC format. The pragmatic reasons for this are that if you don't

follow a certain pattern then you have no chance for the media to follow [the sport].

"Don't forget the span of attention of young people today is eight to 14 minutes; what do you want with an 80-kilometre stage? They will go and do something else! We cannot wake up new fans with this. The sport must adapt regularly to what future generations want and how they consume it. If they only can watch two-hour programmes on linear television and read about it in the newspaper then I have no chance to reach out to young African, Japanese or Chinese fans. That is not what we want.

We need to give it a structure. If we don't do this we will go out of business.

"At the same time, the strong benefit of our sport is that we can be individual on a rally-by-rally basis. Endurance remains always an element, we can see this from the fact we have to cover 300 kilometres on the stages and 1200 on the road. This alone is an endurance element. To combine this with short stages for Facebook user, which come: bang, bang, bang – this keeps them in tune. We can still have a 40 or 50km stage on a Friday morning, but I don't want the a 50km stage on a Sunday morning that's going to send everybody to sleep before the highlight of the weekend [the powerstage]. We have to be clever how we build up this product to sell it."

Ciesla accepted Mahonen's criticism of what he felt was Rally GB's overly long route, but added that he felt there was a place for these events.

Ciesla said: "When the drivers are on the road section, this is a waste of time, we can't use them. It's better that we have them in the stages or in the service park with the fans, but I understand there can be an organisational or commercial reason to use these stages, which are a bit further away [from service] and it's not bad to have these exceptions. For good reasons, two or three times per year I think we can live with these [events]."

"This isn't
good for
the sport"

Michel Nandan



TWITTER REACTION

@henryhopefrost

"Too long? OMG. This is one of the most unfever stories I've ever read."

@gordonhill

"Good job Jarmo is retiring! I could not disagree more with his comments. We want and need the endurance format, and events with different character and uniqueness."

@infomotiveUK

"Jarmo Mahonen is clearly clueless about #rallying. Service has become a 'spectacle' which is far removed from its essential function. We need more remote servicing not less! Under the @fia #rallying will die."

@neildempsey1

"Have they any idea what the fans

actually want to see? They seem clueless or are they just pandering to 4 people in the service park. We're finally getting back to where we were 15/20 years ago. And the FIA are intent on ruining it again."

@jemsport

"Utter pathetic nonsense. 'The city people don't go to the forests'. So

basically the only reason for the WRC's existence on 'Planet Jarmo' is to ensure guests of manufacturers don't get bored in the service area. Is this guy real? No wonder people get disillusioned is it?!"

For more reaction from *Motorsport News*' social media channels, see the letters, page 30.

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Kubica would've made it to the top of the WRC"



This column was going to be about Jarmo Mahonen, Wales and the length of rallies. I would have strived for a worthy explanation of my side of what developed into a fascinating trial by twitter.

That column will have to wait. On Sunday night, something far more important happened. Robert Kubica came to town. Regular readers of *MN* will have gathered that I'm a fan of Robert's. It's not hard to be.

Seeing him walking across the floor in the Grosvenor's Great Room at the Autosport Awards, he was clearly a man whose confidence had all come back. Seventeen kilos lighter than when he started his final World Rally Championship round in Monte Carlo last year, he looks fitter than ever and ready to return to a world he should never have left.

Regardless of the decision that comes out of Williams in the coming days and weeks, one world Kubica will never leave is the world of rallying. I'd arrived at my seat to find him deep in conversation with Elfyn Evans.

Interrupting them, I offered my congratulations on what he's achieved since he left the service park.

"I'm not a legend," he said, "Elfyn is the legend."

He'd spied Britain's first Rally GB winner in 17 years and come straight for him, wanting to offer the Welshman his congratulations on his achievement. And, of course, he wanted to talk about how good the new cars are. M-Sport's technical chief Chris Williams looked on and admitted: "I think we might have found our third driver..."

Just before the twittering starts, he was joking. Or at least I think he was.

A couple of hours later, Kubica was on stage performing his official role and handing Sebastien Ogier the Rally Driver of the Year Award. The former Canadian Grand Prix winner's place on the stage really touched Ogier.

"This guy is incredible," Ogier told me when he came back to the table. "Robert is a special person of our sport. He has taken part in the World Rally Championship and in Formula 1 and we all feel a bit for him and what he has been through. But he has fought back with incredible passion and, like a lot of people around the world, I want to see him back in Formula 1 and see what he can do. He deserves this chance after putting in the work and the effort he has."

"He was a little bit crazy sometimes when he went to and over the limit, but maybe this determination to be the fastest is part of what people love."

Really special people have an aura about them. In some it shows itself as confidence or even arrogance, but Robert Kubica engenders the same impression with humility. I remain firm in my belief that he would have made it to the top of the world championship. Yes, there would have been more bent metal, but in the end he would have tempered his phenomenal bravery, raw natural talent and shocking speed with hard-earned experience and rally craft to make the results he so richly deserved.

Who knows, maybe he will come back and do it all again. But for now, I hope not. Having been fortunate enough to see just how much F1 means to him, I hope we don't see him for a good few years. And in the meantime, if there's any justice, our loss will be F1's gain.

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

RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Rovanpera teams up with Solberg in Italy

World Rally Championship stars of the future Kalle Rovanpera and Oliver Solberg will team up for this week's Bettega Memorial Rallysprint. The pair will drive Ford Fiesta RS WRCs at this weekend's end-of-season spectacular in Bologna. Rovanpera will be looking to go one better than last year, when he finished second to Elfyn Evans, on his debut in a World Rally Car. This time it's Solberg who will be driving a World Rally Car for the first time as he makes his maiden appearance at the event, which is run in memory of Attilio Bettega, who was killed on the Tour of Corsica in 1985.

"Actually," Solberg told MN, "it's not my first appearance – I stood on the roof of my dad's DS 3 WRC when he won in 2011!"

The sons of 2003 WRC champion Petter Solberg and one-time world rally winner Harri Rovanpera will drive Pirelli-branded 2014 Fiestas this weekend.

"It's really exciting to be making my debut in the World Rally Car," said Oliver. "I don't know too much about what to expect from the event. OK, I have watched dad compete here, but it will be different when I'm driving. I'm very grateful for this opportunity to come to Italy and compete."

"Kalle will be a good team-mate I'm sure. We have competed against each other in Latvia and Estonia and I know him quite well, he's a really good guy and he will be good for some experience as he was competing at this event last season."

The Bettega Memorial Rallysprint starts on Friday night and concludes on Sunday afternoon.

HYUNDAI'S STARS SWAP ROLES FOR MONZA RALLY

Mikkelsen and Neuville switch seats for one-off event

By David Evans

Hyundai drivers Thierry Neuville and Andreas Mikkelsen have agreed to disagree about who was the best co-driver and driver at last weekend's Monza Rally.

The pair drove and co-drove each other in a Hyundai i20 WRC for the circuit-based event and both admitted they emerged with a new-found respect for what their co-drivers do on every event.

Mikkelsen won the Master Show shoot-out element of the event, but a puncture spoiled their hopes of victory on the rally proper.

Mikkelsen told MN: "Thierry drove the Master Show last year, so he let me do it this year. I have to say I am impressed with him as a co-driver, he has a very good voice for that. I think it might be a really good idea if he stops driving now and just focuses on that!"

"Seriously though, it was really interesting to see it from the other seat. When we went to the shakedown and I was co-driving, I was really surprised how much I

was moving around in the seat – there was no steering wheel to hold on to! I actually felt a little bit sick. Once we got into the event itself, it was OK and I was able to focus on what I was doing. For the driving, it took me a little bit of time to get into the 2016 Hyundai, I never drove this car before. But it was great fun. I had never done Monza before, so I really enjoyed this."

Those sentiments were echoed by Neuville, who said: "It was really useful to sit alongside Andreas and to co-drive for him – now I have seen where I am quicker and I know where I can beat him!"

Like Mikkelsen, Neuville admitted to being a slightly nervous passenger at times.

"I went for the brake a couple of times where he was going flat-out and I thought he should slow down," said Neuville. "But it did give me a real idea of what Nicolas [Gilsoul] has to do in the car. It's helped me to understand his job much better. There's so much in the delivery of the note, the speed, everything like that. More than once I got lost in the notes, but I was able to find my way back."



Mikkelsen (inset, above) says Neuville should be a co-driver



PH Sport has been granted use of the C3 WRC Meeke won with

Meeke's winning Citroen C3 WRC made available to hire for privateers next season

Citroen has made the C3 WRC driven by the likes of Kris Meeke available to hire – but only to the right driver.

The French manufacturer has given its preferred satellite team, PH Sport, one car to rent to privateers next season, with the stipulation that the driver has the right

experience to handle the car, which won Mexico and Spain's rounds of the world championship this year.

"We're very proud to have been chosen by Citroen Racing to offer a C3 WRC for hire," said PH Sport director Bernard Pierrat. "It's not just any old car and it's

logical that the Citroen C3 WRC on offer is reserved for drivers with enough experience to get the best out of it.

"We're delighted to invest ourselves in an ambitious sporting project as we did in the past with Sebastien Loeb, Sebastien Ogier

and Stephane Lefebvre."

The FIA has already stipulated it will review private entries of 2017 World Rally Cars, with the governing body reserving the right to refuse entries if it feels the drivers don't have sufficient experience to handle the cars.

Sarrazin backs R4 after Var finish

Stephane Sarrazin says his trouble-free Rallye du Var run has highlighted the value of the R4 category.

The former factory Subaru driver gave ORECA's Toyota Etios R4 its maiden public outing in the south of France last month, running as zero car on the Sainte-Maxime event. Following the rally, Sarrazin was full of praise for the car.

The Frenchman told MN: "The Var was a positive experience after all the development work we've done. Validating the tests in real

conditions was essential. We had zero problems, the car was reliable from start to finish. That proved to me it truly is a very good compromise between R3 and R5, and will allow young drivers to learn four-wheel-drive."

No times were available for comparison, but ORECA's Matthieu Bassou says the car is not aimed as a competitor for R5. He said: "The R4 car is the link between R3 and R5, there's something wrong if our car is beating the R5."



Former Chelsea and Tottenham manager Villas-Boas will compete

Ex-Chelsea boss won't park the bus on Dakar

Dakar is well known as an event of two halves – before and after the rest day – but this year that will be truer than ever for one competitor as former Chelsea Football Club manager Andre Villas-Boas starts the event for the first time.

Villas-Boas, 40, will drive an Overdrive Racing Toyota Hilux on the South American marathon which starts from Lima, Peru, on January 5 and finishes in Cordoba, Argentina, 15 days later.

Former KTM team-mate to Cyril Despres, Ruben Faria, will ditch his bike to co-drive for his fellow Portuguese Villas-Boas – who follows in the footsteps of his uncle Pedro Villas-Boas, who competed on the event in 1982.

Villas-Boas' original plan was to tackle Dakar on a 'bike, until KTM team manager Alex Doringier advised him to take four wheels for his first shot at the world's

toughest endurance rally.

"He [Doringier] told me I needed a year of preparation and advised me to ride in the car, so I got in touch with the Overdrive Team and here I am," said Villas-Boas, who recently quit as manager of Chinese club Shanghai SIPG.

While he was manager of Chelsea Villas-Boas talked of his love for 'bikes, saying: "The passion for two wheels is something that grew in me. I have a bit of a crazy head, so I like enduro 'bikes. I go into the mountains with the big rocks and almost kill myself!"

Overdrive Racing's CEO Jean-Marc Fortin said: "We are delighted to welcome Andre Villas-Boas and Ruben to the team for the Dakar. He is well known the world over in football circles and I am sure he is looking forward to the challenge of tackling his first Dakar."

'BRX champion with European ambitions'
Nathan Heathcote interview, p25

Photos: Songasport, Kevin Money, Pro-Rally Photography



Mull Rally couldn't run this season

MULL TO DECIDE ON EVENT FUTURE BY JANUARY

A decision on the future of the Mull Rally is set to be made by early January, according to a statement released by the Mull Guardians.

The Fatal Accident Inquiry into the deaths on the 2013 Snowman and 2014 Jim Clark Rallies has now concluded, paving the way for Scotland to investigate passing similar legislation to that of England, which voted in April to allow the MSA and the local council of each event to decide on

awarding a closed-road permit, rather than the previous law which needed an act of parliament to be obtained.

The event couldn't run in 2017 after an issue with gaining insurance to cover the rally. That issue wouldn't exist if the Scottish Government followed England's lead in enacting similar closed-road legislation.

"The insurance issue that prevented the closed-road stage rally from running in 2017 still exists and it is our

understanding that the only way that we can run in the future is to use the new closed-road legislation recently enacted in England," read the statement from the guardians.

"The Scottish Government need to enact it into law in Scotland for us to use it. Any representation made to the government so far has been met with 'not until after the FAI has concluded'.

"Sheriff Maciver published his report on the Snowman/Jim

Clark Fatalities on November 21 and we have already been in touch with Michael Russell MSP to urge him to make representations on behalf of the Mull Rally in an attempt to run in 2018.

"We understand the need for you to know what is happening so that you can make plans and we undertake to update you on progress by the end of January as to what kind of event or events we shall be able to put on in October."

MEM, Proton buoyed by first rally win

Ben Mellors believes the strength of the opposition on the Grizedale Stages proves the pace of the new Proton Iriz R5, which took its first event victory last weekend.

Ollie Mellors, brother of Ben and son of car builder Mellors Elliot Motorsport's Chris Mellors, drove the car to a comfortable win ahead of 2017 BTRDA Gold Star champion Stephen Petch and Irish rally frontrunner Josh Moffett, both in 2016-spec World Rally Cars.

"We spent a couple of days testing the week before at Higgins' old place and did a lot of work on the set-up and we've come a long way, it's

transformed the car again," said Ben Mellors. "To get the first win is very important for us, especially with dad having meetings with Proton [in Malaysia] this week. We're able to say we've had a win so soon. And against Petchy [Stephen Petch, 2017 BTRDA Gold Star champion] and [Josh] Moffett in world cars, it's a very good result for us. I don't think they were taking it easy. It shows the pace of the car."

MEM is targeting a March 2018 homologation date for the car, which would then be eligible to compete in the likes of WRC2, and the European and British Rally Championships.



Ripon event regularly attracts national rally frontrunners

Riponian Rally cancelled after losing land

One of the oldest gravel rallies in the UK, the Riponian Rally, will not run in 2018 after the use of private land that traditionally hosted the event was withdrawn by land owners.

The Riponian, which was won by Stephen Petch in 2017, was due to take place in February in Western Yorkshire.

Organised by the Ripon Motor Club, the event reaches its 50th anniversary in 2019 and the team behind the rally is eager to return in time for the anniversary.

A statement from the organisers read: "The organising committee of the Riponian Rally regret to announce that the event, planned

for February 2018, will now not go ahead. Historical stages that have been used on the Riponian became unavailable due to the traditional western forests withdrawing the availability of lands owned by them to be used for motorsport events.

"This unfortunately happened at a late moment, which meant the organisers not only had to find new stages, not originally part of the forest allocation, but it also meant the traditional scrutineering, service area and finish venue of Thirsk Auction Mart would not be viable due to the excess road mileage involved, further complicating matters."

THE STRAIGHT-TALKING SCOT

JOHN FIFE

"Fatal Accident Inquiry has wide-reaching impact"



It would appear from the mainstream media reports on the outcome of the recent Fatal Accident Inquiry in Edinburgh that many reporters and journalists didn't bother to read the full 62,879-word, 172-page 'determination'.

Most of them appeared to concentrate on the word 'avoidable' and wrote their stories starting from there.

Sensation seeking at its best. To hell with the facts and the truth. Go for the headline.

Cynical? That's for sure. Sometimes I despair at the way my 'profession' is heading.

Unlike Sheriff Maciver. He quickly got a pretty good grasp of the nature of this complex sport run by amateurs and the circumstances surrounding both events. It was indeed a most considered and thoughtful summation of those dreadful events on those two separate dark days in Scottish rallying.

The mass media have now had their day and their headlines, and rallying has already moved on. Indeed it had already incorporated most of the recommendations from the Sheriff's Determination and is working on the rest, particularly the difficult problem of tracking rally cars through stages.

This is not something to be smug about. Rallying itself has been slow to react, until now. The shocking tragedy which befell spectators on the 1986 Rally Portugal should have sparked a major review of spectator safety. Particularly since the leading drivers of the day went on strike. Sadly, it wasn't until Henri Toivonen and Sergio Cresto's death just two months later on the Tour of Corsica that prompt action was taken – for drivers and co-drivers, but not for spectators.

Since then much has indeed been done, just not quickly enough. It could be argued that the sport's various national sporting authorities across Europe and the overall governing body have been rather slower to react. It's only in the past three years following the Scottish Government-instigated Motor Sport Event Safety Review that the sport has seen a radical shake-up. Making the whole sport safer not just for participants, but for spectators too.

It could be argued the British Motor Sports Association is leading the way on rally safety, as there doesn't appear to be the same urgency in other countries, as ongoing TV coverage shows.

And lest we forget. There were other victims. The drivers. The accident on the Snowman Rally was nothing unusual, but the outcome was horrific. As for the Jim Clark, the Sheriff himself recognised that one individual put himself in jeopardy, but the problem was, he had others with him.

Both these drivers also have to live with the dreadful outcomes, not just the families and friends of those lost.

Spectators have to exercise some degree of personal responsibility when attending any sporting event – not only to themselves but to the sport they are watching.



Iriz has made a step forward after events and tests

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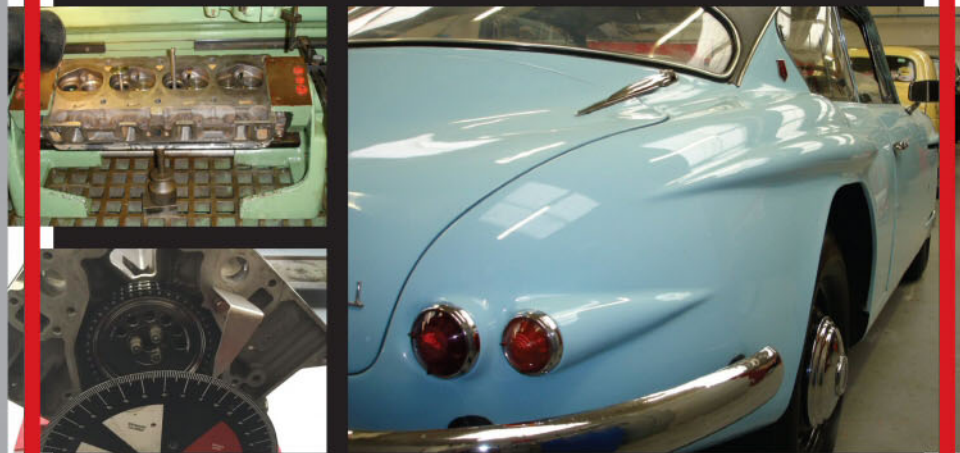
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RALLY NEWS

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MEADOWS SCOOPS £5000 PRIZE

Clitheroe driver takes John Easson Award at first attempt

By Jack Benyon

BTRDA 1400 frontrunner Tommi Meadows sealed the John Easson Award last week, after beating rivals George Lepley and Chris Sharpe-Simkiss.

Meadows, son of 2000 Gold Star champion Martin, won the prize which he can use towards entry fees in 2018 after an informal interview judged by award co-ordinator Allan Durham, co-driver Ian Grindrod and competitor John Stone.

"That was awesome, it will make a big difference to next year," said 19-year-old Meadows. "I put a lot of effort into the application and it went really well in the interviews. To win it it's a massive bonus."

"What an award: I don't know why more people don't enter. I was expecting not to get it this year, Chris Ingram and Sam Bilham had to do it a few times. There's some people who have gone on to do good things so hopefully I can follow suit."

European Under 27 champion Ingram and British Rally Championship frontrunner Osian Pryce are among the previous winners of the award given in memory of Easson, who died in an air accident in 1999.

Meadows was competing in last weekend's Grizedale Stages, after Swift Caravans owner Peter Smith offered him the use of a Ford Fiesta R2 owned by Smith's driver in the BRC, Matt Edwards. "I absolutely loved it," added Meadows. "The first couple of stages I think I adapted to it well. The car is more predictable than I'm used to. It's well balanced and it's confidence inspiring to drive."

Meadows lost 10 minutes in a ditch on the event after his intercom stopped working. The outing in the R2 is a one-off for now as the driver expects to return to the 1400S class in the BTRDA next year. He's set to begin testing his usual Ford Ka in January, when it will have a new sequential gearbox.



Meadows made R2 debut in Grizedale

Icelandic driver Johannesson set to drive Fiesta R2 in British Rally Championship Cadets

British Rally Championship frontrunner Matt Edwards has purchased a Ford Fiesta R2 (above) to rent on rallies next year, with Icelandic driver Gunnar Karl Johannesson set to contest the full season in the car. Johannesson has been competing on Icelandic events

but did come to the UK for two events in 2015 in a Mitsubishi Lancer E10. "I did some tuition with him back then," explained Edwards. "He wants to develop more. The Icelandic rallies are unique and fairly straightforward. "If he wants to get better he

needs to do more relevant stages to the rest of the world. By coming to the BRC he can benefit from tuition and the competition and the stages are good. The car is a 1600 and if he does well in that his results will be even more credible against the juniors." The car will run in the Cadet

Class of the BRC under the ME Rallysport Team banner. Edwards will prepare the car before and after events, and has a team to run the car on events as he will be competing in the BRC again next year with Swift Rally Team in his usual Ford Fiesta R5. Darren Garrod will navigate.

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

The **Preston Rally** lead changed several times, but it was the Rover of Mark Banham/Mathew Smalley that survived to take their maiden win on the Chelmsford MC event.

The pair had been in second place for much of the second half of the rally but took the lead when Andy Smith/Max Freeman retired after the third and final petrol halt.

Only non-Experts were eligible for the overall win on the **Rali Mynydd Ddu**. However this was immaterial at the finish as the Semi-Experts Jonathan Davies/Wayne Jones were the class of the field. They finished six seconds ahead of the first Experts Martin Curzon/Rob Thomas. The two were separated by just one second at Petrol.

The **Chris Hellier Memorial Targa Rally** had the same set up; on Sunday's rally Experts Mark Lennox/Jorden Althorpe were the fastest crew, but it was the Semi-Expert team of Elliott Stafford/Lewis Sim who won the overall award. The two crews were just four seconds apart at the Finish, after battling through 15 tests over various services.

Hefin Jones/Dan Johnson had led but were forced to retire.

Ian Mills

Results

Preston Rally
Organiser: Chelmsford Motor Club When: December 2/3
Where: East Anglia Route: 120 miles Starters: 69.
1 Mark Banham/Mathew Smalley (Rover 25 GT) 22m56s;
2 Rob Kitchen/Ed Rutherford (MG ZR) +5m02s; 3 James Turner/Phillipe Payne (MG ZR); 4 Owen Turner/Rob Henchoz (MG ZR); 5 Jonathan Stimpson/Brian Cammack (Peugeot 106); 6 Mike Jones/Richard Bestwick (Vauxhall Corsa). **Class winners:** Bob Wisniewski/Paul Lettington (SEAT Ibiza); Andrew Scott/Tony Hewitt (Mazda MX-5).

Rali Mynydd Ddu
Organiser: Amman & District Motor Club When: December 2/3
Where: South Wales Route: 115 miles Starters: 59.
1 Jonathan Davies/Wayne Jones (Peugeot 206) 2m09s; 2 Mark Rodway/Allyn Welsby (Subaru Impreza) +18s; 3 Vivian Jones/Dean Wiltshire (Peugeot 206); 4 Michael Parker/Sean Jones (Ford Escort); 5 Ricky Reynolds/Rhys Lewis (BMW E80) 6 Rob Stephens/Nathan Summers (Proton Satria). **Class winners:** Colin Brown/Will Horton (Impreza).

Chris Hellier Memorial Targa Rally
Organiser: Barcud Motor Club When: December 3
Where: Mid-Wales Route: 15 tests Starters: 47.
1 Elliott Stafford/Lewis Sim (Toyota Celica) 42m01s;
2 Mike Webber/Phil Sant (BMW 318Ti) +45s; 3 Dan Davies/Tjay Bennetta (Ford Focus); 4 Stephen Davies/Andrew Davies (Celica); 5 Aled Evans/Sioned Davies (Citroen C2); 6 Paul Morgan/Rhys Griffiths (Honda Civic). **Class winners:** Davies/Bennetta.



Carannante debuted Porsche at Knockhill

Work ahead for Cayman rally car as Carannante debuts

Ciro Carannante believes there is more to come from his Porsche Cayman after the car's debut in last weekend's Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship round at Knockhill.

Carannante, who raced a BMW E30 at the opening two rounds of the year, competed in the D1 class, finishing 14th overall at the Scottish circuit, despite only receiving the car's MSA logbook last Thursday.

He plans to develop it at the end of the season ahead of a full campaign with the 2.9-litre 275bhp car.

"It's brand new and totally standard," Carannante told MN. "I bought the car

privately from a guy in Bristol for £17,000 but I'm only concentrating on the necessities right now."

Despite struggling with the tight confines of Knockhill, Carannante feels the trip up north was worth it. He said: "The whole idea was to learn about the car and find out what I need to do next. The engine transmission mounts are flapping about and I haven't got a hydraulic handbrake so the hairpins were a bit of a challenge. The ABS brakes will have to come out too. I'll use the gap between March next year and October to do most of the major work to the car."

MN crews praise addition of Knockhill

Leading figures from the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship have hailed its competition debut in Scotland a success following the latest round at Knockhill last weekend.

The championship made its first trip north of the border, with Chris West taking victory after Joshua Davey retired with gearbox failure.

Despite significant travel requirements for the series participants, the event attracted a healthy entry list and was bolstered by a number of high-profile Scottish drivers such as SRC's Donnie MacDonald and Tarmac regular Alan Kirkaldy.

Event winner and championship leader West praised the decision to take the championship to the Fife circuit: "It's a very good rally, quite technical with the off-camber sections and the gravel. I enjoyed it a lot."

Series co-ordinator Darren Spann felt the expansion to incorporate a Scottish round was a step forward to becoming a truly national rally championship.

"When we first started the championship, I always said I wanted to have a round in Scotland," said Spann. "Knockhill is a great circuit and I'm really pleased with how the event has run this weekend. Hopefully we can build on this for years to come."

BRC frontrunner Yates makes Monza Rally Show debut by making the Masters Rally Show finale

British Rally Championship frontrunner Rhys Yates finished fifth in the R5 division in the Monza Rally Show last weekend.

The Chesterfield driver was fielding his usual Brettex Rally Team-entered Ford Fiesta R5 for the event, in which he also

progressed to the Monza Masters Rally Show where he finished fourth.

"They want you to race," he said. "I wanted to get into the rally show and I got fourth in that. It was good fun. I met Valentino [Rossi, MotoGP rider] and got a

selfie with him. They adore him out there.

"It's a different kind of event. It's a hyped up single venue. It's good fun, it's just more like a track than a rally. There were some quick lads there."

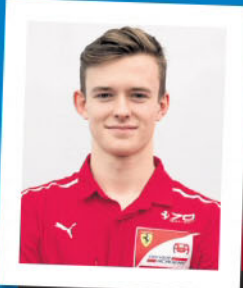
Yates was co-driven by French legend

Denis Giraudet, who did some test work with him earlier in the year.

"It was good to have Denis in the car and in the driver's briefing Neuville and Mikkelesen came to say hello to him. He was a legend out there too."

MACAU DIARY

Ferrari's British junior **Callum Hott** on his highs, and lows, from Formula 3's biggest event



A MIXED BAG IN MACAU

I just love Macau. The track, the location and just the end-of-season vibe makes it a really special place and I always look forward to it.

This year *Motorsport News* asked me to keep a diary to "capture the highs and lows of racing there". They should probably do the lottery with predictions like that as it was certainly a rollercoaster...

My team for 2017 is SJM Theodore by Prema. Theodore was originally founded by Teddy Yip and now it's his son, Teddy Yip Jr, who runs the outfit.

Theodore is Macau's home team and, with its heritage and record, it's a massive thing to drive for them.

SUNDAY



Catching a nap on Rene Rosin

My 10,000km journey to Macau begins with the flight to Hong Kong. Jet lag's an issue but there's a lot you can do these days. Before I leave, I start adjusting my eating and sleeping patterns to help me start to adapt. It helps, but we all still suffer a little bit during the week and team principals come in very handy sometimes (see pic!) It's part of the tradition to catch the ferry to Macau but a new road bridge opens in 2018, so this might be the last time drivers take the boat.

MONDAY/TUESDAY

Being part of Theodore is a big deal out here and the reception you get locally as a driver is really quite amazing.

From visiting a cosmetics store where we were showered (or dowsed, at one perfume shop!) with presents (that's the Christmas shopping sorted at least, and no, I won't reveal the contents...) through to playing football, it's full-on but also great fun.

In the penalty shoot-out us F3 guys faced World Touring Car Championship, GT World Cup (fitting name that...) and the biker teams.

We came last, but we'd only just played a match with the local students so we were pretty knackered. Drivers are just as good as footballers for finding excuses, if anything our excuses book is twice as thick.

Maybe it was the multiple outfit changes for all the photoshoots that were our downfall!



Football excuses and freebies (below)



WEDNESDAY



Today's the time for the track walk. We're out at 0800hrs to avoid most of the traffic but in the busy middle sector, there are no pavements and you're constantly dodging commuters to try and get a good view of the corners. It's my third visit and you can still learn a lot from a lap on foot.

THURSDAY



Building speed is key in Macau

It's always a good idea to build up your speed gradually at Macau. This year I'd planned to take no risks. It was a different approach for me, but it worked well and the mechanics didn't have any late nights changing my car at least!

Once the GT and touring cars start putting rubber down, grip really improves and you can start to push. I went to an Italian restaurant with my Italian team for dinner, just to mix it up after several days of dim sum and noodles.

FRIDAY

Friday brings practice and qualifying, and also so many red flags.

Four in the last session alone meant I got just about one clear lap from that outing. The car was great and even without a tow, and on older tyres, the lap was good enough to get third place on the grid for Saturday. We went to a seafood restaurant where I spent most of the time feeling sorry for the lobsters in the tank, but I went to bed pretty happy!

SATURDAY

Qualifying race time. I got a good start, and passed Lando Norris for second and latched onto Joel Eriksson. The car was mega and I got past Joel on the entry to Mandarin.

Once I was through I got my head down and concentrated so hard on not making a mistake and managed to pull away to win by nearly eight seconds. Boom!

The guys were on the radio

telling me to cool it, so I did, but I felt really relaxed out there thinking back.

It was my first outing as a member of the Ferrari Driver Academy, so I was very happy to get that result on a stage like this.

Then just hours later my thoughts were with Daniel Hegarty, who lost his life in the motorbike race. You realise that Macau can also be brutal.

Qualifying race win was a sweet moment



SUNDAY



Sunday brought its troubles for British racer

Woke up to a wet Macau, but it's at least dry for the Grand Prix itself. Starting from pole, I expected Joel to tow past on the run down to Lisboa and when he did I was cool slotting into second. After the full course yellow, I got the jump on him at the restart to try and get the lead back. But that's when it all went a bit wrong...

Carrying much more speed, I couldn't just sit behind him. The onboard video shows Joel was still drifting left as I was ahead and starting to prepare for the corner. I thought I was clear as we came to Lisboa but Joel

kept his foot in, we touched and, bang - we're both out of the race. Eriksson lost his front wing and my right-rear tyre was punctured.

My onboard wasn't available during the stewards hearing and doesn't support the decision to give me a post-race time penalty. I rate Joel very highly and I'm disappointed that neither of us finished.

After the week I'd had, I was gutted for Theodore and the FDA. We had a good chance to win that one too. It's the ultimate F3 race and who knows, if MN asks me to do another diary, I might go back...

FORMULA E: HONG KONG

Photos: LAT

Scott Mitchell saw two crazy Formula E races in Hong Kong

BIRD AND ROSENQVIST AVOID THE PITFALLS



Bird beat a penalty to notch a win



Rosenqvist won after epic recovery

Formula E is a brilliantly odd championship. The electric single-seater series has a wonderful habit of throwing up dramatic races and tense title battles, but it really pulled out the stops in the 2017/18 season opener in Hong Kong.

As reigning champion Lucas di Grassi failed to score at all over the two races and 2015/16 title winner Sebastien Buemi registered just one point for a 10th-place finish on Sunday, Sam Bird and Felix Rosenqvist shared two of the unlikeliest victories in Formula E history. The previous two champions endured what Buemi generously labelled a "nightmare" weekend, yet even with the two best drivers over the past two seasons removed the paths of Bird and Rosenqvist to victory were anything but simple. Bird won despite having to serve a drive-through penalty for almost clattering into a group of bystanders during his car swap on Saturday.

Rosenqvist had that beat: his triumph in Sunday's sequel came after spinning out of the lead at the first corner, fighting back from 11th to third, taking second after rookie Edoardo Mortara looped it from a commanding lead with less than three laps to go, and then inheriting the win hours after the race when Daniel Abt was

disqualified for badly filled out paperwork.

Although certainly lucky, Rosenqvist was a worthy winner on Sunday. His pace, energy management and aggression as he recovered from a foolish spin at Turn 1 constituted an amazing fightback – he slipped to more than 15 seconds off the lead at one stage, but effectively halved that deficit over the second stint.

His eventual win made amends for a similarly eventful, but far less successful, Saturday. Rosenqvist was boxed in at the start from fifth, T-boned into a half-spin by Luca Filippi a few laps later from 11th and eventually booted out of seventh post-race for exceeding the maximum race power output of 180kW. This angered the team, which felt it only happened because an FIA software glitch meant Rosenqvist unknowingly had illegal access to Fanboost.

Still, this was nothing compared to the heartbreak suffered by Mortara and Abt 24 hours later. Abt inherited his first win in the series, and Audi's as a fully works Formula E team, in dramatic fashion when Mortara spun at Turn 2 on lap 43 of 45. Mortara had put in an astonishing performance in only his second FE start and the ease with which he saved energy and edged clear was something very special. That performance cost him in the end, though, as he took responsibility for pushing too

hard in pursuit of fastest lap.

Abt gleefully benefited, but was later dumped from a breakthrough race win that had secured him the championship lead and a little bit of Audi history when a post-race inspection revealed the barcodes on the motor and inverter units of one of his Audi e-tron FE04s didn't match those on the car's technical passport.

This promoted Bird to the top of the points, after a quiet but effective rise from 10th to fifth to follow up his win on Saturday. He earned that with a beautiful pass on early leader and poleman Jean-Eric Vergne, jinking to the right and diving down the inside to wrest the lead at the Turn 6 hairpin. Skidding past his pit box and nerfing the end of the DS Virgin garage when stopping to swap cars then threatened his triumph, because he got slapped with a drive-through penalty for abandoning his car in the pitlane to hop into his other DSV-03. But a combination of pace, Vergne defending heavily from Nick Heidfeld and a short pitlane meant Bird served the drive-through and emerged just in front – then eased clear to become the only driver to have won races in each of the four FE seasons.

He now leads the championship with a two-point cushion over Vergne, who finished second on Saturday after an overly-aggressive defence against Heidfeld that left the usually-unruffled German absolutely raging. Bird's margin over the pre-season favourites is considerably more generous – Buemi is just equal 14th in the championship with his solitary point, while di Grassi is one of only five drivers who failed to score at all over the weekend.

Di Grassi had been in contention for top-five finishes

RESULTS

Round 1 Where: Hong Kong (HK) When: December 2/3
Laps: 43 Distance: 49.697 miles

| POS | DRIVER | CAR | TIME |
|-----|------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Sam Bird (GBR) | DS Virgin Racing | 1h17m10.486s |
| 2 | Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA) | Techeetah | +11.575s |
| 3 | Nick Heidfeld (GER) | Mahindra Racing | +12.465s |
| 4 | Nelson Piquet Jr (BRA) | Jaguar | +15.324s |
| 5 | Daniel Abt (GER) | Audi Sport Abt | +17.205s |
| 6 | Antonio Felix da Costa (POR) | Andretti | +18.083s |
| 7 | Edoardo Mortara (ITA) | Venturi | +19.797s |
| 8 | Alex Lynn (GBR) | DS Virgin Racing | +20.904s |
| 9 | Nicolas Prost (FRA) | Renault e.dams | +24.785s |
| 10 | Luca Filippi (ITA) | NIO | +25.500s |
| 11 | Sebastien Buemi (SWI) | Renault e.dams | +26.202s |
| 12 | Mitch Evans (NZL) | Jaguar | +34.871s |
| 13 | Maro Engel (GER) | Venturi | +35.752s |
| 14 | Felix Rosenqvist (SWE) | Mahindra Racing | +41.174s |
| 15 | Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) | Andretti | +48.422s |
| 16 | Oliver Turvey (GBR) | NIO | -1 lap |
| 17 | Lucas di Grassi (BRA) | Audi Sport Abt | -1 lap |
| 18 | Neel Jani (SWI) | Dragon Racing | -1 lap |
| NC | Jerome d'Ambrosio (BEL) | Dragon Racing | 34 laps |
| EX | Andre Lotterer (GER) | Techeetah | +1m21.073s |

Pole: Vergne 1m03.568s. Winner's average speed 38.637mph.
Fastest lap d'Ambrosio 1m04.297s (64.710mph).

Round 2

Laps: 45 Distance: 52.009 miles

| POS | DRIVER | TIME |
|-----|------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Rosenqvist | 50m05.084s |
| 2 | Mortara | +7.031s |
| 3 | Evans | +10.619s |
| 4 | Vergne | +12.593s |
| 5 | Bird | +12.879s |
| 6 | Turvey | +14.199s |
| 7 | Engel | +15.676s |
| 8 | Prost | +18.905s |
| 9 | Lynn | +19.025s |
| 10 | Buemi | +22.139s |
| 11 | da Costa | +23.359s |
| 12 | Piquet | +27.904s |
| 13 | Lotterer | +28.591s |
| 14 | di Grassi | +39.137s |
| 15 | d'Ambrosio | +55.189s |
| 16 | Heidfeld | -1 lap |
| 17 | Kobayashi | -1 lap |
| 18 | Jani | -1 lap |
| R | Filippi | 36laps/suspension |
| EX | Abt | +5.276s |

Pole: Rosenqvist 1m02.836s. Winner's average speed 62.304mph. Fastest lap di Grassi 1m03.928s (65.084mph).

before succumbing to right-rear suspension damage in the opening race and dropping down the order when his car lost power before the pitstops on Sunday, while Buemi was ultra-fast in practice but clouted the wall in qualifying the next day and made slow progress in the race to 11th on the road. It followed a battery management system error immediately after swapping cars on Saturday, which cost him a probable top-five finish.

DS Virgin and Mahindra sharing the wins was not in the script pre-weekend, nor was Abt's disqualification handing Mitch Evans and Jaguar their first podium in Formula E after stunning one-lap pace from the British manufacturer. Audi and Renault have work to do before the next race in Marrakech in mid-January to rectify this and prevent 'champions in strife' becoming a regular theme after a fascinating and frenzied opening weekend.

Jag scores, but also shows weakness

Jaguar made its first proper mark on FE in Hong Kong, where Mitch Evans scored the British manufacturer its first podium in the series.

Evans should have been fighting for pole on Saturday, but an amateur mistake from the team meant he did not start his flying lap in time. That consigned him to an almost progression-less race from the back, although new team-mate Nelson Piquet Jr matched Jaguar's best-ever result with fourth.

A day later Evans gave Jaguar its first superpole appearance and qualified second, but had to start fourth after a technical irregularity. He ran third until slipping behind Rosenqvist in the car swaps, but when Daniel Abt was disqualified Evans was promoted to third.

The Kiwi reckons it is now comparing itself to the leaders for the first time, "because we are really mixing it with them, if not even a little



Evans got first FE podium

quicker" on one-lap and that means "our expectations and goals have slightly changed".

However, there is a warning amid the positivity. Jaguar's race pace was not so strong and Evans and Piquet were around 0.3s a lap slower than the fastest on average. That is still a strong step from last season, but could be a crucial weakness given the pure performance looks to be directly comparable with the frontrunners.

"We are trying to extract the speed for a whole race stint and there are obviously some frustrations," said Evans. "It is just in comparison to where we are in one lap pace."



Reigning champion Lucas di Grassi struggled all weekend

INSIGHT: THE SOLBERGS

INSIDE THE

SOLBERG DY

One of the most famous families in motorsport speaks to **David Evans** about competition, the f



Petter Solberg's WRC stint with Subaru team was a demanding time



Pernilla, Oliver and Petter try to travel together when they can

The kettle's on in the house of Solberg. Petter has offered refreshments, but in typical fashion he's distracted.

His wife Pernilla pours the coffee while her husband continues the tale of their last winter holiday.

It's like this. The conversation is a hundred miles per hour, anecdote here, memory there. And, every now and then, all three of them talking at once. I've known the Solberg family for a very long time, through the highs and lows, but I've never seen them happier or more together than they are now.

Which is odd, really, because they are more apart than they've been since Petter was a factory driver in the World Rally Championship. But this time it's Oliver who's missing. He goes to school at FFSE (Federation Francaise Sport Enterprise), the FFSA's racing academy at Le Mans.

You might have noticed Mr and Mrs S were a little bit subdued at WRX of France in Loheac in August. That was because they'd just dropped Oliver off at his new school.

"It was tough, you know," says Petter. "We were both so proud of him – it was Oliver who really pushed for this, but it's still..."

Pernilla: "It was emotional. So emotional. Petter's right, it was difficult, but for me it was hard. Oliver and I have been together all of the time, you know when Petter was away competing, Oliver and I were home. But it is this

incredible opportunity for Oliver to go away and learn so much about every aspect of the sport."

Oliver was just 15 when he committed to the new school, which is tailored to young drivers.

"The week starts on Monday afternoon," Solberg Jr explains, "so you have time to come back from the rally and then we work really hard on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday before we head off to the next race on Friday. It's good, there's a lot of work, but I'm learning a lot. It's quite nice there, a little bit like a strict hotel."

But there's no place like home. And today we're in the Solbergs' weekend home. The one that tours around Europe and sits alongside racetracks. And I'm fortunate enough to be invited into the Solbergs' family area.

"This is the place we keep for ourselves," says Pernilla. "Everything here we share with the team, we are like a big family, but these rooms we like to keep private, it's somewhere we can come and be more like a normal family at home. For a lot of the year, this is our home."

There's not a trace of resentment in her voice when she talks of a motorhome – admittedly a Formula 1-spec, seriously fancy motorhome – being her home.

"We love this life on the road," she continues. "It's changing a little bit with Oliver away, but still when we are together we love this time at races – this is our life."

In 2009, just months after Subaru walked out of the WRC and left Petter

without a drive, the 2003 World Rally champion set up his own team and applied a sticker to the rear of his Citroen Xsara WRC. That sticker read: "This is my life."

At the time, it read like a cliché. But sitting here surrounded by Solbergs, it remains as true today as it's ever been. "It is true," explains Petter. "All the time, we are thinking about rallying and racing."

Except on a non-race Saturday night. "Then it's time for some cooking," says Oliver.

"I do the cooking, I'm the best at it," laughs Pernilla.

"It's Tacos and a movie," continues her son, with the same grin and glint that lights up her face. "It's a really good time. But before we settle down for the movie, we have been quadbiking or driving the rally car somewhere. There's always a car or an engine on a Saturday somewhere."

Life on the Solbergs' farm close to Torsby, Sweden is perfect for them.

"We have a stage which goes right past the front door," says Petter. "It's fantastic. Such a nice place. Fresh air and some real time for peace and quiet."

Apart from the invasion of internal combustion every now and then.

"Our life is so different from when Oliver was young," says Pernilla. "We were living in Monaco until Oliver was nine. When Petter was driving for Subaru, things were different, he was competing or testing all of the time. I miss Monaco. It was tough to start with, Petter was away and I didn't really know anybody, but once Oliver was going to

school I met people at the [school] gates and we made some really good friends. When we left, it was hard to leave all of that behind. But we had to. We had a new plan."

Looking into family Solberg from the outside, it would be easy to see Petter having everything revolve around him. That couldn't be further from the case. Pernilla is team principal at PSRX Volkswagen Sweden and she's team principal at home too.

"I plan for the race team and Oliver's rallying and racing and I do it for the family too," she says.

Petter and Oliver look slightly bashful at this point.

"Yeah, Oliver and I... we're not so good at the planning side of things," says the two-time World RX winner.

And planning for Oliver's future is an increasingly large part of his mum's work. This year he finished second in the RallyX Nordic Championship – becoming the youngest driver of a

600bhp rallycross supercar ever earlier this season – after two wins from five races. But Oliver's not really for going around in circles.

"Rallying is what I want to do," he says, "that's sure. Driving dad's supercar from last year is fantastic and I'm really glad to do that, but I still prefer to drive in the rally. The supercar is good for me, it's helping me. You know the top speed is probably the same as the Peugeot [208] R2 car I drive in Latvia, but the acceleration in the rallycross car is something else. You get the power so directly, it's incredible. But, I have to say, it's not such a hard car to drive; you can drive so much on the throttle."

"Things do happen very, very quickly in this car, everything is coming so quick in the corners, but that's good because when you are in the rally car, it feels like you have more time to react. Everything feels slow after 600bhp!"

Oliver will be a third-generation racer in his family. His grandparents on both



Team's WRX success in 2014



PSRX Volkswagen team has dominated the

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, LAT

WASTY

uture... and holidays



Oliver (right) and co-driver Veronica Engan have formed a successful partnership



Petter has had Oliver with him on rallies since he was a young child

sides competed. But then there's aunts, uncles and extended family. Uncle Henning was a WRC regular for years and now there are cousins Oscar [Solberg] and Pontus [Tidemand].

Oliver doesn't have to look far for advice or inspiration.

One regret he has is that he's never seen his mum compete – apart from when she co-drove for him on rallies when he was just starting out last year.

"It would have been good for her to carry on," says Oliver.

"I think so too," says Petter.

Oliver starts laughing: "Really? Last time she beat you!"

Petter: "Honestly. If I can say my opinion, I regret that Pernilla didn't carry on driving. You look at what she was doing, she was right at the front of the production class; on the podium in Finland. For me, she could have been the next Michele Mouton, the level she was driving at was proper, you know she was really there."

"I tell you now, I have some regrets when I look back."

Pernilla stopped competing to get behind Petter, before they ultimately got married. Briefly, however, they looked like becoming Mr and Mrs Subaru in the world of rallying, with Pernilla offered a Subaru USA drive in 2001.

"I don't mind," she says. "Everything was getting busy back then. We'll never know how far I could have gone, but the Subaru drive in America was interesting. In the end, it was offered to Mark Lovell. How can I have any regrets about the way things turned out? I love my life now; Oliver is the best thing that ever happened to me."

Petter's not ready to let this one lie yet.

"I think I was too single-minded at the time," he says. "I didn't think about anything or about anybody else, I was only focusing so much on my career and what I was doing. I was focused on myself and I regret it now. Pernilla, she could have had the real chance, you know."

The same mistake is not being made with Oliver. Is there a time when we could see him driving alongside Petter in the PSRX Volkswagen Sweden squad?

The answer is a pretty emphatic no. From all sides.

"I don't think it's a good idea to do that," says Petter. "Pernilla and me, we support him completely and we are always behind him and ready to help, but he wants to do all of this on his own. He has done all of his own sponsorship deals, he's designed the livery on the car, everything. I think it's important for him to do it for himself."

Pernilla's of the same mind.

"I was co-driving for him at the start," she says, "and I really enjoyed it. It was fantastic to be in the car with him, I had no fear for him at all. But it was nice when Veronica [Engan, co-driver] came along."

Why?

"Oliver's 15," says Pernilla. "I don't think it's so cool having your mum in the car!"

So, how quick is Oliver? He's finished first or second on every one of the five Latvian events he's contested, but what does that mean?

There's a moment's silence. The parents are refreshingly guarded in their response, with Pernilla offering: "There's natural talent, you can see that from the onboards. And he's done well in the rallies he's done so far."

On his first supercar test, he was 10 seconds per lap off Petter earlier this year. He soon got that down to 2.5s per lap – and don't forget he was using last year's car, while Petter was testing this season's all-conquering Volkswagen Polo RX Supercar.

"Did we tell you about our winter holiday last year?" says Petter. We're back where we started.

"We have a Group N Mitsubishi," he continues. "So, when everybody else was going off skiing or whatever, we loaded the rally car on to the trailer, packed a load of tyres and some fuel and we drove north to a cottage. It was fantastic. We lit the fire at night, had some fantastic food and a really nice time. Pernilla was really busy, so she was working a lot in the day, so Oliver and I took the car out and we were driving this five-kilometre stage up and down every day."

"His time was the same as mine," says Petter. "Honestly, I was so p**sed off. I went out again and again to try and beat him, but I couldn't go faster. Pernilla and me, we are so proud of Oliver. When we saw him win his first junior round in Latvia, we were both there and it was so emotional. We were all in tears, it was

incredible. But what we all do has to be right for Oliver."

Pernilla agrees and adds: "Like you, we are parents, and like you, we know it's not so cool to be pushing your own children so hard."

They don't have to. Oliver knows his own mind.

"This is all I want," he says.

"Motorsport, I love it and I want this to be my life."

The PSRX operation has evolved in the last 12 months. It's gone from a private team battling the odds to help Petter take his two world championships to a team in partnership with one of the world's biggest car manufacturers and a dominant force in global motorsport.

"We don't run the cars here anymore, they go back to Germany between the races," says Petter, "but we still have a lot of work to do. When we're not travelling, Pernilla and I are in the office every day. It's a family business. It's what we do."

"And it's what we want to do into the future. I am really enjoying this now. This year with Johan [Kristoffersson], Sven [Smeets, VW Motorsport director], FX [Francois-Xavier Demaison, VW Motorsport technical director] and the whole team has been incredible. We have achieved so much, honestly it's like a dream from where we started. Twelve months ago, we had a plan and now we have both world titles. This really is unbelievable, but the best thing is this is our family."

And the Solbergs certainly value family. ■



is year's World Rallycross Championship



Pernilla Solberg is unquestionably team manager, both at the track and away from it

INSIGHT: BTCC DISCIPLINE

CLEANING UP



MG driver Josh Cook was banned for a race

Tougher penalties for the BTCC in 2018 will sharpen up driving standards. By Matt James

The British Touring Car Championship is all about the fine margins, the fractions of a second between winning and losing, and the season just gone was one of the closest.

At Silverstone's penultimate round on the National circuit, for example, the entire 32-car field qualified within 0.9s of each other. It goes to highlight what a tough job it is to crack the BTCC and the series bosses will also tell anyone who will listen that it underscores the job that it has done in trying to create equality among the 15 chassis and engine tuner combinations that are represented.

In a series as close as that, collisions will be inevitable. The BTCC has an unfair reputation for being a competition where a blind eye is turned to contact, because 'rubbing is racing', after all. But, in truth, the BTCC series officials go a very long way to stamping out contact and there are some very robust systems in place to weed out culprits. Those measures will be ramped up for 2018 with a structured roster of penalties to clamp down on irresponsible conduct on the circuit.

During 2017, the BTCC featured a

number of large accidents. The most serious was a non-fault accident at Croft in June, where Luke Davenport's Motorbase Ford Focus ran off the circuit and the sump was ripped from underneath the car, coating the already wet circuit with gallons of oil. The multiple pile-up that ensued left Davenport and Eurotech Honda Civic racer Jeff Smith with serious injuries and in comas in hospital, while MG's Aron Taylor-Smith also broke his leg.

There was another big smash at Silverstone too, where Rob Collard's BMW was spat onto the grass coming out of Copse and connected with the Team Hard VW CC of Will Burns at the apex of Becketts. It ultimately ruled Burns and Collard out of the series finale at Brands Hatch in October.

Collard was particularly angry after his accident, which wrote off his WSR 125i M Sport car. "The thing that concerned me particularly was that I was hit on a straight," says Collard. "I wasn't even battling with someone going into a corner so there was totally no need for it. That is a worrying thing and moves like that really need to be stamped out."

While those were the headline incidents, there were a great many penalties handed out this season, and Triple Eight Racing MG driver Josh

Cook was even banned for a round at Silverstone as he had collected four censures over the course of the season. It was the first time such a serious measure had been taken for more than 15 years.

Three-time champion Gordon Shedden thinks that there could be some other reasons why the contact this season has been highlighted, and they stem from the equalisation system that the championship employs.

"Because there is a desire to keep everyone near the same pace, there are some guys out there who have more turbo boost than they should have," says the Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R driver. "There are guys who are driving rocket ships and they don't have the experience to control them properly. That could be one of the contributing factors to what we have seen in 2017. Anything that is being done to clean up driving standards is a good thing, but there are a number of factors involved."

When a driver transgresses, officialdom is quick to react and it issued more penalties in 2017 than it had done before—a move which was prompted, in part, by the competitors themselves.

The BTCC's permanent clerk of the course is Ian Watson. He explains: "At

the end of last season, the drivers were all concerned about push to pass, where another driver would deliberately hit the car in front to get ahead. We said we would take a strong look at it. We told all the drivers that if they were involved in an incident like that, and they rectified it on track themselves, then there would be no action. The ball was very much in their court, but racing drivers never like to own up, do they? I wouldn't say we have been harsher in 2017, but we have made sure that we look at everything."

Watson and fellow officials Dave White and BTCC driving standards officer and former racer Jeff Allam watch the races from race control, where they have access to the circuit's closed circuit TV pictures (if there are any) as well as the footage being broadcast by ITV.

"We will make a note of anything we see from the screens," explains Watson. "Then after the race, we will collect any notes that have been taken by post chiefs at any marshal post around the track of things we might not necessarily have seen."

"Also, the teams can come to us at the end of the race and ask us to look at any particular incidents too."

Once a driver has been cited for an incident, they are called to the TOCA

bus in the paddock to explain themselves, Watson, series boss Alan Gow and Allam have access to onboard footage from each of the cars, and the Cosworth-developed system also shows steering angle, throttle traces and brake pressure, among other things.

"There are five or six different bits of information we can get from the cars so we can see exactly what has gone on in the cockpit," says Watson. "We can also overlay two drivers' footage, so we can run them in split screen and see exactly what both were doing at any given moment. It is a complicated system and it means the drivers have nowhere to hide."

And having nowhere to hide will be the message in 2018 with the penalties imposed. A fourth visit to the bus will result in a driver being banned for a race, and further transgressions will result in more censures. If a driver errs for fifth time, it is a two-race ban, a sixth time will result in a three-race ban and a seventh means the driver will be banished for the rest of the year.

Drivers are often critical of a lack of consistency in the penalties handed out, but Watson explains that each incident has to be looked at on its own merits. "There is a roster in place, if you like, for what we can do to each driver



Sutton's move earned him a back-row start

"We have access to plenty of data"

IAN WATSON



Apportioning blame can be difficult

THE TOURING CAR ACTION



Rob Austin was penalised after this contact back in April

should they make a mistake, but no two incidents are the same. We have to make a judgement. We try to look at what penalties we have handed out before and keep them in line with each other, but sometimes it is impossible to do that. For example, if a driver makes an illegal pass and the cars finish one place apart, then it is easy to simply add a time penalty and swap them back. But on other occasions, that incident could have led to several other people gaining an advantage as a result, and you can't unpick everything. It has to be done on a case-by-case basis."

Alongside the clarified position on censures in 2018, there will also be financial penalties too, and the championship itself will fine the drivers alongside any penalty that might be dished out by the sport's governing body, the Motor Sports Association. The money collected by BTCC bosses will go towards medical and rescue costs.

Watson explains another significant alteration to the penalty system in 2018 too. "From the start of next season, all drivers will start with no marks against them, and then if they are applied, they will then last for a 12-month period," he says. "Presently, each driver's tally is wiped clean at

the end of each season but we have changed it to bring it into line with the way the MSA operates. That means if a driver picks up a penalty at the opening round at Brands in 2018, that will stay on his or her licence up until the opening round in 2019."

That is an important change, because drivers will no longer have a "free strike" if they get to the end of the season and get a clean licence. The temptation to push beyond what is acceptable will not be there if they know that the strike they gain will be carried by them throughout the following season too.

Series director Alan Gow has his typically pragmatic outlook when it comes to driver discipline. "No driver in this championship likes being penalised, and drivers will naturally be critical when they have been in hot water," he says. "But we can demonstrably prove that no competitor has been punished when they aren't at fault. People might look at incidents and think that we have let a driver get away with something, but they don't have access to all the instruments we use when we investigate an incident. If drivers have done nothing wrong, then they have nothing to worry about. It is simple, really." ■



Tom Ingram had a rough ride at Oulton Park in May this season

2017 RAP SHEET

Brands Hatch, April 1/2

Race one

Josh Cook received a verbal warning after gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Aiden Moffat.

Chris Smiley received a verbal warning after gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Stephen Jelley.

Ash Sutton received a verbal warning after gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Will Burns.

Jack Goff received a verbal warning after gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Rob Austin.

Rob Collard received a verbal warning after gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Mat Jackson.

Michael Epps received a verbal warning after gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Matt Simpson.

Race two
Rob Austin was excluded from round two and received four penalty points for driving in a manner incompatible with general safety or departing from the standard of a reasonably competent driver during an incident involving Andrew Jordan.

Race three
Jeff Smith received a verbal warning after gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Luke Davenport.

Ash Sutton was officially reprimanded and received two penalty points for driving in a manner incompatible with general safety or departing from the standard of a reasonably competent driver during an incident involving Jeff Smith.

Donington Park, April 15/16

Race one

Adam Morgan was permitted the addition of 0.5s to his race time for gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Gordon Shedden.

Luke Davenport was excluded from the race result and received four penalty points for overtaking Dave Newsham under yellow flag conditions.

Race two

Tom Chilton received a verbal warning after gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Aiden Moffat.

Thruxton, May 6/7

Qualifying

Tom Chilton was penalised by the loss of lap-time due to not slowing down under yellow flag signals. He received three penalty points.

Race one

Jake Hill was verbally reprimanded and received two penalty points for an incident involving Josh Cook.

Race three

Matt Neal was penalised by the addition of 0.5 seconds to his race time for gaining an unfair advantage during an incident involving Tom Chilton.

Oulton Park, May 20/21

Race one

Tom Chilton received a verbal reprimand for gaining an unfair advantage in an incident involving Will Burns. As this was his third penalty strike of the season, Chilton was demoted to the back of the grid for race two.

Race two

Senna Proctor received three penalty points on his licence and a £500 fine for an incident involving Colin Turkington and Jeff Smith.

Race three

Gordon Shedden received a verbal warning for an incident involving Josh Cook.

Will Burns received a verbal warning for gaining an unfair advantage in an incident involving Tom Ingram.

Croft, June 10/11

Race one

Ollie Jackson was penalised by the addition of 10.4s to his race time after gaining an advantage in incidents involving Rob Austin and Jake Hill.

Jake Hill received a verbal warning for gaining an unfair advantage in an incident involving Stephen Jelley.

Josh Price received a verbal warning for driving in a manner incompatible with general safety in an incident involving Matt Neal.

Race two

Josh Cook received a verbal warning for driving in a manner incompatible with general safety in an incident involving Tom Ingram.

Andrew Jordan received a verbal warning for gaining an unfair advantage in an incident involving Mat Jackson.

Rob Austin received a verbal warning for driving in a manner incompatible with general safety in an incident involving Jake Hill.

Snetterton, July 29/30

Race one

Dave Newsham was officially reprimanded and received two penalty points for an incident involving Mat Jackson.

Race two

Stewart Lines received three penalty points and a £500 fine for an incident involving Josh Cook.

Knockhill, August 12/13

Race one

Adam Morgan received a verbal warning for gaining an unfair advantage in an incident involving Dave Newsham.

Race two

Andrew Jordan received a £1000 fine and three penalty points for an incident involving Matt Neal.

Josh Price was excluded for overtaking or failing to slow down under flag signals.

Race three

Jake Hill received a £500 fine and three penalty points for an incident involving Senna Proctor. This was his third strike and as a result, Hill started the next round from the back of the grid.

Rockingham, August 26/27

Race one

Stephen Jelley was fined £500 and received three penalty points for incidents involving Senna Proctor and Matt Simpson.

Martin Depper was officially reprimanded and received two penalty points for an incident involving Brett Smith.

Race two

Josh Cook was officially reprimanded and received two penalty points for an incident involving Mat Jackson, which was his third strike and meant he started the following round from the back of the grid.

Race three

Rory Butcher was officially reprimanded and received two penalty points for an incident involving Aiden Moffat.

Josh Cook was fined £500 and received three penalty points for an incident involving Stephen Jelley, which was his fourth strike and constituted a one-race ban.

Silverstone, September 16/17

Race one

Ant Whorton-Eales was officially reprimanded and received two penalty points for an incident involving Rob Austin.

Race two

Ash Sutton received a one-second time penalty for gaining an advantage in an incident involving Colin Turkington. As this was his third penalty strike of the season he started the next round from the back of the grid.

Brett Smith was fined £500 and received three penalty points for an incident involving Chris Smiley.

Race three

Matt Simpson was officially reprimanded and received two penalty points for an incident involving Mat Jackson.

Josh Cook was fined £500 and received three penalty points for an incident involving Jason Plato. As this was his fifth penalty strike of the season he started the opening race at Brands Hatch from the back of the grid.

Brands Hatch, October 1/2

Race one

Senna Proctor was given a verbal warning for an incident involving Adam Morgan.

Race two

Colin Turkington was fined £500 and received three penalty points for an incident involving Aiden Moffat.

Race three

Tom Ingram was officially reprimanded and received two penalty points for an incident involving Mat Jackson.

FEATURE: DAN TICKTUM

Photos: LAT

A GIANT STRIDE TO THE TOP



Ticktum on the way to Macau GP victory



The 18-year-old beat strong opposition



A star-studded cast gave Ticktum the award

Dan Ticktum has had a rollercoaster ride on his way to winning this year's MABA award. By Jack Benyon

The monkey is entirely off my back now," says Dan Ticktum. He's just won the biggest prize available to young drivers in the UK, the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award.

In reality, he destroyed the competition. While Max Fewtrell, Enaam Ahmed and Harrison Scott are all worthy adversaries, when it came down to the pressure and adapting to the GT3, F2 and DTM cars used in the test on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit, it was plain sailing for the driver from London.

It hasn't always been plain sailing, though. For obvious reasons Ticktum isn't too interested in talking about it, but in 2015 he was given a two-year ban, with the second year suspended, for overtaking multiple cars under a safety car in order to crash into MSA Formula rival Ricky Collard. Think Vettel and Hamilton in Baku.

But that was 2015, and although motorsport folk have long memories, Ticktum served his time. He's taken his ban on the chin, and has worked hard since.

The thought of someone losing a year of competitive action in this Max Verstappen era of embryonic Formula 1 drivers is simply incomprehensible. But it's time to digest, as there's no doubt despite his chequered past, Ticktum is a much more mature and sensible driver, destined for an F1 drive in the future.

His end to the year has proven that. While this year's Formula Renault Eurocup with Arden didn't yield a title bid in a new team to the category, five outings in GP3 with DAMS gave the 18-year-old the chance to impress, which he did with a podium in Abu Dhabi. Then came victory in the most prestigious F3 race of them all, the Macau Grand Prix, which has the youngster believing that talk about his past can firmly sit in the back seat now.

"Macau and now this!" he says with youthful optimism. "Launchpad is the exact expression for what this can do for me.

"I've had a lot of bad luck, some my own doing. I had some immaturities when I was younger, but the monkey is entirely off my back now. I've proven to everyone in Macau and tonight that I deserve to be here."

In the MABA finals the youngster was "extraordinary" according to

CV

Dan Ticktum

2011: Champion in FKS, Super One, British Open and British Grand Prix Championships
2013: Second in FIA CIK European Championship
2015: Sixth in MSA Formula, two-year ban (second year suspended) from motorsport for crashing into a competitor
2016: Returned to motorsport in last round of FIA European F3
2017: Seventh in Formula Renault Eurocup, Macau F3 Grand Prix winner

award judge, former F1 driver and all-round champion of British talent, Derek Warwick.

"I think the four of them were special this year," says Warwick. "They were very competitive. But there's always someone who stands out.

"We put these guys out early in the F2 car and it was a wet-drying circuit. They shouldn't have been on slicks but we did put them out on slicks.

"Dan was extraordinary. He was three seconds quicker than everybody on that run. You've got to be something different, something

extraordinary to do that. I'm not taking anything away from the other three, but as we know one driver always stands out."

Ticktum was optimistic he'd done enough to take the award, displaying quiet confidence that demonstrated the ruthless determination necessary to force his way up the career ladder.

"A couple of weeks after the event I thought I had done enough [to win] but then after three weeks I began to ponder," he explains. "The more time to dwell, the worse it is. There's time to think about mistakes, but I don't make many. I was confident."

His background has helped to conjure that determination in his racing. While there's been money behind Ticktum, it's not the buy-me-an-F1-seat type money.

"I'm not from a massively wealthy background – my dad never had the chance to go racing when he was younger," he adds. "We've both always loved cars. I'd love to get to F1 one day, I'd love to try a rally. I couldn't have been brought into a better world and I enjoy it as much as I can."

And, F1 isn't unrealistic, looking at Ticktum's 2018 schedule or the list of previous winners of MABA.

While competing in FIA European F3 with Motopark, the same team he won Macau with, is confirmed (see *racing news*), he'll also have the best job outside competing in an F1 car at the highest level. It's called sim support. On race weekends, Ticktum will be at Red Bull's UK base to help set-up the car for Daniel Ricciardo and Verstappen.

"I find it a fascinating role," he says. It's easy to see that he has genuine passion for what he's doing and the sport he's in.

"You're basically a third [F1] car going around testing. They're firing all the data over to Milton Keynes and put it on the car [in the sim] and it's up to you to decide whether it's any good or not."

Whether the RB14 – or whatever it might be called – is "any good or not" is yet to be seen. But what isn't is Ticktum's ability. The past will always remain with him to a certain extent.

Second chances don't come often in motorsport, and the young Brit has learned his lesson.

Now he joins Lando Norris and George Russell as the young drivers most capable of following on from Lewis Hamilton's success in the next generation.

Ticktum has progressed through a varied career from national racer to MABA winner

It has been quite a month for Ticktum with his Macau Grand Prix win, maiden GP3 podium and now the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award triumph. But the 18-year-old's success began long before that.

He announced himself as one to watch with a string of impressive results in karting before graduating to car racing in MSA Formula in

2015. While that season will be forever remembered for his clash with Ricky Collard at Silverstone and subsequent ban, there were some very impressive moments too.

Heading into the closing stages of the season he was still an outside contender for the title and matched and beat his MABA predecessor, Lando Norris, at times during the

year. Winning just his fourth ever car race was no mean feat.

After the ban he made his comeback in European F3 and raced at Macau last year before returning to full-time competition in the Formula Renault Eurocup this year as a Red Bull junior driver.

Considering his Arden squad was new to the hotly-contested category, a title bid appeared

unlikely but Ticktum's target was to beat the two other Red Bull juniors in the series. And he destroyed them.

He scored 45 more points than the highly-rated Spanish and Russian Formula 4 champion Richard Verschoor and a massive 75 more than US F1600 title winner Neil Verhagen to highlight his talent.



Formula Renault Eurocup year was difficult

INSIGHT: NATHAN HEATHCOTE

Photos: Hal Ridge

British Rallycross champion Nathan Heathcote has his feet on the ground. By Hal Ridge

HEATHCOTE REAPS THE REWARDS



Heathcote turned heads on his SuperCar debut in 2016



Brit took the title after a dramatic last round win

H heading out to party?" I asked the newly crowned British Rallycross champion as he loaded his race gear into the boot of his car behind Croft Circuit's garages. "Nah, we're heading straight off. I've got to be on a tractor first thing in the morning," was the reply.

In such circumstances, a newly crowned champion would be forgiven for heading straight to Darlington's finest watering holes to celebrate not only coming from behind to win the British RX SuperCar title at his first attempt, but then concluding the campaign by dominating the annual Rallycross Grand Prix that followed later the same day.

But when the weekend was over and despite Nathan Heathcote's fairytale success on Sunday, the 20-year-old had to embark on the 300-mile journey from Yorkshire to Kent, back to the reality of work.

As it happened, he was granted a lie-in. He didn't start work until 0900hrs on Monday – which was well-deserved after a remarkable success story.

Despite claiming the title however, the odds were against the reigning Swift Sport Rallycross champion entering the ninth and final round of the 2017 season.

A year earlier, Dan Rooke had stunned series regulars by leading on his SuperCar debut and eventually finishing second to Croft local Kevin Procter but, 12 months on, Heathcote went one better and claimed victory in his maiden appearance in the headline category.

While Rooke had won through the season to claim the title with a round to spare in 2016, the following events for Heathcote were turbulent. His events either ending with niggling mechanical issues, or on the podium,

proving the pace of both himself and the LD Motorsports Citroen DS3.

"When I first got into the SuperCar, I just wanted to go flat-out all the time," explains Heathcote. "Then Liam and Pat [Doran] and Graham [Rodemark, engineer] all said 'just calm down, you're not trying to prove anything. You'll go faster if you just bring it back a bit and just stop making the mistakes'. I did that, and used what I learnt in the Swift class. There you have to be consistent and you can't make mistakes. If you do, it takes a lot to get back past someone in the four laps you're racing."

That learning aided Heathcote when under pressure to score his first victory, and those later in the year. However, he admits that despite having the pace to win round one and finish third in round three, there were some speed bumps along the way. After a non-score in round two at Lydden Hill and retirement while leading the semi-final in round four at Mondello Park, he felt his title challenge was disappearing.

"I felt it was very much slipping away from me after the first race at Mondello Park, I thought that was it. Then when I had some problems at Pembrey in round seven I thought that was definitely it, but we managed to win the next race there."

Having dominated the penultimate round of the year, Heathcote entered the season finale 10 points adrift of five-time title-holder Julian Godfrey, who is the master of just doing enough when it comes to accumulating the necessary points. Oliver Bennett also had an outside chance of the crown in his maiden term. Heathcote says he approached the final event as any other, knowing that all he could do was try and secure victory for himself. Everything else was out of his hands.

"I had good pace from the start of the weekend and then it was just a case of keeping it consistent and together. Once you're out front at

Croft, it's very hard for people to overtake and the conditions weren't great, so being out front is a massive advantage. I managed to get a good lead and drove my own race."

Unbeknown to Heathcote, in the pack behind, Godfrey had run into trouble after contact and broken his rear suspension. He was out, and if Heathcote won, the title pendulum would swing to the Citroen driver.

"No one told me Julian had issues, then I came round and saw him pulling off, so I knew if I just kept it together... Graham was telling me on the radio that I had a big lead so I just tried not to make any mistakes to bring it home."

An unemotional character at the best of times, Heathcote admits winning the title was special.

"That was absolutely one of the best experiences of my life to this day, and one of the best memories I'll ever have," he says. "It's what I needed to do if I'm going to go on and make a career in rallycross. There was a bit of luck, but I did everything I could for myself. Nobody wants to win by somebody else retiring, but if that's what it takes to be champion I'm not going to complain."

And a career in the mixed-surface

sport, for now in between his work commitment and love of farming, is exactly what the Englishman is planning. "Since I started racing everyone has asked me if I want to be the next Lewis Hamilton or whatever, but my aim is to get to world rallycross. I just absolutely love it, being sideways in really quick cars. A career would be an absolute dream and I'm working as hard as I can. You have to keep it as a bit of a dream sometimes until you get the deals done, trying to find sponsorship has been a big task. We're getting there but there's still a long way to go until we are able to race the European Championship next year. That's the only sensible option I think after winning the British Championship."

He intends to remain with Liam Doran's LDM outfit for a Euro RX campaign, and has enjoyed using the knowledge of both Liam, his multiple British RX champion father Pat and Rodemark, who is best known as the engineer that has worked with Kevin Hansen throughout the Swede's career so far.

"Liam is very good," says Heathcote. "He doesn't show his emotions massively, but he's really good. He'll come over and have little one-to-ones,

tell me what he thinks I should be doing. His technical skills and his knowledge of the engineering in the cars is massive. He's trying little things which probably other teams aren't, so the main aim is to stay here next year. Graham has been with me since I started in rallycross and we get along really well. We have a good laugh, which is what I need while I'm racing. I'm more comfortable when I'm having a laugh with people and there's a bit of banter going around. The team's been really looking to find more sponsorship and push me to get into Europe, it's nice that they're definitely on my side to try and get me to the top."

And reaching the top isn't an unachievable aspiration. Taking raw facts into account, Heathcote was arguably the fastest driver in British RX this year, beating quick contenders such as Ollie O'Donovan, Godfrey, Procter and ex-BTCC racer (and LDM team-mate) Warren Scott. If you consider that O'Donovan made the Euro RX podium this year (in Barcelona) and was regularly an international semi-finalist, it gives a good indication as to where Heathcote could immediately expect to be on the ladder's next rung.

"By the end of the season I felt so comfortable in the car," he says. "That I've beaten those guys shows I've got good pace. If I go into Europe there will be pressure, but not as much [as returning to British RX]. I'll be a new driver, I've never raced in European rounds, I haven't been to any of the tracks, so it will be a big step up. I don't think anyone would be expecting me to be right at the front straight away, but if I can manage to do it, I'll push my hardest for podiums, once I know the tracks."

With Rooke already competing in the single-make RX2 series, Heathcote's swift progress bodes well for home-grown rallycross talent competing on the international stage in the near future. ■



Heathcote made his name winning the Suzuki Swift Championship

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MN CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Photos: SMJ Photography

CLASS ROUND-UP



Marshall took Class C honours

Benjamin Smith and his father, Steven, scooped maximum **Class C** MN Championship points in their Renault Clio 182, behind event class-winning local pair Ross Marshall/Denver Rafferty in a two-litre Ford Escort.

A brake bias problem for the Clio caused a spin through the main chicane at the back of the circuit in SS1. A suspected loose damper carried over from Cadwell Park brought concerns that retirement was imminent in the afternoon, but instead it was runaway overall leaders Joshua Davey/Tamsyn Davey who were the biggest Class C casualty, suffering a broken gearbox through SS6.

This immediately put Dane Walker/Dave Boyes in the box seat for a top points finish, but a burst exhaust in stage seven – a repeat issue from both Oulton Park and Cadwell Park – and a collision with a tractor tyre at the artificial chicane on the circuit's main straight killed their chances.

"[I] bent the steering arm," explained Walker. "That veered us into the pit wall, so we hit that as well. We limped around just to try to get some points for the championship."

Walker missed out on a class podium altogether as a consequence, also dropping behind local entrants Graeme Rintoul/Jim Rintoul. Cathy Sewart/Colin Stephens completed the top five, with Blair Thomas the last points scorer, finishing seventh in class behind the MN-unregistered Robert Marshall/Lewis MacDougall.

Ford Ka crew Aaron Rix and Rob Cook had the better of Samuel and Liam Johnson's SEAT Arosa in **Class A**, taking class victory by 20 seconds. Local entrant Steven Hay – who works at the Knockhill circuit by day – and co-driver Steven Brown led until a gearbox failure for his Vauxhall Corsa in SS5.

The Johnsons put their failure to keep up with Rix/Cook down to the BTRDA Rally First specification of their Arosa, leaving them down on straight-line speed compared to the Ka.

Cameron Craig/Ewan Lees rounded out the Class A podium in a Peugeot 205, but as a local entrant, third-placed points went to Craig Aston/Nick Baker's Toyota Yaris instead.

Class A also featured a nasty accident for Mark Anison/Ian Humphrey in SS2, locking the brakes on their Ford Puma and whacking the tractor tyre marking the chicane at the crest of the main straight. The impact broke the bolt responsible for holding the wishbone and rear subframe together, forcing the pair to pit a lap early and retire.

Class B was dominated by team owner and Mazda MX-5 aficionado Paul Sheard and his co-driver Bruce Lindsay. Runners-up Ashleigh Morris/Jamie MacTavish suffered minor drama in SS3 after a quick trip into the gravel in their Ford Fiesta R200, finishing second. Andy Pecover/Kevin Blackford completed the Class B podium.

First and second overall were also winners in the **D2** and **D1** classes respectively, with Chris West/Keith Hounslow topping the former and Nigel Feeney/Paula Swinscoe taking the honours in the latter.

Alasdair Lindsay

WEST WINS AFTER DAVEY HEARTBREAK

Dazzling Darrian falters as West increases series lead. By **Stephen Brunson**



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

West has taken first overall win of season

Chris West's Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship title hopes were given a major boost on the series' first visit to Knockhill after inheriting victory from a luckless Joshua Davey, who retired with three stages remaining.

Davey had dominated the event from the start, taking four stage wins out of eight to hold a commanding 18s lead over championship rival West heading into the afternoon loop.

But a jammed gearbox coming through Duffus Dip on stage six sent the Darrian T90 spinning agonisingly into the gravel and retirement, after a 1000-mile round-trip from Cornwall.

West and co-driver Keith Hounslow picked up the pieces and duly recorded their third D1 maximum score and first overall victory of the season in the Peugeot 306 Maxi Kit Car after a measured drive.

West now leads John Stone by 19 points ahead of the next round at Brands Hatch in January.

"Breaking down and queuing up is not my way of winning a rally, but unfortunately for the Darrian, it did break down and we ended up on top," said a relieved West, post-rally.

"Honestly, if Joshua hadn't retired, I don't think we would have been able to catch him, he was on a mission today.

"But we've been on it all day, we've pushed hard and it came to us at the end, so we're over the moon."

As Davey was left to ponder what might have been, West's lead entering the final two stages over the second-placed Nigel Feeney and Paula Swinscoe was a comfortable 16s. It closed to seven by the end, but West was to remain unchallenged once Davey was sidelined.

Having overcome early morning tyre trouble, Feeney hauled his Mini Countryman WRC into podium contention after the lunch break. Feeling more at ease on a fresh set of Pirelli RKW7s, he eventually prevailed

in an epic battle with the impressive Taylor Gibb to secure runner-up spot and D2 victory by just five seconds.

In their first outing together in a Mitsubishi Lancer, Gibb and co-driver Jane Nicol produced the stand-out performance of the rally, despite making an inauspicious start. The pair were only 10th after a tentative opening two stages. However, a stunning fightback produced wins on SS4, SS6 and the curtailed SS7 (after Kevin Mathers's Peugeot 205 caught fire), moving them firmly into the podium fight. A puncture on the final stage ultimately cost Gibb a richly deserved runner-up finish.

One of the pre-event favourites, Andrew Gallacher, endured a nightmare rally. The Ford Focus WRC driver lost time on the first stage after running a softer-compound tyre, before suffering gearbox trouble approaching the end of stage three. He dropped as low as 14th and eventually retired following the completion of the fourth stage.

Another contender to hit trouble was Scottish Rally Championship regular Donnie MacDonald in his Lancer E9. In his attempts to make ground following a slow start on the opening stage, the Aberdeenshire local hit a tree at high speed, damaging the side-panel of the passenger door and losing a handful of time. He finished 34th and last overall.

Alan Kirkaldy was the best of the non-MN championship runners in fourth place. The Scottish Tarmac Championship driver was the closest challenger to Davey on stage one, albeit a full nine seconds behind the Darrian, before slipping behind a resurgent West in stage two. Kirkaldy kept pace with West, with the pair split by just one second after stage four and he felt he could have challenged for the podium had his driver-side door not opened in both SS5 and SS6, which left him driving virtually one-handed. He slipped behind the charging Feeney and Gibb in the final stages.

Behind John Marshall's Subaru Impreza in fifth, John Stone came out



Consistency has helped Stone into second in the points

RESULTS

Knockhill Stages, MN Circuit Rally Championship, round 3/8, December 3

| POS | DRIVER/CO-DRIVER | CAR | TIME |
|-----|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Chris West/Keith Hounslow | Peugeot 306 Maxi Kit Car | 44m49s |
| 2 | Nigel Feeney/Paula Swinscoe | Mini John Cooper Works WRC | +7s |
| 3 | Taylor Gibb/Jane Nicol | Mitsubishi Lancer | +12s |
| 4 | Alan Kirkaldy/Don Whyatt | Ford Escort Mk2 | +18s |
| 5 | John Marshall/Scott Crawford | Subaru Impreza | +26s |
| 6 | John Stone/Shona Hale | Ford Fiesta S2500 | +39s |
| 7 | James Gibb/Charley Sayer-Payne | Mitsubishi Lancer | +40s |
| 8 | Ian Woodhouse/Jason Leaf | Ford Escort Mk2 | +1m10s |
| 9 | Ross Marshall/Denver Rafferty | Ford Escort Mk2 | +1m19s |
| 10 | Mark Kelly/Andy Baker | Ford Escort Mk2 | +1m53s |

Class winners Feeney/Swinscoe; R. Marshall/Rafferty; Paul Sheard/Bruce Lindsay (Mazda MX-5); Aaron Rix/Rob Cook (Ford Ka)
Points: 1 West 163; 2 Stone 144; 3 Woodhouse 140; 4 Kelly 137; 5 J.Marshall 132; 6 Dane Walker 117.

on top in a ferocious rally-long battle with the flamboyant James Gibb.

Using his son Taylor's regular Lancer, Gibb wowed the crowds by drifting to stage victory in SS3, having trailed Stone following the morning loop.

Stone admitted to being too cautious but quickly made amends in the next three stages to reclaim the advantage. The pair matched each other on stage seven, with Stone coming out on top in a

final stage shoot-out to claim sixth place by one second.

Reigning champion Ian Woodhouse's difficult start to the season continued with a largely anonymous drive to eighth. Sixth after the opening stage was the best Woodhouse could manage in the Escort Mk2 as he struggled with limited grip in slippery conditions.

He headed Ross Marshall by nine seconds while Mark Kelly finished a lonely 10th.

RALLY REPORTS

Photo: Pro-Rally Photography, Martin Walsh

MELLORS GIVES NEW PROTON FIRST OVERALL WIN

Mellors/Windress demonstrate the pace of the Iriz as Grizedale marks 30th year

Grizedale Forest Rally

By Phil James

Organiser: Furness & District MC When: December 2
Where: Grizedale, Yorkshire Championships: ANCC;
ANECCC Stages: 6 Starters: 70

In the 30th running of the Grizedale Stages Rally, Ollie Mellors and Ian Windress steered their Proton Iriz R5 to victory with a 22-second winning margin over the Ford Fiesta WRC of Irish duo Josh Moffett and Stephen Thornton.

From the ceremonial start at the Lakeland Motor Museum, competitors had only a two-mile drive to the never-rallied-before Chapel House Wood stage that ran twice in quick succession. Having set joint-fastest time through the opening run it was Moffett who then took sole rights to top spot, heading Mellors by a solitary second.

Paul Bird and Jack Morton were a further second back in their Ford Focus WRC, three seconds up on the similar car of Peter Stephenson and Patrick Walsh. Russ Thompson and Andy Murphy completed the top five in their Mitsubishi Lancer E9. Already in trouble were Tom Preston and Carl Williamson having taken their Skoda Fabia R5 into the scenery.

It was then onto Grizedale, having crossed Lake Windermere via the car ferry, for the first of two 15-mile tests. Fastest time by Mellors gave the Iriz pilot a 21-second lead ahead of Moffett, who now had Stephen

Petch and Michael Wilkinson just four seconds further back. Bird's rally ended there in a ditch while Thompson was now fourth as Stephenson slipped down the order having made the wrong tyre choice. Andrew Gallacher and Jane Nicol completed the top five in their Focus WRC, but they wouldn't get much further as gearbox problems were about to end their day.

Following service at Skelwith Fold, crews headed back to Grizedale where Moffett reduced Mellors' advantage by four seconds. Petch and Thompson consolidated their third and fourth places as Michael Binnie and Claire Mole edged their Lancer E9 into fifth place. The Mitsubishi crew had dropped time earlier, stopping in stage one to check on Phil and Simon Pickard, whose Impreza wasn't going any further. They were also having difficulty with a new suspension system that made the car tail-happy.

Mellors then cemented his win, thanks in no small part to the car running faultlessly, by setting fastest time through the two Dunnerdale stages as Moffett, Petch and Thompson, who suffered a last stage puncture, all held station. Mini WRC pairing Alan Carmichael and Ivor Lamont snatched fifth place but only by virtue of the tie-break rule, their faster time on stage one leaving Binnie and Mole to settle for sixth place.

A windscreen wiper problem contributed to Stephenson not



New Proton R5 got its first win

bettering seventh place but Stephen McCann was happy with eighth on his first gravel outing in more than four years. Co-driven by Tom Woodburn, the pair's only moment came on the first Grizedale stage where they endured a small overshoot in their Fiesta S2000.

Class 3 winners Stuart Egglestone and Brian Hodgson survived a spin and an altercation with a Grizedale

bank to bring their Escort Mk2 home ninth overall ahead of Niall Devine and Kieran McGrath's Lancer E9.

Scottish Rally Championship regulars Simon Hay and Calum Jaffray finished 11th in their Lancer E6 ahead of the Proton Satria of Class 1 winners Mat Smith and Giles Dykes.

Alan Dickson returned to the stages after more than a 10-year absence and, having escaped a

brief visit to a Grizedale ditch, he and co-driver Martin Forrest finished 13th overall in their Lancer E9.

Class 2 winners Finlay Retson and Tom Hynd finished 14th overall in their Ford Fiesta R2, while Class 4 winners Mike Wolff and Mark Twiname brought their BMW E30 home in 16th overall despite an altercation with a Grizedale log pile.

Results

1 Ollie Mellors/Ian Windress (Proton Iriz R5) 43m29s; 2 Josh Moffett/Stephen Thornton (Ford Fiesta WRC) +22s; 3 Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson (Fiesta WRC); 4 Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 5 Alan Carmichael/Ivor Lamont (Mini WRC); 6 Michael Binnie/Claire Mole (Lancer E9); 7 Peter Stephenson/Patrick Walsh (Focus WRC06); 8 Stephen McCann/Tom Woodburn (Fiesta S2000); 9 Stuart Egglestone/Brian Hodgson (Escort Mk2); 10 Niall Devine/Kieran McGrath (Lancer E9).
Class winners: Mat Smith/Giles Dykes (Proton Satria); Finlay Retson/Tom Hynd (Fiesta R2); Egglestone/Hodgson; Mike Wolff/Mark Twiname (BMW E30); Thompson/Murphy.

Killarney Historic Rally

By Maurice Malone

Organiser: Killarney and District MC
When: December 2 Where: Killarney, County Kerry
Championships: 2018 Irish Tarmac Historic Rally
Championship, 2017 Southern 4 Rally Championship
Stages: 8 Starters: 130.

After a long period away from competing, Denis Moynihan returned to take victory on the Killarney Historic Rally, the event that opens the 2018 Irish Tarmac Historic Rally Championship campaign.

With two runs apiece over the classic Moll's Gap, Ballaghbeama, Caragh Lake and Rockfield stages in slippery December conditions, the event provides a tough final test before cars are wheeled back into hibernation for the winter.

Mark Falvey caught everyone napping on the first run up the Gap in his Ford Escort Mk1, although Moynihan hit back hard on the second test to hold a slender lead going into the first service of the day after Falvey lost time with a half-spin. Interestingly, Falvey was also returning from an extended period away from competitive action, making his times equally impressive. Last year's winner

MOYNIHAN MASTERS KILLARNEY



Rallying hiatus ended with victory

and top seed Ryan Barrett held third ahead of Owen Murphy's new left-hand-drive Talbot Sunbeam Lotus, with Melvyn Evans a few seconds further back, the Welshman reporting gearbox issues.

Oil on the road caused issues for many crews on the third stage, although Moynihan blitzed it and wasn't to be headed for the remainder of the day. Murphy commented that he was pushing very hard, and was a little surprised to not be closer to the

top of the timesheets. Behind him, Evans held a steady fifth place, as Gareth Lloyd struggled with clutch issues throughout the day.

Despite a scary moment on the penultimate test and a late charge from Falvey, Moynihan brought it home, paying tribute to the huge family effort that went into preparing and running the Escort. With this event being the first counting round of the 2018 Irish Historic Tarmac Rally Championship, Murphy leads the

series as the highest registered competitor. Last year's champion Barry Jones was absent and won't complete a full season.

Results

1 Denis Moynihan/Ger Conway (Ford Escort Mk1) 1h05m08.8s; 2 Mark Falvey/Diarmaid Lynch (Escort Mk1) +11.4s; 3 Ryan Barrett/Paul McCann (Escort); 4 Owen Murphy/Anthony Nestor (Sunbeam); 5 Melvyn Evans/Sean Hayde (Escort Mk2); 6 Gareth Lloyd/David Byrne (Escort Mk2); 7 Denis Cronin/Helen O'Sullivan (Escort); 8 Tim Pearcey/Neil Shanks (Escort); 9 Duncan Williams/Guy Weaver (Escort); 10 Alan Watkins/Lion Tractor Williams (Escort).
Class winners: Moynihan/Conway; Colin McDowell/Michael Spence (Morris Mini); George Swanton/Labhaise Hyland (Escort); Maurice Meskel/Stephen Meskel (Escort); Pat Looney/Tom Kelleher (Escort); Williams/Weaver; Barrett/McCann.

Duggan defends honour as top modern entry

Local hero Rob Duggan successfully returned to defend his Killarney Historic Rally Modified honour, finishing the highest non-historic driver in one of the event's most competitive entries, with sister, Tara, on the notes.

Duggan blitzed everyone on the first run up Moll's Gap, despite reckoning that it was the worst run he'd ever had over the hallowed test! Gary Kiernan and Ryan Moore had a much better run on stage two, only a second behind the Killarney man, but stated that they needed to push even harder to really stay in contention.

A change of tyre compound allowed the Duggan Escort to really stretch its legs, and a time of 8m52.6s on the greasy stage three would have been impressive in dry conditions, let alone on a damp December morning. Kiernan was

effusive in his praise for Rob's pace, the Cavan man's Escort shorn of its bonnet after an issue with the pins. There was to be no change in the top two overall until the end, although Gary did take several stage wins.

The rest of the top 10 featured some top quality Modified machinery, as Enda O'Brien took the final podium slot ahead of Tommy Doyle, with only Raymond Conlon's Toyota Corolla breaking up the Escort monopoly.

Results

1 Rob Duggan/Tara Duggan (Ford Escort Mk2) 1h01m46.8s; 2 Gary Kiernan/Ryan Moore (Escort Mk2) +25.5s; 3 Enda O'Brien/John Butler (Escort Mk2); 4 Tommy Doyle/Liam Moynihan (Escort Mk2); 5 Damian Toner/Marty Toner (Escort Mk2); 6 Wesley Patterson/Johnny Baird (Escort Mk2); 7 Colin O'Donoghue/Kieran O'Donoghue (Escort Mk2); 8 Charlie Hickey/John McCarthy (Escort Mk2); 9 Raymond Conlon/James O'Reilly (Toyota Corolla); 10 Leonard Downey/Mark Murphy (Escort Mk2).
Class winners: Kevin Flanagan/Vanessa Hamilton (Austin Mini); Victor Beamish/Susan Beamish (Opel Corsa); Tommy McDonagh/Paul Hickey (Escort); Damian O'Reilly/Martin Byrne (Escort); O'Donoghue/O'Donoghue; Conlon/O'Reilly; Duggan/Duggan.

SPORTING SCENE

Photos: fiaworldrallycross.com, Albatec Racing, Duncan Stephens

OBITUARY

George Warren
1927-2017

Long-time rallycross driver George Warren passed away peacefully in his sleep on November 30.

Initially competing in motorcycle grasstrack racing in the post-war years, he first tried autocross in 1969, racing a Jaguar. He quickly switched to the more effective Ford Anglia and then to Ford Escorts, in which he achieved success.

From 1974, Welshman Warren competed in rallycross, still in Ford's Escort, and raced into the 21st century. He continued driving into his mid-70s.

Seldom contesting full championships, Warren competed for the love of the sport, and undertook much of his racing both at home and on the continent, where he was widely known and respected.

Motorsport News extends its sympathies to Warren's family and many friends.



Rooke took runner-up spot

Rooke has impressed this season

Rooke targets second season in RX2 division

Former British Rallycross champion Dan Rooke is targeting a second successive term in the World Rallycross Championship-supporting RX2 International Series next season.

Rooke completed his maiden international rallycross season in only his third year in the sport at the South African finale last month.

Despite only initially expecting to contest the five European-based rounds of the seven-event series, the 2016 British RX champion added the Canadian and South African rounds to his 2017 programme and finished second in the points.

He claimed victory in the Swedish round at Holjes and was the only driver to stand on the top step of the podium during the campaign, aside from dominant champion Cyril Raymond.

"The plan at the start of the year was to just do five rounds, but we've done the whole season," said the 20-year-old. "We've had the pace all year: we've always been within the top three in the lap times, so we know the speed is there."

"I want to try and stay in RX2 next year, we battled for budget this year but now hopefully with this result it will help us to find a bit more backing, and maybe we will have a bit more luck too. The exposure of RX2 has grown massively this year as the stepping stone into the World championship and it's the best option for me. Getting into World RX is still my goal."

Rooke rolled his car out of the last final of the year in Cape Town.

TEAM BOSS SCOTT SET FOR EURO RX RETURN

Albatec Racing head will be back in the driver's seat next season



Scott says he'll race next year

By Hal Ridge

Former European Rallycross Championship podium finisher Andy Scott is targeting a return to the series next season in one of his Albatec Racing team's Peugeot 208 Supercars.

Scott last raced regularly in the Euro RX Championship in 2016 and finished equal on points with Irishman Ollie O'Donovan, before stepping back to run cars for Norwegian Tommy Rustad

and Finn Jere Kalliokoski in the series this year.

It's expected that Scott will drive a third Peugeot in 2018, alongside the team's other drivers.

"I'm definitely driving next year. I've enjoyed running the team in the European Championship this year but I'm not getting any younger and I want to have one last crack at the European Championship," Scott told *Motorsport News*. "Some of the guys I've been used to racing with have come on and made good

progress, Derek [Tohill] in particular, so it'll be a challenge. I would like to think I can be a top-10 finisher in the championship."

Scott returned to the driving seat at a French championship event at Lessay in October, where he drove the latest evolution of the squad's 208.

"Each year the car has got stronger. We did a big update on the suspension on my car for last year and we rolled that across all the cars for this year, which is definitely a step in the

right direction," said Scott. "It's the same theory this year, we've built a new car with an upgraded engine package, some tweaks on the suspension and it's lighter."

"We've been working on the packaging to get the best from our engines so, along with [engine tuner] ORECA, we're starting to feel more confident on the engine side. We're very pleased with the way the development has gone, but we know how to fight at the front and we have to improve again through the winter."



Scott wants return

SPORTING TRIALS



Uglow shone on way to title

Uglow secures third title with last-round victory

Gloster Sporting Trial

By Duncan Stephens

Organiser: 750 Motor Club When: December 3 Where: Frocester, nr Stroud. Starters: 35.

Roland Uglow secured his third straight MSA British Sporting Trial Championship at the final round on Sunday, the Gloster Trial, with an emphatic win during the afternoon. Uglow had fought hard and had wrapped up the championship before the last round on his previous two successes, which meant this was an emotional triumph for him.

Ian Veale led Uglow by a point at lunchtime with John Fack just a single point further back as the grassy sections deteriorated. Despite sections being moved to fresh grass, engine revs soon increased, apart from Uglow, who drove sublimely to drop just three points on the last round to beat Veale by eight points.

Paul Price completed the podium from Richard Sharp, who nevertheless secured runner-up spot in the

MSA championship standings.

Fack dropped to fifth, just ahead of Simon Kingsley, who went the wrong side of a post on the last round costing him third overall.

Ian Wright borrowed customer Stuart Beare's Sherpa Indy to finish in seventh. Josh Veale finished top red live-axle in ninth, while his brother Sandy won the rookie class in a creditable 16th just behind blue independent winner John Cole.

David Hailes took the blue live-axle class victory.

Phil Haines won the clubman class on a challenging day. Peter McKinney had recruited Brita Goodwin, who had flown in from Australia for a week and not seen a trial beforehand, to passenger finishing 11th.

Result
1 Roland Uglow/Beth Carroll (Crossle) 30 marks; 2 Ian Veale/Tristan Veale (Sherpa) 38 marks; 3 Paul Price/Kate Kirk (CAP); 4 Richard Sharp/Joe Sharp (Cartwright); 5 John Fack/Andy Gowen (MSR); 6 Simon Kingsley/Matt Kingsley (Crossle); 7 Ian Wright/Stuart Beare (Sherpa Indy); 8 George Watson/Victoria Watson (Hamilton); 9 Josh Veale/Elaine Smyth (Sherpa); 10 Jerome Fack/Jess Fack (MSR).

Dubourg gets early boost in Andros Trophy season

Two-time Andros Trophy champion and World Rallycross driver Jean-Baptiste Dubourg shared the spoils in the opening round of the 2017-2018 winter series last weekend to begin his second title defence.

Benjamin Riviere claimed victory on the opening day of the season aboard a Peugeot 3008, while Dubourg debuted DA Racing's new Renault Captur, replacing its previous Renault Clio. He was also carrying 60 kilos of success ballast as the reigning champion.

While Riviere dominated day one, thanks to many revisions to his car's chassis and differentials in the off-season, Dubourg produced a spirited drive in the final to finish third.

On day two, it was Dubourg who dominated, winning ahead of Riviere to sit just behind his compatriot in the standings. Former Formula 1 driver and long-time Andros Trophy racer Franck Lagorce finished third in round two.

"I knew that I was going to suffer with the weight in the first race and the whole team was able to show its strength to be in the best shape for race two," said Dubourg.

"We had established an aggressive strategy with a different tyre strategy from our rivals. If you had told me we would take two podiums in the same weekend, including a win in the way we did on Sunday, I would have signed up for that immediately."



Dubourg took a win in his team's new Renault Captur ice racing machine

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

The night that the stars come out

Ticktum headlines the show at Autosport Awards ceremony

Among the glitz and the glamour at the Grosvenor House Hotel in central London on Sunday night, there were some serious messages about how strong the UK's place is at the heart of motorsport.

Almost everyone who was decorated during the celebrations, no matter where they are from, recognised that the United Kingdom produces the engineering nous and the competitive talent to make it a standard bearer in motorsport.

Chief among the underlining of Britain's place at the cutting edge was the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Dan Ticktum. It has been something of a whirlwind few weeks for the Red Bull junior driver after his win at Macau, and now he joins an elite group of men who have lifted the famous accolade – and fellow rising Brits Lando Norris and George Russell were there to cheer him on to the stage.

While there is no doubt that the history books are full of successes that have been masterminded by home-grown talents, Sunday night showed that there is plenty more to come too.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



YOUR PICS



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



James Lomax's shot of this barely-in-control Ford Escort Mk2 of Rob Cox at Oulton

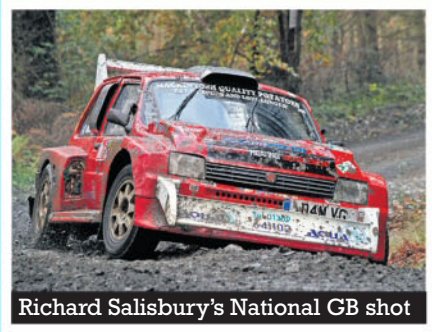
ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



Anglesey circuit manager Andrew Crighton samples his own track. By Brian Gower



Dan Humphreys was at the TCR taster



Richard Salisbury's National GB shot

LETTERS

Mahonen's wrong

So FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen thinks rallying is all about the prawn sandwich brigade in the service park, the people in the host city who never go near a forest, and the 'fans' who only see rallying through Twitter or Facebook.

When does he retire? Not soon enough in my opinion.

Martin Shaw
Via email

Jarmo: still wrong

FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen certainly proposes a glum future for the WRC.

Instead of embracing variety within a global championship he appears to favour banal standardisation.

Rather than encouraging diversity, where each rally offers a distinctive challenge, his primary intent seems to be appeasing the demands and expectations of corporate hospitality and social media.

This season has undoubtedly generated more media coverage than in recent years and, in turn,

opened up opportunities to attract new businesses and spectators.

The overflowing car parks on Rally GB were clear evidence of mounting interest. Yet, putting this aside, he recommends the sanitising of all rounds.

Each organiser will comply with a standard profile of short sprint stages within the vicinity of a major municipality which, in essence, is to attract the curious to a service and hospitality area on their doorstep.

High quality, diverse ingredients are essential to a good recipe.

Here's hoping that Mr Mahonen's successor steers clear of 'WRC lite' where the over-riding flavour is decidedly bland and only the place mats change.

Lawrence Stephens
Via email

A penalty point

I have just noted that Nico Hulkenberg could negate a five-second penalty in the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix by making up the time in his following laps.

If the penalty was increased by, for example, one second a lap



Motorsport News, November 29

for each lap completed after the incident it would encourage the offender to take it sooner rather than later.

As with all views and opinions there is always more than one but this is just a suggestion, be a little more interesting to see an extra point given for pole position and another for fastest lap.

Ray Lacombe
Via email

WHAT YOU SAID

Our story this week of FIA rallies director Jarmo Mahonen criticising many modern rallies – including Rally GB – for being too long drew a wide response from you on our social media channels. Here are some of your best comments.

Twitter

Composites Cymru (@Importcymru)

"The only issue [on Wales Rally GB] this year was that every car park was full... because it's the most spectators we've seen in Wales. Why don't you ask all of us who travelled hours to get to stages if it was too long?"

Janne Laahanen (@Sepponaattori)

"I think this falls into the same category with the complaint from [Chanoch] Nissany that a Minardi F1 car had 'too much grip'. Just complaining about an aspect that makes the thing awesome."

Mike Shaw (@oregonwings)

"I've said it so many times. Rallying is and should remain an endurance sport, not a series of sprints. I think Mahonen has it all wrong. I loved the 30-mile stage in Mexico."

Gordon Lynch (@GordonLynch)

"The best days I remember were when the Circuit of Ireland was really that – five days – the whole

island! And the RAC covered some ground too (they even had different kinds of cars). Too long? Absolute nonsense."

Kieran (@kiebenson)

"Shorter events will lead to less paying fans and a vicious circle with lack of income. Best solution is to have more competitive stages over longer and multiple days and bring ticket prices down. With the new closed-road regulations you could run a mixed-surface event in Wales, based in Cardiff, using iconic stages such as Rheola, Resolven and Epynt at a push. More stages and less road mileage."

Rob K (@Edition002)

"Just saying but Casino Square is approximately 3.5 hours driving from service in Gap... and it's a brilliant event #rallyemontecarlo"

Allen Russell (@FallingAR)

"When Jean Todt and Michele Mouton joined the FIA they made rallies longer again saying modern events were too short. They need to make up their mind."

Jack Lancelott (@LancelottPhoto)

"This is pathetic. Where have the days gone where crews were racing for four or five days through day and night? Rallying should be about

the endurance aspect."

Brynmor Pierce (@BrynPierce)

"I can sort of see the long road section frustration and to a degree the under utilised service park, but cut stage lengths and people from cities won't go to the stages?"

Duncan Burrow (@duncanburrow)

"I see the point but, where is there a city central to Wales that incorporates all the forest mileage required to make the event challenging enough for drivers but delivers small road mileage between stages? Ideal world yes, practically no as it won't work."

Facebook Alex Coady

"Ironic that a few years back they said the clover leaf format was too boring... Fun police out in force."

Iean Millward

"There you are: bring Wales Rally GB back to South Wales and use Felindre as the service park, which was huge, near to Brechfa and Neath forests and Margum stages and just off the M4."

Daniel Darrall

"I do wish sometimes that the FIA/teams or whoever, would make their minds up about what they want. They complain it's too

much of a European championship and should become more global, then complain Australia is too far – they complain about 'office hours' rallying, and want endurance back, then complain the rallies are too long...."

John Owen

"[Rally GB]'s far too short. Needs to take in Kielder, Twiggles and North Yorkshire forests as well as North and South Wales. With minimal service and as little rest as possible in today's pampered world."

Chris Henton:

"[The answer is] simple, use the closed roads between forest stages as Tarmac stages. Hardly any point in the law change for the one closed-road rally that's happened so far."

Nigel Odell

"It sounds like if [Mahonen] got his own way, rallying would be just a series of super special stages near the service parks... eg rallycross. Just so the folks with hospitality, who probably got an invite from the teams anyway, can see some cars race. This is rallying! The original format never even had special stages!"

Barry Murphy

"Look what happened to the Circuit of Ireland. It's now the Circuit of Down and Antrim. Bring back the old days and less fragile rally cars."

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TV GUIDE

It's that time of year where season reviews are gracing our television sets, with the **European Rally Championship's** best bits of 2017 on today (Wednesday, 2300-0000hrs, Eurosport 2), as Poland's Kajetan Kajetanowicz and Portugal's Bruno Magalhaes battled it out

for the top spot in the series. There's a chance to see a re-run of the **2017 Autosport Awards** (Thursday, 1515-1750hrs, Motorsport.tv), with the great and the good from the world of motorsport coming together for the great occasion. While most championships have finished for the year that's

not the case with **Formula E**, as season four begins in Hong Kong and reigning champion Lucas di Grassi will look to retain his crown (Thursday, 2205-2305hrs, Eurosport 2). Relive the 2012 Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix with **Classic F1**, as home hero Fernando Alonso had a race-

long duel with the Williams of Pastor Maldonado in one of the sport's most surprising results of recent years (Friday, 2305-0120hrs, Sky Sports F1). And finally, the **TCR Asia Series** will be showing its season review on Saturday (1650-1720hrs, Motorsport.tv), with action from six rounds.



Magic Maldonado won

LISTINGS

SATURDAY/SUNDAY
Corby, Northamptonshire
Rockingham Stages
Starts 1127hrs
Admission £12 (advanced)
Web rockinghamstages.co.uk

Listings correct at time of press, but please check before travelling

BOOK REVIEW JENSON BUTTON: LIFE TO THE LIMIT

In many ways, Jenson Button's *Life to the Limit* reflects his Formula 1 career. The book is warm, engaging and can thrill, but it never quite sets the world alight for a lengthy period.

The strength of Button's memoir is the touching tribute, evident throughout, to his late father John. From the family home in Frome where Button was inspired watching F1 in the 1980s, through their partnership in karting and then the highs and lows of life in the grand prix spotlight,

the love and devotion is clear. *Life to the Limit* suffers from the same problem as many sporting autobiographies. Button spends a bit too much time recounting his childhood and early racing exploits before covering most of his F1 career at a higher speed than he achieved in a McLaren-Honda towards the end of his time in the category.

Turbulent, and therefore controversial, moments feel a touch glossed over too.

You're left wanting to know more about Button's Williams/BAR contract wrangling in 2004 for example, but then covering every fascinating tale from a career packed with ups and downs would be tricky.

But there is genuine insight across the pages. You especially find it in the little details of the bigger moments of Button's story. Naturally, the Honda/Brawn transformation is well covered and you learn that Button considered a Toro

Rosso drive before committing to Ross Brawn's eponymous squad for what went on to become his title-winning season.

Overall, *Life to the Limit* is a charming tale – told with the wry humour Button is known for. There's enough insight to captivate the reader and air a few amusing grievances – he doesn't hold back on Flavio Briatore and Sir Richard Branson – so it's a must read if you're a Button fan or general F1 supporter.



Button's book: Must-read

NEXT WEEK

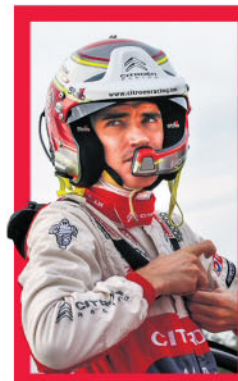
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WILL THE HALO BREAK NATIONAL MOTORSPORT?

MN LOOKS AT IMPLICATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY



WORLD RALLYCROSS SEASON REVIEW: HOW KRISTOFFERSSON LANDED THE CROWN



CRAIG BREEN'S BIG BREAK IN THE WRC

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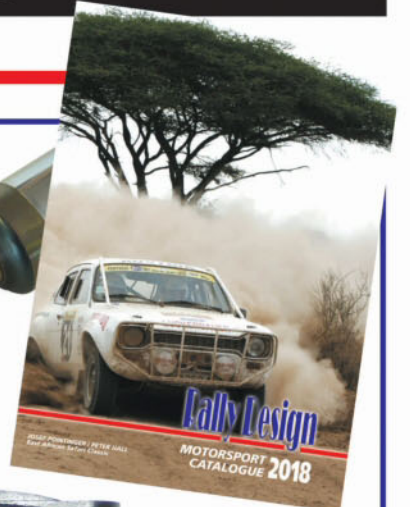
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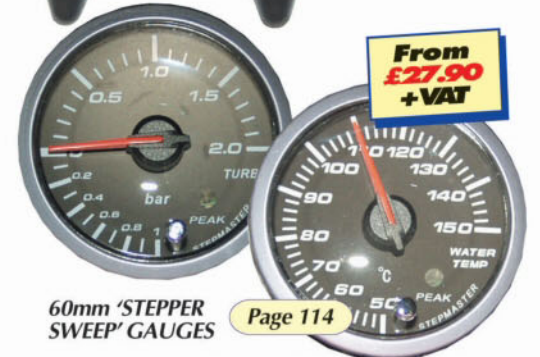
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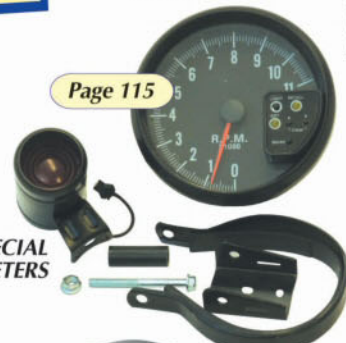
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| 12gln injection fuel tank | £250.00 |
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| Escort Mk2 Grp4 Alloy Forest Arch Set | £290.00 |
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| RMD 25 Battery | £59.50 |
| Odyssey Red Top 20 | £125.00 |
| Odyssey Red Top 30 | £155.00 |
| Odyssey Red Top 40 | £160.00 |
| Fibreglass Battery Box | £34.99 |
| Alloy Battery Tray 20/25/30 | £39.99 |
| Alloy Battery Tray (Transit Type Battery) | £45.00 |
| Alloy Battery Tray Red Top 40 | £45.00 |

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| Ap Radial Kit fits under 13" wheels | £1140.00 |
| (Inc 2 ap open back callipers, 2 AP forest vented discs, 2 bells, 12 bolts Mintex pads, brake pipes & radial mounted brackets & all bolts needed) | |
| Ap radial kit fits under 15" wheels 305mm (inc as above) | £1395.00 |
| Ap Monte Carlo front brake kit | £1699.00 |
| (inc 2 callipers machined ready to fit, 2 ap tarmac discs, 12 nuts & bolts 2 bells, 1x mintex pads) | |
| **we also stock a wide range of wilwood brake kits please do not hesitate to call | |
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| AP forest calliper (machined ready to fit) | £599.00ea |
| Ap tarmac front discs | £162.00ea |
| Ap forest front discs | £145.00ea |
| Ap front mounting bells | £20.00ea |
| Ap rear vented discs | £145.00 ea |
| Ap rear solid discs | £185.00ea |
| Rear bells | £30.00ea |
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| 2.8 Capri vented discs grooved & drilled | £70.00 a pair |
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| Princess spacer kit | £29.99 |
| Mk1 Escot Goodridge Hose Kit | £39.99 |
| Mk2 Escort Goodridge Hose Kit | £29.99 |
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| Lever Type Bias Valve | £45.00 |
| Vertical hydraulic handbrake kit | £90.00 |
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| Extra long vertical hydraulic handbrake kit | £95.00 |
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| Ap reservoir with bracket push on | £13.00 |
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| Escort Mk1 or Mk2 Cable Clutch Pedal Box | £225.00 |
| Escort Grp4 Throttle Pedal | £34.99 |
| Balance Bar | £25.00 |
| Dash Adjuster Click Head Type | £25.00 |
| Dash Adjuster Tube Type | £25.00 |

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| Mintex MDB1292 1155 Ap Racing Caliper | £84.00 |
| Mintex MLB52 1144 Princess Calliper | £57.00 |
| Mintex MLB52 1155 Princess Calliper | £79.00 |
| Mintex MDB1864 1144 Grp4 Forest Calliper | £65.00 |
| Mintex MDB1864 1155 Grp4 Forest Calliper | £84.00 |
| Mintex MDB633 1144 M16 Calliper | £51.00 |
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| Mintex MDB1323 1155 Cosworth 2wd Fronts | £58.95 |
| Mintext MDB1407 1144 Cosworth 4wd | £64.75 |
| Mintext MDB1407 1155 Cosworth 4wd | £101.00 |
| Mintex MDB1202 1144 AP Grp4 Calliper Rear Pads | £52.00 |
| Mintex MDB1202 1155 AP Grp4 Calliper Rear Pads | £52.00 |
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| Mintex MDB1201 1155 Monte Carlo Calliper Pads | £96.00 |

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| Ferodo FRP219R DS3000 To Suit Escort Forest Callipers | £115.00 |
| Ferodo FRP203R DS3000 To Suit Monte Carlo Callipers | £120.00 |
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| Mega spark 4 coil | £35.00 |
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| Lumenition ignition leads Xflow | £45.00 |
| Lumenition ignition leads 16v red top | £55.00 |
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| Coil leads 24" | £14.00 |
| Coil leads 36" | £15.00 |
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| Omex Shift Light Sequential | £115.00 |

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| Omex Shift Light Pro | £93.00 |
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| Escort Xflow Alternator 80amp | £70.00 |
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| Rs2000 2 1/2 3 piece | £135.00 |
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| Xflow 1600 2" | £85.00 |
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| Xflow 4.2.1 2 1/2 | £130.00 |
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| 16 v Vauxhall redtop to escort 2 1/2 | £190.00 |
| Capri ohc | £99.00 |
| Capri 2.8 | £150.00 pair |
| Capri 3.0 std manifold | £150.00 pair |

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| Rs2000 left hand twin box 2" | £85.00 |
| Rs2000 right hand single box 2" | £85.00 |
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| Rs2000 left hand twin box 2 1/4 | £115.00 |
| Rs200 right hand single box 2 1/4 | £105.00 |
| Rs2000 right hand twin box 2 1/4 | £115.00 |
| Rs2000 left hand single box 2 1/2 | £130.00 |
| Rs2000 left hand twin box 2 1/2 | £135.00 |
| X flow single box 2" | £70.00 |
| X flow twin box 2" | £75.00 |
| X flow single box 2 1/4 | £99.00 |
| X flow twin box 2 1/4 | £110.00 |
| X flow single box 2 1/2 | £130.00 |
| X flow twin box 2 1/2 | £135.00 |
| Capri ohc | £109.00 |
| Capri 2.8/3.0L | £195.00 |
| Micra 1000cc system | £145.00 |

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| 2.4L Handheld Dumpy fia | £90.00 |
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Fluids & Oils

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| Castrol Sfr | £49.00 |
| Ap551 Brake Fluid | £9.00 |
| Ap600 Brake Fluid | £20.00 |
| Ap Prf 660 Brake Fluid | £20.00 |
| Silkolene Syn5 | £16.50 |
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| Silver Top Road | £54.00 | £72.00 |
| Solid State Competition | £59.95 | £69.90 |
| Solid State Fast road | £39.00 | £49.00 |
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| 67mm Filter king glass or alloy | £45.00 |
| 85mm Filter king glass or alloy | £57.00 |
| 85mm Filter king with gauge | £65.00 |
| Gauge only | £15.00 |
| Facet Sytec Adjustable Pressure Regulator 6/8/10mm | £24.95 |

Harnesses

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Trs

| | |
|---|------------|
| 4pt Club non fia | £50.00ea |
| 4pt Pro Club fia 3x2 | £99.00 ea |
| 4pt Magnum fia 3x3 | £115.00 ea |
| 6pt Magnum fia 3x3 | £125.00ea |
| 4pt/Magnum fia 3x3 Superite (with alloy adjusters) | £145.00ea |
| 6pt/Magnum fia 3x3 Superites (with alloy adjusters) | £150.00ea |
| 4pt Hans Harness fia (with steel adjusters) | £120.00ea |
| 6pt Hans Harness fia (with steel adjusters) | £130.00ea |
| 4pt Hans Harness fia (with alloy adjusters) | £155.00ea |
| 6pt Hans Harness fia (with alloy adjusters) | £165.00ea |

Sabelt

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| 4pt 3x3 fia | £115.00 |
| 6pt 3x3 fia | £125.00 |

Helmets, Intercoms & Headsets

Peltor G79 Snell 2010 c/w Intercom & Hans

| | |
|---|---------|
| Omp Helmets | |
| Omp Jet 7 Hans Snell 2005 | £230.00 |
| Omp Jet 10 Hans & Intercom Snell 2010 | £450.00 |

Accessories

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Omp Helmet Bag | £30.00 |
| Omp Hans Helmet bag | £35.00 |
| Peltor helmet bag | £34.00 |
| Peltor Hans/Helmet Bag | £49.99 |
| Helmet Hammock | £29.99 |

Intercoms and Headsets

| | |
|--|---------|
| Peltor FMT120 | £189.50 |
| Peltor fmt200 | £660.00 |
| Fc15 | £25.00 |
| Fc16 | £49.00 |
| Peltor Open Face Headset | £99.00 |
| Peltor Full Face Headset | £99.00 |
| Peltor White Practice Headsets | £159.00 |
| Terratrip Intercom Club c/w Headsets | £98.00 |
| Terratrip Intercom Pro c/w Headset | £120.00 |
| Terratrip Practice Headsets | £106.00 |

Stand 21 Hans Devices

| | |
|--|---------|
| Stand 21 Club Series Hans Device | £335.00 |
| Stand 21 RS2 Hans Device | £550.00 |
| Stand 21 Pro Carbon Hans Device | £800.00 |

PLR Peter Lloyd Rallying

ALL PRICES ARE CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT

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