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F1 2015



ALONSO CRASHES

...as team admits it's "50 per cent" behind



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POLE POSITION

After bold predictions, a hard dose of reality

SHOULD WE BE SURPRISED THAT McLAREN-HONDA IS struggling in testing? Not really. It was always going to be a massive challenge to come into Formula 1, a year into the new engine regulations, with only a one-car test programme. But given the bold pronouncements being made over the past six or so months, it seems that such trials and tribulations were not expected.

You just have to look at what happened last year. During the first half-hour of the opening test, the pitlane was littered with people loitering around. It was the least 'live' live pitlane I have ever seen.

Inevitably it takes time to get new power units, particularly ones as complex as those in F1, up and running. So for Honda to expect to avoid teething troubles and be on terms with established engine manufacturers so quickly was always desperately optimistic.

But if there has been a failure to manage expectations, it's only fair to give this new alliance time. Honda is serious about F1, and steps have been taken at McLaren to tackle the weaknesses that have held it back. There's no doubt the potential is there.

*This week's AUTOSPORT contains the ever-popular diary stickers. These are only available to those in the United Kingdom.



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COVER STORY

“We will arrive to Australia hoping Australia was in June or July, but it's not in June or July, it's in March”

Fernando Alonso, p14



FIND US ON



Cover images: Mauger/LAT; Thompson/Getty

PIT & PADDOCK

- 6 **THIS WEEK IN F1**
- 9 **JONATHAN NOBLE: F1 NEWSHOUND**
- 10 **THIS WEEK IN MOTORSPORT**
- 13 **JOLYON PALMER: INSIDE LINE**

FEATURES & REPORTS



- 14 **McLAREN-HONDA IN TROUBLE**
- 22 **F1 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**
- 24 **BARCELONA F1 TECH DEBRIEF**
- 26 **REMEMBERING BRITISH FORMULA 3**
- 38 **GREAT CAR: RALT RT3**



- 40 **MIKE CONWAY INTERVIEW**
- 50 **PENSKE IN V8 SUPERCARS**
- 56 **DEAN STONEMAN INTERVIEW**
- 60 **INDYCAR AERO KITS**
- 62 **DAYTONA 500**
- 64 **NASCAR XFINITY SERIES; TRUCKS; PRO MAZDA WINTERFEST**

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 75 **FIELDING SWITCHES TO MSA FORMULA**
- 76 **JELLEY RETURNS TO CARRERA CUP**
- 80 **FORMULA 4: SPOT THE DIFFERENCE**

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

- 78 **GET AUTOSPORT DELIVERED TO YOU**

THE BACK STRAIGHT

- 82 **THIS WEEK**
- 84 **FROM THE SOFA**
- 86 **RACE OF MY LIFE: JOHN MILES**

S. BLOXHAM/LAT





THE BIG PICTURE

Alex Bowman (7) becomes collateral damage after Sam Hornish Jr (9) gets a tap on lap 36 of the second Budweiser Duel qualifying race for the Daytona 500

Photographer Nigel Kinrade / LAT



This week in F1

FERRARI REVEALS F1 CONCEPT CAR



Ferrari has released images of a striking Formula 1 concept car that it hopes will fuel the debate about the dramatic changes the sport should be considering.

Rather than pushing for any set direction of rules – such as car width, tyre size or engine capacity – the idea

of the Ferrari concept car is purely to show how simple it would be to make sweeping car changes.

Teams are continuing discussions about a rules revolution aimed at making cars faster, harder to drive and better looking.

Wolff and Nasr in 'stupid' clash

Susie Wolff said her collision with Felipe Nasr in Barcelona testing was a "stupid" incident, as the two drivers blamed each other for their tangle.

The Williams test driver and Sauber racer came together at Turn 5 while Wolff

was on an out-lap and Nasr on a flying lap.

Wolff said. "He hit my front left with his rear. It was a stupid, unnecessary thing."

Nasr responded: "I felt a big hit on my rear suspension. I asked her if she saw me and she said 'no!'"



MAUGER/LAT



HOVE/LAT

Tost unhappy with testing in Europe

Toro Rosso team principal Franz Tost says the decision to restrict testing to Europe this year is hurting the team's pre-season preparations.

A number of drivers, including Lewis Hamilton, have said low ambient temperatures have affected the usefulness of last week's running in Spain.

"I don't like the tests in February in Europe," said Tost. "You don't get the feedback on all the technical topics you need to be prepared for the start of the season. Last year's test in Bahrain was much more useful."

For all the breaking news, visit AUTOSPORT.COM



DUNBAR/LAT

Korea bosses want 2016 race

Korean Grand Prix chiefs are bidding to secure the return of their race in 2016, despite a dispute over their contract with Formula One Management.

Officials from the race are due to meet F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone soon to discuss the future of the event.

FOM is understood to be seeking damages for breach of contract after the event did not return this year.

But a senior Korean GP official said: "We would like to get the race back, and believe we can do it for 2016, but not at any price."

I thought he was sick but he is not



Ferrari team principal Maurizio Arrivabene after spotting Kimi Raikkonen smiling

F1 HELMET DESIGN CHANGES TO BE BANNED

Formula 1 drivers will be banned from changing helmet designs in-season under new rules set to be introduced this year.

F1 chiefs have become concerned that fans are turned off by the drivers constantly changing their helmet colours.

Unlike the days of Ayrton Senna when a drivers' iconic helmet design was part of his appeal, these days some drivers change colours at every race.

Four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel, for example, has used around 90 different helmet designs over the course of his career.

But Vettel said: "I don't know what is the penalty. If it's a little fine with



XPB IMAGES

money for charity, then I am happy to keep changing my helmet."

Felipe Massa believes drivers should stick to a single design for their career because "a helmet is like our face" but added: "I don't like the idea to block it. Maybe in a few years, what are they going to decide? We need to make a rule on the haircut?"

If I have to keep the same helmet I will. I think someone like Seb will suffer a bit!



Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo on the helmet ban

FIVE ICONIC F1 HELMETS

AYRTON SENNA
Distinctive yellow, green and blue of the Brazilian national flag is perhaps F1's most famous helmet.



NIGEL MANSELL
Union Jack colours remained with the 1992 world champion through his entire racing career.



GILLES VILLENEUVE
The stylised red V on a dark background was designed with help from the Ferrari ace's wife Joann.



GRAHAM HILL
Black-and-white design inspired by colours of London Rowing Club, and was used by son Damon.



JACKIE STEWART
Simplistic tartan band on a white helmet helped JYS to stand out in the era before sponsors hit F1.



Manor exits administration

Manor's hopes of returning to the grid have received another boost after its creditors agreed to bring the company out of administration.

The team, which ran under the Marussia banner last season, ceased trading in November after missing the final three races of the year.

But the team can continue after entering a Company Voluntary Agreement (CVA), which has involved restructuring its financial debt.

Meanwhile, Ferrari team principal Maurizio Arrivabene says his team has verbally agreed a deal to "supply Manor with their 2014 engine" for 2015.

AUTOSPORT understands Manor is working on a modified car that could be ready for the start of the season.



THOMPSON/GETTY

ALONSO STAYS IN HOSPITAL OVERNIGHT AFTER CRASH

Fernando Alonso escaped injury following his accident during testing at Barcelona last week.

The double world champion was airlifted to hospital after his McLaren struck the inside wall exiting the long,

fast Turn 3 right-hander.

McLaren racing director Eric Boullier said: "Fortunately, he's fine, but was concussed during the accident, which therefore required an overnight stay in hospital. That's normal practice."

Button: we may win during 2015

Jenson Button believes the new McLaren-Honda has the potential to be a race winner by the end of 2015 once the team gets on top of the problems that have hampered testing. "We have made massive steps since the first test, but you don't see it because we've run into other problems," he said.

P14 McLAREN'S DRAMAS



BIG NUMBER
124
The number of laps McLaren managed at the second test, one quarter of Mercedes' total.



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Jake Rattenbury
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We look forward to another fantastic year of racing on some of the best circuits in the world and enjoying some of the finest hospitality.

Welcome to our drivers so far for this year

Tim Richards

Nima Khanda-Nia

Jake Rattenbury



We will contest the 2015 championship with two Lamborghini Huracan super trofeo's

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Jonathan Noble

F1's newshound

Out with pointless posturing, in with proactivity; Ferrari's wild-looking Formula 1 concept car signalled a new approach at Maranello

Progress is never achieved by endless repetition, but by breaking the chains of habit and the cycle of inertia. Progress is the result of us choosing not by-products of the past, but catalysts of a future."

Those were the words that Ferrari chairman Sergio Marchionne used in a letter he addressed to factory staff last year when he wrote about his vision for the future of the Maranello team. And while he might have been talking about the need for fresh management to make the most of a new era, his comments ring true for a different path that Ferrari has embarked upon more recently on the political front too.

It's one that culminated in that stunning F1 concept-car image that swept through the internet last week.

There was a time – both during the autocratic rule of its original founder and under Luca di Montezemolo – when Ferrari had a tried-and-tested revolutionary tactic it would unleash when it felt the need. Whenever those in the corridors of Maranello grew frustrated with the direction F1 was taking, it would threaten to shut up its grand prix shop and race elsewhere.

That is exactly why, if you ever get to wander around the Ferrari museum in Maranello, you can find the Ferrari 637 proudly on display. It was an Indycar, penned by Gustav Brunner, that got as far as testing at Fiorano in 1986 but never actually raced.

The push for it came amid concerns from company founder Enzo Ferrari that F1's future engine regulations

Ferrari grew frustrated at Mercedes' unwillingness to accept any compromise over a potential engine 'unfreeze' last winter, did it go public and threaten to quit F1? No.

Instead, it kept its head down and privately challenged the FIA over F1's engine-homologation rules and their failure to explicitly state a date for when the 2015 power units had to be lodged. Very rarely do teams go up against the governing body in this way and succeed, but Ferrari pulled off a masterstroke that has served to change the whole F1 engine-development platform going forward.

It's been a similar story of action rather than words in the battle to shape F1's rules revolution for 2017 too.

Rather than simply complain about what is being discussed, Ferrari has been proactive on the matter. That is why it followed automotive industry practice by producing its concept F1 car. Team principal Maurizio Arrivabene spoke last week of the drawing being a 'provocation'. It was a call to arms for F1 to talk about the realities of what could be achieved if it got its top brains together and came up with positive solutions, rather than bickering and worrying about short-term gains.

"Our competitors – they are cars in video games," said Arrivabene. "If you look at cars on these games, they look fantastic, well designed, and cool.

"And if you are asking a guy who is 18 years old if he prefers to play for one hour on a video game, most probably he prefers to do that than watch the grand prix. This is one of our competitors.

"Rather than simply complain about what is being discussed, Ferrari has been proactive"

were taking the sport in a direction he didn't favour. Has a familiar ring, doesn't it?

In fact, if you look back in recent years – the threats to create a breakaway grand prix championship (in alliance with other teams), or go racing at Le Mans, were all fuelled by unhappiness about a path F1 was taking.

But as F1's political tides have shifted in recent years, with Red Bull emerging as the dominant force and Bernie Ecclestone's closest ally, Ferrari's ability to get its own way by staging a noisy protest has diminished. In fact, di Montezemolo's final public thump of the tub – when he hit out at F1 for 'taxi-cab racing' at last year's Bahrain GP and called for urgent changes to the fuel-efficiency rules – backfired dramatically when the Sakhir race turned out to be an absolute thriller.

The Marchionne broom that has swept through Maranello has stopped such militant showmanship, and instead there are now more subtle attempts to deliver a way forward that actually works. When, for example,

"We need to try to liberate the creativity and create a beautiful car. We will not say we were first or second [with the concept], or ours is better. We are happy to try to move the status quo."

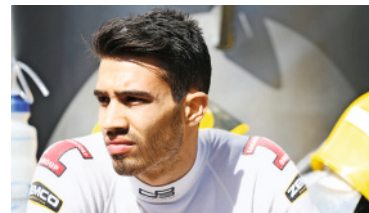
Indeed, dancing around the edges of F1's rulebook – thinking that agreeing to ban drivers from changing helmet designs is the limit of progress needed – doesn't cut it anymore. Ferrari's concept car (just like its Indycar) may never make it as far as racing, but that wasn't the point. It was about pushing the debate on – being extreme but in a positive way. And fuelling discussions.

In doing that, it was a success.

Arrivabene and Marchionne are right. Proper advancement doesn't happen by simply moaning and complaining about what is happening now, or threatening to go and do something else.

Instead, progress will come only from standing up and breaking the cycle of inertia that has been crippling F1's ability to improve itself creatively. ❧

This week in motorsport



ELLINAS IN AT STRAKKA

Cypriot Tio Ellinas has switched from GP2 to Formula Renault 3.5 for 2015, with British team Strakka Racing.

Ellinas, 23, has a long-term deal with Strakka's driver-management division, and joins Gustav Malja at the team. Team boss Dan Walmsley said: "He's a driver with fantastic natural talent."

LONDON'S FORMULA E EVENT GETS GREEN LIGHT

The London Formula E event has been given the final go-ahead by the local council and will be a two-day double-header meeting.

Planning permission for the Formula E races to take place in Battersea Park on June 27/28 was granted by Wandsworth Council last week. The approval covers both the Saturday and Sunday of

the last weekend in June, allowing Formula E's first double-header.

Permission has been granted to turn the riverside park's perimeter roads into a Formula E race circuit measuring 1.81 miles. The approval covers works to widen sections of the road and to resurface a car park and the boules court, which will be the sites of two of the chicanes on the 15-turn track.

● Renault Sport and the Audi-supported Abt team are among the eight organisations selected by an FIA tender process to produce drivetrains for Formula E for 2015-16. They will be able to run their own motors, inverters and gearboxes, but all other parts of the car – including the battery – must remain as standard.

Rallycross joins DTM opener

The World Rallycross Championship is to hold a round at Hockenheim in May as part of a unique tie-up with the DTM.

A brand-new circuit will be constructed in the stadium section at the end of the lap, with the WRX's second round sharing the bill with the DTM opener and the Formula 3 European Championship.

The Hockenheim event brings the WRX calendar up to 13 rounds, and comes in addition to the round at Germany's traditional rallycross venue Estering.

Audi star Mattias Ekstrom was a winner in both DTM and WRX last season.

10

BIG NUMBER

11

Age of Callum Ilott, the youngest driver in European F3 this year, when Felix Rosenqvist (below) made his category debut in the German F3 Cup in 2010.



Rosenqvist in Prema switch

Macau Grand Prix winner Felix Rosenqvist is to return to the Formula 3 European Championship with series powerhouse Prema Powerteam.

The 23-year-old Swede, who spent four seasons in F3 with Mucke Motorsport, will be a title favourite with the Italian squad, and retains his links with power supplier Mercedes.

Rosenqvist is just one of a raft of driver signings for F3 in recent days. Indian Arjun Maini, runner-up in BRDC Formula 4 last season, has joined Van Amersfoort Racing for his rookie season.

Meanwhile, Tatiana Calderon remains in the series for a third season, the Colombian joining British team Carlin.

Motopark has captured Brazilian Sergio Sette Camara and Indian Mahaveer Raghunathan, while Team West-Tec will run ADAC Formel Masters graduate Fabian Schiller.



BTCC: OLD FACES IN NEW PLACES

Three BTCC champions broke cover in their new 2015 steeds at last week's Thruxton test. Jason Plato (above) and Colin Turkington drove their Team BMR VWs, with Andy Priaulx also out in his WSR BMW.

For all the breaking news, visit AUTOSPORT.COM

Bleekemolen is Bentley boy

Jeroen Bleekemolen was among the first wave of nine drivers announced by the HTP Bentley team for its campaigns across the Blancpain GT Series, the Nurburgring 24 Hours and ADAC GT Masters.

The Dutchman has so far been confirmed only for the Nurburgring enduro in May, but is also expected to contest rounds of the Blancpain Sprint Series and the German ADAC series with the German squad. The deal means that Bleekemolen is putting his relationship with the Black Falcon Mercedes team, with which he won the 24 Hours at the 'Ring in 2013, on hold.

HTP regular Maximilian Buhk will join the team in the BSS and at the Nurburgring in addition to his commitments as a Bentley factory driver in the Blancpain Endurance Series. Other drivers include Harold Primat, Vincent Abril, Christian Menzel and Lance David Arnold.



M-Sport in big new-car rush

British rallying giant M-Sport will take no fewer than 17 brand-new cars to May's Rally of Portugal – the biggest collective debut in the firm's World Rally Championship history.

Five of the Fords will be the 2015-specification Fiesta RS WRCs, while the remaining 12 are the all-new one-litre Fiesta R2s running in this year's Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy.

M-Sport boss Malcolm Wilson said: "Portugal's going to be a busy one. We were a bit behind, but we're getting there now."

Both the WRC and R2 will be homologated at the start of May.



EVANS KEEPS GP2 SEAT

GP2 race winner Mitch Evans has been retained by Russian Time for his second season with the squad.

The New Zealander will be joined by Russian Artem Markelov, meaning an unaltered driver line-up. There is a change in the running of the team though, with Auto GP operation Virtuosi UK taking over from iSport

International, which in turn replaced Motopark last season.

In further Russian GP2 news, Sergey Sirotkin has switched from Formula Renault 3.5 and will drive for Italian team Rapax.

Meanwhile, Brazilian Andre Negrao has committed to a second season with Arden Motorsport.

Busch brothers in trouble

Kurt Busch has been handed an indefinite suspension by NASCAR due to an ongoing domestic-assault case.

The decision, which was upheld twice after the 2004 Cup champion appealed, followed a Delaware court's decision to award a protection order to his ex-girlfriend last week, just hours after Busch's first appeal

was quashed, younger brother Kyle was also sidelined when a crash in the Xfinity Series race at Daytona (below) left him with fractures to both legs.

Regan Smith has replaced Kurt Busch at Stewart-Haas racing for now, while Truck Series king Matt Crafton stood in for Kyle Busch at Joe Gibbs Racing in the Daytona 500.



In brief



KARAM'S ST PETE RIDE

Chip Ganassi Racing development driver Sage Karam will drive the team's fourth entry in the IndyCar season-opener at St Petersburg next month, with the team working on securing the funding to make the deal permanent. Karam made his IndyCar debut at last year's Indy 500 (above).

CHINA SET FOR RETURN

China is expected to run a candidate World Rally Championship round this season, with WRC Promoter admitting a 2016 entry for the event – based 50 miles north of Beijing – is a "priority". Japan and New Zealand are also vying for places on the calendar in the next two years.

SORDO ON THE MEND

Dani Sordo has tested a Hyundai i20 WRC for the first time since breaking two ribs earlier this month. The Spaniard admitted to some discomfort, but said he fully expects to compete at Rally Mexico next week.

TORDOFF IN FERRARI

Sam Tordoff will dovetail his British Touring Car Championship campaign with an attack on the European Le Mans Series in 2015. He will contest four of the five ELMS races in JMW Motorsport's GTE-class Ferrari 458 Italia with fellow Britons George Richardson and Rob Smith.

LYNN'S GP2 DRS TEST

Williams Formula 1 reserve Alex Lynn got an early start to his GP2 season in Bahrain last week. As a prize for his GP3 title, the Briton spent a day in the GP2 development car carrying out aero-based tests on the category's new DRS system.

CHILTON TOPS LIGHTS

Formula 1 refugee Max Chilton set the pace in last week's two-day Indy Lights test at NOLA Motorsports Park. The Carlin driver was half a second clear of Kyle Kaiser, with Formula 3 converts Felix Serralles and Ed Jones next and 2014 title runner-up Jack Harvey rounding out the top five.

GOFF GETS NOD FOR MG BREAKTHROUGH



British Touring Car Championship young gun Jack Goff has landed a factory drive alongside Andrew Jordan at the Triple Eight-run MG team.

The 23-year-old, who won the 2012 Renault Clio Cup UK, has taken a best finish of second in his two seasons to date in the BTCC, driving for Team HARD and

Team BMR in Vauxhall and VW cars.

Meanwhile, championship-winning Honda Civic team Eurotech has confirmed that Martin Depper will stay on alongside returnee and new co-owner Jeff Smith. Race winner Dave Newsham will race for Power Maxed in its ex-Aiden Moffat Chevrolet Cruze saloon.

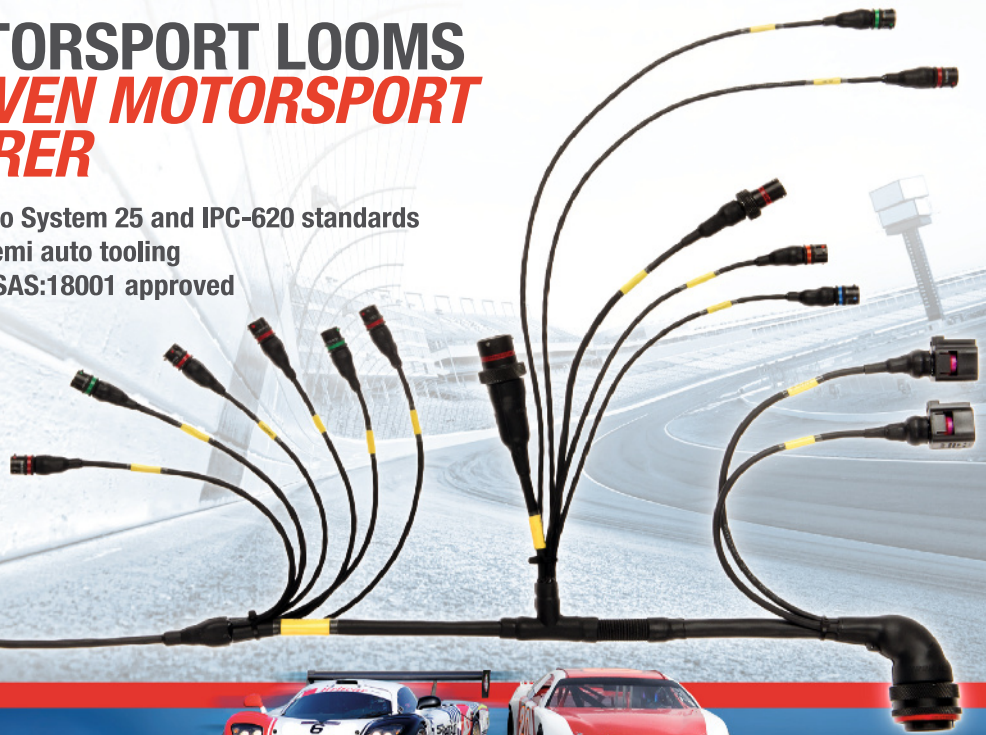
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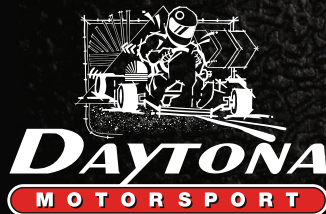
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July 19th	Rye House - Full Circuit
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October 18th	Daytona Tamworth - Extended Circuit
November 15th	Daytona Milton Keynes - International

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Jolyon Palmer

The Inside Line

The GP2 champion and Lotus F1 reserve driver can't wait to get back in the car after enjoying the first test with his new team

Getting back behind the wheel of a Formula 1 car felt really good when I drove the Lotus for a day in last week's test at Barcelona. It was my first drive in the car too, so it was great to start working with my new team and really crack on with my third and reserve-driver role.

It was like I was starting a new job and it was my first day. I know that I need to build up my experience driving the F1 car, because I've done very little mileage so far, so that was my focus.

Before the Barcelona test, my only F1 experience was 30-odd laps in a Force India at last year's Abu Dhabi test, so the day's work at the test was a real step forward and I'm really pleased with how it went.

As a racing driver, you can take any car to the limit very quickly – it's natural. The power and torque in F1 is huge, but it doesn't take you long to get used to it and you're soon driving to the maximum.

It's then all about fine-tuning and getting comfortable with the car, because the feel, especially with the brake-by-wire system and power steering which we didn't have in GP2, takes some getting used to.

Even the steering wheel has so many more switches and buttons compared to GP2, so I need to acclimatise to the controls and that will happen with more time in the car. I'd done a few laps in the simulator, but you can never be quite sure until you get in the car for real.

I completed 77 laps behind the wheel of the E23



motivated to do a good job and progress the car well in testing, and it's great that I'm now a part of that.

The numbers look good and personally I felt really good in the car, especially in the afternoon when I was able to push on a bit more and do some long runs.

I spent the other three days of the test at the track, following the action on the pitwall or in the garage, listening in to what Pastor Maldonado and Romain Grosjean were saying and hearing how their feedback compared to what I gave during my day in the car.

It also provided a chance for me to work with the engineers more. In GP2 you're working with a handful of people, but in F1 the team is massive. A lot of the

“I felt really good in the car, especially when I was able to push a bit more and do some long runs”

Hybrid, which was hugely beneficial for me but also for the team in terms of completing a solid day's work ahead of the 2015 season.

Driving out of the garage was a great sensation, but there wasn't much time to enjoy it because I was straight down to work with a series of aero runs. I had a run plan for the day, with the focus on data collection and getting me comfortable in the car.

It would be fair to say the morning didn't go that smoothly because it was so cold – barely five degrees – and it was difficult to get the hard tyres to work.

The afternoon was more successful and we got through some set-up work. We did a number of runs for tyre assessments – on the mediums before switching to the softs at the end. That's when we got the bulk of our laps done and had some good data to work with.

There was a lot to take on board with the different settings we were running, so it's been a steep learning curve, but I really enjoyed it. Everyone is really

details in the debrief are the same but the parameters are wider and the sport is more complex, so there's more to cover. That test was a great opportunity for me to get on top of all of that.

Working with Romain and Pastor, spending more time with engineers and further integrating myself into the team means that when I next get in the car, I know the processes that little bit better and therefore can get more out of a test or practice session.

There's no doubt that I'm facing a big challenge in this role, but I'm really enjoying it and trying to absorb as much experience as I can from the team and the drivers. There's always something to improve on.

As soon as I got out of the car, I wanted to get back in, but I guess that's the same with any racing driver. I'm not sure exactly when I'll be back in the car, but it will be in a free practice session as I won't be at this week's Barcelona test. Whenever that day is, it can't come soon enough. ❧

BARCELONA TEST SPECIAL



McLAREN-HONDA ON THE BACK FOOT

After a second troubled test, it's looking like the reformed alliance will start the season without having hit its pre-season target. **BEN ANDERSON** explains what's gone wrong for McLaren



XPBIMAGES

For Formula 1 fans of a certain age, the reformation of McLaren-Honda is the stuff of dreams. Not the 'earth dreams' that adorned Honda's woeful last attempt at building its own F1 car, but the glorious red-and-white vistas that defined one of the most successful partnerships in the sport's history. The hope, indeed the mission, is for McLaren-Honda to once again dominate the sport as it did when the Woking squad was winning titles for fun in the late 1980s and early '90s. But the start that McLaren-Honda 'Mk2' has made so far cannot be called a dream.

After a disastrous opening in Abu Dhabi last November (just five laps completed

with Honda's new V6 hybrid turbo engine in an interim 2014 car), McLaren's new 'size-zero' F1 machine managed just 12 across the first two days of the opening pre-season test at Jerez earlier this month. There were encouraging signs of progress over the final two days of that test, as both Jenson Button and Fernando Alonso managed more than 30 laps aboard the MP4-30. But problems continued to plague the car in Spain, and so it remained during the second pre-season test of 2015 at Barcelona.

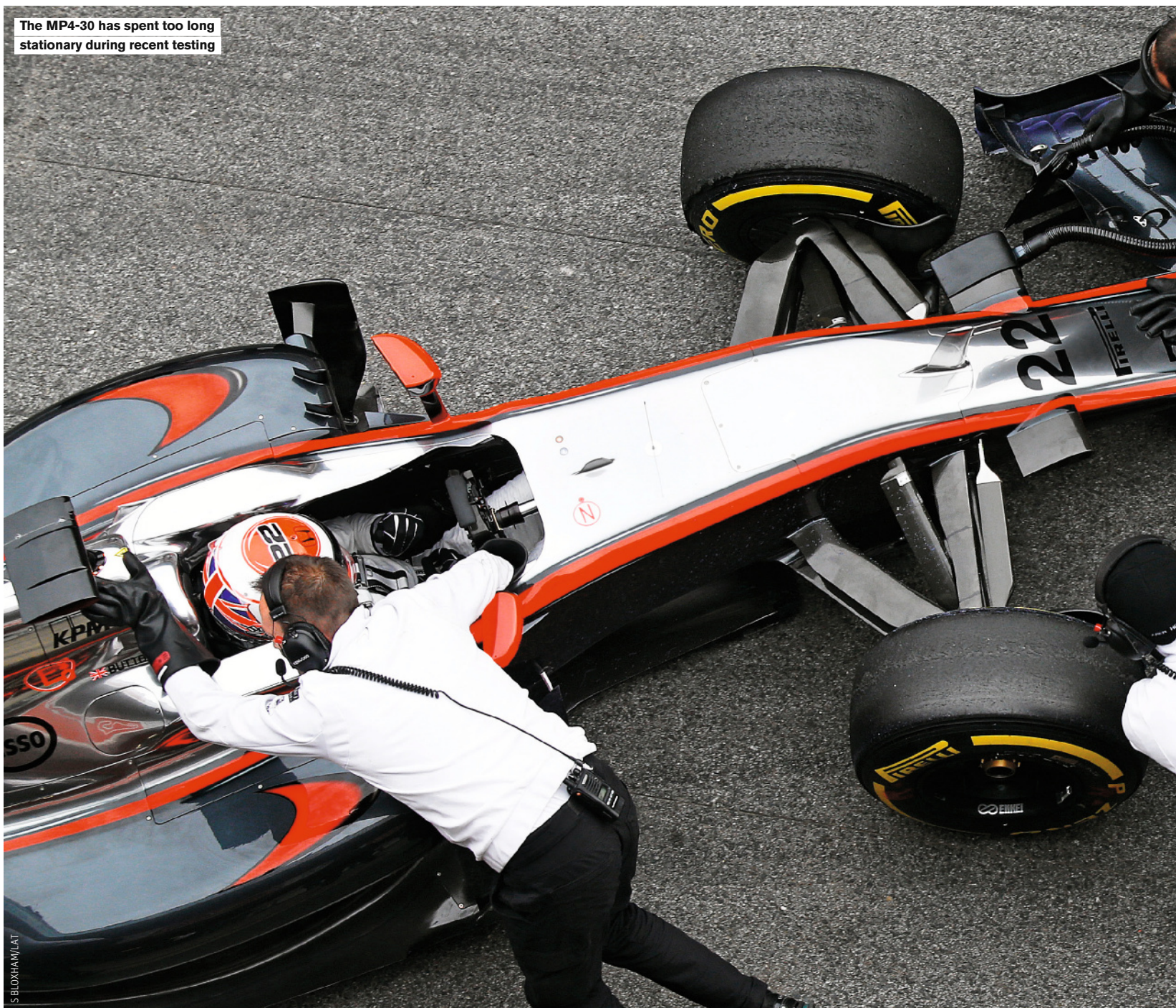
McLaren completed just 124 laps over four days (some teams managed more than that in a single day's running), as a seal on the MGU-K component of its Energy Recovery System (ERS) failed repeatedly, in spite of Honda's best efforts to fix it. So far, McLaren-Honda has yet to complete a trouble-free day of testing: electrical issues, sensor problems, a water leak, excessive oil, water pressure, and now this. To compound the misery, McLaren cut short its final day after Fernando Alonso crashed heavily on the exit of Turn 3, receiving a concussion in an impact that exceeded 30g at its peak.

Perhaps save for the electrical trouble that ruined McLaren's post-season Abu Dhabi test, all of the problems encountered so far have been relatively minor in themselves. The reason for furrowed brows and concerned expressions among McLaren-Honda chiefs is what racing director Eric Boullier calls a "chain of consequences", whereby this sequence of problems delays opportunities to explore the potential of the car, which means future reliability glitches (unavoidable as you stress the car further) are not discovered early enough. The longer this goes on, the more trouble lays in wait for McLaren-Honda when the season starts in anger on March 15 in Australia.

"If you can't run fast enough, you can't put the car at its limits in terms of brakes, cooling and aero – then you can't build the car properly, to the point that there will be consequences for the development programme," says Boullier. "That's why we need to be as early as possible to the performance limit of the car and put enough miles on it.

"The more we get to the limit, the more we

The MP4-30 has spent too long stationary during recent testing



find new problems, so we have a long way to go and a lot of gains to unlock from experimenting. You can get much faster in short term than in the aero side of things, [so] engine and power unit is the first focus.

"Anything that goes wrong is a concern. If you want to run with fewer engines for the year [teams are limited to four per driver this season], you have to worry. A little stupid seal on an MGU-K like this can kill your day, and in Australia, your race. Everything needs to be treated with a high level of attention, and it's true we're not on top of that right now."

While Honda engineers readied a first replacement seal last Friday, Alonso drove the MP4-30 at reduced power to rack up some much-needed mileage. When the replacement component stymied the car again on Saturday, McLaren decided to split driving duties between Alonso and Button for the final day, in order to gain "balanced feedback" from the drivers (and no doubt let poor Button finally get some decent running in the car).

Unfortunately, Button never got that

opportunity to drive again, owing to Alonso's crash. The on-going difficulties getting the car to run cleanly mean both drivers fear McLaren won't be fully prepared come the first race around Melbourne's Albert Park.

"We will arrive in Australia hoping Australia was in June or July, but it's not in June or July, it's in March and I don't know if we will arrive completely ready," explained Alonso, before his unfortunate incident. "But what I'm sure is we'll arrive in the best conditions we can."

"The potential of the car is there – with limitations or no limitations the car feels good, feels quick, so slowly we will put in order some of the issues we have."

"Every lap we learn," continues Alonso. "Our competitors have one year of previous experience; we don't have that, but we will try to make [progress] faster than last year."

It is only really fair to judge Honda (at least initially) on the standards set by rival teams at this stage last season. By that score, McLaren-Honda is wandering into Renault territory as far as reliability is concerned...

Boullier is remaining stoic about potential of McLaren



STALEY/LAT



"WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO AND A LOT OF GAINS TO UNLOCK FROM EXPERIMENTING"

ERIC BOULLIER

"I think last year the winter was very strange for all of us," adds Alonso. "Red Bull was doing 10 laps all winter, we [Ferrari] had many issues and Mercedes was on another planet, so it's difficult to compare both winters."

"I'm excited about this project. I went to Japan recently, saw again the facilities, the resources. I don't know how long it's going to take to win for us, but definitely we will win sooner or later, because we have all the ingredients to do it."

The good news for McLaren in its current situation is that its renewed status as a works partner means it can fix its problems much quicker than before. But there is a feeling right now that, regardless of performance, Honda is not yet sharp enough operationally to compete with Mercedes, which continued to look peerless on track at Barcelona, despite Nico Rosberg's bad neck and Lewis Hamilton's high fever.

The Honda that has returned to F1 this year is not the same Honda that left after 2008 in terms of personnel, and its failure to so far get on top of this recurring ERS problem means McLaren will employ a short-term fix using its own components for the time being, in order to properly track-test the rest of the car while Honda works on a better solution.

Despite the difficulties encountered so far, Honda motorsport chief Yasuhisa Arai feels experience gained in other series since the company pulled out of Formula 1 ahead of the 2009 season means it still has the skills to get the job done.

"We are always racing, so I don't feel there's a ▶



“WE ARE A LITTLE BIT BEHIND THE TEAMS AT THE FRONT. BUT THAT IS OK...”

YASUHISA ARAI

► gap since we left [F1] racing,” he argues. “We have good pressure from McLaren, and we apply that pressure to McLaren. There is good communication.

“We are running very steep up the learning curve,” he adds. “Maybe we will have success in Melbourne. We are still in the running and practice makes perfect.

“I won’t say that everything is on schedule – honestly we are a little bit behind the teams at the front. But that is still OK for preparing for Melbourne.”

But the time drifting away down this river of unreliability and drama can only lead to more (unwelcome) pressure, especially given that McLaren-Honda’s rivals have a season’s worth of experience with the current technology, and thus have more-mature engines at their disposal.

“It’s frustrating because we have to spend hours on every new issue, but we have the capacity and the ability to fix them,” Boullier argues. “We’re not relaxed. We would have preferred to have achieved 150 laps a day by now, but even with this total we would not be relaxed for Australia.

“There is enough time, but the more time we have [not running] the less time we have to be confident. The time is shrinking down. It’s frustrating but we have to go through this process. If we’re a little behind, we have to deal with that. We need to over-check if we can. I’m not sure we will have time to tick all the boxes but we will do our best. We have to go through this pain at this time.”

‘No pain, no gain’, as they say. And both ►





Button hasn't had the mileage he desired

MERCEDES CUSTOMER TEAMS COMING ON STRONG



Merc-powered Lotus is a world away from 2014 car

With Mercedes' 2015 engine clearly a step forward, the likes of Red Bull and Ferrari need to keep a wary eye on the champion's customers too – and of those present with 2015 cars at Barcelona, one showed its hand and the other emphatically didn't.

Lotus was fastest on three of the four days of the test, using soft or supersoft tyres on short runs each time to achieve that feat. While the team could be forgiven for seeking a morale boost after 2014's pain, it insisted that the qualifying-style bursts were being done for a practical purpose too: unlike 12 months ago, the car was running very reliably, so the chance was taken to comprehensively assess all the tyre-compound options.

While Lotus won't replicate its Barcelona results in qualifying anytime soon, it was clear from the car's behaviour and the drivers' mood that a Mercedes-powered E23 is a huge step forward from a Renault-powered E22. That will lift Lotus off the back of the grid, but exactly how far

back up the field is still impossible to judge.

That's partly because late-2014's second-fastest team, Williams, has focused on reliability, operational procedures and long runs so far and only offered a few hints of performance. Its drivers are content that the FW37 does everything it needs to build on the FW36's promise, and were happy to spend a day focused on pitstop practice as it was the detail areas where Williams let chances slip away in 2014.

There's a confidence that anything the new car currently lacks can be resolved via set-up refinement and the upgrade package due for the final test, when Williams does plan to demonstrate its potential more openly with some qualifying simulations. The signs are it has kept the gap to Mercedes stable (an achievement in itself given the teams' relative resources), sharpened its organisation and achieved strong tyre preservation – but it's well aware that much depends on Ferrari's and Red Bull's leaps.

Matt Beer



Williams has yet to show the FW37's true pace

“THE LAST TWO YEARS WE JUST WEREN’T QUICK ENOUGH; THIS IS ALL-NEW FOR US”

JENSON BUTTON



Vettel hasn't really proved long-run pace

FERRARI IMPRESSES RIVALS

Ferrari's performance at Barcelona was not quite the same as its head-turning Jerez pace, but its rivals remain convinced that the Scuderia has taken a big leap forward over the winter.

Nico Rosberg played down his own stellar performance in the Mercedes on Sunday, and two days earlier had suggested that the Ferrari could be the team's biggest threat.

"For sure, yes," he replied when asked if Mercedes was looking at the team in that way. "Our eyes are wide open at the moment."

"It's clear that the others have really stepped up their game. The lap times are surprising to us, and in relation it seems Ferrari have made the biggest step at the moment."

The first two days were better barometers of the Ferrari's pace, which was a direct rival to Red Bull's last week. Kimi Raikkonen almost topped the times on day one on the medium-compound tyre, and was half a second faster than Daniel

Ricciardo on the same rubber. That prompted the Australian to admit: "It looks pretty good"... And on Friday, Raikkonen was just 0.010s slower than Ricciardo with both on softs.

Sebastian Vettel's days were the least representative, as most teams switched to race-simulation work over the weekend (Ferrari not included), though his day-three time was 0.33s slower than Hamilton's when both were on the medium tyres. The indication is that the car's one-lap pace has been improved. But there were few opportunities to evaluate how it shapes up on race simulations, especially with 'teething problems' limiting Vettel's running on the final day.

It means the final test, in which the team will show its long-run pace, will be crucial.

If all goes to plan, it will tell if Rosberg and the others are right to have been monitoring the Maranello team so closely.

Scott Mitchell

► McLaren and Honda seem confident the pain will be worth it in the end. Despite the fact that he has yet to drive the MP4-30 in anger, Button feels sure the car has the potential to return McLaren to winning ways.

"We're not in for another tough season, that's definitely not the case," he says. "But whether we are ready for the first race or not, that is something I can't answer right now."

"This is a very different situation to the last two years; the last two years we just weren't quick enough, whereas now it's all-new for us. If we were sat here last year [as McLaren-Honda] I don't think we would be asking the same questions, because most people would be in the same position. Everyone else out there has so much experience with these power units, whereas Honda obviously doesn't, so it looks worse than it is."

"I would love to be pounding round every day we drive the car, but it's just not the case right now. There are problems we need to solve, which we will solve, and hope the next test will be a good one for us in terms of mileage so we can feel confidence going to the first race, and make the most of what we have and push the car to the limit."

"We're not going to have a race-winning car at the first race, but we might have one at the last race. I think you will see big improvements from us. We are all quite interested to see what this car can do at full power, because I think it has a lot of potential – it's just difficult to extract right now."

"It's tough for all of us, and very tough for the guys in the garage, but it's all about learning and we will solve these problems – hopefully soon."

McLaren is planning to continue its aggressive approach to development and bring new parts to the final pre-season test, plus a significant aerodynamic upgrade to the first race in Melbourne. There is much excitement inside the team that the aero concept implemented on the MP4-30 under the influence of chief engineer Peter Prodromou (of Red Bull fame) will yield far greater development potential than its conservative predecessor, once the engine is working properly.

"The Honda power unit is immature and there will be a lot of evolution to come," explains Boullier. "We have to get on top of our reliability issues but we have to be ambitious. What Mercedes did was brilliant, so we have to be more brilliant. It's going to take time, a few years, to put everything in place. The rules are stable so we need time to solve the issues and when we've fixed the list we'll be up there."

"We are happy. The drivers are happy. It's early days. But I can say the car is behaving and handling differently from last year's car and the drivers look happier. I think it's too early to have

20

Q&A

REMI TAFFIN

RENAULT HEAD OF TRACK OPERATIONS



We still have some hardware to come for the next test to try to move up into the performance side. We already know what the potential is, because we do that on the dyno. We still have to be careful, because we know we have had some bad experiences, like at the first test, so we want to ramp up slowly to where we think it will be the third test with maximum performance.

Do you remain confident, from what you have seen so far, that you can halve the gap to Mercedes?

Yes, it is on target. We know what we have left on the table and we know where we would have been if we were running maximum power. It's fair to say it's early days for Red Bull and Toro Rosso. We have to all ramp up at the same time. The game of comparing anyone in testing is always difficult. The only thing I would say is the pace of Mercedes is still there. They have the performance; it's more a matter of assessing the gap we will have to them. If you're one second behind, it's difficult to grab them. If it's two or three tenths, everything becomes feasible.

Remi Taffin was talking to Ben Anderson

What progress did Renault make at Barcelona?

We did more than 100 laps a day, so it shows the little gremlins that we had at Jerez have disappeared. Overall, we are quite happy with the ERS system, which we struggled a bit with last year. It's all settled down and it's working properly. We did not really do a massive change into that area anyway – that was quite spot-on from last year in terms of performance – but we had to get the reliability right.

Will we see more of what the engine can do, in terms of pure performance, at the next test?



Alonso has a good feeling about the MP4-30's latent ability...



...but he wasn't able to fully exploit it due to final-day crash

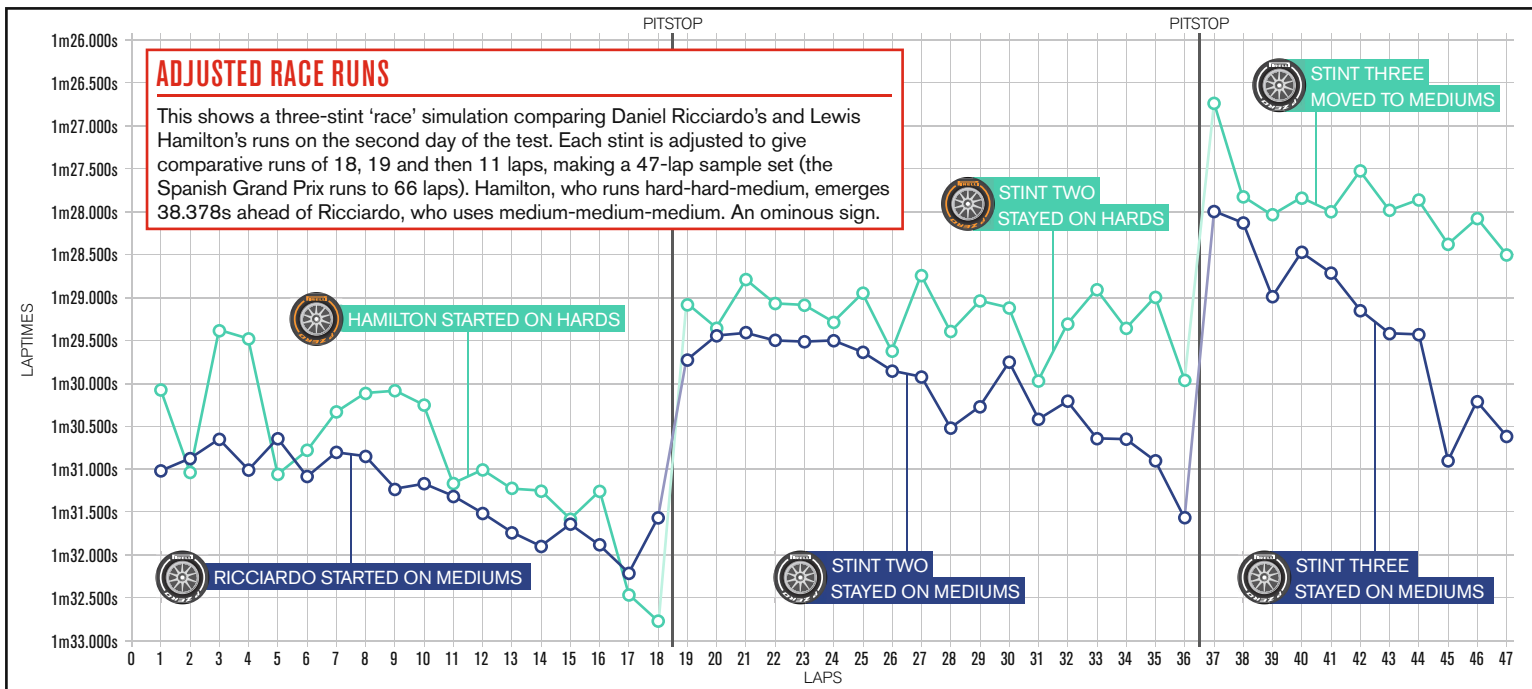
optimism, but the car is behaving as we were planning, so that means the base is good. In terms of pure performance, we don't know yet. We are far from having used any tools to go fast."

But McLaren needs to start using the tools to go fast pretty soon, or else it won't be able to break the "chain of consequences" Boullier referred to earlier.

"It will be an aggressive [engine-reliability] development programme in the first few rounds. That will give us the possibility to run and we can exploit the development later," Boullier explains. "It's a decent package and we need to work on running flawlessly and then look at the power afterwards.

"I know the package is good, [but] we don't know if it's good enough. We need to test it, go into reliability and then back to performance as the cycle continues. I'd prefer to get pole in Australia and blow the engine on the first lap, because at least you know we're good. We won't turn up in Australia with power turned down because we care too much to lose the race."

What a statement that would make to the rest of the paddock... It's highly unlikely a McLaren will be on pole in Melbourne, but the message is clear: as problematic as the programme has been thus far, McLaren-Honda still means serious business in 2015. ❧



MERCEDES REVEALS ITS TRUE PACE

If you needed any persuading that the Silver Arrows are still the cars to beat,

SCOTT MITCHELL analyses the data and shows just how quick the champion team really is

Nico Rosberg's jaw-dropping lap on medium tyres in the final hour of the second pre-season test was not the first indication of Mercedes' true pace at Barcelona. On Friday, Lewis Hamilton and Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo were performing race simulations at almost identical times, offering the first glimpse of the Silver Arrows' real potential.

Breaking down the long runs that took place while both were on track together is the best way to compare, although variables such as fuel load and tyre quality remain. But the first point of comparison is Ricciardo's 18-lap run on the medium tyre, the second stint of his race run, to Hamilton's 21-lap stint on the hard tyre, which kicked off his simulation. For reference, those numbers do not include in-laps and out-laps.

Ricciardo's run was spent mostly in the 1m31s with a best lap of 1m30.645s. His average was 1m31.35s, with pretty negligible pace drop

towards the end, with his times stabilising in the mid-to-high 1m31s. Hamilton's first lap was almost 0.6s faster than Ricciardo managed all run. The Mercedes driver dipped twice into the 1m29s bracket (with a best time of 1m29.391s), though did experience a greater degree of drop-off. His final five laps were 1m32s or higher, meaning his average lap time was only 0.17s faster than Ricciardo's, but this is skewed by the slightly longer stint. Taking off those additional three laps, Hamilton's advantage was 0.4s on average, and that's before you consider that he was on a tyre that Pirelli estimates to be as much as 1.2s per lap slower.

Both drivers were interrupted in their simulations by the red flag caused by Carlos Sainz's spinning Toro Rosso, though it will arguably have hit Ricciardo's next stint hard because it occurred two laps after the Red Bull had pitted for a fresher set of mediums. But the pattern holds as the run gets longer.



Adding those two laps onto Ricciardo's stint after the red flag gives him 20 on another set of medium tyres, and it was a better run – he admitted later on that the winter break had left him a little rusty on how hard to push on race runs. It showed, as his average fell to 1m30.0s over a much longer run.

But it was after that red flag that Hamilton underlined the potential of the new Mercedes. He stretched his average-lap advantage to 0.73s in this 19-lap run, with a best lap of 1m28.7s and only three lap times in the 1m30s bracket.

On their final runs, we finally got

a chance to see them on the same tyre. And again, the Mercedes was more impressive. Hamilton set his best lap of the day, a 1m26.7s, on his first flying lap and his average to the end of the 16-lap stint was 1m28.1s. On a much shorter run – 11 laps – Ricciardo was 0.9s per lap slower.

There was more to the Mercedes' perceived advantage than just its speed over longer runs. Hamilton's flier at the end of that day, which left him just three tenths back from Ricciardo on a harder-compound tyre, suggested it was capable of something beyond anything the Red Bull managed on mediums. ❧

TESTING DATA

BARCELONA February 19-22 2015

SETS OF TYRES USED
261



21

DRIVERS



40,997

WORDS IN AUTOSPORT.COM'S LIVE COVERAGE



MOST LAPS COMPLETED
MAX VERSTAPPEN

223

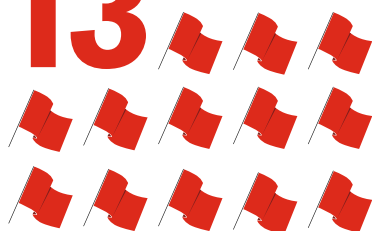


3134

TOTAL LAPS COVERED



13 RED FLAGS



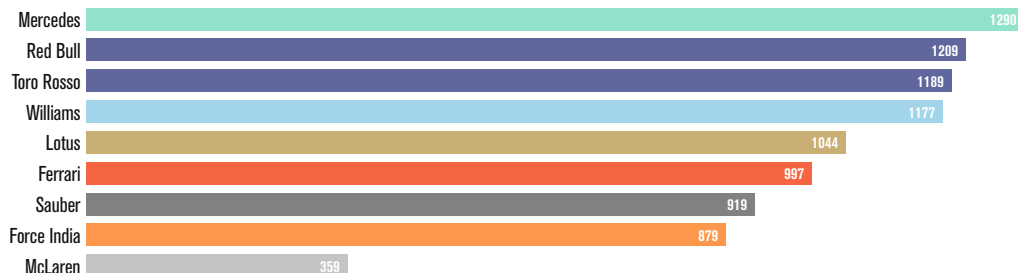
FEWEST LAPS COMPLETED

36



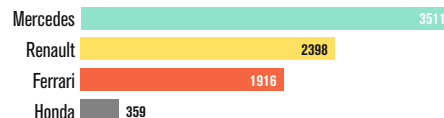
NICO HULKENBERG

MILES COVERED CAR



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ENGINE 2015-spec engines only

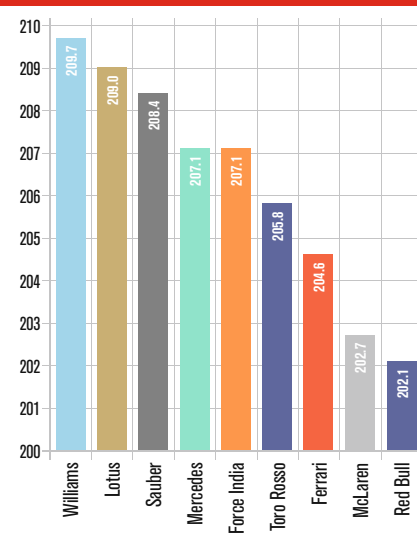


F1 TEST TIMES

POS	DRIVER	CAR	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	Romain Grosjean	Lotus-Mercedes E23	-	-	-	1m24.067s (ss)
2	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes F1 W06	-	1m25.556s (m)	-	1m24.321s (m)
3	Pastor Maldonado	Lotus-Mercedes E23	1m25.011s (s)	-	1m24.348s(ss)	-
4	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull-Renault RB11	1m25.547s (s)	1m24.574s (s)	-	-
5	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari SF15-T	1m25.167s (m)	1m24.584s (s)	-	-
6	Felipe Massa	Williams-Mercedes FW37	-	1m24.672s (s)	1m26.912s (m)	-
7	Sergio Perez	Force India-Mercedes VJM07	1m26.636s (m)	1m24.702s (ss)	-	-
8	Max Verstappen	Toro Rosso-Renault STR10	1m27.900s (m)	-	1m24.739s (ss)	-
9	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes F1 W06	1m30.429s (m)	1m24.923s (m)	1m26.076s (m)	-
10	Daniil Kvyat	Red Bull-Renault RB11	-	-	1m26.589s (m)	1m24.941s (s)
11	Felipe Nasr	Sauber-Ferrari C34	1m27.307s (m)	-	-	1m24.956s (ss)
12	Valtteri Bottas	Williams-Mercedes FW37	-	-	1m27.556s (m)	1m25.345s (s)
13	Carlos Sainz Jr	Toro Rosso-Renault STR10	-	1m28.945s (m)	-	1m25.604s (ss)
14	Fernando Alonso	McLaren-Honda MP4-30	-	1m25.961s (s)	-	1m27.956s (m)
15	Jolyon Palmer	Lotus-Mercedes E23	-	1m26.280s (s)	-	-
16	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari SF15-T	-	-	1m26.407s (m)	1m26.312s (s)
17	Marcus Ericsson	Sauber-Ferrari C34	-	1m27.344s (m)	1m26.340s (s)	-
18	Nico Hulkenberg	Force India-Mercedes VJM07	-	-	-	1m26.591s (s)
19	Pascal Wehrlein	Force India-Mercedes VJM07	1m28.329s (wh)	-	1m27.333s (m)	-
20	Jenson Button	McLaren-Honda MP4-30	1m28.182s (m)	-	1m29.151s (m)	-
21	Pascal Wehrlein	Mercedes F1 W06	1m28.489s (h)	-	-	-
22	Susie Wolff	Williams-Mercedes FW37	1m28.906s (m)	-	-	-

Tyre key: ss=supersoft; s=soft, m=medium, wh=winter hard

TOP SPEED MPH



LAST PRE-SEASON TEST

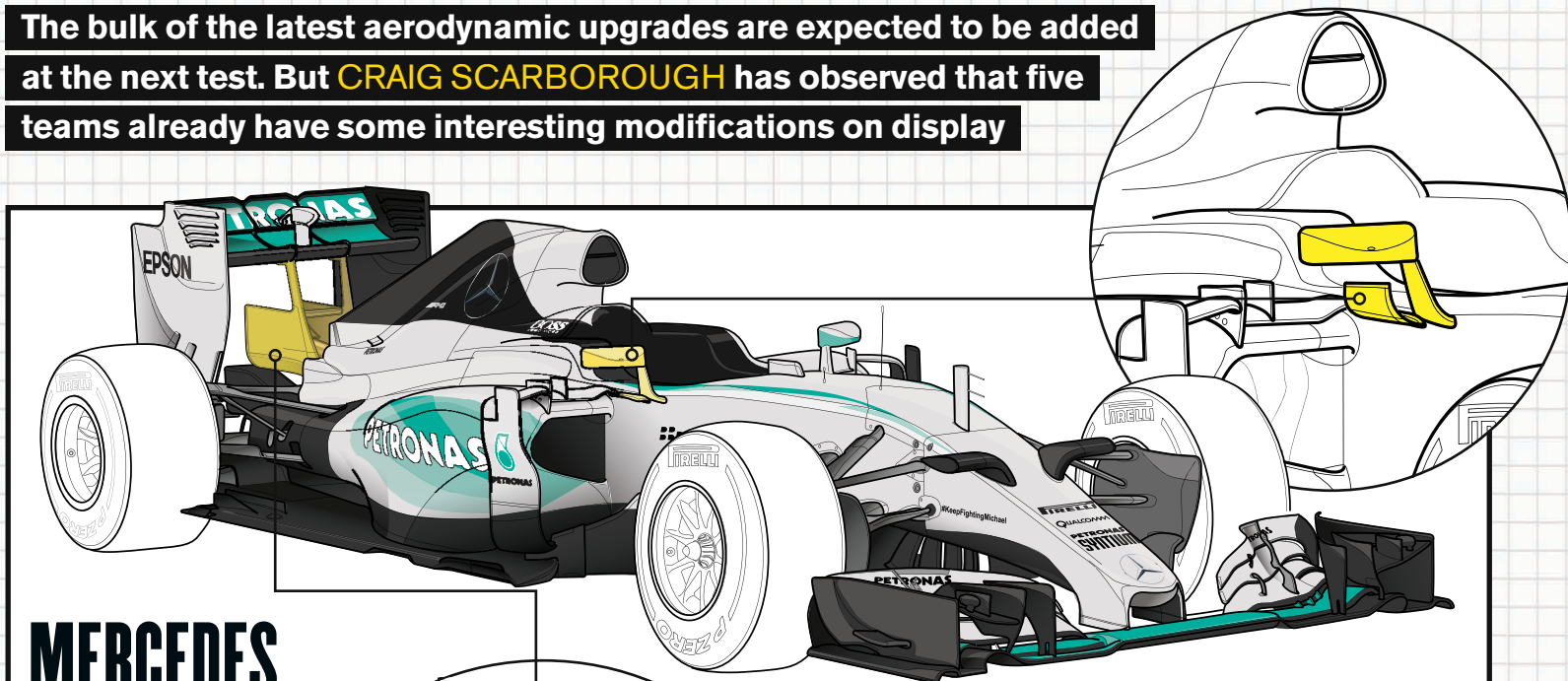
February 26-March 1 Barcelona

FOLLOW THE AUTOSPORT LIVE COVERAGE ONLINE AT



THE DEVELOPMENT WAR RAMPS UP

The bulk of the latest aerodynamic upgrades are expected to be added at the next test. But **CRAIG SCARBOROUGH** has observed that five teams already have some interesting modifications on display

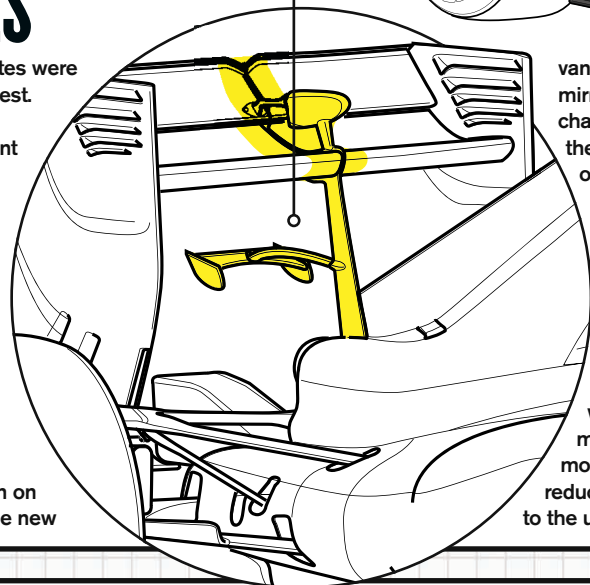


24

MERCEDES

Some minor aero updates were introduced during this test. Both a new rear-view mirror/vane arrangement and a rear-wing mount appeared ahead of much more substantial updates expected for the final pre-season test.

Working in conjunction with the vanes over the sidepod fronts, a new L-shaped vane was fitted to the sidepod in place of the fin-shaped version seen on the launch car. Since the new



vane is larger and taller, the mirror stalk itself was subtly changed and brought closer to the cockpit side so as not to obstruct the vane.

The rear-wing mounting has also changed. Mercedes was one of the few teams not to adopt the 'Y' mounting for the rear last year, whereby a single pillar supports the wing then wraps around the exhaust with a horseshoe-shaped mounting. Having one less mounting on the rear wing reduces the airflow disruption to the undersurface of the wing.

This change was anticipated, since the engine cover on the launch car had a slot prepared to wrap around the new single pillar. But some other subtle bodywork changes around the exhaust were also required for this update. This included the provision of a new mounting for the 'monkey-seat' Y100 winglet, whereas the 2014 winglet mounted to the old twin pillars. The new set-up uses a slender swan-neck mounting.

This was trialed with a simpler winglet, sporting a less elaborate two-element profile, compared with the complex multi-profile winglet run so far in testing.

RED BULL

With most of its bodywork unchanged from Jerez and still in its 'dazzle' camouflage, the RB11 did sport one new detail in its Y100 'monkey-seat' winglet.

These winglets are often used to connect the airflows from the diffuser to the rear wing.

Last year, Mercedes aggressively used the exhaust gases to blow under

the winglet, to aid its effect. Red Bull's wing follows some of those concepts, with a two-element winglet, joined by a third element mounted below and behind to work the flow further.



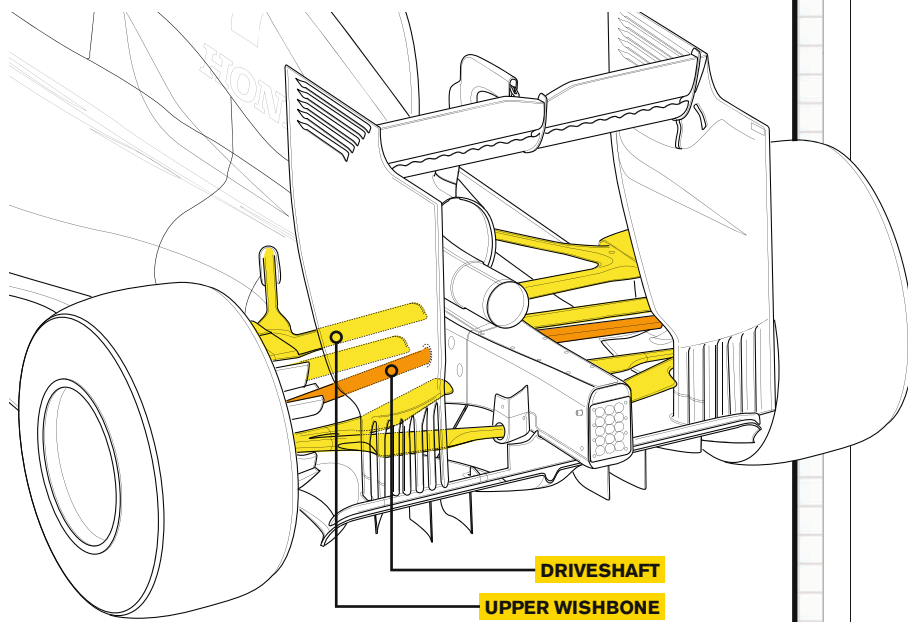
McLAREN

Despite its engine problems, McLaren introduced small updates on the MP4-30. The diffuser's trailing edge features a tall flap around its perimeter to create more low pressure below the car. The curvature of this flap was altered, especially where it passes around the starter-motor hole in the top centre of the diffuser's exit.

Chief designer Matt Morris explained in Jerez that the suspension blockers from last year's car may still reappear. So the compromised installation to position the rear-suspension members in the right place is carried over to the new car. Typically, the rear suspension has the upper and lower wishbones ahead of the driveshaft, with the

trackrod sitting behind the axle line. In order to place the rear leg of the lower wishbone near the diffuser's exit, this has had to be reversed and now sits entirely behind the axle line, requiring mounting to the rear crash structure rather than the gearbox.

In its normal place further forward is the trackrod, while the upper wishbone is in a conventional position. This layout, while peculiar, does not necessarily compromise the geometry. Its design is purely aerodynamic, should the mushroom fairing be refitted to the wishbone, in order to create some extra downforce at the rear of the car.



LOTUS

The Lotus E23 was fitted with more of its new parts, including a new bargeboard and cooling package.

Slotted bargeboards have been run by Lotus on and off for several years. The new vane is split into three panels, with narrow slots in between. As the bargeboard's job is to turn the airflow passing under the raised nose section around the sidepods, creating a complex series of vortices as it does so, it's a device sensitive to airflow changes.

Breaking up the vane into separate pieces, just as with a conventional wing, reduces the chances of the airflow separating around its tightest curves. Each break in the vane also generates more vortices to manage the airflow downstream.



With cooler conditions in Spain, Lotus also tried a tighter cooler exit for the sidepods. The rounded exit to the sidepod's Coke-bottle shape was shrunk and the opening under the exhaust pipe was closed off.

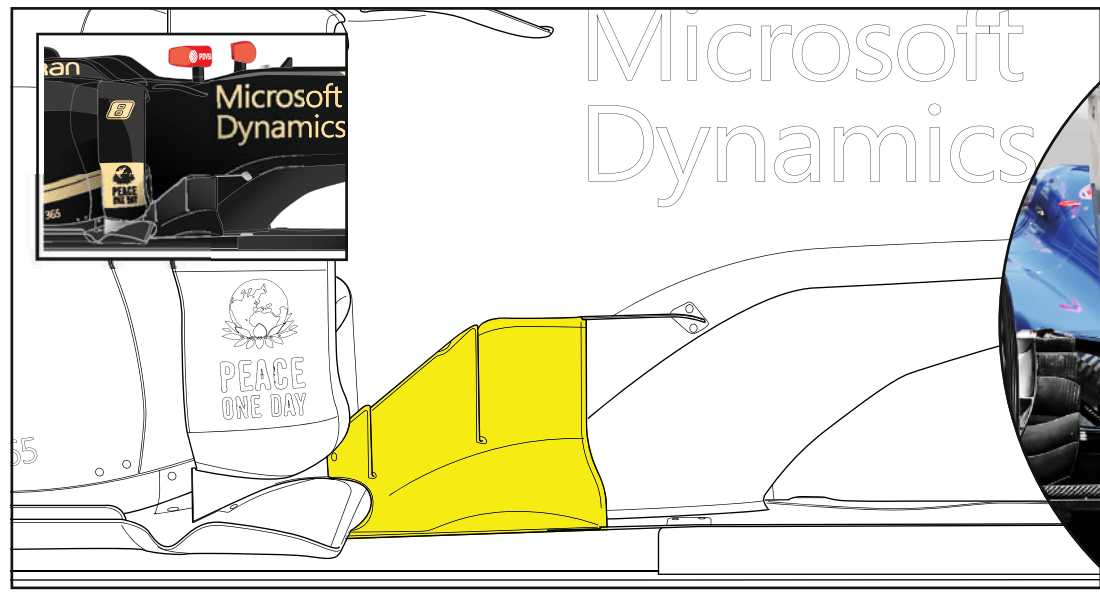
Running with Mercedes power for this year, Lotus has been able to greatly reduce its cooling package, with the sidepods, their inlets and the tail shape much smaller than with last year's Renault-engined car.

SAUBER

Forced by budget and resources to run a new car heavily shaped on the 2014 model, Sauber has at least brought some key updates to the tests.

A new diffuser sporting the 2015 Mercedes-style U-shaped centre section was trialled in Jerez and remained on the car for the Barcelona test.

A tighter cooling package was also tested. As with Lotus, this had a smaller opening at the rear of the sidepods, and the opening around the exhaust was reduced to fit tightly around the tailpipe.



British F3 1979-2014

A LOST BREEDING GROUND FOR HEROES

British Formula 3 breathed its last gasp at the end of 2014, but for many years it was a vibrant, colourful and super-competitive arena full of future superstars. MARCUS SIMMONS traces its story and the pivotal moments



Mika Hakkinen and David Brabham head a huge grid at Brands Hatch in 1989

LAT



Take a look at the picture on the previous page. The late 1980s was a real heyday of the British Formula 3 Championship, as a host of teams fielded upwards of 40 cars, with qualification races held at the shorter tracks. Career-minded drivers, many of them future Formula 1 stars or professional aces, sported the colours of Marlboro, Benetton, Camel, Jewson, Cellnet and many other big backers. They shared the grid with impecunious youngsters or amateurs who could afford to compete in the one-year-old rolling stock that came on to the market every winter. Great days.

The birth of the championship, on March 4 1979 on the Silverstone Club Circuit, had featured 20 cars. Grids wouldn't boom for another few years, but this was a crucial step, born of the realisation that having two F3 championships in the UK – one organised by the BRDC at Silverstone, the other (generally more prestigious) by the BARC at Thruxton – didn't make sense. The new series, belonging jointly to the BARC and BRDC, was given British championship status by the RAC, then the governing body of motorsport in the UK – the first time this was awarded for F3.

"Everyone doing it was looking for one championship," says Dave Price, whose team at the time was running Unipart-backed, Triumph-engined Marches for Nigel Mansell and New Zealander Brett Riley. "If you tried to do both you ended up doing 30-odd races a year and it was too much. Even then budgets were getting a bit stretched, but it didn't guarantee full grids going forwards. In 1980/81 the grids started shrinking a bit, and around '82 and

'83 they were very up and down."

At some of the mid-to-late-season races over 1982 and '83, grids barely scraped into double figures, and the decision was taken to form the Formula 3 Teams' Association (FOTA). "FOTA came into being in '82 because all the teams were trying to look after their interests," continues Price. "It was me, Eddie Jordan and Murray Taylor [both of whom ran eponymous teams], Dick Bennetts [from West Surrey Racing] and Glenn Waters [Intersport Racing]. We formed it to have a voice with the BRDC. BARC were very easy, but Pierre Aumonier at the BRDC was bloody hard work – they thought the world revolved around them, which at the time it did. But things needed to change."

Price's 1979 team ("Brett was naturally talented and extremely lazy, and Nigel was so determined!") took just two wins in that inaugural season. Driving a pristine March run by Ron Dennis's Project 4 team, Chico Serra won the opening race at Silverstone and came out on top of a title fight against Andrea de Cesaris,



Stefan Johansson Ron Dennis's last F3 champion

"I'd tried to qualify for the first two grands prix in 1980 with the Shadow – we had no business to be there, no testing, and thrown in at the deep end. So my F3 season was all or nothing.

"You couldn't help but be impressed on every level with Ron Dennis and Project 4. The cars were immaculate – it's always been that way since the very beginning. Everything was so organised.

"He was keeping F1 quite secret [Project 4 was in the process of taking over McLaren]. He had this office upstairs at the shop that we'd call the fishtank,

and there would be these three shadowy figures – John Barnard, Steve Nichols and Alan Jenkins – only the best group of three designers in the history of motor racing! They even used to come to the tests; John was quite heavily involved and he was fantastic. It made you feel extremely confident.

"Once we switched to the Ralt we never looked back. Dick Bennetts was put on the car and he was one of the best I ever worked with – apart from being a great engineer he's a great psychologist, and made you feel you were the best out there."



Chico Serra leads the first British F3 race on March 4 1979

driving another March but run by Team Tiga, the squad of Tim Schenken and Howden Ganley.

RALT'S GAMECHANGER

Another winner that year was Stefan Johansson, and over the winter of 1979-80 he tested the new Ralt RT3 for Tiga. Marque founder Ron Tauranac was attempting to introduce ground-effect principles to F3, but it took time for the potential of the RT3 to be unlocked. "I tested it at Goodwood for two days before Christmas," says Johansson. "It was even snowing a bit. But then Ron Dennis offered me a great deal and that's where we went." Dennis also had good connections with Marlboro, Johansson's backer. "Marlboro was like Red Bull is now – the same kind of system," says the Swede.

The problem was, Dennis and Project 4 were March customers, and it was with the constructor's new 803 that Johansson started the season. It was an incredibly tight three-way title battle between Johansson, Kenny Acheson (who switched back to the older March 793 for much



Johansson started the 1980 season in a March 803

P1 MOST POLE POSITIONS: TEAMS (reversed-grid races disregarded)

154	Carlin Motorsport/Carlin
71	West Surrey Engineering/West Surrey Racing
68	Paul Stewart Racing/Stewart Racing/Jaguar Racing
46	Fortec Motorsport/Team AJS
31	Hitech Racing
24	Raikkonen Robertson Racing/Double R Racing
23	Alan Docking Racing
22	Promatecme
21	Eddie Jordan Racing
18	Project 4 Racing
18	Madgwick Motorsport
17	Murray Taylor Racing
17	David Price Racing
17	Intersport Racing
11	Piquet Sports
13	Bowman Racing
11	Manor Motorsport
10	Edenbridge Racing
9	Team Tiga
7	P1 Engineering/P1 Motorsport/Sweeney Racing

P1 MOST POLE POSITIONS: DRIVERS (reversed-grid races disregarded)

Andy Wallace	16
Ayrton Senna da Silva	15
James Courtney	14
Mika Hakkinen	13
Ralph Firman	13
Nelson Piquet Jr	13
Marko Asmer	13
Stefan Johansson	11
Gil de Ferran	11
Takuma Sato	11
Alvaro Parente	11
Jean-Eric Vergne	11
Johnny Dumfries	10
Mike Conway	10
Jack Harvey	10
Rubens Barrichello	9
Kelvin Burt	9
Jonny Kane	9
Chico Serra	8
Andrea de Cesaris	8
Dave Scott	8
Martin Brundle	8
Luciano Burti	8

Pole tables based on best competitor registered for British F3 Championship, ie where a 'guest' runner has competed in Invitation Class they are disregarded

of the season) and Roberto Guerrero in the Argo. Acheson and Guerrero were edging ahead, until a remark from Project 4 engineer Dick Bennetts changed the future of F3. "March couldn't get the 803 running properly," recalls Bennetts. "I dropped into the conversation with Ron Dennis that there was some Kiwi I'd never heard of [future driver-coach guru Rob Wilson], with a scruffy little team, doing a good job with the RT3.

"Shortly after that Ron said, 'You've got the car you wanted. I said that wasn't the car I wanted – I just said it was a good car! At first we couldn't get it working – we took it to Goodwood two or three days a week. It was a proper downforce car, with tunnels on the side of it. The set-up from Ron Tauranac wasn't that good so we had to push the boat out – suddenly we hit the sweet spot and made it work."

Johansson ran the last five races in the RT3, won the last four on the trot and snatched the title from the despairing grasps of Acheson and Guerrero at the final round ("Had we had the Ralt at the beginning of the year we'd have

smashed everybody!" he jokes now). All three moved up to Formula 2 in 1981 and left behind a British F3 scene that was switching wholesale to the RT3. March and Argo just never got to grips with the tricky business of bringing ground-effect to a category for cars that were – with only 160bhp – hardly rocketships in a straight line anyway. There was one win for March in '81, but otherwise Ralt RT3s won 76 of the 77 races up to the end of '84.

Bennetts, meanwhile, had left the employ of Dennis, who had taken over McLaren and wanted the Kiwi as his F1 test team manager. Shying away from being a small cog in a big wheel, the freewheeling Bennetts carried on running Johansson's old Ralt for Jonathan Palmer in 1981 under the banner of Palmer's FF1600 mentor West Surrey Engineering, owned by Mike Cox. Renamed West Surrey Racing for '82, it came close to carrying Enrique Mansilla to the title in a battle with Tommy Byrne, who was very highly rated by a young Brazilian named Ayrton Senna da Silva. ▶

“I had to sit Ayrton down and tell him that by non-finishing he was throwing away valuable points”

DICK BENNETTS

SENNA VERSUS BRUNDLE

► Impressed by WSR's work with Mansilla, Senna chose the team for his F3 graduation in 1983, when he would win an epic fight with Martin Brundle. “Martin had been racing in touring cars because he'd stalled a bit,” says Price, whose David Price Racing team ran him in '82. “I managed to do this deal and BP came to us, and after he got his shit together Martin took the last four poles of the season. It was proposed we'd run a two-car BP team in Europe in '83 with Martin and James Weaver. Then BP dropped Martin and took Calvin Fish instead. Martin was sitting in my office in despair, so I rang Eddie Jordan up – he had a habit of being able to make something work from nothing – and did a deal for Martin to run there.”

Unbeknown to WSR and Senna, Jordan had an ace up his sleeve that carried Brundle to a mid-season run of wins, and Senna to a pile of wrecks. “What we didn't cotton on to early enough was that EJ had got a Mk2 Novamotor Toyota engine,” says Bennetts. “Ours was being rebuilt in England to a standard spec; his was being rebuilt in Italy by Novamotor. We had to run a whisker less rear wing and Ayrton had to overdrive a bit to get through the corners.”

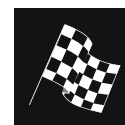
“He also felt that no one should beat him – he wasn't happy to finish second – and I had to sit him down and tell him that by non-finishing he was chucking away valuable points. Before the last round at Thruxton, Ayrton went to



Team boss Price was FOTA leader

Novamotor himself and stayed there while his engine was rebuilt. We ran it in a test at Snetterton and it was quicker straight away.” Senna had slipped behind Brundle in the points, but a win in the finale gave him the title.

Senna's future Lotus team-mate Johnny Dumfries would clean up in 1984. David Price Racing had a works Volkswagen engine deal, and Dumfries was BP's new prospect. “He was an absolute natural – although he didn't have much success in anything else!” says Price. “We made our own chassis, with a new RT3 at the rear end and an older one at the front. We were working out of [ace fabricator] Mo Gomm's workshop,



MOST WINS: CONSTRUCTORS

Dallara	446
Ralt	168
Reynard	53
March	29
Argo	7
Lola-Dome/Lola	4
Mygale	3
Chevron	1
TOM'S	1

working with FORCE [the talented but short-lived Haas F1 team of the mid-80s] – some of the ex-McLaren guys there were pals of mine. We did our own sidepods, our own noses.”

Through FOTA, Price had also boosted the F3 grids through the new Class B, introduced in 1984 for cars at least a year old for drivers with a lower grade of licence. “Yes, most of the initiatives were FOTA,” he says. “Eddie [Jordan] was ostensibly chairman, then when he was voted off I took over. Exclusive tests came from FOTA as well, and when I took over I did a deal with Steve Rider's company and got them to show some of the races on the BBC.”

Price had on his staff two youngsters named Andy Miller and Bruce Jenkins, who would form the leadership of the Paul Stewart Racing team that went on to dominate the 1990s, but by then F3 would look very different. The FIA had banned ground effect for '85, and Reynard – entering the category for the first time – initially looked to have the best flat-bottomed car with its new carbonfibre 853. But Bennetts and WSR worked away on the asymmetrically sidepodded, aluminium-monocoque Ralt RT30 and carried Mauricio Gugelmin to the title thanks to a Johansson-style late run.

“Ralts never came out of the box like a Dallara does today,” says Bennetts. “There were always a couple of hidden problems and it was us who sorted getting to the bottom of them.”

But Reynard, with Andy Wallace and Madgwick Motorsport, got a free run in 1986, after overcoming an early challenge from Jordan's man Maurizio Sandro Sala. Madgwick's effort, run by Robert Synge, was founded on top engineers Mick Cook (running Wallace) and Paul Haigh, with Teo Silva and latter-day T-Sport chief Russell Eacott as mechanics on Wallace's car. “It was one of those things – everything was right,” says Eacott. “Mick was one of the best engineers I ever worked with, as a person and as an

MOST WINS: TEAMS

168	Carlin Motorsport/Carlin
71	Paul Stewart Racing/Stewart Racing/Jaguar Racing
68	Fortec Motorsport/Team AJS
56	West Surrey Engineering/West Surrey Racing
30	Raikkonen Robertson Racing/Double R Racing
29	Alan Docking Racing
24	Hitech Racing
23	Promatecme
18	Eddie Jordan Racing
17	Murray Taylor Racing
16	David Price Racing
16	Intersport Racing
15	Bowman Racing
15	Edenbridge Racing
14	Manor Motorsport
12	Piquet Sports
11	Project 4 Racing
11	Madgwick Motorsport
8	Pacific Racing
8	P1 Motorsport

All win tables based on best competitor registered for British F3 Championship, ie where a 'guest' runner has competed in Invitation Class they are disregarded



Senna-Brundle battle was epic



Pacific struck gold in '88 with JJ Lehto in a Reynard-Toyota

engineer. Andy was a lovely guy as well – he used to pick us up and drive us in his diesel Fiesta.”

Wallace’s season was made easier by tragedy. Formula Ford 2000 champion Bertrand Fabi was to drive for WSR, with FF1600 graduate Damon Hill as his team-mate, but the Canadian was killed when he crashed his Ralt in a pre-season test at Goodwood. “That was devastating,” says Bennetts. “It hit me hard, and I was thinking of giving up racing. Such a talented, nice young lad. I’d just been to hospital for microsurgery on my knee, because I’d jumped off the wall at Macau when Mauricio won! Bertrand picked me up from hospital in Windsor on the way down. I was going to use the profit from him to run Damon.”

Instead, Bennetts transferred Hill’s deal to his great friend Murray Taylor, and ran Gugelmin in F3000 for a year instead. He was back for 1987 with Bertrand Gachot spearheading the effort, but everyone lost out to Eddie Jordan Racing and the super-talented Johnny Herbert as the engine war ramped up. “We had VWs from John Judd and EJ had an exclusive electronically injected VW

from Spiess,” says Bennetts. “Then we went to Novamotor and got some Alfa Romeos.”

PACIFIC – THE ‘BRAWN’ OF BRITISH F3

Another strong engine was the TOM’S Toyota, which hit a strong run of form with the Cellnet-backed Intersport Ralts of Hill and Martin Donnelly, but it was a private Toyota powerplant that stole the honours in 1988. Pacific Racing had cleaned up in FF2000 in ’87 with Marlboro protege JJ Lehto, using Neil Brown-tuned engines. For his F3 entry, team boss Keith Wiggins – who’d worked as a mechanic on Serra’s March with Project 4 in ’78 – brought Brown on board. “I did a deal where you could buy the parts and build your own Toyota,” says Wiggins. “We’d worked with Neil in FF2000 and built a relationship, and all the elements played a part. We had a good relationship with Reynard too and got the car working well.”

Wiggins also had to convince Marlboro, which often sent drivers to WSR, to keep Lehto at Pacific. “We’d won championships for Philip ▶

MOST WINS: DRIVERS

Takuma Sato	16
Jan Magnussen	14
Jean-Eric Vergne	13
Ayrton Senna da Silva	12
Nelson Piquet Jr	12
Alvaro Parente	12
Andy Wallace	11
Kelvin Burt	11
Oliver Gavin	11
Mike Conway	11
Marko Asmer	11
Johnny Dumfries	10
Gil de Ferran	10
Alan van der Merwe	10
Martin Donnelly	9
Mika Hakkinen	9
Ralph Firman	9
Nicolas Minassian	9
Robbie Kerr	9
Jonathan Palmer	8
Martin Brundle	8
JJ Lehto	8
Mario Haberfeld	8
Felipe Nasr	8
Jack Harvey	8



Andy Wallace won 11 British F3 races

► Morris with Harald Huysman, Bertrand Gachot and JJ,” says Wiggins, who also engineered Lehto. “Timing’s everything – Dick Bennetts was the obvious choice but there was a wave of something new with us. It took a lot of persuasion to work on them, but we were pushing the establishment.”

The Reynard was overtaken in the latter stages of the season by a new team named Bowman Racing and running Gary Brabham. Run by Steve and Vic Hollman, it had a team manager in the form of their nephew Trevor Carlin and young engineers Anthony ‘Boyo’ Hieatt and Adrian Burgess, who would set the template for Carlin Motorsport’s domination in the 21st century. All were in thrall to the late Australian engineer Bruce Carey, who reworked the Ralt and whose ideas revived the marque’s fortunes for the next few years. “About a third of the way through the season Bruce worked his magic on the Ralt RT32,” says Carlin. “He did a total redesign, which we built ourselves, and Gary dominated the second half of the season. Because of that we were in such demand over the winter that instead of turning down drivers who wanted to sign with us we found a way to pull it off.”

Bowman’s pre-Carlin template of a six-car line-up was helped by Wiggins moving Pacific into F3000. “We kept moving up, and Adrian [Reynard] and Rick [Gorne, Reynard’s commercial partner] said it didn’t make much business sense,” says Wiggins. “But I was tunnel-visioned:



Mugen-motivated Mikas in 1990: Salo leads Hakkinen

we’d done it, and I wasn’t interested anymore. These days an older person would probably say we should have stayed on and capitalised on it...”

JAPANESE POWER INVASION

With Bowman running Brabham’s younger brother David in 1989, WSR hit back with Marlboro new boy Allan McNish – and a new engine. “We were the first to approach Mugen Honda,” says Bennetts. “They wanted one Ralt team, one Reynard, so JYS [Jackie Stewart] got the Reynard deal. I recommended three engine builders to Hirotoishi Honda [Mugen boss and son of Honda founder Soichiro] and at the end of the day we chose Neil Brown.” This was a pivotal

point in BF3 history, as Brown’s Mugens would power 15 of the next 16 champions. But it was also controversial: McNish was initially crowned ’89 champion, only for this to be overturned in VW Spiess-powered Brabham’s favour.

“You couldn’t add material to your engine block or cylinder head,” says Carlin. “We knew Honda had done that to help with the starter motor – that was illegal. We protested this, then they did a tit-for-tat against the VW. Both were deemed to be in breach of the regulations.”

“We proved theirs was illegal,” says Bennetts, “but we still lost the championship because the scrutineer wouldn’t verify it. But it didn’t bother us: we already had Mika signed up!”

Allan McNish and Paul Stewart were F3’s tartan army



PTS MOST POINTS

Using original 9-6-4-3-2-1, with 1 for fastest lap, format; reversed-grid races disregarded for this table

Takuma Sato	212
Nelson Piquet Jr	206
Andy Wallace	197
Marko Asmer	195
Mike Conway	194
Dave Scott	183
Martin Brundle	181
James Courtney	181
Martin Donnelly	174
Kelvin Burt	168
Jazeman Jaafar	165
Alvaro Parente	163.5
Gil de Ferran	163
Warren Hughes	163
Oliver Gavin	152
Stefan Johansson	151
Thierry Tassin	150
Alan van der Merwe	149.5
Ralph Firman	147
Mika Hakkinen	143



MOST PRESENCES

(attempts to qualify for races)

Hywel Lloyd	105
Jazeman Jaafar	91
Stephen Jelley	90
Steve Arnold	80
Tor Sriachavanon/Graves	80
Carlos Huertas	80
Michael Bentwood	78
Jamie Spence	78
Warren Hughes	77
Rob Austin	76
Clivio Piccione	74
Fairuz Fauzy	74
Ricardo Teixeira	74
Martin O'Connell	72
Will Buller	72
Marko Asmer	71
Justin Sherwood	70
Alan Tulloch	68
Brian Cunningham	68
Karun Chandhok	68
James Walker	68
Adderly Fong	68

The golden era continued, with WSR-run Hakkinen (“He had such raw talent, but he couldn’t tell you much about the car!” says Bennetts) beating Alan Docking Racing’s Mika Salo to the 1990 title. The following year, it was WSR’s Rubens Barrichello defeating Paul Stewart Racing’s David Coulthard. No one knew that this would be the last title won by a Ralt...

The key to this change was Gil de Ferran, who’d been unbeatable on his day in 1991 – even against Barrichello and Coulthard – in a new-design Reynard run by new-to-F3 Edenbridge Racing, whose boss Peter Briggs would run FOTA in British F3’s last few years. De Ferran had been at Paul Stewart Racing in Formula Vauxhall Lotus in 1990, but there was no room at the F3 team alongside Coulthard in ’91.

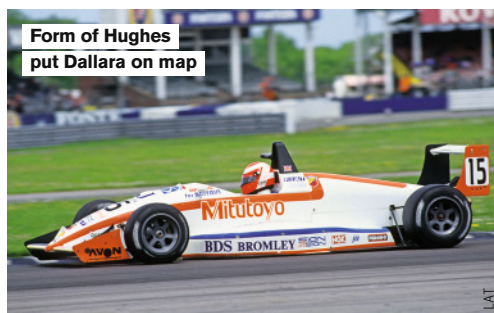
“DC and I were the original beneficiaries of the Staircase of Talent at PSR,” says de Ferran. “But there was a hiccup on the funding and they couldn’t take me for the year after.

“I’d driven for Reynard in FF1600, and they couldn’t sell their brand-new F3 car in ’91 because the ’90 product wasn’t great. They needed to run it so they said, ‘Why don’t you drive the car?’ Originally it was from the factory with Roly Vincini [long-time F3 engineer], and then they struck a deal with Edenbridge. Jackie Stewart took me back for ’92, and he also had a prior relationship with Reynard. The ’92 car was just an evolution of the ’91 – it was a great car, my baby!”

PSR switched to Reynard. So too did long-time Ralt loyalist WSR. “Ron Tauranac had sold Ralt to March,” explains Bennetts. “Andy Thorby [who had produced the superb TOM’S chassis of 1991] designed the RT36 – we thought it looked difficult to work with so we switched to Reynard.” Even so, Philippe Adams took Alan Docking Racing’s Ralt to runner-up behind de Ferran.

THE DALLARA INFLUX

Bowman had also been producing its own bespoke chassis, but the team collapsed in 1992.



Form of Hughes put Dallara on map

“I went to run a wine bar with my sister, and ‘Boyo’ went to work with Formula Project in French F3,” says Carlin. “He worked with the ’92 Dallara, saw the ’93 and told me how fantastic it was. I wanted to set my own team up, so I saved up £350 for a ticket to fly out to see Mr Dallara. I took a photo of the Bowman BC1 to show him what we’d built, then he showed me the ’93 Dallara and I was completely blown away. He was going to help with chassis, get Fiat to help with engines, and I was trying to get [Bowman race winner] Steve Robertson to drive it. We’d have won the championship...”

Dallara was already talking to ADR. “Dallara knew ‘Doc’ and his partner Dick Puxty, who was the De Tomaso importer [Dallara designed De Tomaso’s 1970 F1 car],” says engineer Chris Weller, who was at ADR after stints at Madgwick and EJR. “The Ralt was doing well so the Dallara people wanted to look at it. They did a tear-apart and a few measurements and said they’d like to bring a Dallara over for us to try. We had a Mugen engine put in it, got Philippe Adams to drive it and he thought it was the greatest thing since sliced bread. I had a long chat with ‘Doc’ but he said he’d done a deal to be the works Ralt team. I’d got to know Richard Arnold [who was setting up a team for his son Steven] and convinced him that buying the Dallara would be the way to go. We had a lot of pressure from Reynard, who saw the writing on the wall. ▶



Gil de Ferran PSR’s first champion

“My relationship with Jackie and Paul Stewart played a huge part in my early career. If it wasn’t for their confidence, trust and support, I wouldn’t be where I am now.

“There weren’t any alternatives. GP3 didn’t exist, World Series by Renault didn’t exist. So all the best teams and drivers were in one place – there wasn’t any dilution of competition.

“The team was very young. Andy Miller and Bruce Jenkins [the engineers] came from great backgrounds and they were very methodical, and I got on really well with them! People underestimate the value of testing, and it’s sad these days that even in F3 it’s restricted. When I was in F3, you could do all the testing, and that gave you time to develop your skills, develop the car and a lot of freedom.

“It was a great learning experience. I learned how the car interacted with my driving, and what I needed to enhance the car. Even more than F3000 it was the pinnacle of developing your understanding. Motorsport is a huge interaction between the human and the machine, and F3 was a huge platform in this. I wish these guys coming up now could go through similar experiences.”



Gil de Ferran took the 1992 title



NATIONALITIES COMPETING

TOTAL DRIVERS 983

United Kingdom	377
Brazil	68
United States	50
France	40
Italy	39
Sweden	37
Australia	31
Belgium	28
Japan	27
Germany	26
Spain	24
Netherlands	23
Ireland	17
Finland	16
South Africa	16
China (incl HK/Macau)	14
Mexico	13
New Zealand	13
Switzerland	12
Denmark	11
Canada	10
Argentina	8
Colombia	8
Austria	7
Malaysia	7
India	6
Portugal	6
Russia (incl 1 USSR)	5
Greece	4
Venezuela	4
Bahrain	3
Indonesia	3
Lebanon	3
Monaco	3
Angola	2
Estonia (incl 1 USSR)	2
Iceland	2
Norway	2
Turkey	2
Bolivia	1
Chile	1
Czech Republic	1
Egypt	1
Jamaica	1
Peru	1
Poland	1
Romania	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Serbia (as Yugoslavia)	1
Taiwan	1
Thailand	1
United Arab Emirates	1
Uruguay	1



Brazil v UK in '91: Barrichello, Negri, Coulthard, Robertson

► “Steven tested it and we got Warren Hughes involved as driver coach. Before the second race at Thruxton, Mr Dallara sent over another car for Warren. It turned up on the Friday half-built in a van, and we spent the rest of the day testing with Steven and building Warren’s car. He went from 21st [after a gear-ratio glitch in qualifying] to sixth with fastest lap, and everyone brushed it aside because of the characteristics of Thruxton. But the next race was at Brands Hatch, Warren did really well again, and that got people noticing.”

By the end of the season, nearly all the teams had switched to Dallara. “I’d fallen out with ‘Doc’ with Reynard, and with all the teams that had to fork out on new cars!” jokes Weller. Why was the Dallara so good? “Obviously it had an aero advantage, but the biggest thing was the mechanical construction. Particularly the gearbox – a lot stiffer than what Ralt and Reynard were doing.”

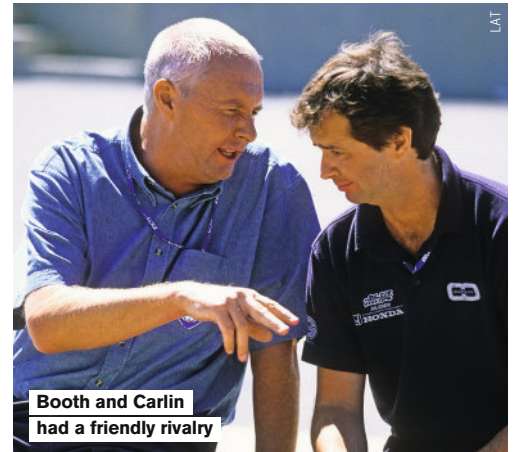
From that day Dallara crushed British F3, apart from brief flashes from TOM’S, Lola (ironically in an effort spearheaded by Weller’s Promatecme team, as well as P1 Motorsport) and Mygale.

STEWART VERSUS RENAULT

The first few years of Dallara domination from mid-1993 were a story of Paul Stewart Racing. The team won six titles between ’92 and ’98.

“The whole run of those years was just incredible,” says engineer/team manager Bruce Jenkins. “It only came about because of the vision of Jackie and giving us the opportunity of doing what we believed we could do.

It was the first team to bring in that Staircase of Talent you see at others now – you only have to look at what Carlin are doing.” The difference here was that Stewart acquired the sponsors himself to choose drivers on talent. “People knocked him, but it was a fantastic business model,” says Jenkins.



Booth and Carlin had a friendly rivalry

Although Edenbridge interrupted PSR’s run with an Oliver Gavin title in 1995, the team’s biggest rival was Promatecme, which entered as a factory Renault squad in ’96. Nicolas Minassian arguably should have won the ’97 title only to be banned from some races for a stone-throwing incident, while Enrique Bernoldi looked set for ’98 honours until his form faded. New boy Jenson Button also starred in ’99, but won only three races. The Serge Saulnier-run team counted Weller as one of its engineers in what he agrees was an edgy time. “It was, partially because of some of the characters involved,” he says. “You had Bruce and Andy Miller on one side, and Serge was often on the limiter!”

“Renault put a crew from the F1 factory on the F3 engine – even Bernard Dudot was involved on the initial design. But one of the downsides of an operation like Renault is you have to play along to their politics. They’d sold engines to Piers Portman Racing and Martin Donnelly Racing that weren’t the same spec as ours, and we had to swap Enrique’s engine to save a bit of face. The first engines had all been based around the Clío



Minassian was foiled in 1997 fight with Kane

“The secret of F3 is doing a good, thorough job, but enjoying it”

TREVOR CARLIN



Jan Magnussen's 14 wins with PSR in 1994 is a season-record tally

Williams, but they ran out of blocks, so they did a new engine which became the Formula Renault unit, and it was never quite as competitive." It was always strong at Thruxton, Weller says: "It had horsepower; it just didn't have the torque."

PSR was now under the ownership of Ford as a junior team to the F1 squad, and its titles dried up. "Maybe the focus wasn't as sharp as it had been before," suggests Jenkins. "The F1 project was more important."

MANOR/CARLIN: THE FRIENDLY WAR

By the time Stewart – now in the guise of Jaguar Racing – pulled out at the end of 2001, F3 was in a new era of domination: Carlin Motorsport and Manor Motorsport. Gone were the Stewart/Promatecme politics; it was now a friendly game between the lager-drinking southerners of Carlin and the Yorkshire Tea-quaffing northerners at Manor. Carlin recalls: "What we learned from Bruce [Carey] has held us and 'Boyo' [Hiatt left to form Raikkonen Robertson Racing, now Double R Racing, for 2005] in good stead ever since. It's good old-fashioned, basic engineering.

"It worked for us and it's the secret of F3: doing a good, thorough job, but enjoying doing it. We've tried to keep it fun. We all know motor

racing is hard work, but if you don't have fun... bloody hell."

Manor stepped up from Formula Renault with Promatecme refugee Marc Hynes (who'd won the Renault title with Manor in 1997) and Tor Sriachavanon (now Graves). "Tor committed himself quite early so that gave us a chance to get organised," says team boss John Booth, whose squad would evolve into the Virgin/Marussia F1 operation. "Getting Marc on board was the icing on the cake. His second year in F3 was so important, so it was a massive gamble to him. Marc and Stan [his father] came up for a cup of tea and within 10 minutes of walking in they felt at home again."

Booth says the team worked using FRenault principles: "We didn't know any different! We went to Jarama for three or four days, shifting ballast, trying to understand it. We came back to Silverstone for the first official test and Marc was right on it. At the second or third test we were four tenths clear and had to get Gavin Harrison from Neil Brown to check our airbox!"

Hynes won the 1999 title, and Antonio Pizzonia followed suit in 2000 after a mid-season lull. "We ran Toby Scheckter [whose brother Tomas, at Stewart Racing, was Pizzonia's major

title rival] at the Marlboro Masters," says Booth. "Antonio thought he was spying on us for Tomas and he had a wobble, but we got it back on track."

Manor should have run Kimi Raikkonen in 2001, but Sauber promoted him straight from FRenault to F1. That season, a field of incredible talent (featuring Andre Lotterer, James Courtney, Gianmaria Bruni and Andy Priaulx, among others) played second fiddle to Carlin duo Takuma Sato and Anthony Davidson. "We had two fantastic drivers, two good budgets, a dream team of engineers [Hiatt and Burgess] and mechanics," says Carlin. "That was an important year for us. It was a similar scenario in 2008: I managed to persuade Helmut Marko to give us a couple of Red Bull juniors, and he gave us two awesome drivers: Jaime Alguersuari and Brendon Hartley. And then we got Oliver Turvey – another fantastic driver – from Racing Steps."

Manor, meanwhile, had switched to the F3 Euro Series in 2004. The team had taken Lewis ▶

Takuma Sato Carlin's first champion

"After my dad took me to the 1987 Japanese GP, I became a huge fan of British motorsport because so many teams and great drivers came from British F3. F1 was almost unreal, but looking at F3 was realistic.

"England had such a strong structure of junior categories, and I started with Hughie Absalom at Diamond Racing. Growing up in that age was such an important time, and when I came to F3 I had great fun racing Martin O'Connell in the National Class.

"When I had the opportunity to test with Carlin I was so excited! Trevor gave me so much of his time

and I thought this was the team I wanted to join. British F3 was so competitive you had to be with the right team, because you were up against so much talent and experience. After that it was an unbelievable two years. I still remember every single moment! I learned a lot from Ben Collins in 2000 – he was my team-mate and like a big brother. Then I had great times with Anthony Davidson in '01.

"Carlin was a small racing team and it's incredible what they have achieved – I'm really proud to have been a part of it."



WILLIAMS/LAT

► Hamilton to the Renault UK crown in '03 and, as a protege of McLaren, he had to use Mercedes engines. Merc wasn't willing – yet – to supply engines for British F3. “We couldn't run Lewis without Mercedes, and we couldn't run Mercedes without doing the Euro Series,” says Booth. “I would have loved to have stayed in Britain, but it gave us a fresh challenge and made us a better team.”

THE END

Mercedes came to Britain in 2006, its attack spearheaded by the Raikkonen Robertson team. After Mike Conway won the title, this was the engine everyone wanted, and Carlin followed suit in '07 before switching to the new VW/Spiess product in '09. Now F3 was big money (up from £350,000, including 35 test days, for a Carlin seat in '01 to sometimes more than double that with certain teams). British F3 was trying to take on the Euro Series by running rounds abroad and, when Gerhard Berger took over the presidency of the FIA's Single Seater Commission – and in the process converted the Euro Series to a full-blown FIA European championship – the end was nigh.



Carlin secured three mega-talents in 2008



By 2012 the F3 field (pictured at Monza) was just 14-strong

What was the point in contesting a domestic series that went abroad, when for the same money – or less – you could do the FIA's?

By this time FOTA had almost total power, with the GT-focused Stephane Ratel Organisation, as promoter, happy to devolve responsibility to the teams, since they knew the market. The last 'proper' year was 2012 as Berger took the helm at the FIA, but even then the teams were struggling to make double-figure grids.

“We shot ourselves in the foot,” says Trevor Carlin, referring to a last-ditch U-turn not to join the BTCC package for 2009. “The teams, the promoter all thought British F3 would go on forever. No one realised the world was changing. When we had meetings with TOCA [the BTCC promoter] we were moaning about the schedule and not being in garages – petty things like that.

It was pride before a fall. We've ended up in the same position in the FIA championship.”

An attempt to refocus with lower budgets for 2014, allowing older cars to compete on an equal footing, and continuing with older-spec engines, fell flat on its face. Grids dropped to as low as five cars. Martin Cao delivered a belated first title for Fortec Motorsport, whose owner Richard Dutton was arguably British F3's longest-standing competitor, but it wasn't a great contest.

Fortec and Double R fought hardest alongside FOTA chief Briggs to keep it going, but when German F3 chiefs rejected an offer of a merger for 2015 that was the final straw: for both series. Better to remember the great days.

“F3 is where my heart is and I'm still a big fan of it,” says John Booth. “As a driver and engineer, it's the place to learn your trade.”

CHAMPIONS

1979	Chico Serra	Project 4 March-Toyota 793
1980	Stefan Johansson	Project 4 March-Toyota 803/803B/Ralt-Toyota RT3
1981	Jonathan Palmer	West Surrey Engineering Ralt-Toyota RT3
1982	Tommy Byrne	Murray Taylor Racing Ralt-Toyota RT3
1983	Ayrton Senna da Silva	West Surrey Racing Ralt-Toyota RT3
1984	Johnny Dumfries	David Price Racing Ralt-Volkswagen RT3
1985	Mauricio Gugelmin	West Surrey Racing Ralt-Volkswagen RT30
1986	Andy Wallace	Madgwick Motorsport Reynard-Volkswagen 863
1987	Johnny Herbert	Eddie Jordan Racing Reynard-Volkswagen 873
1988	JJ Lehto	Pacific Racing Reynard-Toyota 883
1989	David Brabham	Bowman Racing Ralt-Volkswagen RT33
1990	Mika Hakkinen	West Surrey Racing Ralt-Mugen Honda RT34
1991	Rubens Barrichello	West Surrey Racing Ralt-Mugen Honda RT35
1992	Gil de Ferran	Paul Stewart Racing Reynard-Mugen Honda 923
1993	Kelvin Burt	Paul Stewart Racing Reynard-Mugen Honda 933/ Dallara-Mugen Honda F393
1994	Jan Magnussen	Paul Stewart Racing Dallara-Mugen Honda F393
1995	Oliver Gavin	Edenbridge Racing Dallara-Vauxhall F395
1996	Ralph Firman	Paul Stewart Racing Dallara-Mugen Honda F395
1997	Jonny Kane	Paul Stewart Racing Dallara-Mugen Honda F397
1998	Mario Haberfeld	Paul Stewart Racing Dallara-Mugen Honda F397
1999	Marc Hynes	Manor Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F399
2000	Antonio Pizzonia	Manor Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F399
2001	Takuma Sato	Carlin Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F301
2002	Robbie Kerr	Alan Docking Racing Dallara-Mugen Honda F302
2003	Alan van der Merwe	Carlin Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F302
2004	Nelson Piquet Jr	Piquet Sports Dallara-Mugen Honda F303
2005	Alvaro Parente	Carlin Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F305
2006	Mike Conway	Raikkonen Robertson Racing Dallara-Mercedes F306
2007	Marko Asmer	Hitech Racing Dallara-Mercedes F307
2008	Jaime Alguersuari	Carlin Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F308
2009	Daniel Ricciardo	Carlin Motorsport Dallara-Volkswagen F308
2010	Jean-Eric Vergne	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F308
2011	Felipe Nasr	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F308
2012	Jack Harvey	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F312
2013	Jordan King	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F312
2014	Martin Cao	Fortec Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F312



Red Bull tested the likes of Vergne in F3

CLASS B/NATIONAL CLASS/SCHOLARSHIP CLASS

1984	Keith Fine	MAS Promotions Ralt-Volkswagen RT3
1985	Carlton Tingling	Ralt-Volkswagen RT3
1986	Steve Kempton	Tony Trevor Racing Ralt-Volkswagen RT30
1987	Gary Dunn	Swindon Engines Reynard-Volkswagen 863
1988	Alastair Lyall	Swallow Racing Reynard-Volkswagen 873
1989	Fernando Plata	Bowman Racing Ralt-Volkswagen RT32
1990	Charles Rickett	Bowman Racing Ralt-Volkswagen RT33
1991	Pekka Herva	Fred Goddard Racing Ralt-Mugen Honda RT34
1992	Paul Evans	Mark Bailey Racing Ralt-Mugen Honda RT35
1993	Jamie Spence	Bowman Racing Bowman-Mugen Honda BC2
1994	Duncan Vercoe	DAW Racing Dallara-Vauxhall F393
1995	Martin Byford	Z Speed Racing Dallara-Vauxhall F394
1996	Simon Wills	Z Speed Racing Dallara-Vauxhall F394
1997	Martin O'Connell	Rowan Racing Dallara-Toyota F395
1998	Phillip Scifleet	Rowan Racing Dallara-Toyota F395
1999	Martin O'Connell	Rowan Racing Dallara-Toyota F398
2000	Gary Paffett	Fred Goddard Racing Dallara-Renault F398
2001	Robbie Kerr	Fred Goddard Racing Dallara-Renault F398
2002	Adam Carroll	Sweeney Racing (P1) Dallara-Mugen Honda F399/F300
2003	Ernesto Viso	P1 Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F300
2004	Ryan Lewis	T-Sport Dallara-Mugen Honda F300
2005	Salvador Duran	P1 Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F304
2006	Rodolfo Gonzalez	T-Sport Dallara-Mugen Honda F302
2007	Sergio Perez	T-Sport Dallara-Mugen Honda F302
2008	Jay Bridger	Fluid Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F305
2009	Daniel McKenzie	Fortec Motorsport Dallara-Mugen Honda F305
2010	Menasheh Idafar	T-Sport Dallara-Mugen Honda F305
2011	Kotaro Sakurai	Hitech Racing Dallara-Mugen Honda F305
2012	Spike Goddard	T-Sport Dallara-Mugen Honda F308
2013	Sun Zheng	CF Racing Dallara-Mugen Honda F308

GOODBYE



BRITISH F3

THE GREAT CAR

RALT RT3

The ground-effect Ralt RT3 became the car to have after this model – raced by Stefan Johansson in late 1980 and Jonathan Palmer in '81 – won two successive British F3 titles with two different teams. **JONATHAN PALMER** reveals its secrets

CAR AND TEAM

My Formula Ford sponsor, Mike Cox, had a company called West Surrey Engineering based in Ashford, Middlesex. It was logical to step up to F3 and I persuaded Mike to make the step: we looked at buying the championship-winning Ralt, which Ron Tauranac had loaned to Project 4 for Stefan Johansson; the other thing was the Anson [designed by Gary Anderson] – they would have done a very good deal but it would have

changed my career hugely! We went for the known quantity. Dick Bennetts had engineered Stefan and gone back to New Zealand to work in Formula Atlantic. I kept badgering him, saying I had plenty of people, a good budget – it was a fair degree of optimism, if not bullshit! Eventually I ground him down. He came over and we assembled a team of three people: Dick, Harvey Spencer as mechanic and a truckie/gofer called Dave Stevens.

EARLY WINS

We won the first four races, after Stefan had won the last four of 1980. It was a fairytale start, so the BBC and Murray Walker came down to film the new superstar in the next round at Thruxton. I got taken out at the Complex on the first lap by Cliff Hansen!

TYRES

It was the early days of control tyres, and the Goodyear G54 was very good. Tyres were just black, round things that you bolted on the corners – there wasn't as much focus on them as there is now.



Jonathan Palmer was talking to Marcus Simmons



SPONSORSHIP

We were really lurching through it! We spent £55,000, which in today's money is around £220,000. That would be a sensible budget for F3 now. We did a lot of testing [35 days] but we only had three people in the team. We had no data on the car so I had to do circuit maps from every session – I can virtually remember all my exit revs now. Mike Cox told me at one point we didn't have

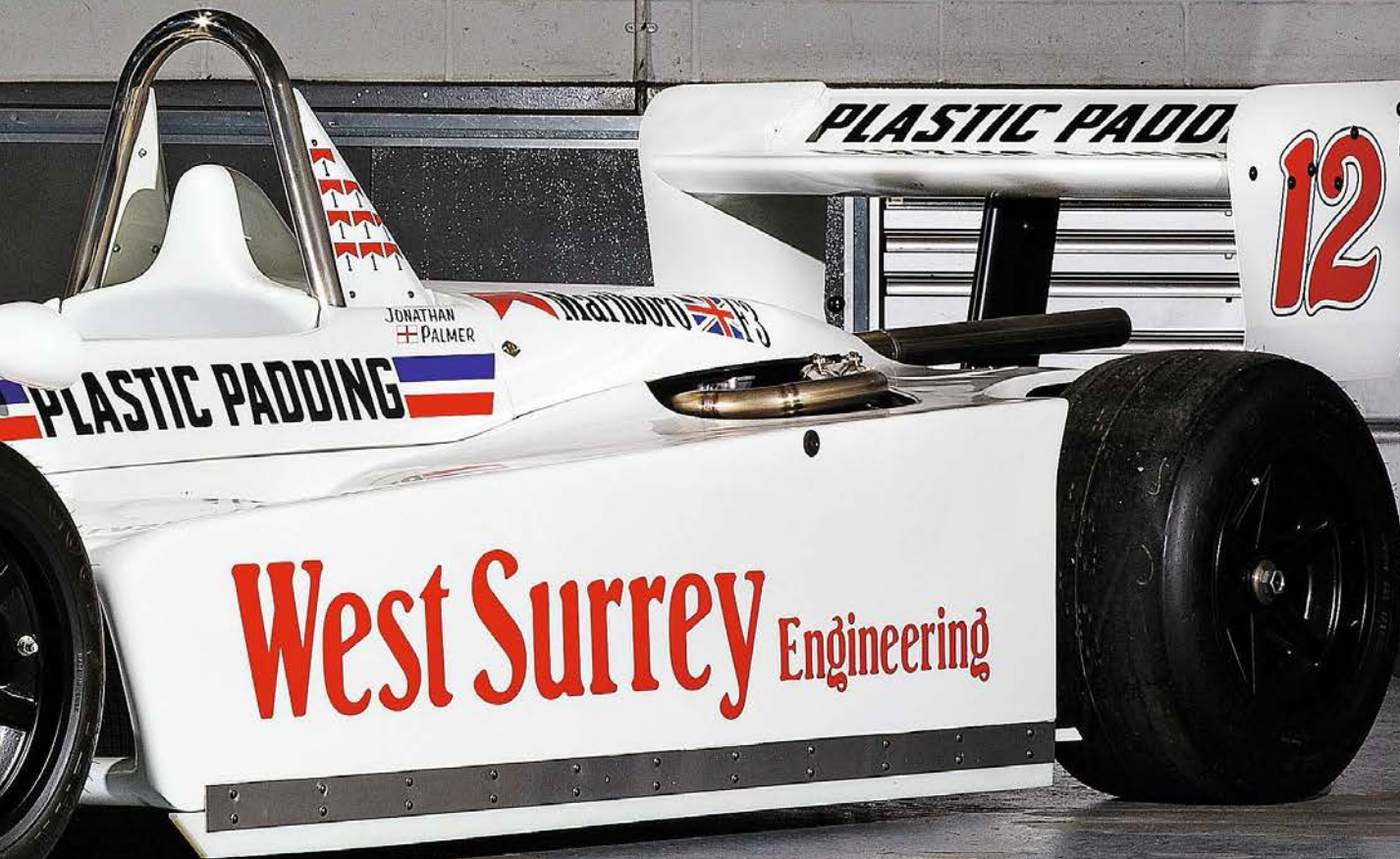
money to carry on, but I had lunch with him a couple of weeks ago and he said we could have done! We got backing from BP, Plastic Padding, Racing for Britain, John Cavill, Tricentrol... Also I had an idea that was almost like crowd-funding: people bought stickers saying 'I'm backing a future British grand prix star' and we sold 3500 of them. Very much hand-to-mouth!

TITLE-CLINCHER

I'd clinched the championship, all was relaxed and chilled, and we went to Silverstone [for round 18 of 20]. Dick tried a tweak. We had this innocuous plastic on the ceiling above the rear tyres. We got protested and excluded, and we lost a double win's worth of points, so I wasn't champion anymore. We went to Snetterton and had a big hit in a startline fiasco. I was in despair, but before the restart the team worked amazingly to pull the car back together. The left-hand wheelbase was 1cm shorter than the right, and if ever I drove with a red mist it was then. I was champion again! But then I got the Silverstone wins reinstated anyway.

ENGINE

Most people ran Toyotas. We went for Mader to build ours; I think Dick just thought it might give us an edge. I remember I went down to Geneva three times – I'd put the engine in my Golf GTI and camp in the car for three days while Heini Mader rebuilt it. We had about 160bhp, with maximum revs at about 6100rpm and peak power at 5500. The air restrictor was at 24mm. It was a sweet engine, quite torquey but with a very narrow power band, a bit like a modern diesel. It had very crisp throttle response.



DOWNFORCE

I went from Formula Ford, where you played around with the rollbars and chucked it around on the track, to Formula 3. I don't think it was so much about having a smooth driving style as that I was more technical than my rivals. I worked very methodically with Dick, who was the same, and that enabled us to have a

faster car. Half the job of the driver is to develop the set-up so it's a faster car. March had half an idea on ground-effect and Argo had half an idea, but Ralt did a significantly better job. A lot of it was intuition though, and the job of the driver was more important then, in reporting back what the car was doing.





XPB IMAGES/LAT

Séance R China Master Challenge
尚酷R中國大師賽

澳門格蘭披治
Grande Prémio
Macau

FERRARO/LAT



AN UNCONVENTIONAL CAREER

41

Mike Conway was a hot property in IndyCar despite refusing to race on ovals, and has landed one of the best sports car seats in the world with relatively little LMP experience. EDD STRAW explains what makes the Toyota ace special

When Mike Conway announced that he was unwilling to race on ovals any more on the eve of the 2012 IndyCar finale at Fontana Speedway, his future didn't look bright. Even he believed that his IndyCar career was done for and, after investing five seasons in racing open-wheelers in the USA, it was unclear what the next step was.

He admits that he briefly wondered whether he might ever sit in a racing car again. Yet, two and a half years later, with the help of

canny management from Mark Blundell, he has managed to continue to be a force in IndyCars – winning three races in the past two seasons driving for unfancied teams – as well as earning himself one of the most sought-after drives in motorsport with the Toyota World Endurance Championship squad.

That's what makes the 31-year-old such a remarkable case. Talk to Conway about the decision to hang up his oval-racing helmet, and he makes it seem like the most rational and obvious decision he could possibly have made. But how many drivers would have had the conviction not only to do it, but to announce publicly his reasoning rather than coming up with some convenient excuse? Not many. Over the years, there have been several drivers who ▶

Stand-in role for Nakajima has led to full-time drive



► have privately admitted to being uncomfortable with that form of racing, but never seriously contemplated turning their back on it.

Perhaps that's a clue to the kind of character Conway is. Unquestionably, it takes real tenacity to turn what appeared to be a career dead end into the springboard for the chance of a lifetime.

"Whether it was conventional, unconventional, it's just a thing that happened," says Conway of his decision when the putative headline of this story was put to him. "All drivers are pretty strong-minded and strong-willed. For instance, look at a guy doing a normal job; there are definitely some days when he doesn't enjoy his job but gets on with it. I'd never had that feeling before in racing, so this was a decision I had to make. It could have been a complete flop and I'd never be back in a racecar ever again. But it was right.

"I'm very fortunate to be where I am now. Me, Mark [Blundell, long-time manager] and my dad made a plan a few years ago and it has

come to fruition. It's been a case of having that goal and sticking to it."

Conway is currently preparing for his WEC campaign alongside Alex Wurz and Stephane Sarrazin, in the sister car to last year's drivers' championship-winning entry, driven by Anthony

(see over the page). He came back with Andretti Autosport at the start of 2011 and raced on full-time for two more seasons in IndyCar before making that momentous decision to retire from left-turn-only tracks.

While the decision didn't follow immediately,

"In terms of Le Mans, I've only done it once, but I don't feel at a disadvantage because I've got really strong team-mates" MIKE CONWAY

Davidson, Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima, the latter having moved over from the seat now occupied by Conway. But the Briton's path to this great opportunity has its roots in the 2010 Indianapolis 500, when Conway suffered a huge shunt that put him out for the rest of the season

that accident played a big part in the move. Conway also cites being in the 2011 season finale at Las Vegas, when Dan Wheldon was killed after, like Conway at Indy, his car flew into a retaining fence. Then there was Conway's second aerial accident at Indy a year later, the consequence of some unnoticed front-wing damage after clipping a mechanic at a pitstop.

"In terms of driving on ovals, the only one I really liked was Indy, because it was unique and I always felt I could get some speed out of the car there," he says. "I had my big shunt, but it was just a crash and I came back. Obviously, Dan had his big accident and that made it hit home to me how lucky I was.

"I started thinking about it more but I had a good opportunity with AJ Foyt in 2012, so put it to the back of my mind. Then I had another shunt at Indy and it brought back those memories. I started to think I had made the wrong decision coming back. But typical driver, you just want to get on with things.

"Then I got to Fontana and, I don't know, I just didn't like the place and made the decision during the test session to stop. Maybe it was a combination of things building up that I tried to put off and forget about, but there was a strong underlying feeling that I didn't want to ►

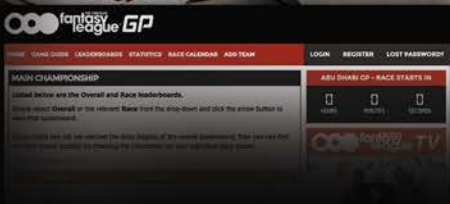
Conway is paired with experienced Wurz and Sarrazin





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NEW NAMES UP IN LIGHTS

Indy Lights enters its next era in 2015 with a new car, and an influx of drivers and teams. What does it mean for the final step before IndyCar on the US ladder?

T

he 2015 season is the beginning of a bold new era for US open-wheel racing. Brand-new cars will fight out the Indy Lights Presented by Cooper Tires series, battling for honours on the final step of the Mazda Road to Indy ladder, as the drivers vie for recognition that would promote them to the holy grail of North American racing: a career in the Verizon IndyCar Series.

Out has gone the old-faithful Dallara Indy Lights chassis, which served for 13 years, replaced by the Dallara IL15, a state-of-the-art car built to the latest IndyCar and FIA safety standards, powered by the turbocharged, 450bhp, AER-built Mazda MZR-R engine, which offers another 50bhp when the push-to-pass is used, and sporting a paddle-shift gearbox. In have come competitors from European racing, joining those who have already made their mark on the Mazda Road to Indy ladder, in some cases right from the karting Driver Advancement Program,

via the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda and Pro Mazda Championship Presented by Cooper Tires, and then into Indy Lights.

Why the new look? "The technology in racing has advanced quite a bit," explains Dan Andersen, CEO of Lights organiser Andersen Promotions. "The older Dallara Indy Lights car was originally designed for oval racing only, and later adapted for road courses.

"It was a good race car, but it was outdated. I felt that the value wasn't there to support the budgets. We wanted to make it attractive for drivers to come and race, not just with the car but with better street races and more double-headers."

With many of the sub-Formula 1 categories in Europe based upon modern spec Dallara chassis, it was clear that Indy Lights needed a similar kind of weapon to broaden its appeal. "Dallara have exceeded my expectations with the new car," says Andersen. "They've more than delivered. Our car has to train drivers for a higher-level career, mainly IndyCar. It needs advanced technology and to be visually appealing. They've delivered us something great. We've



Scott Dixon gave thumbs-up to car

had Scott Dixon, James Hinchcliffe, Josef Newgarden and Tristan Vautier drive it, and they've found that the adjustments needed to get into the happy zone on the car are the same as they'd do on an IndyCar. So when you jump in an IndyCar it'll feel a whole lot more comfortable when you adjust dampers, springs and ride height. That's exactly what we wanted."

The schedule this season has expanded to 16 races, 14 of them supporting IndyCar, run over 10 race weekends.



Mazda MZR-R engine offers 450bhp, plus 50bhp on push-to-pass



Scott Hargrove is already a champion on the Mazda Road to Indy ladder

Four road courses, three street circuits and three ovals give a strong education for any aspiring IndyCar contestant. The double-header events feature one race on Saturday, and one just before the IndyCar main event on Sunday, maximising exposure for the drivers to those watching trackside, those viewing on TV through NBC Sports Network or ESPN International, or even those following on the action on the RoadToIndy.TV website.

That's good news for those who aspire to race in IndyCar. Already, 19 of the 33 starters in last year's Indy 500 were Lights graduates, while reigning champion Gabby Chaves graduates full-time to IndyCar this year with Bryan Herta Autosport. That means three of the past four Indy Lights champions will be on the IndyCar grid for the season opener on the streets of St Petersburg.

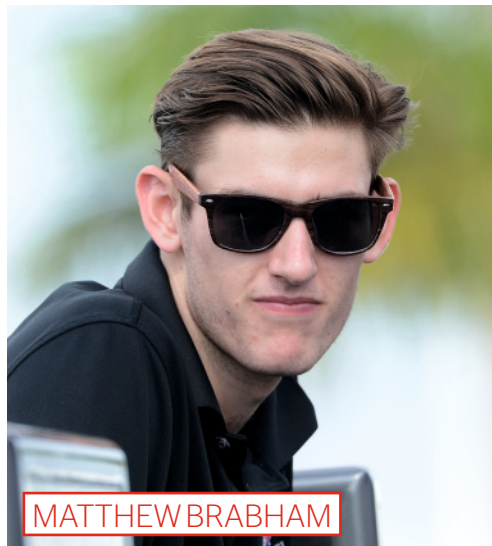
But there had never been a guaranteed 'scholarship' graduation to the pinnacle, until now... The 2015 champion will get a minimum of three IndyCar races next year, and that includes the Indy 500. "That was one of the problems in the past," states Andersen, "ensuring that our graduates could advance. It's a challenge everywhere, including in F1 - there is no automatic guarantee that a ladder champion will move up. But we want to have our champions to have a chance - if they're trained well, and perform well in those three races, then the hope is that they can connect with a team and stay. If they can get through a proper audition like this, it bodes well for our series."

"We'd love to do more [than three races], but it is do-able on limited budgets to advance over here. Matthew Brabham went through USF2000 and Pro Mazda and into Indy Lights via scholarships."

The merit-based progression is something European-based racers are noticing. With only two of the four champions from the main F1 'ladder' series moving up this season (one looks set to make a sideways step and the other has an F1 reserve deal, but no race programme), it's



JACK HARVEY



MATTHEW BRABHAM



MAX CHILTON

interesting that Felix Serralles and Ed Jones have switched from Formula 3 to Indy Lights, with F1 refugee Max Chilton also getting involved. What's more, top British team Carlin is joining the Lights field with Jones and Chilton, with Italian squad EuroInternational looking towards a 2016 attack.

"That is very satisfying and encouraging," says Andersen. "People are beginning to recognise that it's a very clearly defined path. Europe has a lot of options, but in North America it's much simpler. Even a lot of drivers in IMSA [in United SportsCar] have come out of the Mazda Road to Indy development ladder, proving that this is a great place to train."

Budgets are competitive with European racing. As in any category they vary, but the average for 2015 is just over \$1 million, approximately equivalent to £650,000 or €880,000. That's a little bit more than an average F3 or GP3 budget in Europe, but some way below one for GP2 or Formula Renault 3.5. And the financial commitment for the step to IndyCar is nowhere near as daunting as for F1!

Andersen finds his own experience running a team on the Mazda Road to Indy ladder stands him in good stead. "I was running 11 different cars at one point!" he says. "The business plan we've put together for teams allows them to be more profitable. It's a hard business to be in, but I never forget my roots."

He also has a word for those wary of ovals. Obviously mastering this craft is vital for an IndyCar career, but Andersen feels that the inclusion of races at Milwaukee, Iowa Speedway and the Indianapolis superspeedway itself



Shelby Blackstock steps up to Lights

– with the Freedom 100 on Carb Day for the 500 – gives an ideal spread of such venues. "Having those ovals is essential training for drivers," he argues. "There's more of a fear of ovals than there should be."

Confidence is there for a season-starting grid of 15 to 18 cars when the field is unleashed for the opening round on the streets of St Petersburg, a useful advance on last season. There are seats still available at 8Star Motorsports, Andretti Autosport, Belardi Auto Racing, Conquest Racing, McCormack Racing and Team Moore Racing. "We've just got to find the drivers with the right talent, budget and experience," says Andersen.

With the new car, the signs are that Indy Lights will do just that in its new era. ■



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Impact with fence tore Conway's chassis apart

WALCZAK/LAT

ANATOMY OF AN ACCIDENT

Mike Conway will never forget lap 199 of the 2010 Indianapolis 500, even though he didn't get to experience the accident until he watched the video footage of what happened a couple of nights later.

After Ryan Hunter-Reay hit fuel trouble, Conway had no choice but to cut to the inside. But he made contact with Hunter-Reay and Conway's Dallara was launched over the front-left wheel. Fortunately, the rotation of the car meant that the impact, while he was still travelling at over 200mph, was with the floor of the car. Even so it was a savage crash, with the survival cell coming to rest on its side on the track. Conway

suffered a broken left leg, as well as a compression fracture to a vertebra.

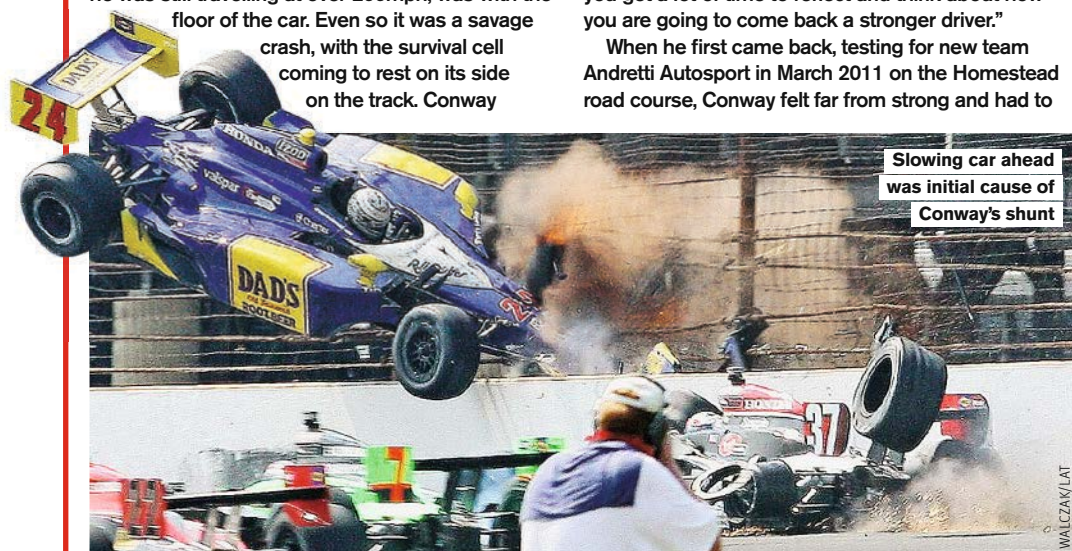
"I initially thought it wasn't that bad, that I'd only broken my leg and would be back in a month or two," says Conway. "You don't realise how long it takes. The hardest thing was just the time it took to heal. The biggest frustration was that you would have a good week, then a couple of bad ones, then good weeks again, then another with no improvement, but you get a lot of time to reflect and think about how you are going to come back a stronger driver."

When he first came back, testing for new team Andretti Autosport in March 2011 on the Homestead road course, Conway felt far from strong and had to

rely on the leg being wrapped and pain medication to keep things under control.

"I remember coming down to the hairpin for the first time," says Conway. "I hit the pedal and had so much pain in my leg. But I didn't let anyone know it was difficult. All the way through the end of '11, and a little bit into 2012, I was having to do things to keep on top of it. I still have to do stuff now to keep it strong, and there's things I will have to do until the day I die. That's just part of it."

There's no impediment in terms of driving, although his fitness regime is now based on cycling – and, as he puts it, the leg is "a bit lumpy and scarred up". But it's also "a strong old leg".



Slowing car ahead was initial cause of Conway's shunt

WALCZAK/LAT



Race finished under caution after crash

WILLIAMS/LAT

► do it anymore. Then one day, it all came out. I'm glad it happened because sooner or later it was going to. It was best to let someone else get in the car and do a good job, otherwise you're wasting everyone's time.

"Thanks to AJ [Foyt] for being so understanding. I wasn't sure what he was going to say, but it was the right decision. But when I did that, I thought the same thing as everyone else – that's me over in IndyCar."

But it wasn't. While Conway made a concerted effort to break into sportscars that year, landing a top LMP2 drive with the G-Drive Delta/ADR squad (also contesting an American Le Mans Series round at Mosport Park with the Level 5 HPD squad), he unexpectedly re-established himself in IndyCar as a non-oval specialist.

First, Conway was called up by Bobby Rahal to race a third entry on a one-off basis at Long Beach, the track where he had taken his first

IndyCar victory two years earlier. Then Dale Coyne Racing called on Conway to drive in the Detroit double-header, which resulted in a pole position and a win.

Conway is hugely grateful to both teams for an opportunity to get back into IndyCar racing that he suspected would never come. Even those early opportunities with Rahal and Coyne were only accepted because "this may be my last chance to get in one, so why not?" ►

CONWAY'S CAREER STEPS



FERRARO/LAT

EARLY SUCCESS

After two years racing in Formula Ford, Conway stepped up to the UK's Formula Renault 2.0 championship in 2003 with Fortec Motorsport. After finishing fourth in his first season, he won the championship in his second year – beating, among others, Paul di Resta.

FORMULA 3

Conway finished third in the British F3 Championship in his first season, creating the perfect platform for his superb 2006 season with Double R Racing. He won the British championship, as well as taking victory in the blue-riband Macau Grand Prix.



GRIFFITHS/LAT

GP2

After a toe-in-the-water in 2006 with DPR, Conway raced full-time in GP2 in the following two seasons, first for Super Nova and then for Trident. Victory at Monaco in 2008 was his sole win. But he also tested for the Honda and Brawn F1 teams.



STALEY/LAT

INDYCAR

From 2009-2014, Conway started 73 IndyCar races for Dreyer & Reinbold, Andretti Autosport, Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, AJ Foyt Enterprises and Dale Coyne Racing. He won four times, twice in the Long Beach Grand Prix.



BOYD/LAT

SPORTSCARS

After quitting oval racing, Conway established himself in sportscars in 2013 with a strong season in the G-Drive-backed Delta/ADR LMP2 ORECA. He claimed four class victories in eight starts, earning himself a test-driver role with Toyota.



EBREY/LAT



Conway has already claimed an LMP1 win, in Bahrain

► But that win, and subsequent outings with Coyne in 2013, led to Conway dovetailing his road/street-course programme with Ed Carpenter's team in 2014 alongside his Toyota commitments. Last year, he won another two IndyCar races. But he realises his refusal to race on ovals will always inhibit his opportunities in IndyCar, so he believes the time is right to focus on his LMP1 activities with Toyota.

After winning four WEC rounds in the LMP2 class in 2013, Conway raced for Toyota three times last year. While not initially announced as having a race programme, he was always slated to fill in for Nakajima when the Japanese was otherwise engaged with a Super Formula campaign. He was in the mix for promotion to a full-time seat, should one become available. And with the troubled Nicolas Lapierre being benched mid-season, and not restored to the full-time line-up in 2015, Conway had his chance.

He's already got one outright win in WEC, in Bahrain, and it's likely there will be more to come.

"It's good to focus on one programme, especially with Toyota having a good chance of another strong year, although I have enjoyed doing multiple programmes," he says. "At the end of 2012, I wasn't sure what I was going to do and I was just picking things up here and there. I really did enjoy it but it's great to channel your energy into one programme."

You could say that Conway's plan could not have worked better. Step one, switch to sportscars; step two, become a test driver for a manufacturer; step three, land a full-time race seat with the top team. Hundreds of drivers attempt that route and the vast majority of them never get anywhere near one of the elite drives at the top level in LMP1.



Conway tested the Brawn at Jerez in a post-season session



STALEY/LAT

“I wasn’t sure what I was going to do and I was just picking things up here and there” MIKE CONWAY

“We looked into sportscar racing as being good for a long-term career,” he says. “We were speaking to Delta at the time [for 2013] and it all fell into place. I really enjoyed the LMP2 racing and the whole realm of sportscars; it’s quite different. But I like the whole teamwork aspect. At the back of my mind, I always had LMP1 and a manufacturer seat in mind and it all came together. It’s unbelievable really.”

Conway credits the fact that he was racing an ORECA chassis in LMP2 as the reason for Toyota noticing him, given the French squad’s involvement with the Japanese manufacturer’s project. That, combined with Conway proving to be the most impressive driver in a line-up also

including rapid ex-Formula 1 racer Antonio Pizzonia, not to mention being the fastest driver in ORECA LMP2 machinery that year, proved his credentials. As for Toyota, given that he’s logged thousands of miles in the car, it knows exactly how quick he is, so this is a seat landed on merit, not by default.

That doesn’t mean it will be easy. Wurz and Sarrazin have vast experience in prototype racing (Conway was still racing karts when they started out in sportscars), and the quality in the manufacturer line-ups is unquestionable.

As you’d expect for a driver who has a strong CV, with championships in British Formula Renault and F3 (as well as victory in the Macau

Grand Prix, Honda and Brawn Formula 1 test experience and GP2 wins), Conway is quietly confident. But, by character, he is not the kind of person to shoot his mouth off about how good he is. Instead, he is calm and assured, just as you would expect of a driver with the clarity of thought to quit oval racing.

“Last year, it was a great opportunity to be involved in the Toyota programme,” he says. “I knew it was where I wanted to be, so to have a full race seat is what I wanted. They had a mega car last year, and this year it looks very good, although you are always unsure what the competition have come up with. It’s a great opportunity and there will be a fun season ahead.

“In terms of Le Mans, I’ve only done it once but I don’t feel at a disadvantage, because I’ve got really strong team-mates and a lot of knowledge around me. Le Mans is still a unique place, and it’s one of the ones where you get to the end of the race and you feel like you really know the track. Having that year of experience, I learned a lot – you get lots of laps around there.

“Obviously, these guys have done it many times and know the place like the back of their hand, but I feel like the year I did in 2013 was a really tough one in terms of conditions, raining on and off. It was quite a hard one. So I feel ready. And we’ve got more testing to come.

“By the time we get around to the first race at Silverstone, there’s no reason why I shouldn’t be fully up to speed and ready.”

For someone who managed to turn what superficially appeared to be career suicide into the chance of a lifetime, success at Toyota is probably guaranteed. There will be wins in 2015, surely. And if that is the case, the foundations can be built for a long career in LMP1. 🏆

How Penske became a V8



Supercars team



ELLMAN/LAT



The most illustrious team in US motorsport has tried its hand at many categories over the years.

MARK GLENDENNING explains how it comes to be in Australia

Roger Penske might be known as the owner of the most formidable open-wheel race team in North America, but he has always been a man of catholic taste when it comes to motorsport. In addition to his immensely successful IndyCar team, Penske has been a long-time campaigner in NASCAR, there have been several forays into sportscars, and at one point in the 1970s the team even entered Formula 1.

And now it's racing a V8 Supercar in Australia, with two-time V8 Supercar champion-turned-NASCAR-race-winner Marcos Ambrose returning home from his nine-year stay in the US to drive it. To make it all happen, Penske has bought a majority stake in Dick Johnson Racing, a long-standing institution on the Australian motorsport

Team is encouraged by early progress in two-day open test



► scene whose owner and founder was himself a five-time ATCC and three-time Bathurst winner.

The combination of Penske, DJR, Ambrose and Bathurst sounds exciting, if perhaps a little left-field. On the surface, there appears to be no more obvious reason for Penske to go into V8s than there would be for it to race in the BTCC or the DTM. Confusion in this regard is understandable: even Penske team president Tim Cindric admits that he was caught off-guard when the idea was first run past him. But Penske does not do anything without a reason, and in this case, understanding his desire to race on the other side

of the Pacific first requires you to understand something about Antipodean truck distributors.

“Roger’s company aligned themselves with a trucking distributorship down there,” Cindric says. “They service about 85 dealers throughout Australia and New Zealand, and when he took it over he did a survey with all these dealers, and one of the questions on the surveys asked what they invested in from a marketing perspective.

“The one consistent answer was V8 Supercars, and Roger has always felt that the culture of his business is racing. So he contacted me in 2013 and said he’d be interested in trying to understand how to promote his association with these brands in Australia through racing, and that could be through sponsoring a race car, it could be through hospitality, or it could be running a race team itself.

“Honestly, I thought in the beginning, ‘Are you serious? You’d consider racing halfway around the world?’ So I waited, and usually with Roger, the second time by, it’s going to go green. We have a lot of discussions about a lot of crazy ideas that never happen. But when he called the second time, he said, ‘Hey, some guys by the name of Dick



Cindric (left) and boss enjoy another Indy win

LEVITT/LAT



Ambrose returns after nine years racing in the US

MARCOS AMBROSE RETURNING LEGEND

The first time Marcos Ambrose drove a V8 Supercar in anger – at the Australian Grand Prix support race at Albert Park in 2001 – he put it on pole. At the time, he'd just returned from Europe after his open-wheel career had been stymied by a lack of funds, and by the end of the season he'd secured eighth in the championship and been named rookie of the year.

His V8 career is difficult to put into historical context because it was so short – he only raced in the series for five years (his NASCAR career was almost twice as long). But what he was able to achieve in that time was remarkable, particularly for someone who arrived in the category with a grounding in single-seaters.

After his first season, he never finished lower than third in the championship, and when he left for the US he did so with 28 wins, 18 poles and two championships to his credit.

A big part of his success was his Stone Brothers Racing team, run by salt-of-the-earth New Zealanders Ross and Jim Stone. Their meticulous approach to racing was reinforced by the presence



Ambrose won 28 times...

of engineer/V8 Supercar-whisperer Campbell Little, and putting Ambrose into the cockpit resulted in a customer Ford team that beats its mothership senseless – and all the Holdens on the other side of the divide – with alarming regularity.

Ironically, that rapid success was a big part of Ambrose's decision to try NASCAR: the appeal of adding more silverware at home paled in comparison to the opportunity to try something new while time was on his side.



...in five-year V8 Supercar stint



CIANFLONE/GETTY

CIANFLONE/GETTY

CIANFLONE/GETTY

“Honestly, I thought at the start, ‘Are you serious? You’d consider racing halfway around the world?’”

PENSKE PRESIDENT TIM CINDRIC ADMITS HE WAS CAUGHT OFF-GUARD

Johnson, and Ryan Story [DJR managing director], and Campbell Little [now-former DJR sporting director] are going to come over. Give them a tour of the race shop. These might be guys that we’d consider working with in Australia.’ And at that point I decided I’d better get on a plane and get over there and get to the last race of the season.”

The DJR team that Cindric found when he made his first trip to Australia was one that had faced an increasing struggle to retain the powerhouse status that it had enjoyed during the ’80s and into

the ’90s. Steve Johnson and Paul Radisich’s win at the Queensland 500 in 2001 would be the team’s last for seven years, and when James Courtney secured the championship in 2010, it ended a 15-year title drought. The battle for results was matched by years of snowballing sponsorship problems behind the scenes, and climaxed with a split between Johnson and business partner Charlie Schwerkolt that put the very existence of the team in question. Penske came along at a time when DJR was very much

open to well-resourced outside help.

Of all the racing organisations on the planet, few have a more strongly defined team culture than Penske. On that basis it might come as a surprise to learn that the core of DJR has been left largely intact.

“There’s this perception that it’s Penske-ised, and it’s not that way at all,” says Cindric. “A big part of why we chose Dick’s organisation to partner with was the quality of his people, and the loyalty that they have shown over the years. There’s one person that came from Penske and that’s Jeff Swartwout, the team manager.

“[Technical director] Nick Hughes is someone that we hired from the outside, but he wasn’t a Penske employee. But all the mechanics, all the fabricators, the front office, the merchandise people, the parts people, the engine people, all of those are ex-DJR employees.”

The team might not have been ‘Penske-ised’ in terms of staff, but you only have to look at what the missionaries in the era following the age of exploration were able to do to recognise that you can export a culture without sending a whole lot of people along with it. DJR Team Penske might ▶

CIANFLONE/GETTY

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PENSKE



THE DRIVER

Roger Penske made his first professional start as a race driver at the now-closed Marlboro Motor Raceway in Maryland in 1958. He amassed numerous wins over the years, mostly in sportscars, and also made two F1 starts in the US GP at Watkins Glen in 1961 and 1962, finishing eighth and ninth respectively.

1958

THE TEAM OWNER

Penske retired from driving in 1965 to focus on his Chevrolet dealership in Philadelphia, but he returned to racing a year later to run a pair of Corvettes in the endurance races at Daytona (below) and Sebring.



DONOHUE ARRIVES

Penske's first real success as a team owner came via the cars he prepared for his friend Donohue, who became a dominant force in the USRRC and Trans-Am during the late 1960s. Their exploits included a surprise win at the Daytona 24 Hours in 1969 (left).

PORSCHE LINKS

Penske Racing and Donohue began to collaborate on developing the 'ultimate Can-Am car' in 1972. This eventually led to the outrageous Porsche 917/30, which dominated the series and set a world closed-course speed record that would stand for 11 years.



EARLY INDY SUCCESS

Penske and Donohue made their debut at Indy in 1969, with Donohue finishing seventh and picking up rookie of the year honours. Three years later, they won. In total, the Penske/Donohue combo contested the Indy 500 five times.

FIRST INDYCAR FORAYS

Penske and Mark Donohue first ventured into single-seaters together in 1968, when Donohue contested a series of USAC-sanctioned events.

1969

EXPANSION INTO NASCAR

Donohue was again at the wheel when Penske moved into NASCAR's top tier for the first time in 1972. Their maiden victory came early the following year at Riverside.

1972

1977

1980

BRICKYARD DOMINANCE

No team owner can match Penske's 15 Indy wins, and five of those came during the 1980s through Bobby Unser, Rick Mears, Danny Sullivan and Al Unser. Later, Helio Castroneves and Gil de Ferran combined for a Penske Indy 500 hat-trick.

1980

FORMULA 1 FORAY

Penske ran in F1 between 1974 and 1976, mostly with its own car: first the Penske PC1, and later the PC3 and PC4. (It also briefly campaigned a March 751.) The PC4 took John Watson to victory in Austria in 1976.

1974



► have retained most of its original staff, but Swartwout — who was previously tasked with setting up Penske's ALMS and NASCAR Nationwide programmes — is there to make sure things are done the Penske way.

"It's not the sort of thing where you can wave a magic wand or flick a light switch," Swartwout says. "It's a matter of taking the time to understand what their MO has been, and how do we change that to get in step with Penske, which is probably more formal than what they are used to, with a lot more checks and balances. But as far as we're concerned, it's a model that has proven successful and it's a model that we have to adhere to here.

"It's a task that requires patience and an awful lot of communicating with folks on a group and individual basis. The one thing that has made things a lot easier is that everybody here from the old regime wants to win, and that's why we're here. Providing them with additional

“We're very hungry for success, and we're expecting success. Having said that, we have a lot of homework to do”

TEAM MANAGER JEFF SWARTWOUT

resources and an improved work environment, that's all part of the commitment Penske is bringing to the team here. And I think for the most part everybody has responded positively.”

Penske does not go racing for the mere sake of participating, but it is being realistic about its expectations for its first full season. The current

V8 Supercar is a completely different specification to that campaigned with so much success by Ambrose a decade ago, and Penske has arrived in the middle of the current's car four-year lifecycle — in two seasons' time, the rules will change again.

And like IndyCar, V8s Supercars is competitive enough that just a couple of tenths can make vast

STOCK CAR REGULAR

Penske's first NASCAR tilt ended in 1977, having amassed five wins between Donohue and Bobby Allison. It returned for two races in 1980 to field a car for rookie Rusty Wallace, and again in 1991 with the formation of Penske Racing South. By the end of 2005, Wallace would have 37 Cup wins with Penske.



1991

SPRINT CUP TITLE SUCCESS

Two years after Brad Keselowski gave Penske its first national NASCAR title by winning the Nationwide crown, he went one better and secured the Cup championship for the team in 2012.



2005

2012

MODERN INDYCAR ERA

Penske won back-to-back CART titles with de Ferran in 2000 and 2001, and consecutive Indy wins with Castroneves in 2001 and 2002. Also in 2001, the team made its first foray into the IRL, and was in the series full-time the following year. Will Power delivered the most recent success with the 2014 IndyCar title.



1988

2000

2002

2014



V8 SUPERCAR PROGRAMME

Penske bought a 51 per cent stake in DJR in 2014 and confirmed plans to run a car for former two-time series champion Marcos Ambrose, who was returning to Australia after nine years in NASCAR. The team made its debut in the finale at Homestead ahead of a full campaign in 2015.



2005

2008

2014

SPORTSCAR RETURN

Penske returned to endurance racing in late 2005 with a Porsche Spyder LMP2. The team won three consecutive class titles in the ALMS, and secured an outright win at the Sebring 12 Hours in 2008 – Porsche's first victory at the event in a decade.



differences to grid positions. Any weakness will be penalised. At the same time, the team is encouraged by its early progress. Its participation in last year's season-finale at Homebush gave it a clear development direction for the off-season, and by the end of the recent two-day open test at Eastern Creek, Ambrose was beginning to feel comfortable in the car.

"We're very hungry for success, and to a certain extent we're expecting success," says Swartwout. "Having said that, we have a lot of homework to do, a lot of preparation and a lot of learning to be able to crack into the upper tier of the series. Initially we'll be happy just to finish races, learn how the races are managed, and get Marcos back into step with the competition.

"We're cautiously optimistic. Certainly through the first half of the season it will be a win for us if we can crack into the top 12 or top 15. We have a lot to figure out. But it's the same for everyone, and we just have to do our job." ❧



Ambrose joins up with Aussie racing legend Dick Johnson

“I’M BACK, AND I’VE GOT THE SPEED”



56

Dean Stoneman’s career was derailed by cancer when he was just weeks from the start of the 2011 Formula Renault 3.5 season. Now he’s back where he belongs. By **PETER MILLS**

Dean Stoneman has completed a four-year odyssey. His career has come full circle and returned to the point he had reached in early 2011, just before frighteningly advanced testicular cancer – choriochoriocarcinoma – was diagnosed. While urgent treatment was administered, Stoneman relinquished a signed deal to partner Red Bull-backed rising star Daniel Ricciardo at Formula Renault 3.5 frontrunning team ISR.

Now he is returning to the series. His exceptional GP3 performances last season, which earned him second place in the championship, have been rewarded by membership of the increasingly select Red Bull Junior Team. What’s more, he’s secured a seat at the



Powerboats picked for convalescence...

coveted DAMS squad, with the Le Mans-based team placing its faith in Stoneman to take its third consecutive FR3.5 crown.

“We are four years down the line,” says Stoneman, without any indication of regret. “It’s 2015 and I had planned to do [FR3.5] in 2011. It has hurt me a bit, but all I can do is what my body allows me to do. I’m back now and, as you saw from GP3 last year, I’ve got the speed.”

It’s worth recounting some details of Stoneman’s incredible comeback. Intensive treatment at Southampton General Hospital, for 24 weeks, made a year away from competition inconsequential in the grander scheme of things. His treatment, some of which was experimental, and subsequent operations proved successful in removing a multitude of tumours that had spread to Stoneman’s lungs and liver.

Initially unable to cope with the physical demands that a return to car racing would have entailed, Stoneman accepted an opportunity to race P1 Powerboats from sponsor Pickfords. The sport had been part of his childhood thanks to father Colin, the 1995 world offshore powerboat champion.

Stoneman Jr proved to have a natural feel on water, leading to title success at his first attempt. ‘Proper’ motorsport still beckoned, though, and a drive in the Porsche Carrera Cup was viewed as a potential gateway into a professional seat in GT racing or the Supercup. Those designs were put on hold when, after nearly three seasons away from a single-seater cockpit, Stoneman made his GP3 debut at the 2013 season finale in Abu Dhabi. Widespread accolades were forthcoming when



...and Porsche Carrera Cup for first step back

a second place was achieved on his debut with Finnish team Koiranen GP.

“The reason I went back to single-seaters was because I felt I’d had something taken from me,” says Stoneman. “When I was diagnosed, I was going into World Series. I felt like I had to give it a go again and see if I still had the ability to drive a single-seater. As soon as I got back in the car I loved it. I wasn’t really surprised; you’ve either got it or you’ve lost it. I still had it.”

Remarkably, Stoneman has adjusted to drive with peripheral neuropathy, or nerve damage, related to his chemotherapy.

“There has been no improvement since I finished the treatment,” he says. “I’ve still got pins and needles in the cockpit. It is what it is and you just have to deal with what you’ve got and the circumstances that are there – you just have to get on and adapt. It’s like someone with no legs. When you get false legs given to you, you adapt to walk again. It’s quite amazing how people can adapt. ▶

“ The reason I went back to single-seaters was because I felt I'd had something taken from me ”



Older, wiser
Stoneman is now
on Red Bull's books

MAUGER/GP3

► "I may not be able to feel my feet, but I'm used to feeling through the tops of my legs and through the joints of my knee. I do it that way. It's just the way you adapt and learn, it's like learning to drive again and I've shown I've still got it."

Koiranen team manager Afa Heikkinen confesses the extent of Stoneman's condition was unexpected, but he remained confident of his new charge's prospects.

"Dean told us quite openly about his condition," he says. "We were a little surprised, but I had spoken to several people beforehand and I thought he could do well."

The Abu Dhabi result encouraged the former F2 champion to commit to a full assault on

“I was testing DTM when Helmut Marko called. It was the best trip I ever took. It’s my lifelong dream to be on a programme like this one”

GP3 with Marussia Manor last year. Three wins were scored before the team's financial difficulties intervened, and precipitated the squad withdrawing from the series with two rounds remaining.

How to tackle this latest hurdle? Stoneman promptly dialled +358 to Finland, seeking a vacancy with his former team. Fortunately Heikkinen was receptive to the proposal.

"I just had this call asking if there was an opening," recounts the laconic Finn. "To be honest, I just said yes straight away, even when I didn't actually know how I was going to make it happen!"

"It was all very last minute," confirms Stoneman. "We knew that Marussia wasn't going to Sochi and were on the phone to a few teams in case the Koiranen deal didn't come off. Luckily for us, it did. It was definitely the right move."

"I don't think the money side of things impacted on the performance at Marussia. We struggled a little for one-lap speed throughout the year, although there was nothing wrong with the car's race pace and we still had wins and podiums."

When I raced the Koiranen car in 2013, even though it was my first time back in a single-seater, there was just something about it that allowed you to drive it easily. When I knew I was going to be racing for Koiranen again last year, I had that feeling again, I knew it was going to be fine."

Two feature-race wins and a second place in four starts propelled Stoneman to the runner-up position in the standings. The significance of the results and subsequent career momentum are not lost on him.

"To be on pole in the Koiranen car at Sochi by half a second was really good. If I hadn't pulled that deal off and we'd finished eighth in GP3 instead of second I don't think I'd be sitting here today talking about being with Red Bull. My dad and I would probably be scratching our heads wondering what we were going to do."

Heikkinen, who has run Red Bull-supported drivers Carlos Sainz Jr and Daniil Kvyat in Formula Renault 2.0, was with Stoneman in Austria when Red Bull first made contact. He concurs with Red Bull motorsport consultant Helmut Marko's decision to recruit Stoneman to the Austrian concern's talent pool.

"Dean has incredible natural feel for the car," says Heikkinen. "He would also ask for some detailed things on the car. Fortunately our engineers are clever and could carry out his requests. It would have been a good addition to our team to keep Dean this year, but I think the move with Red Bull is a good choice all round. It's for the best."

Stoneman will be one of just three drivers on the programme this year, and joins GP2-bound Pierre Gasly and kart graduate Callum Irott.

"I was in Spain testing DTM when I had the call from Helmut Marko requesting a meeting," says Stoneman of events last December. "I took a diversion from Jerez to Vienna, and it was the best trip I ever took. Even if I didn't get the deal it would have been the best trip. We sat down with Helmut, who I thought was a lovely guy, and over a few weeks negotiated a deal to do World Series. It has been my lifelong dream to be on a programme like this. There are only



Three wins in GP3
with Marussia Manor
before team folded

STONEMAN'S TASTE OF FORMULA 1

Competing in a domestic Porsche championship in 2013, Dean Stoneman reasoned that he had already enjoyed the extent of the Formula 1 opportunities that would head his way. As Formula 2 champion, he had taken part in a post-season test at Abu Dhabi with Williams in 2010. The astronomical costs involved in continuing his single-seater career made a return to the world of F1 appear unlikely.

But when AUTOSPORT called to speak with Stoneman last week, he was fresh from completing two days in the Red Bull F1 team's simulator in Milton Keynes. There has been no suggestion of an F1 reserve-driver role yet, but it's a step in the right direction.

"I can't really give any details out, but I have been in the Red Bull simulator. Red Bull haven't said, 'Right, you're going to be in a Formula 1 car.' They just said, 'We'll see how you get on in

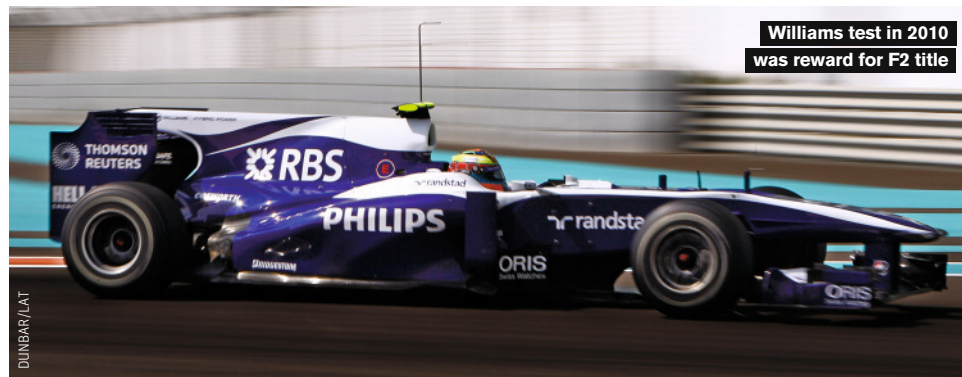
the sim, and how you get on through the World Series season and how we get on from there."

Stoneman certainly acquitted himself well with Williams, finishing a solid fifth fastest despite already suffering symptoms of his illness.

"I remember everything about the Williams test," he says. "It was tough, very tough, but it was special to be with a team like Williams, and to have a great engineer like Patrick Head there was an experience.

"It was quite a lot to take in for one day, but Patrick said I was one of the best-prepared drivers in nine years, that I could actually do a full day of testing with no problems.

"I did do that but, unknown to us, the illness was there at that time. I really didn't think I'd get the opportunity to be this close to it again. I thought it had all been taken away from me in 2011."



Williams test in 2010 was reward for F2 title

DUNBAR/LAT

three drivers on the Red Bull programme now. It's amazing to look at all of the guys, like Vettel, who have come up on it."

Stoneman makes clear that without the support from Red Bull the costs to move into Formula Renault 3.5 were prohibitive. Since his fleeting arrangement with ISR, budgets have increased substantially following the category's adoption of a faster, Zytex-powered, machine.

"We definitely couldn't be doing this without Red Bull," says Stoneman. "We were looking at World Series but, when we realised the budgets, we said straight away that wasn't the way for us."

To emulate DAMS's previous champions Kevin Magnussen and Sainz, Stoneman will have to outshine some serious opposition. Among these are McLaren protege and FR2.0 Eurocup

champion Nyck de Vries, who will occupy the opposite side of the DAMS pit garage, returning highest-placed competitor from 2014 Oliver Rowland and single-seater veteran Tom Dillmann, who moves from GP2.

"Those are all good drivers, but there is no reason why I can't go out there and beat them," continues Stoneman. "They have always been at the top, but I have always been at the top as well, so I'm just coming in at it from a slightly different angle. Tom Dillmann has done a lot of racing, but I'll go out there and do the best job I can. My aim is to be really consistent to get that championship."

Despite his tribulations, Stoneman believes he has never been better prepared for a season – and not just in terms of having the Francois Sicard-led DAMS team's immaculately prepared equipment at his disposal.

"You get older and you get wiser, and you change the way you are and the way you deal with things," says Stoneman. "I was 20 to 21 when I was looking to join ISR; it's a cliché but you don't realise what you've got until you've lost it. Now it's completely different, you enjoy every day and do the best job that you can. If you don't succeed, you can say at least I gave it my best shot. That's where I'm coming from, really.

"To have a deal signed so early, we know exactly where we are, and what we're going to do. This is the best route. To have Red Bull behind me and for them to have the faith in me to do a good job is really another step on a long ladder that started in 2006 and '07. Now I'm at the top. I never expected to be here, so I have to make the most of it while we've got it."

Has a second chance been harder fought? ❧



Stoneman aims to match Sainz's title success in FR3.5

ROZENDAA/LAT

Chevrolet reveals first new-look IndyCar

It's still a Dallara. But with manufacturers now able to modify the bodywork, the first of the new-look designs has been revealed.

MARK GLENDENNING explains what it's all about

When IndyCar fans were imagining the sort of changes that the introduction of manufacturer aero kits for the DW12 might bring, their vision probably didn't resemble an early-2000s Sauber that looks like it has been on the cupcakes.

Chevrolet is the first of IndyCar's two manufacturers to release renderings of its 2015 road/street/short-oval aero package (Honda's is scheduled to appear in a couple of weeks' time).

It's not pretty, but that's a product of what both manufacturers had to work with. Dallara designed the DW12 to hit certain parameters set by IndyCar, including cost and safety. Aesthetics was less of a priority. When the series gave the green light for manufacturers to design their own aero, only certain areas of the car were opened for exploitation. Restrictions such as the prohibition on moving the original radiator mounting and ducting mean that the fundamental silhouette of the DW12 shape remains. The manufacturers' job was simply to squeeze as much additional performance as possible out of the available areas.

"The first step that we took along the process was doing some baselining of today's car to fully

Mirrors

As has been the trend on racing cars for some time, the mirrors have been enlarged and streamlined to reduce their impact on the airflow over the rest of the car.



Front wing

Keeping the original anhedral mounting to the nosecone, the outer wing sections are far more complex, with a three-element wing section, for more downforce. But the other features such as the fences and the large pillar-mounted winglet are likely to be aimed at reducing the front tyres' effect on the rear bodywork rather than pure downforce.

Technical analysis by Craig Scarborough



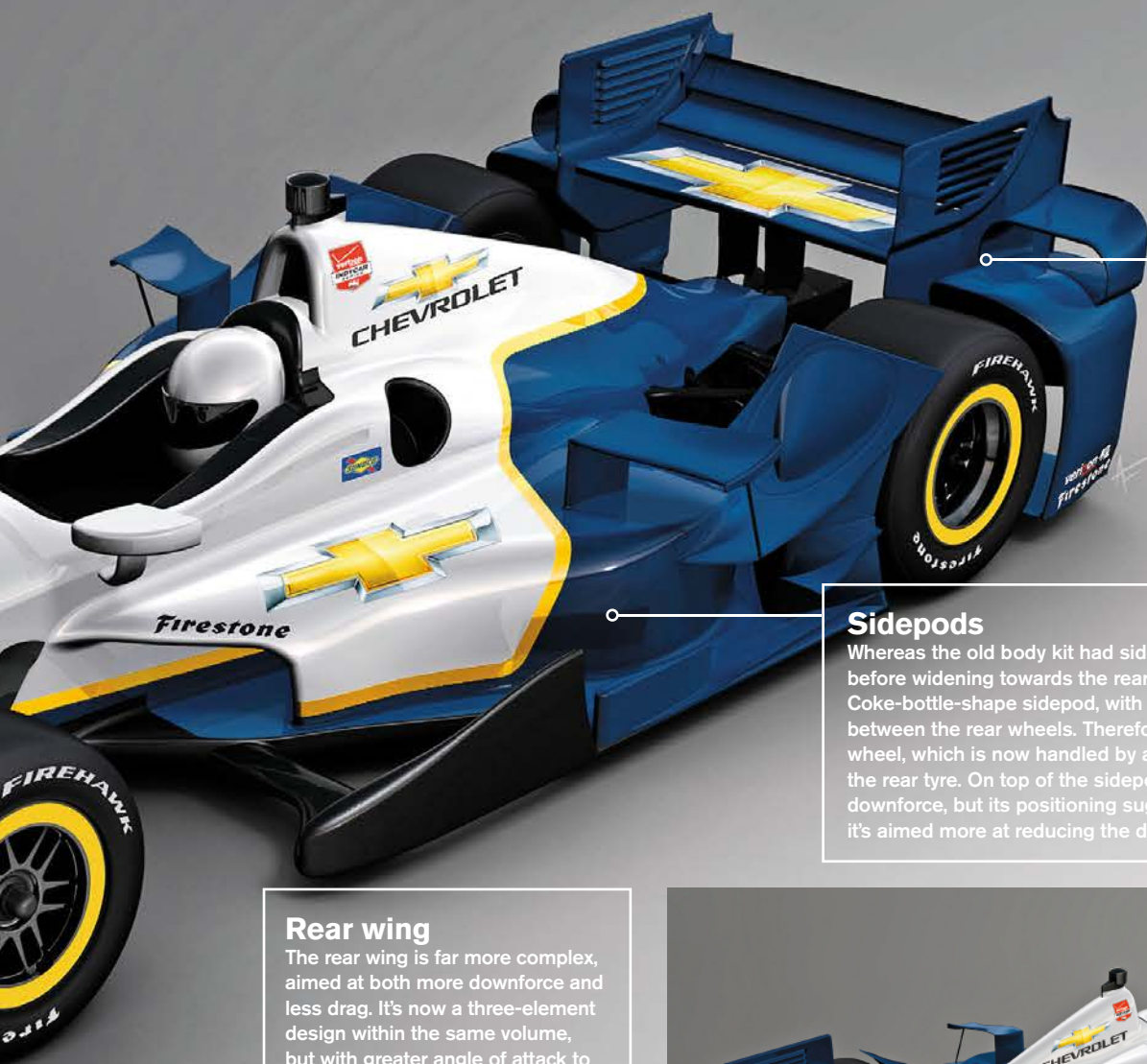
New aero kit (right) shows tweaks to original DW12

understand what the DW12 does on road courses and short ovals to ensure our kit performed to a level that exceeded today's car," says Mark Kent, Chevrolet's director of motorsport and competition.

"Once we understood where we were starting, we developed numerous design concepts. This is probably the biggest challenge, to balance the requirements for the kit. It's not all about downforce, it's not all about drag, it's not all about engine power. It's developing that optimal combination between those three to ensure that we are

providing our teams an aero kit and engine combination that can let them win week in and week out."

Expectations from those teams will be high: this is the aero kit that will help determine the fortunes of Team Penske and Chip Ganassi Racing, among others. Predictably, both teams were called upon to help during the kits' development phase, with Will Power and Simon Pagenaud testing early versions of the package at Austin, Helio Castroneves and Juan Pablo Montoya at Homestead, and Scott Dixon and Tony Kanaan at Phoenix.



Rear-tyre fender

With an open-aero rulebook and the need to protect the rear tyre from contact with other cars, there is a 'fender' both in front of and behind the rear tyres. Linked by a vane to the sidepods, the front fender section is rounded in order to divert airflow both inside and outside the rear tyre. There is also an additional vane lower down on the front fender section, which along with the larger vane will add downforce to the rear end.

Behind the rear tyre is the rear section of fender. This is much larger than the old set-up and will fair in the rear tyre, reducing the low-pressure region created behind the tyre for reduced drag. There's a winglet device fitted atop this fender to further aid the aero performance behind the tyre.

Sidepods

Whereas the old body kit had sidepod inlets angled into a sharp point before widening towards the rear tyres, the new Chevrolet design sports a Coke-bottle-shape sidepod, with narrower inlets widening before tucking in between the rear wheels. Therefore there is no intention to fair in the rear wheel, which is now handled by a complex fender arrangement around the rear tyre. On top of the sidepod is a large winglet, which may well add downforce, but its positioning suggests, like that of the front-wing winglet, it's aimed more at reducing the drag created by the spinning rear tyre.

Rear wing

The rear wing is far more complex, aimed at both more downforce and less drag. It's now a three-element design within the same volume, but with greater angle of attack to the rear-flap elements. Being more aggressive it will create greater wing-tip vortices, which add to the car's drag, so high-pressure air is bled from above the wing to the outer wing tip, thus reducing the drag induced by the steeper flaps. Airflow towards the rear wing is improved by the new rounded engine cover, which also wraps in tighter around the engine to help improve airflow to the rear wing.



“The first step was to ensure our kit performed to a level that exceeded today's car”

CHEVROLET'S MARK KENT

One of Chevrolet's most obvious visual departures from the original Dallara bodywork are the winglets – which Chevy has designated 'flicks' – protruding from the front wing, sidepods, and the heavily revised rear-bumper pod. The latter is an optional part, but the other two winglet pairings bear a heavy resemblance to the late-1990s/early-2000s 'X-wings' that were outlawed in F1 after they kept being torn off by errant air hoses during pitstops. As was the case in F1, they represent the triumph of function over form.

One of the challenges faced by both manufacturers was a late change that IndyCar made to the regulations regarding the DW12 floor; a change that came just as the aero-kit designs were in their final stages, and which reduced the car's downforce by something in the order of 100lb. The flipside is that the gains made through the introduction of the new kit will regain all of that multiple times over. IndyCar has a stated medium-term aim to go after Arie Luyendyk's 19-year-old track record at Indianapolis; Chevrolet's new kit is

the first step towards achieving that.

Placing so much more reliance on the dirtier airflow that runs over the top of the car to generate all that downforce raises questions over the ability of cars to run close behind one another through high-speed corners. The base-model DW12 is not the most attractive racing car ever built, but it has delivered the best single-seater racing on the planet over the past three seasons. The extent to which that has been preserved will only become apparent at the open test at Barber Motorsports Park next month. 🏁



Logano proves he's no flash in the pan

Only a few years ago, Logano's status as a NASCAR rising star was in tatters and he faced an uncertain future. Victory in the Daytona 500 showed that his strong 2014 was no fluke

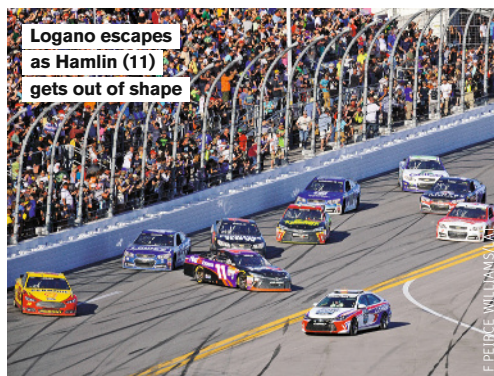
THE DAYTONA 500 MARKS THE START OF A NEW NASCAR Sprint Cup campaign but, for the victorious Joey Logano, it acted more as an underscore to his breakout 2014 season. Had it not been for his car dropping off its jack in a late-race pitstop in last year's season finale, Logano might have been crowned Sprint Cup champion and, having already guaranteed his place in the 2015 Chase with this win, it's clear that the progress made last year was no fluke.

It took a while for the 24-year-old to reach these heights. When he was named as the replacement for the departing Tony Stewart in the Home-Depot backed #20 Joe Gibbs Racing entry in 2009, expectations were sky-high. Despite becoming the youngest winner in the history of Sprint Cup with a fortuitous victory at New Hampshire that year, it took a long time, and a switch to the rival Team Penske squad in '13, for him to fulfil his potential. Last year, the only obvious weakness was the restrictor-plate tracks, and Logano's consummate win at Daytona suggests that this is no longer a problem.

"It's no secret that I probably got thrown into this series too young," said Logano after the race. "I was inexperienced, didn't know what I had to do. Then, the switch to Team Penske was the best

of my career. To be here with a great team was an opportunity for me to regroup, be who I wanted to be as an adult and not as an 18-year-old kid anymore and go out there and work hard.

"Superspeedway racing was not our speciality at all last year and I've never really been that good at this big-pack drafting. Over the off-season, Todd [Gordon, crew chief] and my spotter sat down and watched a lot of tapes. We went up and watched the second Duel on top of the spotter's stand. We watched the Xfinity race up there. We did everything possible to prepare."



Logano escapes as Hamlin (11) gets out of shape

And it showed. Logano ran at the sharp end throughout the race, until the decisive moment of the race came during the penultimate stretch of green-flag running. But he needed a little help from Michael Waltrip Racing's Clint Bowyer, who proved to be, as Gordon put it, "a good pusher for us". A bump from Bowyer helped Logano to assert himself over a lead group including Jimmie Johnson, Martin Truex Jr and Denny Hamlin before a late red flag triggered by Justin Allgaier's shunt following an engine failure. This set up a green-white-checker finish, with Logano leading the field at the restart ahead of Hamlin, Johnson, Truex and Bowyer. But it was two cars behind – sixth-placed Kevin Harvick and eighth-placed Dale Earnhardt Jr – that were the real threat.

Harvick had kept his usual watching brief throughout, always lurking at the front but never laying his cards on the table. Earnhardt had been part of a Hendrick Motorsports line-up that looked almost certain to win the race, with Jeff Gordon leading most laps before slipping back at a restart, Johnson always in contention and Kasey Kahne also thereabouts. But Earnhardt had made a misjudgement at a restart and had to lift, plummeting to the bottom of the top 20 and running out of time to recover. The race came



Poleman Jeff Gordon led a lot of laps but fell back

Logano leads Hamlin, Truex and Johnson

I kept reliving over and over again what it was like down the back straightaway when I came off T2

JOEY LOGANO

down to Logano trying to hold off that pair, running in tandem, to the line.

As Logano took the white flag, you could forgive him for briefly reflecting on the path that had led him to this moment. In 2012, Joe Gibbs had decided to drop him and things looked bleak. Yet after being picked up Penske, here he was in a position to win Daytona.

“Some of the emotions you go through when you start to think about if you will have a job next year are hard as a race-car driver to say,” said

Logano. “It is scary and you don’t know what will happen. That win in Pocono [in his final Gibbs season, 2012] was one of the biggest of my career because I was able to prove to myself that I could still win one of these things. That was a special race for me. Who would have ever guessed three years down the road that we would be Daytona 500 champions. That is just crazy.”

But he still had 2.5 miles to go and it was far from a done deal. Logano had Harvick and Earnhardt right behind him, ready to make a move through the final turn leading onto the tri-oval section. Logano carried a useful advantage and could very well have made it stick even with the pair behind him. But it was all academic, as Austin Dillon turned round Jeff Gordon in the thick of the pack, triggering a multi-car accident on the back straight and bringing out the yellow flag. So Logano took the biggest win of his career cruising under caution.

“I keep reliving over and over again what it was like down the back straightaway when I came off Turn 2 and I was looking in the mirror,” he said. “I saw them crashing and I’m like, ‘OK, keep my foot in here’. You hope there’s a caution, but they weren’t close enough to really make a run.”

Earnhardt was probably the one with the most reason for frustration. He was chasing the 50th race victory at Daytona for the family and had a seriously quick car throughout – as his victory in his qualifying Duel race proved. But the penultimate restart proved his undoing and forced him to play catch-up. An attempt to switch lanes to join the train behind teammate Johnson didn’t work.

“Jimmie was on the quarter panel; he was in a great spot on the guy in front of me,” said Earnhardt straight after the race. “I thought if I could get in behind him, he was going to shoot past to the lead and I could tuck on the quarter panel a little bit as soon as I got on that right-rear. It was one of those moves. You make some good ones, you make some bad ones. I made a bad one too late.”

Jeff Gordon also had reason to be disappointed. He led much of the first half of his farewell Daytona 500, but also slipped back at a restart and didn’t seem to have the speed needed to claw his way back up the pack. He finished 33rd after the final-lap wreck.

But as Logano proved, this was a day for youth. For while this is his seventh season at the top level, he still has a long career ahead of him.

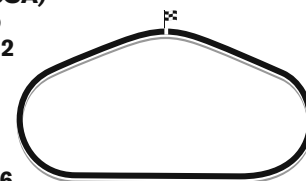
“I have been here a while,” he admitted. “The advantage I have now is that I am basically the same age as them [the other rising stars] but with seven years’ experience. You see the reward from the hard work put in earlier. I feel like I’m still involved with the youth movement, and I hope to be the leader of it.”

On the evidence of Daytona, Logano’s arrival as a force to be reckoned with last year should now be considered as permanent. ❧

NASCAR Daytona 500



Daytona (USA)
Sprint Cup
February 22



Round 1/36

RESULTS

200 laps, 500 miles

1	JOEY LOGANO (USA) Team Penske Ford Fusion (Q05)	3h08m02s
2	KEVIN HARVICK (USA) Stewart-Haas Racing Chevrolet SS (Q11)	+1.006s
3	DALE EARNHARDT JR (USA) Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet SS (Q03)	+1.193s
4	DENNY HAMLIN (USA) Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry (Q42)	+1.761s
5	JIMMIE JOHNSON (USA) Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet SS (Q02)	+2.102s
6	CASEY MEARS (USA) Germain Racing Chevrolet SS (Q41)	+2.578s
7	CLINT BOWYER (USA) Michael Waltrip Racing Toyota Camry (Q09)	+2.779s
8	MARTIN TRUEX JR (USA) Furniture Row Racing Chevrolet SS (Q10)	+3.167s
9	KASEY KAHNE (USA) Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet SS (Q13)	+3.340s
10	GREG BIFFLE (USA) Roush Fenway Racing Ford Fusion (Q08)	+3.373s
11	DAVID GILLILAND (USA) Front Row Motorsports Ford Fusion (Q26)	+3.573s
12	SAM HORNISH JR (USA) Richard Petty Motorsports Ford Fusion (Q38)	+3.765s
13	MICHAEL ANNETT (USA) HScott Motorsports Chevrolet SS (Q27)	+4.141s
14	AUSTIN DILLON (USA) Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet SS (Q30)	+4.239s
15	ARIC ALMIROLA (USA) Richard Petty Motorsports Ford Fusion (Q33)	+4.646s
16	REGAN SMITH (USA) Stewart-Haas Racing Chevrolet SS (Q24)	+8.236s
17	DAVID RAGAN (USA) Front Row Motorsports Ford Fusion (Q28)	+8.317s
18	MATT CRAFTON (USA) Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry (Q4)	+8.612s
19	JOHNNY SAUTER (USA) BK Racing Toyota Camry (Q36)	+9.992s
20	AJ ALLMENDINGER (USA) JTG Daugherty Racing Chevrolet SS (Q40)	+12.213s

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	LOGANO	47	4	HAMLIN	41
2	HARVICK	42	5	JOHNSON	40
3	EARNHARDT	42	6	MEARS	39



Logano celebrates his win in the Big One

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NASCAR XFINITY SERIES DAYTONA (USA), FEBRUARY 21 RD 1/33

Reed takes dramatic thriller



RYAN REED CLAIMED HIS FIRST victory in the renamed NASCAR Xfinity Series (formerly Nationwide) in a chaotic opener.

The Roush Fenway driver took the white flag in fifth position, in the thick of a gaggle of cars fighting for victory. But the three cars separating him from leader Brad Keselowski were put out of contention when Aric Almirola bumped Kyle Larson into a spin, wiping out Ross Chastain in the process. Reed had a grandstand seat for this, as Chastain was torpedoed right in front of him.

After his narrow escape, Reed benefited from a bump from team-mate Chris Buescher – who had run second on the penultimate

lap before running wide and dropping back – to get a run on Keselowski. He made a dramatic dive to the inside of Keselowski through the final turn leading onto the tri-oval section to take the lead.

Keselowski dropped to fifth in the final seconds of the race, so it was Buescher who emerged as Reed's closest challenger. But the race wasn't quite long enough and he crossed the line just 0.009s behind, with brothers Ty and Austin Dillon taking third and fourth.

The headlines were grabbed by Kyle Busch, who speared head-on into a concrete wall on the inside of the oval with 10 laps to go after being caught up in a 'big one' triggered by Erik Jones spinning.

Busch suffered a broken right leg and a fractured right foot, which kept him out of the Daytona 500.

That incident brought out the red flag, the second stoppage of an incident-packed race in which only nine drivers finished on the lead lap. The first halt occurred when rookie Daniel Suarez spun after being bumped by Larson and collected Regan Smith, who rolled.

RESULTS

1 Ryan Reed (Ford Mustang), 120 laps in 2h00m59s; 2 Chris Buescher (Ford), +0.089s; 3 Ty Dillon (Chevrolet Camaro); 4 Austin Dillon (Chevy); 5 Brad Keselowski (Ford); 6 David Starr (Toyota Camry). **Points 1 Reed, 47; 2 Buescher, 43; 3 T Dillon, 42; 4 Starr, 38; 5 Ross Chastain, 35; 6 Dakota Armstrong, 33.**



BAJA RUSSIA

Finns dominated an icy and snowy Baja Russia Northern Forest '15 in the Republic of Karelia. Jouni-Matti Ampuja and Markku Hurskainen snatched a 1m58s victory on the three-day event from Tapio Suominen and Toni Nasman. The winning Mitsubishi Pajero crew was chasing Russian championship points and was not registered for the FIA World Cup. Suominen (above) duly claimed maximum FIA points in his Overdrive Toyota Hilux, with reigning champion Vladimir Vasilyev third in a Mini All4 Racing.

USF2000 WINTERFEST

Tennessee talent Jake Eidson won two of the three races at NOLA Motorsports Park. The 19-year-old from Memphis prevailed in the first race, while Aaron Telitz got past Nico Jamin for second. A stunning drive by Brazilian Victor Franzoni took him from seventh on the grid to win race two from Jamin and Eidson. Franzoni finished first in the finale, but was excluded for a technical infringement. This handed the win to Eidson (below), who survived a clash with Jamin that put the Frenchman out with broken suspension. Jordan Lloyd was second.



Aitken took Louisiana double

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES DAYTONA (USA), FEBRUARY 20, RD 1/23

Reddick claims opener

TYLER REDDICK ONLY HAD 17 NASCAR Truck Series starts to his name heading into this year, but at Daytona he showed the savvy of a veteran to hit the front at the perfect moment.

Reddick had Brad Keselowski Racing team-mate Austin Theriault to thank for his splendid isolation as he crossed the line. It seemed that the train would inevitably swallow up Reddick on the final lap. Scott Lagasse Jr and Erik Jones were

the ones who made the move. Lagasse attacked first to the inside, with Jones going high. Theriault did everything he could to keep them back, making contact with Lagasse and forcing Jones to go a little higher to ensure he stayed clear of trouble. All three lost momentum, crossing the line as one in the victorious Reddick's wake.

Jones took second ahead of Lagasse, with neither delighted by Theriault's canny defensive effort.

RESULTS

1 Tyler Reddick (Ford F-150), 100 laps in 1h56m45s; 2 Erik Jones (Toyota Tundra), +0.173s; 3 Scott Lagasse Jr (Chevrolet Silverado); 4 Austin Theriault (Ford); 5 Ray Black Jr (Chevy); 6 David Gilliland (Ford). **Points 1 Reddick, 48; 2 Jones, 42; 3 Theriault, 41; 4 Black, 39; 5 Bryan Silas, 37; 6 Matt Crafton, 37.**



Reddick started season in style

PRO MAZDA WINTERFEST NOLA (USA), FEB 19-20, RD 1/2

Impressive double for Brit Aitken

BRITON JACK AITKEN SCORED TWO wins at the NOLA Motorsports Park track near New Orleans as he warms up in the States for his Formula Renault Eurocup title attack.

Aitken, who contested a one-off Pro Mazda round last year, managed to keep his Team Pelfrey car just ahead of Malaysian Weiron Tan – who has moved to the US for 2015 to drive with Andretti Autosport – in the first race. Will Owen took third from another Brit, Raoul Owens.

Tan scorched away from the field in the second race to win comfortably from European-based Canadian Nicholas Latifi, who charged from eighth on the grid to second. Aitken got delayed in a big

mix-up at the start, which caused a caution period, but was able to clamber up to fourth behind Owen.

A brave move from Aitken sent him around the outside of Tan at Turn 1 to lead the finale. Garrett Grist, his car patched up after the race-two skirmish, fell to fourth behind Latifi.

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Jack Aitken, 19 laps in 29m57.2619s; 2 Weiron Tan, +0.3387s; 3 Will Owen; 4 Raoul Owens; 5 Garrett Grist; 6 Dalton Kellett. **Race 2 1 Tan**, 14 laps in 30m12.7023s; 2 Nicholas Latifi, +6.9243s; 3 Owen; 4 Aitken; 5 Florian Latorre; 6 Owens. **Race 3 1 Aitken**, 20 laps in 31m32.9568s; 2 Tan, +0.6788s; 3 Latifi; 4 Grist; 5 Jose Gutierrez; 6 Owen.

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Analysis Engineers - to undertake analysis of components and systems to identify the potential to maximise performance. Previous experience of FEA, CFD or multi-body dynamics techniques is an essential requirement.

Simulation Engineers - to support both the "clean sheet" layout of systems and the development of existing systems. Experience of GT-Suite or similar is preferred.

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Cosworth is renowned for its engine programmes and so experience in high performance powertrains will be an advantage, however we will consider exceptional applicants from other industries. A good degree is required for most positions and typically between 2 and 10 years of relevant experience, but applicants with more experience are welcome to apply.

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THE CANDIDATE SHOULD BE AN ENGINEER WITH:

At least 5 years of experience in on-car control systems (chassis or engine)
In depth understanding of F1 chassis control application functionalities
Awareness of potential issues within the interaction of chassis / engine control
Knowledge in F1 KERS and/or ERS energy management strategy will be an advantage
Experience in the modern model-based rapid control development processes
Practical experience in McLaren TAG320 ECU and the development suite of tools

THE CANDIDATE MUST ALSO HAVE:

Excellent competence in technical co-ordination and arbitration
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Demonstrate a deep knowledge of F1 Power Unit and regulations
Show a strong awareness in engine physics.

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Fielding was a title contender in BRDC F4 last year with HHC

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DRIVER ANNOUNCEMENTS

continue to flow in both MSA Formula and BRDC Formula 4, but neither is bursting at the seams as the clock ticks down to the start of the season.

During the past two years there has been a clear number one series, thanks to British Formula Ford's struggles and the demise of Formula Renault. If you were serious about getting into single-seaters, BRDC F4 was the place to go. The numbers make that unarguable.

Now though, there's a credible alternative. At least in the eyes of karters pondering the next step.

Certainly, Britain's top-level international karters have seen MSA Formula as the place to be, with Dan Ticktum the latest in a long line of top talents that includes world champions Lando Norris and Enaam Ahmed.

Ticktum's decision to join the MSA Formula field was, it is said, due to his age. A very promising test for Lanan's BRDC F4 team looked like it might spark a delayed entry into that series. But Ticktum, who doesn't turn 16 until later this year, was not willing to miss the first few races.

Both series are now well into double digits for confirmed drivers, but big teams in both are still searching for drivers to fill their seats. These are busy times for the UK junior racing scene, and if some budget rumours are to be believed it's definitely a good thing that there isn't just the one option.

We offer a small glimpse into the world of both series this week in our National Focus. Two series known colloquially by similar names can make it confusing at times, and technical specifications, finances and pace are useful, interesting comparison points.

Fielding in MSA Formula move

BRDC F4 star joined by karting ace Ticktum in TOCA support series

McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC Award finalist Sennan Fielding will switch from BRDC Formula 4 to the MSA Formula series this year.

After finishing fourth in the BRDC F4 standings last season for HHC Motorsport with four wins to his credit, Fielding has signed to race for the JHR Developments squad, with which he finished runner-up in the 2012 Ginetta Junior championship.

The 19-year-old was on the brink of switching to GT racing, with a Lamborghini Super Trofeo offer on the table, but believes his single-seater experience should enable a title assault in the new-for-2015 MSA Formula.

"JHR has a reputation for having its drivers at the front of the grids in whichever championship they've run in," said Fielding. "I'm confident that we'll have a strong,

competitive car and we will push each other to keep developing it.

"Many drivers are already doing lots of testing which I can't due to a limited budget, but my experience is going to be key and a title shot is definitely on."

Fielding added that he believes the personnel assembled by JHR boss Steven Hunter will allow the team to challenge from the outset.

"With the experience which [ex-Minardi and Arrows Formula 1 chief engineer] Paul Leach brings, I know that we can be a force to be reckoned with."

Hunter said he was delighted to be reunited with Fielding: "JHR and Sennan enjoyed a lot of success together in 2012, and we watched him grow and progress in single-seaters last year.

"Sennan is not only a very talented driver but also has an

impeccable work ethic, and I have no doubt that he will play a key role in helping us to develop JHR's burgeoning single-seater arm."

Also joining this year's MSA Formula field is former karting champion Daniel Ticktum, who has signed for Fortec in his first year of single-seater competition.

Ticktum, 15, will partner Racing Steps Foundation-backed Josh Smith at the Northamptonshire-based team, having won the MSA British and Super One Cadet titles in 2011 and placed sixth in last year's World Championship.

"MSA Formula is the best option as it allows me to get racing experience under my belt immediately," explained Ticktum.

"I looked at BRDC F4 and Formula Renault, but because of my age I would have had to do half a year's testing in either series."

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Jelley last raced in the Carrera Cup in 2011

Jelley back to Carrera Cup with Parker

BRITISH TOURING CAR RACE winner Stephen Jelley will return to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this year with Team Parker Racing.

Jelley previously raced for the team in the TOCA support series in 2010 and '11 following his two-year BTCC stint with West Surrey Racing. He won a total of seven races in the Carrera Cup, twice finishing third in the points.

The 32-year-old joins reigning

champion Josh Webster at Team Parker (see below), and hopes to be immediately competitive on his return.

"We have a good testing programme lined up, so we want to be winning straight away," said Jelley, who has spent the past two years competing in the Blancpain Endurance Series.

"I chose to return because I miss sprint racing, but also because the championship looks rejuvenated and

will have a strong grid of competitive guys. It's also great for my sponsors to be on the TOCA package."

Jelley added that, although he isn't specifically targeting a BTCC reprieve, he wouldn't refuse an offer to return to the championship.

"I didn't want to leave the BTCC when I did, but it was out of my hands. The NGTC rules mean costs are lower now than they were then, which can only be a good thing."

LEADING CONFIRMED DRIVERS

DRIVER	TEAM
Josh Webster	Team Parker Racing
Stephen Jelley	Team Parker Racing
Michael Meadows	Redline Racing
Dan Cammish	Redline Racing
Nicholas Latifi	Redline Racing
Jack Falla	Redline Racing
Dino Zamparelli	Parr Motorsport
Josh Files	Racing for Heroes
Ignas Gelzinis	Juta Racing
Tom Sharp	Privateer

Reigning champion Webster switches teams for new bid

JOSH WEBSTER WILL JUMP SHIP from Redline Racing to Team Parker Racing as he seeks to win a second Porsche Carrera Cup GB title.

Webster secured the crown in his maiden Carrera Cup campaign at last year's season finale at Brands Hatch, dethroning Redline team-mate and two-time champion Michael Meadows.

But the 21-year-old expects to face a sterner challenge this year following an influx of drivers from elsewhere in motorsport into the series.

"It'll be up to drivers not having a bad weekend and not making mistakes," said Webster. "There could be up to six professional drivers who can win races this year, so it will be exciting."

Speaking of his decision to switch teams for 2015, Webster added: "I loved my time at Redline but Team Parker is also a good outfit."

"They took Dan Cammish to victory in the guest car at Brands Hatch last year – that shows they can produce a quality car out of the box."



Webster claimed title in his rookie season

Meadows firms up Carrera Cup return with Redline Racing

DOUBLE PORSCHE CARRERA Cup GB champion Michael Meadows will return to the series this year after renewing his deal with Redline Racing.

Meadows was beaten to title honours in 2014 by team-mate Josh Webster, despite winning nine races to Webster's five, and the 27-year-old believes that consistency will be the key to regaining his championship crown.

"I had lots of wins and poles and my pace was very good, but DNFs were my downfall last year," admitted



Meadows relinquished his crown last year

Meadows. "There'll be much stiffer competition, so some luck and consistency will be required."

"I've got two very quick team-mates in Cammish and Latifi, who should spur me on this year."

Meadows will combine his Carrera Cup commitments with an assault on the Pro-Am Cup class of the Blancpain Endurance Series, sharing an Aston Martin Vantage GT3 with VLN racers Paul Wilson and Stuart Leonard.



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BRDC Formula 4

Motors TV to broadcast five BRDC F4 races live in 2015

FIVE BRDC FORMULA 4 RACES will be shown live on Motors TV this year. As a result of the MSV-run series sharing the bill with British GT for six of its eight rounds in 2015, F4 is to receive live coverage for the first time as part of Motors TV's GT programming.

One race from five of the six weekends during which F4 shares the bill with

British GT will therefore be broadcast live, the exception being the opening round at Oulton Park on Easter Monday.

Highlights of all eight F4 events will also be shown on ITV4 and BT Sport, including the standalone meetings at Snetterton and Brands Hatch.

MSV chief executive Jonathan Palmer said: "The addition of live TV broadcasts to our post-event highlights programmes is more good news for BRDC F4.

"The championship will be seen on TV in many more households this year as well as reaching trackside audiences now that it co-headlines with British GT."

● Tom Jackson will return to Chris Dittmann Racing for this year's BRDC F4 season. The 18-year-old contested six of last year's eight rounds, taking a best finish of fifth place on two occasions.



BRDC F4 will get live TV coverage for first time

EBREVI/LAT



Hunt takes top Pomeroy honours

The VSCC season kicked off last weekend at Silverstone with the Pomeroy Trophy. Martin Hunt took top honours for best overall performance in his Frazer Nash Targa Florio (above), while the Densham Trophy for best pre-war car went to Dudley Sterry's HRS Sports.

JEFF BLOXHAM

BRDC

Russell headlines fresh intake of BRDC Superstars

McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC

Award winner George Russell has been named as one of five newcomers to the British Racing Drivers' Club's Superstars scheme for 2015.

Joining the BRDC Formula 4 champion on this year's roster are Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion Charlie Robertson, recent Porsche Carrera Cup GB convert Dan Cammish, Lotus Formula 1 junior Alex Albon and McLaren GT driver Ross Wylie.

Williams F1 test driver Alex Lynn, British Touring Car drivers Jack Goff and Tom Ingram and single-seater aces Ben Barnicoat, Jake Dennis, Matt Parry and Oliver Rowland all remain on the scheme from last year.

BRDC Superstars director and former BTCC champion Tim Harvey said: "We are reducing our line-up to 12 drivers in order

to focus our efforts and give them even greater support.

"We are building on the wonderful success that we enjoyed last year with Jolyon Palmer, Alex Lynn and Ben Barnicoat winning a series of high-profile single-seater championships."



BRDC F4 champion Russell leads Superstars

BLOXHAM/LAT

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club racing



The Nuvolari Trophy in 2013 attracted a star field

AMP-SPORT

VSCC's Premier Cru series is the perfect vintage

Running highly strung racing cars of any era is a notoriously difficult – not to mention costly – business but, when the youngest in the field is more than 75 years old, it takes a committed owner with highly skilled specialist engineers providing on-track back-up to keep the machines in working order, let alone delivering peak performance.

The opportunities for enthusiasts to see representative grids of pre-war Grand Prix cars and Voiturettes were few and far between until the HGPCA piloted its exquisite Nuvolari Trophy event at the 2013 Donington Historic Festival. That experiment – which attracted Alfa Romeo P3s, four, six and eight-cylinder Maseratis, Bugattis, Altas, Frazer Nashes and, of course, ERAs – brought astonishment to onlookers' faces and led to a repeat at Dijon's 50th Grand Prix de l'Age d'Or last summer.

Many of the machines, notably the supercharged 1.5-litre Voiturettes, were not designed to run for long distances in the 1930s, and there is nothing like prolonged periods of high revs on some of Europe's classic circuits to wear old (and in some cases fragile) engines out. That and the logistics involved in travelling to the big international events have led to owners not exercising their precious steeds as often as they would like. For them, the VSCC's Premier Cru Racing initiative is a godsend.

Three exclusive 20-minute races at meetings which attract strong spectator turnouts, a good proportion arriving in vintage cars, should certainly encourage British owners to bring their venerable bolides out, and the feature races are also open to competitors from

overseas, for whom the hospitality and availability of extra track time in the host club's trophy races are major bonuses.

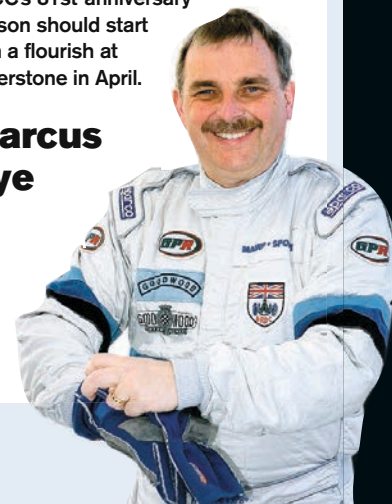
I've enjoyed the races put on by Sean and Laura Danaher at VSCC Snetterton in 2013 and last autumn, but like many rued small entries, perhaps unsurprising at the end of a long season. By formalising Premier Cru for genuine cars only (specials

"For vintage owners, the VSCC's Premier Cru Racing initiative is a godsend"

are outlawed) and offering a short series of sprint races, the initiative should sustain and indeed underpin the sensational pre-war racing car movement for years to come.

Having identified a niche in the sport – and there are still one or two clear historic prospects ripe for exploration – timing and credibility of proponents are everything if such ventures are to succeed. Both in this case are impeccable; thus the VSCC's 81st-anniversary season should start with a flourish at Silverstone in April.

Marcus Pye



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UA-run Audi has been a regular contender for race wins in British GT



In brief

VW Cup duo to GTs

Volkswagen Racing Cup duo Stewart Lines and David Fairbrother will share a car in this year's GT Cup. The pair finished ninth and 12th respectively in last year's VW Cup standings, both driving Scirocco Rs, and will campaign a Porsche 997 GT3 Cup together for the Slidesports team. The new team-mates tested the Porsche last week at Donington Park (above).

Nicosia in Junior move

Geri Nicosia will race in this year's Ginetta Junior championship for the R & J Motorsports team. Fiesta Junior champion Nicosia, who placed fourth in last year's Winter Series, joins the returning Jonathan Hadfield and debutant Frank Bird at the team.

Gamble eyes Supercup

Ginetta GT5 Challenge champion George Gamble is eyeing a step up to the GT4 Supercup this year after being named a Rising Star by the British Racing Drivers' Club. The 19-year old, who dominated the GT5 Challenge last year with seven race wins for the Total Control Racing squad, believes the accolade will help him secure a seat in the TOCA support category.

Cockills get Radical

Ford Fiesta champion Ed Cockill will share an entry with his brother Harry in this year's Radical Enduro Championship. The duo previously claimed the Britcar Production Cup title together in a Honda Civic in 2012, and will team up again in a Radical SR3.

Jorg back in FRenault

Formula Renault 2.0 race winner Kevin Jorg will remain with Josef Kaufmann Racing for an assault on both the Eurocup and Northern European Cup in 2015. The 19-year old Swiss won three races across the two championships last year.

Dorlin steps up to Clios

Junior Saloon champion James Dorlin will step up to the Clio Cup Race Series this year. The 15-year old, who joins Westbourne Motorsport, will have to wait until the second round at Thruxton to make his bow in the championship, since he will not reach the minimum age of 16 until the week after the opening weekend at Rockingham.

British GT

United Autosports out of BGT

UNITED AUTOSPORTS WILL NOT participate in this year's British GT championship, instead electing to concentrate on its GT Cup and historic racing commitments.

The American-owned team first raced in British GT in 2011, and has been a regular victory contender in its four seasons in the series using Audi and McLaren machinery. Its most successful

year came in 2013, when Matt Bell and Mark Patterson fell a point and a half short of winning the title.

Team boss Richard Dean explained that United Autosports would be taking a year out to focus on Phil Burgan's GT Cup programme, adding that the Leeds-based operation could yet make a return next year.

"We've got no plans for British GT this

season," said Dean. "Our customer [Burgan] wants to concentrate on the GT Cup as he wants to drive solo and the series gives great mileage for that.

"I also see 2015 as a transition year for GT3 racing in general. Mercedes, McLaren, Audi and BMW are all launching later this year or next, so as a team it's difficult to know what to invest in. We'll take a view again for 2016."



Bushell (leading) won prize BTCC test last year

Clio Cup UK

BTCC test for Clio winner

THE WINNER OF THIS YEAR'S Renault Clio Cup UK will once again be rewarded with a prize British Touring Car Championship test.

Last year's Clio Cup champion Mike Bushell spent a day driving a Motorbase-run Ford Focus NGTC prior to signing up to drive for AmD Tuning in this year's BTCC, and his successor will benefit from a similar

prize at the end of the year.

Micky Butler, representing BTCC tyre supplier Dunlop, said: "Given the depth of talent on the Clio Cup grid, the winner will deserve their prize.

"This test gives the new Clio Cup champion an early opportunity to gain experience of the Sport Maxx [Dunlop tyre] and one of the best-prepared BTCC cars."

Rallycross

Flaherty gets Albatec 208 seat

FORMER EUROPEAN RALLYCROSS ace Mark Flaherty will compete in this year's British series for Albatec Racing.

Flaherty returned to rallycross last year after an absence of 20 years, finishing third at the Rallycross Grand Prix at Croft driving a Citroen DS3 Supercar.

Partnering Albatec team boss Andy Scott in the team's second Peugeot 208 Supercar, Flaherty has his sights set on title glory in 2015 despite his lack of recent rallycross experience. He will miss next month's season opener at Croft due to clashing commitments.



Flaherty will race 208

Lotus Elise Trophy

Historic prize for Elise champ

THE 2015 LOTUS ELISE TROPHY champion will receive a fully funded test in a historic Formula 1 car.

As part of a new prize package for the series announced at an MSVR media event at Brands Hatch last week, the winner of the club-level Elise Trophy will

be rewarded with a day's running in an as-yet undetermined classic F1 machine.

Historic F1 regular Chris Perkins, who owns a range of Surtees chassis, will provide the car for the test in order to promote his historic racing car preparation business.



Historic racer Perkins will supply the car

FORMULA 4



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

In 2015 there will be two British championships using F4 machinery.

SCOTT MITCHELL explains what separates MSA Formula from BRDC F4



MSA FORMULA

CHASSIS

Mygale FIA-homologated carbon-monocoque chassis

ENGINE

1.6-litre Ford EcoBoost, 160bhp

TRANSMISSION

Sadev-supplied six-speed sequential gearbox with paddle shift

TYRES Hankook

FRONT WING

Adjustable front wing

REAR WING

Adjustable rear wing

BRAKES

AP two-piston calipers

SUSPENSION

Twin wishbones and pushrod suspension, twin adjustable dampers, adjustable anti-roll bar

MSA FORMULA (SUPPORTING BTCC)

DATE	LOCATION
April 4-5	Brands Hatch Indy
April 18-19	Donington Park
May 9-10	Thruxton
June 6-7	Oulton Park Island
June 27-28	Croft
August 8-9	Snetterton 300
August 22-23	Knockhill
September 5-6	Rockingham
September 26-27	Silverstone National
October 10-11	Brands Hatch GP

Jonathan Palmer's BRDC Formula 4 has the trademark and the upper hand, having asserted itself as the number-one junior single-seater category in Britain over the past two years.

But MSA Formula, the UK variant of the FIA's Formula 4 concept and successor to the ailing British Formula Ford category, has been building good momentum since its launch in September last year. AUTOSPORT explains the differences between the two series.

HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?

Two years ago, Jonathan Palmer's BRDC F4 initiative was launched, attracting strong grids and producing good racing. But with the FIA also creating its own version of the concept, one that was different from Palmer's, we now have a second series using a different kind of F4 car, but without the rights to use the name, hence its title of MSA Formula.

With the start of both

TALKING POINT

Arguably BRDC F4's greatest asset is the ability for its cars to follow closely and race well. How good MSA Formula racing is will be a significant element to watch out for.



FORMULA 4

championships still just over a month away, it's difficult to predict grid sizes, although both could still realistically hit 20 cars.

In terms of budget, BRDC F4 can range from £80-120,000, but there is talk of some in MSA Formula running to more than £140,000.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM LAPTIME?

Last year, the BRDC Formula 4 cars were very close in laptime to the leading British Formula Ford runners, despite having a 15bhp power deficit.

The championships shared two layouts – Snetterton 300 and Brands Hatch GP – with the Mygale quicker over the longer layout and the F4 faster at Brands, albeit in better conditions.

There will be a power swing this year, with the MSA Formula cars powered by a detuned 160bhp Ford EcoBoost engine, so expect the quickest junior single-seater to be the Ralph Firman-built F4 this year. 🏆

BRDC F4

CHASSIS

Ralph Firman-designed spaceframe chassis built to IA Article 377 regulations

ENGINE

2-litre Ford Duratec, 185bhp, fly-by-wire throttle

TRANSMISSION

Sadev-supplied six-speed sequential transmission; Cosworth SQ6 ECU

TYRES

Pirelli

REAR WING

Adjustable twin-element rear wing

FRONT WING

Single-plane front wing with two adjustable flaps

BRAKES

AP four-piston calipers with adjustable bias

SUSPENSION

Twin wishbone and pushrod suspension, adjustable front and rear anti-roll bars

BRDC F4 (SUPPORTING BRITISH GT)

DATE	LOCATION
April 4-6	Oulton Park
May 2-3	Rockingham
May 30-31	Silverstone GP
July 11-12	Snetterton 300
August 1-2	Brands Hatch GP
August 22-23	Snetterton 300
September 12-13	Donington Park GP
September 26-27	Brands Hatch Indy



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THIS WEEK

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What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



F1 shouldn't have to be quick-fix entertainment

Pay attention, F1 is a sport

Jonathan Noble's column last week about proposed rule changes in Formula 1 raises some interesting points. It's time that those involved in running F1 remembered that it is a sport, first and foremost, like tennis, cricket, rugby, football and darts – all of which take over an hour and maintain a certain level of interest for that time.

If prospective motor-racing fans need a quick fix, they can find that elsewhere. Why should a sport have to change the way it's presented just because a certain element of society can't keep their attention going for

long enough to enjoy it for all it has to offer? How about those who have supported F1 for years and actually enjoy two or three hours of coverage? Shouldn't their views be sought? Why the panic over how F1 is broadcast? Isn't this a case of tail wagging dog?

The feeling seems to be that watching top sports on TV is becoming a luxury reserved for those who can afford the likes of Sky, and the younger generation who are happy to watch highlights on their phones or tablets.

Nicholas Bateman, Guildford, Surrey

In response to the recent letter

(February 12) from Tim Richardson of Marlborough, with regards to attracting NASCAR to the UK, we totally agree with him and think this is a fantastic ideal! But Tim, surely the place for NASCAR in the UK is at Rockingham Motor Speedway? As the UK's only banked oval, and with an Indianapolis-style pitlane, proper grandstands etc, the whole venue was designed to host this sort of event!

Sarah Thomson
Rockingham Motor Speedway

orientated series of all, produced a race that built and built until that dramatic final green-and-white chequer. My point being is NASCAR listens to its fans – F1 should take note.

Mark Wade
By email

Thanks for the analysis of Australian V8s last week. Having caught the tail end of last season, I am looking forward to watching the full season this year. Great racing with excellent TV coverage. It's the BTCC on steroids!

Marvin Cooper
Exmouth, Devon

I'm glad F1 drivers have been ordered to keep their helmet design

constant through the season, but agree that an occasional change for special reasons should be allowed.

This, I'm sure, has been brought on by Vettel's continuous helmet-graphics changes. It's very irritating, and now he says he's going to defy the 'ban'. Thus proving how arrogant and irritating he really is.

Richard Hargrave
Hitchin

I have recently seen a film entitled *Fifty Shades of Grey*. AUTOSPORT readers should be warned that this is *not* about Ron Dennis's interior-design preferences.

Ian Page
Haslemere, Surrey

BIG NUMBER

7 Number of V8 Supercar titles Jamie Whincup will have won by the end of this year if the season goes his way. He's won six of the past seven...

MILESTONE

Last Sunday's Daytona 500 was the first Sprint Cup race to start without one of the Busch brothers - Kurt and Kyle - on the grid since Atlanta in November 2001



Both Busch brothers missed the Daytona 500

WHAT'S ON TRACK



NASCAR reconvenes in Atlanta for round two

THACKER/LAT

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 2/36
Atlanta, Georgia, USA
March 1
nascar.com

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

Rd 2/33
Atlanta, Georgia, USA
February 28
nascar.com



V8 Supercars to Adelaide

KALISZ/LAT

V8 SUPERCARS

Rd 1/14
Adelaide, South Australia
February 28-March 1
v8supercar.com.au

MY FAVOURITE DRIVER

Michael Schumacher

As a fan, **Mark Glendenning** disliked the German intensely. As a journalist, he soon appreciated Schuey's ability and massive contribution to F1

WHEN I WAS WATCHING F1 AS

a fan in the 1990s, I loathed Michael Schumacher. It started off as a mild irritation in 1994 when he punted Damon Hill off the track in Adelaide to win the 1994 title. I wasn't necessarily a Hill fan either; just sympathised with him as the victim of a cynical move.

But with each passing season, as it became increasingly clear just how good Schumacher was, I began to dislike him more and more. It was that very conflicted sort of dislike that only really exists in sports fans - despite having convinced myself that there was

no-one more distasteful walking the earth, I'd still have queued up for two hours to get his autograph if I'd had the chance.

My position hit full bloom during those early years at Ferrari. Just the thought of those red-clad pitcrews swarming out of the garage like minions from Modor, with Ross Brawn observing from pitwall with the omniscient eye of a bespectacled, unshaven Sauron, was enough to make my upper lip curl involuntarily. There's no *Lord of the Rings* equivalent of Eddie Irvine, but I disliked him most of all.

When Schumacher rammed into Jacques Villeneuve at Jerez and then bounced into the Dry Sack gravel, handing the Canadian the 1997 world title, I couldn't have been happier. Similarly, when Schuey drove into the back of a lapped David Coulthard in the pouring rain at Spa in '98 and then charged down the pitlane, chest all puffed out, to pick a fight with him afterwards, I might have laughed out loud. A sports fan has the divine right to be a myopic twat, and I fully embraced it.

All that said, I wasn't completely blind to



...but Schumacher was courteous and thoughtful

COATES/LAT

the magic that he and Brawn could produce together.

Schumacher's final stint in Hungary in 1998 remains one of the greatest things I've ever seen someone do in a race car.

It changed when I started writing about motorsport for a living in 2001 and began to view Schumacher through the lens of journalistic detachment. In the few times I spoke with him one-on-one, he was never anything other than courteous, and

"It was that very conflicted sort of dislike that exists in sports fans"

rewarded thoughtful questions with thoughtful answers.

And it required that bit of distance for me to understand how his brilliance helped to bring out the best of those who raced against him. The likes of Villeneuve and Mika Hakkinen beat him, but they were stretched to their absolute limits to do so.

And I certainly appreciate now how much he, in his role of arch-villain, really did contribute to the drama for this F1 fan in the mid-'90s. The whole experience wouldn't have been the same without him. ☹️



COATES/LAT

Ferrari domination went down badly...

FROM THE SOFA

WHAT'S ON TELEVISION

Q&A

WILL BUXTON

NBC F1 REPORTER

@thebuxtonblog

AUTOSPORT: What's different about presenting Formula 1 to an American audience?

Will Buxton: I think it's very easy to underestimate the knowledge that the American fanbase has. They are incredibly passionate, incredibly loyal and incredibly knowledgeable. At the same time, we're trying to draw in new fans, so you have a very difficult line to tread – not dumbing it down to the point where those diehard fans will say 'This is childish and ridiculous', but so the new fans are not blinded by the science of it all.

AS: What made you step back from GP2 and GP3 commentary this year?

WB: The US is one of the few territories where F1 viewership is increasing, it's one of the good-news stories in F1 broadcasting and with that comes an inherent responsibility for me to up my game. For as long as I was doing GP2 and GP3 – and as much as I loved it and being a lead commentator – there was always going to be a drain on my time. NBC and F1 has got to be my focus.

AS: What ambitions have you still got?

WB: Print journalism was always my first love, TV was just a lovely mistake. It's something I've fallen into and something I absolutely adore. I would absolutely 100 per cent love to be a lead commentator on Formula 1, but I also want to dedicate my future to NBC because I think they're a phenomenal broadcast team,



XPB/IMAGES

wonderful people to work with and in Leigh Diffey I think we have one of the best lead announcers in the business, if not the best. I can't see Leigh hanging up his microphone anytime soon.

AS: You've received some pretty vicious criticism in your time. How has that felt?

WB: I read every single review – good and bad. When I first started at SPEED, there was a forum thread within two months called 'I hate Will Buxton'. I spoke to James

Allen about it, because he had to go through the 'Stop the Cock' campaign, and asked him how he dealt with it because I really struggled at the start. I'm quite emotional and I do take things to heart. I love this sport and I love what I do; all I ever wanted to do was bring my love of it to other people who love it. To have somebody say, 'This guy's a prick'... it hurt. James gave me some really solid advice about listening to your producers and doing everything you can to ensure that you're doing what those guys who make the television and gave you that job in the first place want you to do and what they believe you're good at doing. I'm just trying to do my job the best I can. If some people like that, great. I can't be anything but me.

Will Buxton was talking to Matt Beer

"James Allen gave me some solid advice about criticism"



COATES/LAT

Buxton grills Jolyon Palmer on GP2 podium

TV pick of

Edited by Matt Beer



DUNBAR/LAT

BARCELONA F1 TESTING: PADDOCK UNCUT

Sky Sports F1
Thursday-Sunday
2100-2115

With the first race edging closer and fans hungry for every scrap of information, Barcelona is the venue for the final – and most significant – stage of pre-season F1 testing. While the minute-by-minute action is best followed on AUTOSPORT Live, Sky F1's Paddock Uncut offers a perfect video round-up and a chance to see the final pre-Melbourne upgrades in action. There's also a chance to quiz commentator David Croft in 'Ask Crofty' each night.



RACHEL BOURNE

RACE OF REMEMBRANCE

Sky Sports F1
Saturday 1930-2030 + repeats

The inaugural Race of Remembrance – an eight-hour endurance at Anglesey featuring and commemorating the armed forces – was one of the highlights of the 2014 national motorsport calendar, and very deserving of this Sky documentary. Ex-rugby pro Richard Parks presents it and both meets and competes against some of armed-forces charity Mission Motorsport's ex-service personnel, as well as speaking to organisers Jon Earp and Major James Cameron about how they put the race together and their hopes for the event.

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ONLINE

the week



ADELAIDE V8 SUPERCARS - LIVE

BT Sport/Motors TV
Saturday 0300-0430/0545-0715
Sunday 0420-0700

International interest in V8 Supercars continues to grow as the final year of the Ford-Holden rivalry begins. Series legend Marcos Ambrose returns from America, bringing the revered Penske team with him in a new partnership with Dick Johnson Racing, but can he topple dominant six-time champion Jamie Whincup? Much-loved ex-F1 venue Adelaide hosts the opener, with both Motors and BT showing all three races live plus multiple repeats.



RALLY SWEDEN HIGHLIGHTS

Motors TV
Thursday 2135-2235

Whether you followed Rally Sweden as it happened and want to relive one of the best WRC rounds in years, or somehow missed the three-way thriller in the snow, this is well worth a second watch. There was nothing to choose between Volkswagen duo Sebastien Ogier and Andreas Mikkelsen and their Hyundai rival Thierry Neuville all weekend and it all came down to the final few miles of the rally, when Mikkelsen squandered his chance to secure a maiden WRC victory. Look out for Neuville's record 44-metre jump and Jari-Matti Latvala's misadventures too.



ATLANTA NASCAR - LIVE

Premier Sports
Sunday 1700-2100

Atlanta Motor Speedway hosts the first 'ordinary' round of NASCAR Sprint Cup after the Daytona 500, moving from its old August position to take the second-race slot from long-time holder Phoenix. Whereas last year Atlanta was one of the final chances to rescue a Chase slot – which Kasey Kahne did with a close win over Matt Kenseth – this time the year's storylines will still only just be shaping up. Premier's new deal (announced at the eleventh hour) means UK viewers can still watch it all too.



2014 CANADIAN GP HIGHLIGHTS

Sky Sports F1
Saturday 2130-2230

The drama-filled Canadian Grand Prix is the one to catch as Sky continues to re-show the 2014 season highlights in the build-up to this year's first grand prix. After so many races of untouchable Mercedes dominance, Montreal was where the Silver Arrows stumbled and Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo's emergence as the hero of the season really began, amid a super-tense lead train led by a hobbled Mercedes, controversial late crashes and the usual Circuit Gilles Villeneuve chaos throughout the field.



GLENN FREEMAN
 EDITOR AUTOSPORT.COM

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 @glenn_autosport

THE KEY DIFFERENCE between Formula 1 testing at Jerez and Barcelona – for those on the ground at least – is the fact that the current Spanish Grand Prix venue has a lunch break. That in itself isn't very exciting, but don't worry – we're not here to dwell on the fact that our journalists get to stop to eat. What's more interesting is how we keep our all-day live coverage of testing busy during that one-hour break, and that's with the help of you.

Last week, unless Fernando Alonso was being loaded into an air

ambulance, we chose a fun topic – usually historical – for readers of our live commentary to discuss on social media. We then pulled out some of the best responses, and filled lunchtime with discussion and plenty of pictures from Formula 1's past. Helmet designs, car liveries and favourite grands prix of all time were discussed.

Judging by the number of responses it was a popular way to pass the time, so this week (starting Thursday) at Barcelona we'll come up with more discussions for you to get involved in using #autosportF1 on Twitter.

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube LOGANO WINS DAYTONA 500



SEARCH FOR: Logano win highlights

The official NASCAR YouTube channel is packed with incidents and race highlights. Check out the key moments in Joey Logano's victory in last Sunday's Daytona 500 in this short, sharp video.

AUTOSPORT'S TWEETERS

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@ScottMitchell89
- Lawrence Barretto**
@lawrobarretto

John Miles

■ ETCC ■ Paul Ricard ■ September 3 1972 ■ Ford Capri RS2600 ■ Beating the works cars



Smart thinking helped Miles/Muir Ford Capri trounce the works cars

I've chosen my only win in the European Touring Car Championship as my favourite race, as it was a very satisfying victory against some stiff competition, particularly from the works Ford Capris.

I knew Brian Muir from our time at John Willment's team and we'd raced a Lotus Europa 62 together in the BOAC 6 Hours at Brands Hatch in '69 and got on well.

He asked me to share Malcolm Gartlan's Capri at Zandvoort and Paul Ricard and I welcomed the opportunity to get some confidence back at a time when my career was in decline.

Our success over the Cologne cars of, among others, Jackie Stewart/Francois Cevert, was down to three key things. First, our guys, led by Malcolm and ace mechanic Ted Grace, had got Weslake to do the engine, rather than stick with the stock Ford unit. Weslake worked out that to combat a particular fuel-injection problem that caused spray-back when on part throttle, they had to move the injectors to

the other side. It worked a treat.

Second, there was no competitive needle between Brian and me. The objective in practice was purely to check fuel consumption – because that's what the six-hour race would come down to – not to try to get one over each other by who could go fastest.

And third, Brian's canniness meant that by filling the car with fuel early in the morning when the ambient temperature was

less, you could get more in – if you filled it slowly and carefully, like you would top up the oil.

We qualified in sixth and were pretty evenly matched. Come the race, Brian was into the lead within six laps or so and we won by a country mile, a whole pitstop in fact. It really was that simple.

There were all sorts of mutterings afterwards, of course, as our privately run car had beaten the works cars of F1 superstars Stewart

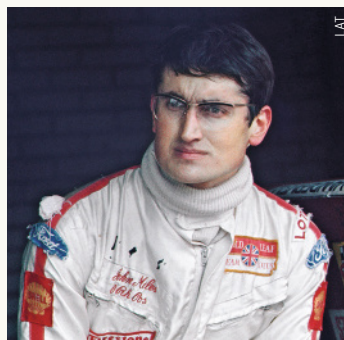
and Cevert, with another – the Gerard Larrousse/Alex Soler-Roig/Jochen Mass car – in third. Folk even asked Ford if they were going to protest, to which they correctly pointed out they couldn't really protest 'one of their own'. The car was perfectly legal, of course – we'd just got it very well sorted.

The other interesting thing about that race was the prize money. The organisers paid money for leading the race at various stages, so Brian and I shared 88,000 francs and I remember carrying it out of the circuit in a smart Samsonite briefcase, worried I was going to be mugged. When you consider I was on £300 per race and had to pay my own expenses in my days with Lotus in F1 a few years earlier, it was a lot of money.

It was great to win a race in a class in which I was unknown, and it felt like a good-old British approach – thinking about the objective and setting out to achieve it without any sort of all-out macho attack! John Miles was talking to Henry Hope-Frost

PROFILE

Londoner John Miles began racing in sportscars and single-seaters in the 1960s. With his engineering nous, he landed a place in the Lotus Formula 1 team in '69 to help develop the four-wheel-drive 63. He competed in 12 grands prix, with a best of fifth in South Africa in 1970. Since retiring from racing he has worked as a consultant engineer to numerous manufacturers and teams, a role he continues to this day with the Multimatic sportscar squad.



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