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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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FINN ENDS WIN DROUGHT – AFTER 112 RACES...P4-5

KIMI PUTS LEWIS'S CELEBRATIONS ON ICE



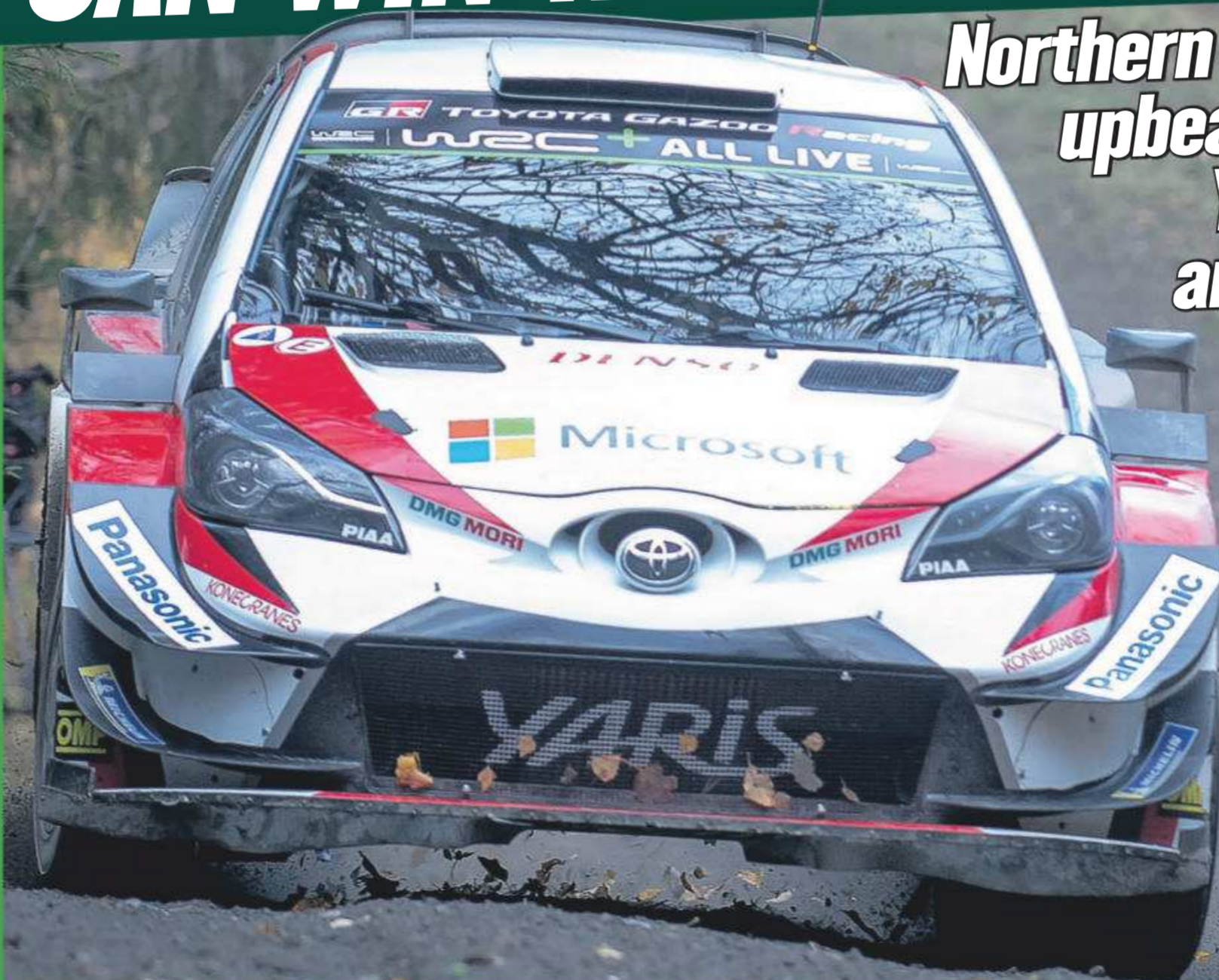
HAMILTON'S PODIUM PUTS HIM ON THE CUSP OF TITLE

MEEKE

I CAN WIN WRC WITH TOYOTA



Northern Irishman upbeat as new Yaris deal announced



By David Evans

Kris Meeke has targeted next season's World Rally Championship title on his return to the series with Toyota Gazoo Racing.

The Northern Irishman, confirmed at Tommi Makinen's team last week, says he has unfinished business in the series. He will look to complete that business in a Yaris WRC.

Meeke spent much of last week testing his new car in Finland.

Full story, p2-3

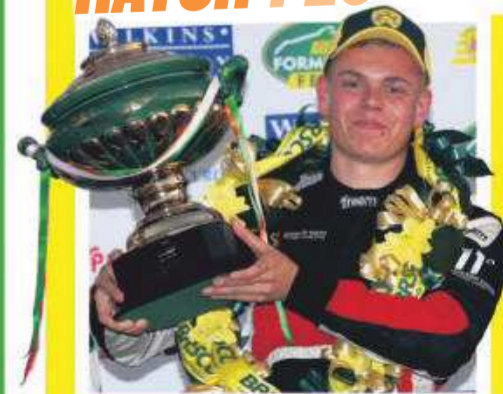
ASTON ATTACK

BRITISH GT CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW P24



SMITH'S FESTIVAL JOY

VAN DIEMEN WINS AT BRANDS HATCH P20



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IN THIS ISSUE

Raikkonen ends winless streak
P4



TORO ROSSO CHASE ALBON FOR F1 SEAT
P6



SMITH WINS THE FESTIVAL
P20



BRITISH GT SEASON REVIEW
P24



HOW LUNDQVIST WON BRITISH F3 TITLE
P27



USA Grand Prix	4	Rally reports	28
Racing news	6	Sporting Scene	29
SUBSCRIBE TO MOTORSPORT NEWS	10	Letters/Comment/What's On	30
Historic race and rally news	13	Classifieds	32
Rally news	14	Wanted: Early Kris Meeke debut to show his true colours. Apply: Tommi Makinen.	32
Formula Ford Festival	20		
Racing reports	22		
British GT season review	24		
British F3 season review	27		



FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P32

Toyota's new recruit is relishing his fresh

MEEKE!



Meeke says that he has slotted into the team already

By David Evans

An eight-month absence from the World Rally Championship won't dim Kris Meeke's determination to land Britain's first drivers' title since 2001 when he starts January's Monte Carlo Rally with Toyota.

Announced at Toyota Gazoo Racing on Wednesday, Meeke spent the remainder of the week driving a test Yaris WRC on the roads around the team's Puuppola base in central Finland.

The Northern Irishman admitted he has never felt more immediately comfortable than he does in Tommi Makinen's team and he intends to capitalise on

that feeling with an assault on next year's title.

"My main target is for success, I want to be a World Rally champion and I still believe I can," Meeke said during his test last week. "The environment at this initial stage feels very nice. It's something completely different to what I've had before in my career. Let's try to capitalise on this feeling and try to become world champion."

"I have given my life to rallying and rallying has given me so much and certainly I didn't feel it was time to stop. I still think I can achieve a lot more in the sport and hopefully with this new exciting venture we can achieve good things together."

Makinen confirmed to *Motorsport News* that Meeke will have the same chance to challenge for next year's title, despite Ott Tanak emerging as the Finnish squad's lead driver.

"They will all have absolutely identical equipment next year," said Makinen. "They will all have

the same chances and we will put the maximum effort to all three cars to try to make the best results they can. But what they do and what they can do is up to them, we will let them focus to the driving."

Meeke confirmed he had options for next season – he had spoken to all four factory team principals – but his discussions with Makinen reassured him joining Tanak and Jari-Matti Latvala was the right move.

Makinen confirmed both Meeke and Latvala have single-season agreements for 2019.

"It's been a difficult few months for me," said Meeke, "but I wasn't that long away [from rallying] before I got that hunger back. I knew deep down that I wanted to come back and drive a rally car."

"Since my departure out of the championship in May I took a few months to myself, but when I lifted the phone to Tommi it all seemed to click. I came out to visit him in Jyväskylä and I could sit and talk for hours about the car and the



Meeke offered feedback

challenge

I WANT TO GET THE ENJOYMENT BACK



Toyota 'feels different' for Meeke

The Brit was straight to work in Finland

technical aspects. It's all forward thinking and that was refreshing, it's not something I've been used to for quite a period of time. There were maybe some options on the table, but I said if I wanted to come back then I wanted to come back in the proper way and the way Toyota Gazoo Racing is approaching it in the long term – and the success they're having in just their second season – there was no doubt where I wanted to be."

Makinen intends to have Meeke in the car as much as possible, but he has ruled out the potential for a WRC debut before January's Monte Carlo Rally.

As well as getting to know the team and the car, Meeke was running chassis and aerodynamic test work last week.

"We want Kris to drive as much as possible," said Makinen. "I know how important it is to understand how the car behaves and what the car is doing. We had some things we wanted Kris to do for us, some parts to run on the car – this was

basically data gathering and [comparing] the data to the CFD.

"I want Kris to come and enjoy being with us, I want him to enjoy the driving. We saw this year with Jari-Matti: when you take away the pressure from his shoulders then the speed and the enjoyment and the results are coming. Kris has to drive to enjoy himself, this is the most important thing. I don't want him to take any pressure and then he can take the best result."

After his initial mileage in the car, Meeke is convinced it won't take him long to feel at home in the Yaris WRC.

"This was an exploratory test," he said. "So, while we went in the right direction with some changes, we also went in the wrong direction with others; each of those decisions was as important as the other, because it's about working out what happens when you do certain things.

"That aside, we racked up plenty of useful kilometres in the Yaris, on a variety of roads. I don't really want

to get into comparisons, I'm really pleased with how the car performs. It's very different from what I've been used to, in lots of ways."

Both Makinen and Meeke said the negotiations to bring the former Citroen driver to Toyota were straightforward.

Meeke added: "My dealings with Tommi and meeting the team, it truly does feel like family atmosphere. Tommi's base feels like a natural environment. It's rally country, you know you're in the heart of Rally Finland here. And just dealing with everybody, they're just good, decent guys pulling in the same way and this is refreshing for me. It's my first time to work with the Japanese culture; you hear a lot about it, but to witness it and see the pride they have for the brand and the honour and respect they have in the working environment is something that sits easily with me.

"If I can just enjoy my driving and the connection with road, then the speed will take care of itself."



Meeke said that he has found some strong points during testing the Toyota Yaris

USA GP REPORT

BY JAMES ROBERTS

The Flying Finn serves up a masterclass as Mercedes-Benz rivals struggle

KIMI STEALS HAMILTON'S THUNDER



The Iceman kept his head in Austin to land his first win after 112-race drought



Two stops made life hard for Lewis



Vettel fought back to fourth after first-lap contact – and kept the title alive

There were a few unopened champagne bottles in Mercedes's paddock hospitality unit

last Sunday evening. Along with the 'five-time world champion' T-shirts, they remained in their boxes and were packed onto the next available flight to Mexico City.

Lewis Hamilton came to Austin knowing he needed to out-score Sebastian Vettel by eight points to claim a historic fifth world drivers' championship. But a two-stop strategy, brought about by higher than expected tyre wear, meant he was only able to extend his lead over Vettel by three points. He finished third, with his title rival fourth. Now Hamilton just needs a seventh-place finish in Mexico next Sunday to wrap it all up.

Taking the spoils last Sunday afternoon was Kimi Raikkonen. The outgoing Ferrari champion mugged Hamilton off the line to lead into Turn 1 and headed the field for 39 of the 56 laps. It was Raikkonen's first victory in 112 races – the last time he stood on the top step of the podium was at the 2013 Australian Grand Prix.

Behind him on the road was Max Verstappen, who had flown from 18th on the grid (he was ninth at the end of the first lap) to take second place on the podium – nicely repelling any attack from Hamilton in the closing stages.

Vettel too had come from behind to secure his fourth place. On the opening lap, he tangled with Dan Ricciardo's Red Bull as the pair were squabbling over fourth. As the Ferrari man tapped Ricciardo's front right wheel, it caused the Ferrari to pirouette and he dropped 10 places. This was another costly mistake in a season littered with errors for the German. He was at least able to overtake Valtteri Bottas in the

closing laps to secure fourth and keep his ultra-slim title hopes alive.

Raikkonen, oblivious to the points differential, spoke to Hamilton in the cool down room behind the podium. "Did you win the championship or not?" was the honest, if not a little sarcastic line of questioning. Not yet, Kimi. Not yet.

Qualifying

Heading into qualifying, Vettel knew the highest grid place he could start from was fourth. The Ferrari man had picked up a three-place grid penalty for a misdemeanour in Friday's first free practice session. Half-way through FP1, Sauber's Charles Leclerc took a trip through the gravel and, as he returned to the track, littered the course with stones. Sensibly, the officials decided to suspend the session to allow the track to be cleaned.

A new regulation was introduced to the series this year to ensure drivers reduce their pace significantly as they return to the pits after a red flag. Positioning data and telemetry from Vettel's car alerted the stewards to the fact he'd failed to stay above the minimum time set by the FIA ECU. In their decision to give Vettel a three-place grid penalty and two penalty points on his licence the stewards added that: "a breach of this regulation is seen to be an extremely serious matter."

Fourth was the best he could hope for, but that still meant beating Hamilton to the fastest time. Given that the Ferraris had appeared to close the outright speed to the Mercedes at this track, the margin between the two teams was virtually nothing.

The first runs in Q3 gave an indication to the margins involved. Bottas went quickest with a 1m32.68s lap. He was then eclipsed by Hamilton's 32.5s and then Vettel who did a 32.65s. The difference between the two title protagonists was just 0.088s. The

Ferrari man thought he could overcome his nemesis on the next flying lap – but it would be very tight.

On the final run in Q3, once again Bottas went quicker (32.6s again), followed this time by his compatriot Raikkonen (32.3s) who placed his Ferrari on provisional pole. All eyes then switched to the top two in the title chase. Hamilton's final lap was a 1m32.237s, while Vettel stopped the clocks on 1m32.298s – the difference between the pair? Just 0.061s.

Vettel appeared to have the advantage on the straights, while Hamilton had the upper hand in the corners. The pair were virtually identical until Vettel ran a little too deep into the final corner. When he heard on the team radio how much he'd missed the fastest time by, he responded with: "Oh for f***'s sake."

So, the front of the grid, with penalties applied read: Hamilton, Raikkonen (starting on the fast ultrasoft tyre as Ferrari decided to split strategies), Bottas, Ricciardo and Vettel. The second Red Bull of Verstappen had failed to make Q3 after he broke his car's right-rear suspension on the kerbs at the exit of Turn 15.

Ironically, new raised yellow kerbs positioned on the exit of Turn 15 and the apex of Turn 16 had been dubbed 'Verstoppen' kerbs to prevent a repeat of the move Max made on Kimi on the final lap of last year's race. They had done their job. Verstappen damaged the driveshaft and was forced to change his gearbox overnight, dropping him to 18th on the starting grid.

Race

After a week of cool, overcast and wet conditions, the sun appeared on race day in Austin, which raised the track temperatures to the hottest they had been all weekend. On the sunny starting grid, there was less fanfare than last year; Michael Buffer's driver introductions were ditched in favour

'Verstappen just would not yield'
Red Bull's roadblock, below



ROUND 18

Photos: LAT



Raikkonen overtook Hamilton at the first corner

of a handful of parachuters, the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders and a chinook helicopter flyby.

Once the race was underway, Raikkonen had an immediate run on polesitter Hamilton and, despite moving across to defend, the Finn had done enough to claim the lead in the crest up to Turn 1.

Behind the leaders there were numerous incidents between the 'Class B' runners. Lance Stroll harpooned the side of Fernando Alonso's McLaren, while at the end of the back straight, Romain Grosjean braked too late and eliminated Leclerc.

As the pack entered Turn 13, Vettel bravely attempted to pass Ricciardo on the inside for fourth, but understeered into the Red Bull - which sent the Ferrari into a spin. In his desperation to claim ground on Hamilton, it was the worst possible start for Vettel, as the championship looked done and dusted by this point of the race.

By lap eight Raikkonen was leading from Hamilton, Bottas, Ricciardo and Verstappen, who had taken advantage of others' misfortunes to climb up to fifth from 18th on the starting grid. That became fourth when he inherited the position from his team-mate. Electrical power shutdown on Ricciardo's Red Bull exiting Turn 11 and the virtual safety car was deployed to retrieve his stricken machine.



Hulkenberg: Winner of 'Class B'...

The Australian was gutted by another mechanical failure - his despondency was evident by his body language as he jumped out of his car.

"It's a crying shame for Daniel, I feel so sorry for him," said Red Bull Racing team boss Christian Horner after the race. "It looks identical to the power unit issue he had in Bahrain where it's just gone into complete shutdown. He was driving a strong grand prix and would have been right up there. He's gone and taken out his frustration in his room by putting his fist through the wall, which you can totally relate to..."

The activation of the VSC prompted Mercedes to make a strategy call for Hamilton as less time is lost in the pits while the race is neutralised. His engineer Peter Bonnington ordered Hamilton to do the opposite to what race leader Raikkonen did. If Kimi pits, stay out. If he doesn't - box. Kimi didn't pit, so Hamilton stopped for soft tyres on lap 11 and emerged behind his team-mate and ahead of Verstappen. Bottas dutifully yielded and the Brit was just a few seconds behind race leader Raikkonen.

The Finn managed to preserve his ultrasofts for another 11 laps, in which time he'd been able to successfully hold up the Brit and allow Bottas and Verstappen to close up the gap.

At half distance (lap 28) all the main protagonists had pitted and Hamilton held a 17-second lead over Raikkonen, Verstappen (a further 4.5s in arrears), Bottas (3s back) and Vettel.

If Mercedes had pitted Hamilton at this stage, then he would have probably just emerged ahead of Verstappen and with fresher tyres to hunt Raikkonen down. But the team didn't, it was another nine laps before Hamilton pitted for his second stop, his tyres significantly blistered. Over that time, Raikkonen had taken nearly 10 seconds out of his lead.

Perhaps Mercedes was hoping not to pit Hamilton again, but a lack of dry

running on Friday scuppered any intelligence it had on tyres. Once the team knew it was committed to a second stop, the strategy changed to leave Hamilton out for as long as possible. "The thinking was that if we were to bite the bullet a little more we would have a larger tyre differential at the end," said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. "But then we started to drop massive pace and probably we were a lap or two late in pitting Lewis because the tyres dropped off from mid-38s, low 39s to 41s."

When Hamilton did finally make his second stop he emerged 12 seconds behind race leaders Raikkonen and Verstappen. The closing stages became a thrilling contest as Hamilton only needed to overtake Verstappen to be world champion for a fifth time.

With two laps to go, the Mercedes man had caught his prey and made a move at Turn 12, but Verstappen would not yield. They went side-by-side around the next three corners, before Hamilton tried to get a run around the outside of Turn 16. There he ran wide onto the marbles and his championship charge looked over. It was always going to be risky to make a move past Verstappen, but it would have sealed the title.

"I had to be very careful how I navigated around them [Raikkonen and Verstappen] as championships are not won by fighting and making silly mistakes," said Hamilton. "I gave him [Verstappen] way too much space just to be sure I didn't get clipped. If that was me and Seb, I would have been a lot more aggressive if we were fighting for the championship."

Hamilton's move became academic when Vettel managed to pass Bottas for fourth on the penultimate lap. With his comeback drive, it means mathematically at least, the championship rolls onto Mexico this weekend. The champagne remains on ice for now.

RACE FACTS

Results © 2018 Formula One Administration Ltd

USA GRAND PRIX

Circuit: Circuit of the Americas **Laps:** 56
Race distance: 191.643 miles **Lap:** 3.422 miles
Lap record: 1m37.392s (Lewis Hamilton, 2018)
2017 winner: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)

Date: October 22
Weather: sunny, dry

DRS Timing line (indicated on track map)

Drag reduction system activation (indicated on track map)

TYRE CHOICE

Prime **SOFT**

Option **SUPERSOFT**

Option **ULTRASOFT**

RESULTS

FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 18/21

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Ferrari	1h34m18.643s
2	Max Verstappen	NED	Red Bull-Renault	+1.281s
3	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	+2.342s
4	Sebastian Vettel	GER	Ferrari	+18.222s
5	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Mercedes	+24.744s
6	Nico Hulkenberg	GER	Renault	+1m27.210s
7	Carlos Sainz	ESP	Renault	+1m34.994s
8	Sergio Perez	MEX	Force India-Mercedes	+1m41.080s
9	Brendon Hartley	NZL	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap
10	Marcus Ericsson	SWE	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap
11	Stoffel Vandoorne	BEL	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap
12	Pierre Gasly	FRA	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap
13	Sergey Sirotkin	RUS	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap
14	Lance Stroll	CAN	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps
EX	Esteban Ocon	FRA	Force India-Mercedes	+1m39.288s/fuel flow
EX	Kevin Magnussen	DEN	Haas-Ferrari	+1m40.657s/using too much fuel
R	Charles Leclerc	MON	Sauber-Ferrari	L31/collision
R	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Red Bull-Renault	L8/electrical
R	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	L2/collision
R	Fernando Alonso	ESP	McLaren-Renault	L1/collision

Winner's average speed: 121.916mph Lap leaders: Raikkonen 1-10; Hamilton 11; Raikkonen 12-21; Hamilton 22-37; Raikkonen 38-56

FASTEST LAP | HAMILTON 1m37.392s (ON LAP 40 (AVERAGE SPEED: 126.63mph))

QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m32.237s	11	Sainz	1m34.566s
2	Raikkonen	1m32.307s	12	Magnussen	1m34.732s
3	Bottas	1m32.616s	13	Alonso	1m35.294s
4	Ricciardo	1m33.494s	14	Sirotkin	1m35.362s
5	Vettel	1m32.298s*	15	Stroll	1m35.480s
6	Ocon	1m34.145s	16	Ericsson	1m35.536s
7	Hulkenberg	1m34.215s	17	Vandoorne	1m35.735s
8	Grosjean	1m34.250s	18	Verstappen	**
9	Leclerc	1m34.420s	19	Gasly	***
10	Perez	1m34.594s	20	Hartley	****

* = three-place grid drop for not slowing under yellow flags ** = five-place penalty for a replacement gearbox *** = required to start at the back for additional power unit elements **** = required to start from the back for additional power unit and gearbox elements used



Ricciardo had to hitch a lift home

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS			CONSTRUCTORS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS	POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Lewis Hamilton	346	1	Mercedes	563
2	Sebastian Vettel	276	2	Ferrari	497
3	Kimi Raikkonen	221	3	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	337
4	Valtteri Bottas	217	4	Renault	106
5	Max Verstappen	191	5	Haas-Ferrari	84
6	Daniel Ricciardo	146	6	McLaren-Renault	58
7	Nico Hulkenberg	61	7	Racing Point Force India-Mercedes	47
8	Sergio Perez	57	8	Toro Rosso-Honda	32
9	Kevin Magnussen	53	9	Sauber-Ferrari	28
10	Fernando Alonso	50	10	Williams-Mercedes	7

NEXT RACE: MEXICAN GRAND PRIX OCTOBER 28

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Fuel errors

Kevin Magnussen and Esteban Ocon were disqualified from their points finishes in the US Grand Prix after their cars both breached fuel rules. Immediately after Racing Point Force India driver Ocon crossed the finish line in Austin to claim eighth place, the FIA announced that his car was suspected of breaking the rules. The FIA's telemetry data had pointed to it breaching the 100kg/hr fuel flow limit. Magnussen would therefore have inherited eighth but he was also excluded after exceeding the 105kg of fuel allowed to be used during the race. Their exclusions promoted Toro Rosso's Brendon Hartley and Sauber driver Marcus Ericsson into the points.

Stroll to Force India

Lance Stroll is set to get his first run for Force India at the post-season Abu Dhabi test. The Canadian's 2019 move from Williams to Force India had yet to be officially confirmed, but his father's takeover of the Silverstone-based outfit has helped seal his switch. Team principal Otmar Szafnauer said: "I think Abu Dhabi it would be good to have the second driver in the car to get some mileage." Asked if there was any scope for the Stroll Abu Dhabi plan to be tripped up, he said: "I don't think so, but I don't think there is any reason to hurry it. It is just out of courtesy to Esteban [Ocon] until he knows what he is doing."

Unhelpful upgrades

Sebastian Vettel says Ferrari took 'too long' to wake-up to the fact that it had lost its way with recent car developments. Ferrari's decision to abandon recent updates and roll back to older specification concepts at the United States Grand Prix helped trigger a return to form, with Kimi Raikkonen taking his first win since returning to the team. "It took too long," Vettel said about the car being quick again. "If we have to go back to a car that has been competitive three/four months ago, then surely it cannot be good news if you think about it. I think for us on the technical side it is important to understand what went wrong."

'Amateur' drivers

Fernando Alonso says there are "more amateur" drivers in F1 than in the World Endurance Championship after his crash with Lance Stroll in the US GP. Alonso was hit by Williams driver Stroll as they approached the esses on the opening lap, with the contact causing heavy damage to the McLaren, which retired after returning to the pits. "I'm not upset - I'm disappointed because I'm here [for] nine days in the US to do a race and I do 600 metres of the race and they push you off," he said. "There are more amateurs here than in other series. Here we need bumpers, like rental go-karts, so we can all crash into each other."

NISSAN "UNHAPPY" AS ALBON CLOSES ON TORO ROSSO SEAT

F1 team is trying to get Anglo-Thai out of his FE contract for 2018/19 season



Albon is favourite to partner Kvyat

By Alex Kalinauckas

The Nissan e.dams Formula E squad is "very unhappy" at the situation surrounding Alexander Albon's possible 2019 Formula 1 move to Toro Rosso, according to team principal Jean-Paul Driot.

Nissan had signed the Anglo-Thai F2 title contender, who races for e.dams' sister team in the F1 support series, to a three-year FE contract in July, which placed him alongside Sebastien Buemi for the 2018/19 season.

But it emerged at the start of FE's pre-season test at Valencia that Albon was closing on a Toro Rosso seat and he did not drive at the Circuit Ricardo Tormo, which cost Nissan two days of running

before Oliver Rowland was brought in for the final two sessions.

"It came out of the blue," Driot said. "We are very much frustrated within DAMS and Nissan e.dams because as far as DAMS is concerned and Formula 2 is concerned, we have done a lot in order to help Alexander Albon race, financially speaking.

"We gave him a good car - because the year before the team he was with [ART Grand Prix], he didn't really perform - and with us he has demonstrated that he is very quick, which I never doubted.

"We took him for a three-year contract [in FE] and suddenly out of the blue - because we helped him a lot to brush and to shine his image - Toro Rosso came with Dr [Helmut] Marko to say that he

wanted to have Albon in a car.

"When you ask a blind man if he wants to see, you know the answer. When he talked about Formula 1 to a driver who was always dreaming to do so, you know the answer as well.

"So we are negotiating with Toro Rosso. Nissan have top management who were not really happy, as you can imagine. "[They are] very unhappy because we had signed him for three years. But we are trying to find a solution."

Driot said that situation remains unresolved and that negotiations regarding Albon's future are continuing.

"We are trying to find a solution because when you have a driver who doesn't want to drive any



Rowland replaced Albon in Nissan's FE test line-up

more, what do you do? But we have a contract and that is clear," he explained.

"We are discussing with Toro Rosso in order to see how we can find the best solution for everyone."

Albon (right) was backed by Red Bull in karting and Formula Renault, but was dropped after 2012. However since then he has been rehabilitated in the eyes of Marko.

Albon still has an outside chance of sealing the F2 title in the Abu Dhabi finale. He finished 10th in the standings last term but is currently 37 points behind leader George Russell with 48 still available.



Raikkonen took first win since '13

Raikkonen believes he has "proved some people wrong" with US GP victory

United States Grand Prix winner Kimi Raikkonen believes he has "proved some people wrong" after claiming his first Formula 1 victory in five and a half years.

Raikkonen had not won a race since the 2013 Australian GP with Lotus and, having lost his Ferrari driver to Charles Leclerc for 2019, was at risk of ending his second stint with the Scuderia without a win.

"It hasn't really been a big

deal for me," he said. "It's been a much bigger deal for other people.

"If it comes it comes, if it doesn't it doesn't change my life one bit. I'm happy because we are here purely to try to win. The biggest difference is how people look at you.

"Obviously, I'm happy. [I] just proved some people wrong."

Raikkonen said he was also pleased for his team having had "a pretty rough few races".

Hamilton and Mercedes had

won the previous four grands prix and six of the last seven races, with Ferrari only enjoying Sebastian Vettel's Belgian GP success during that run.

Ferrari told Raikkonen he would not be driving for the team next season ahead of the Italian GP, and the Finn went on to claim his first pole of the year that weekend before signing a two-year deal with Sauber.

He made it clear his

comments about proving people wrong were not aimed at the decision to drop him.

"For sure I didn't mean in that sense," he said. "I think people don't understand I'm actually very happy with where I'm going. I have had my time with Ferrari, I won the championship with them and many races with them.

"For me, as a driver, I want different challenges. I want different things."

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'Smith wins premier FF1600 event at Brands'
Formula Ford Festival, p20



Photos: LAT

NO FULL-TIME McLAREN ENTRY FOR INDYCAR IN 2019



Engine problems robbed Alonso in 2017 Indy 500



McLaren will not join IndyCar full-time in 2019 after months of considering a move to the American series.

The team's CEO Zak Brown confirmed McLaren's intentions during the United States Grand Prix weekend, but has not ruled out a return to the Indianapolis 500 next year or a full-time move as soon as 2020.

McLaren had been heading down a route that would have led the Formula 1 team into reviving

its partnership with series giant Andretti, but it would have worked out of the Andretti-supported Steinbrenner Harding Racing base.

That deal was complicated by Andretti's Honda-powered status, as McLaren and Harding would have used Chevrolet and not Honda engines.

After Honda told *Motorsport News* it was willing to work with Alonso once again after an ill-fated spell in F1 and at the 2017

Indy 500, Honda senior bosses also pulled a U-turn which complicated the situation.

While *Motorsport News* understands IndyCar and McLaren's discussions included Alonso joining the series, the Spaniard has denied it was the case.

"A full IndyCar season was never an option that I wanted because of the implication it carries," said Alonso.

"I would like to race in

IndyCar one day but not next year. Seventeen races, all of them in America, learning everything from zero."

Alonso's post-F1 career is still unclear, but he will complete the World Endurance Championship's 2018/19 superseason with Toyota.

He won the second leg of his triple crown at Le Mans earlier this year, having already won the Monaco Grand Prix twice in his career.

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Ex-Formula 1 driver Jenson Button's Super GT championship lead was eradicated in the penultimate round at Autopolis. Button and team-mate Naoki Yamamoto secured fifth, while the TOM'S team implemented team orders to help defending champions Nick Cassidy and Ryo Hirakawa win the race. Cassidy/Hirakawa are now tied with Button and Yamamoto with a race in Motegi remaining... HWA – the team which runs

Mercedes' DTM programme and which has a Formula E team which will be taken over by Mercedes next year – is evaluating an entry into Formula 2. The squad is already going to run a FIA F3 entry which is one-level under F2... **BMW scored the fastest time on both days of Formula E testing at Valencia, with Alexander Sims following up Antonio Felix da Costa's opening day benchmark...** A proposed TCR championship with electric cars is set to get underway

in 2020. WSC Technology is behind the concept, with it promising multi-marque eligibility... **The Gold Coast 600 was cancelled due to a thunderstorm. Australian Supercars organisers have also admitted that it is in talks to bring NASCAR to the Gold Coast next year...** Chase Elliott claimed his third NASCAR Cup win of the season in Kansas, holding off Kyle Busch in the closing stages to win by less than a second. Despite finishing third, Kyle Larson is out of the playoffs...



Button's points lead hacked

Red Bull ace Ticktum won last year's GP



Ticktum joins competitive Brits for Macau

Reigning Macau Grand Prix winner Dan Ticktum will return to defend his crown, and faces strong opposition from a number of Brits and F3 frontrunners.

Red Bull Junior Ticktum sticks with the team he used to finish second in the European Formula 3 championship – Motopark – while the man who beat him, Mick Schumacher, lines up for Prema for the November 13-15 event.

ART Grand Prix GP3 race winner Callum Iloft joins Carlin for the first time since 2015, while his GP3 team-mate Jake Hughes makes a return

with Hitech GP alongside another Brit in Enaam Ahmed.

BMW junior and DTM driver Joel Eriksson makes a customary return and is a likely frontrunner, along with team-mates Ticktum and Juri Vips, who has been rumoured to be joining the Red Bull junior programme.

Eriksson and Iloft clashed late in a dramatic finale last year.

"This could be the last year the current generation of F3 cars compete at Macau. It would be special to get the result with the team I started in F3 with – I'm sure we can be in the mix," said Iloft.

Formula Renault Eurocup title for Fewtrell

McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist Max Fewtrell secured his first Formula Renault Eurocup title last weekend at Barcelona.

The 2016 British F4 title winner battled rookie Christian Lundgaard all season, taking the title by 17.5 points in a tense finale in his second season in the series after he had claimed the rookie title the previous year.

A pair of fourths was enough to seal the title in Spain.

"I am at a loss for words... what a season," said the 19-year-old R-ace GP driver. "We started the season really strong before dropping to fifth place in the general classification after Monaco. We didn't panic and continued to work flat out to crawl back."

He took six wins in the series in 2018, including one at home at Silverstone, and six pole positions. He also earned 11 podiums in 20 races.



Fewtrell's epic year ends in championship title

F1 RACING ASSOCIATE EDITOR

JAMES ROBERTS

"America needs a top F1 driver to grow"



'K eep Austin Weird' is the slogan for the city that hosted last weekend's USGP. On Thursday evening, at a sponsor event, Williams's chief technical officer Paddy Lowe was spotted wearing a cowboy hat, attempting the Cotton-Eyed Joe line dance. **Weird indeed.**

Lowe's antics was one of a number of F1 events taking place in Austin that night. A little earlier Max Verstappen was in a downtown bar taking on fans in a Red Bull pitstop challenge. While on the other side of the city, Valtteri Bottas was showcasing a new Bose headphone, designed to help you sleep.

But Austin wasn't the only American city with a Formula 1 flavour last week. On the streets of Miami, cars took to the city's streets as F1's latest fan festival drummed up interest in the sport.

Red Bull did its bit by performing a few stunts. One of them had David Coulthard perform donuts in an F1 car on the top floor of a 700ft skyscraper...

Meanwhile in New York, Lewis Hamilton was also educating the country about F1. He went to the headquarters of America's stock exchange, Nasdaq, which was projecting a huge billboard of him across Times Square. While in town, he also appeared on the chat show circuit, taking in *Good Morning America* and the satirical news programme *The Daily Show*.

On the latter, presenter Trevor Noah explained who Lewis was and what he did. "Formula 1 is one of the biggest sports in the world, with millions of people watching it, but in America as many people have no clue what it is. When I try to explain Formula 1 to people, they say 'what is that?'"

"It is growing here," said Hamilton in return. "Every time I meet someone and explain about F1, I tell them about the weight I lose. Once I lost as much as 10 and a half pounds [4.7kg] in a race and every American I tell that to says, 'Wow! I need to be a race car driver!'"

A Texan chap I got chatting to last weekend reiterated the fact very few people know what Formula 1 is in the US. They have heard of NASCAR and the Indianapolis 500 and assume F1 is just a part of the IndyCar series.

Seeing the former Marussia F1 driver and Indy 500 winner Alexander Rossi in the paddock at the weekend reminded everyone that despite all the promotional help (which included concerts from Bruno Mars and Britney Spears at the circuit on Saturday and Sunday evening) what the series really needs to capture audiences and attention that F1 craves is a successful American F1 driver.

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

RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

RX-8 interest

The Classic Sports Car Club's new-for-2019 one-make class for road-legal Mazda RX-8s already has eight entries, despite only being announced last month. The RX-8 Trophy will join the New Millennium Series grid for post-2000 production cars. Club director David Smitheram was "thrilled" with the "crazy" level of interest. Further entries are anticipated once the full regulations are finalised early in November.

Eastwood chosen

World Endurance Championship driver Charlie Eastwood has been chosen as the Motorsport Ireland Young Racing Driver of the Month for August. The 2017 Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion matched his best WEC result of second in the GTE Am class in the Silverstone round during that month. Eastwood's selection means he is the latest driver to become eligible for the Sexton Trophy at the end of the year.

Kellett returns

Alastair Kellett, 2016 Ford Fiesta champion, joined in this year's finale at Brands Hatch last weekend with a view to making a 2019 return. The 41-year-old has made only a handful of appearances in the last two years but now looks forward to a full campaign back in the Fiesta ranks. "I was bored, and [fellow driver] John Cooper offered the use of his spare car this weekend, so here I am," he said. Kellett qualified second fastest in Class D and twice finished on the class podium.

F1 to Fun Cup

Grand prix aerodynamicist John Iley made his racing debut in the Fun Cup at Donington Park last weekend. The ex-EuroBrun, Jordan, McLaren, Ferrari, Renault and Caterham design man shared one of the Team 7 Fun Bikes cars with Jay Shepherd and Jon King. "It's been really good and I love the atmosphere," he said. "I have wanted to do a race for some time, but not to just make up the numbers." They finished 22nd, having run as high as 15th after the second hour.

Dibden's bid

Ashley Dibden will return to the Monoposto championship in 2019 with a view to mounting a full challenge for the title. The ex-Saxmax and F4 racer, who competes in a Dallara F301 in the F3 class, narrowly missed out on the 2017 title after problems struck mid-season, having won four of the first five rounds. Dibden, 24, got married in August and opted to sit out this season to prefer for his 2019 campaign.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Matt Barrington

COATES TARGETS INTERNATIONAL WIN

UK Clio Cup runner-up plots world glory at Paul Ricard



Coates missed out on UK Clio Cup crown



Clio runner-up: Coates

By Stephen Lickorish

Max Coates will seek to make up for the disappointment of his Renault UK Clio Cup title defeat by aiming to win the Clio Cup International Final race at Paul Ricard next month.

The Team Pyro driver had headed the UK Clio Cup standings for much of the season but was beaten to the crown by seven points by James Dorlin in the Brands Hatch finale. However, Dorlin could lose the championship win if an appeal to the National Court from Paul Rivett over his exclusion from race two at Silverstone is successful.

But Coates now has his eyes set on winning the new French event on November 3/4, which will feature top drivers from Clio Cup championships around the world. Initially, the top six in this year's UK Clio Cup were invited – but that has since been extended.

"I would've liked to have been UK Clio Cup champion but to be Clio Cup world champion sounds good!" said Coates. "It would help to make up for it [title defeat] and it's a great chance to race at a fantastic track against some pretty stiff opposition. "I can't wait – I've been on the simulator and I'm really excited for it, driving abroad is always good. I'm lucky to have the support of my sponsors to go and do it."

MRM pairing Brett Lidsey and Jack Young (*see above*) will join Coates in the event, but Dorlin and Rivett are among those to decline the opportunity.

Coates added: "It would've been nice to have more of a UK contingent but I don't think we are going to be short of people to race against!"

The other European Clio categories benefit from having the final round of their championships at the event, while UK competitors have to find extra budget to take part.

Young gets licence signatures at Oulton

Renault UK Clio Cup driver Jack Young made a surprise appearance in the CNC Heads Sports/Saloon championship at Oulton Park last weekend, in order to upgrade his licence to compete in the Clio International Final.

Last year's Clio Junior champion made his senior Clio debut at the Snetterton round in July and has since shown strong pace, including bagging a pole at Brands Hatch.

He raced his Clio in the two Sports/Saloon races last weekend in Cheshire to get the required signatures for the licence upgrade to race abroad.

"We're doing an upgrade to the licence for Europe, and to learn the track for next year," Young explained as his reasons for appearing at Oulton Park. "[Going to Europe] basically just to get noticed from other championships. We're going in there hopefully to try and progress."

Young claimed two wins in class, finishing ninth and eighth overall.



Young took class wins at Oulton

Renault Sport Racing sporting manager Tarik Ait Said says entry fees for UK drivers have been reduced as a result of this.

"For the UK, it was a difficult situation because it has a contract with TOCA and already has nine meetings while other championships have six," he told MN. "For them it was not possible to do a 10th [round at Paul Ricard]."

"We tried to create a package and reduce the entry fees so that should be an incentive. We want as many drivers there. We don't do this for business purposes we do this for the sport."

Ait Said added that he would like the International Final to become a regular event but that it's unlikely to be an annual fixture.

"We would love to [make it regular] but we need to make it special so we may look at doing it every two or three years," he said.



Eurotech has sold cars and licences

AmDTuning buys ex-Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R cars along with the team's TOCA BTCC Licences

The AmDTuning team has bought the two British Touring Car Championship Honda Civic Type R machines from Eurotech Racing and will field the hatchbacks in next year's championship.

AmD will work alongside new team Trade Price Cars (*see below*), which has taken over the Audi S3s that AmD ran last year. The two MGs the team ran in

2018, which will move on to new owners.

AmD has bought the two Hondas and the associated TOCA BTCC Licences to compete from former team principal Jeff Smith.

No drivers have been confirmed yet and the squad is in discussion with other sponsors. "Last season, it was a big move for us to expand to a four-car team and after a successful 2018, we

are again seeking to move forwards to the next level," AmD team principal Shaun Hollamby said.

"Whilst we enjoyed some strong results on track with the MGs, the opportunity to purchase the ex-Eurotech Hondas was one that was too good to turn down as you only have to look at the stats to see what a strong package the FK2 Civic Type R is.

"Acquiring these cars provides us with

a fantastic platform to really raise our game and fight consistently towards the sharp end of the grid, and we are already in discussions with drivers who we know are capable of helping us to achieve our goal."

AmD is backed by Cobra Sport Exhausts, and its managing director Rachel Abbott will take on the role of joint team principal alongside Hollamby.

New Trade Price Cars team enters BTCC with Audis

A new team will enter the British Touring Car Championship in 2019 with the ex-AmDTuning Audi S3 machines.

Trade Price Cars Racing has agreed terms to purchase the two cars, along with their TOCA BTCC Licences (TBLs) required to compete in the series, while AmD will continue to run the cars as part of a two-year deal.

The company's managing director is Dan Kirby, who has contested races in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup in 2017 and the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this year. Drivers for the Trade Price Cars

Racing team will be announced shortly.

"We dipped our toe in the water in 2018 as a sponsor, but we feel the time is right to take our involvement in the BTCC to the next level," Kirby said. "I'm confident we can all work together to unlock more of the potential that is in the Audi during 2019."

The AmD team, which also operated a pair of ex-factory MGs last season, has run the Audis in the BTCC since 2015.

Former BTCC and Renault UK Clio Cup driver Andy Wilmot will take up the role of joint team principal alongside Hollamby after joining from Matrix Motorsport.



Top two in Mini Challenge had test thanks to Dunlop

Whorton-Eales and Harrison in prize BTCC test

Mini Challenge champion Ant Whorton-Eales and runner-up Nathan Harrison drove a Motorbase Performance British Touring Car Championship car last week as part of tyre supplier Dunlop's prize package.

For Whorton-Eales, who took part in the entire 2017 BTCC in an AmDTuning Audi S3 and tackled one round in an MG in 2018, it was the second time he had won a prize outing.

He took part in Dunlop's

annual prize test in 2016 after winning the Renault UK Clio Cup that year.

Whorton-Eales said: "It was great to test a proven race-winning car. Motorbase has come a long way in developing this car in the two years since my first test."

He was joined at the Snetterton test by Mini JCW runner-up Harrison, who had coaching from 2018 BTCC race winner and Motorbase regular Tom Chilton.

Photos: Ollie Read, Gary Hawkins, Steve Jones

CONCERNS OVER SILVERSTONE SURFACE FOR WALTER HAYES



British F3 'race' was run behind safety car

Leading entrants have expressed concern over the potential impact of bad weather at this year's Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone.

Following the abandonment of the final round of the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship earlier this month, and the high-profile MotoGP washout in August, there are fears that autumnal weather could cause difficulties on the track's new surface.

"When we did the Northern round there and it was pouring down all day, the track surface

just held the water," said leading team boss Kevin Mills. "They were aquaplaning all over the place and that was even with reasonably warm temperatures. In November it's not going to dry up. I think with heavy rain they will have a bit of a problem running it, so fingers crossed."

Stuart Gough, who tested in wet conditions ahead of the opening round of the National Championship in April, and plans to take part in the event for the 15th time, added: "When

I was testing I was aquaplaning off. Even on the straight it spat me off and did a load of damage. Silverstone's always had standing water but you'd never go into Woodcote and aquaplane straight on before you even got to the right-hander [previously]."

In response to the concerns, Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle said: "We're not anticipating problems while we await the outcome of the independent investigation [after the MotoGP cancellation]."

MSA rule change to prevent safety-car only races counting

A new rule issued by the Motor Sports Association should help to stop drivers winning races run entirely behind a safety car from next year.

In both the British GT Championship – at Oulton Park in April – and at Silverstone in BRDC British F3 earlier this month, races were won despite no racing laps

actually taking place.

The regulations currently indicate that as long as two laps take place, a race can be declared and a winner awarded even if no competitive action occurs as the race is neutralised by a safety car.

Neither the Oulton race – won by Jon Minshaw and Phil Keen in a Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini

Huracan GT3 – or the Silverstone British F3 race won by Josh Mason of Lanar affected the championship outcome in either case.

Under section Q the following regulation has been added for 2019: "For any race that has been run, in its entirety, under safety car conditions shall be declared null and void."

Monoposto F3 champion Cater makes successful Sports 2000 debut and could compete in series next year

Newly-crowned Monoposto F3 champion Ben Cater made a one-off Sports 2000 appearance at Brands Hatch while he considers what to do in the future.

Cater was quickly on the pace and

qualified the ex-Guy Jeynes-Ellis MCR in third place and was second behind champion Tom Stoten in the first of two races. He followed this with a victory after Stoten's car was withdrawn before race two.

"Winning a championship usually means looking for something different for the following season, and Sports 2000 is one of the options," said the Clapham driver. "It's a very friendly championship, and the guy who ran

my F3 car had this S2000 in his garage for sale, and suggested I might have a go.

"Having said that, a switch to historics is another choice, and I've always fancied having a car for events like the Silverstone Classic and Goodwood."



Cater won second Brands race

Grant makes switch to newer machinery for Hayes

Multiple Historic Formula Ford 1600 champion Callum Grant will drive the most modern machinery in his career so far when he fields a Van Dieman RF91 in the Walter Hayes Trophy.

Grant, the 2012 and '16 Historic Sports Car Club FF1600 champion, will drive the car owned by Roger Arnold.

The Bolton driver – who helped spectators pull fellow competitor Nelson Rowe out of his burning car at Cadwell Park earlier in the year – was one spot out of qualifying for the final of the Walter Hayes Trophy last year in his Merlyn Mk20, and with more modern machinery he is hoping to

go one place better.

"I was one place off the final last year with a historic car, so I'd like to think I can get into the final, but you know what the Hayes is like, I'll probably be in a massive accident at the first corner in the first heat!" said the 24-year-old.

"I'm just going to watch my back. We're not going to win it, the car is 25 years older than some of the cars, so the final is the target. But it depends on the circumstances."

After testing the car last week at Silverstone, Grant has decided to put the engine from his Merlyn into the Van Dieman for the Hayes.



Grant has tested the Van Dieman RF91 at Silverstone ahead of WHT outing

Moyers, Dempsey and Eastwell to spearhead expanded Kevin Mills Racing Hayes attack

Kevin Mills Racing, winner of the 2017 Walter Hayes Trophy with Michael Moyers, will run six cars in the event this year.

Moyers will return to lead the team alongside Formula Ford Festival pacesetter Michael Eastwell and Chinese Formula 4 champion Jordan Dempsey.

"I really think Jordan, after a couple of days testing, has got as

good a chance as those two," said team boss Kevin Mills, who will hire a car from Wiltshire College to complete his squad of six Spectrums.

"Moyers had a good run-out at Donington [in the National Championship two weeks ago] to get the rust off, so he's still a threat."

The line-up will be completed by Roger Orgee and South African pair Julian van der Watt and Alex Gillespie.

●Neil MacLennan made a late switch to join KMR for the Festival, making his debut in the Australian-built Spectrum chassis. The Scot had made sporadic outings earlier in the season in the National championship in a Cliff Dempsey Racing-run Ray but, with Mills' squad already fully subscribed for the Walter Hayes Trophy, MacLennan will sit out the Silverstone event ahead of a planned 2019 National title assault.



MacLennan raced for KMR in Festival

Green announced as Carlin's first F4 driver

Ginetta Junior race winner Fin Green has been confirmed as Carlin's first driver as it returns to British Formula 4 next season.

Carlin powered Lando Norris, Max Fewtrell and Jamie Caroline to the first three F4 drivers' titles before taking a sabbatical from the series this year as it expanded into IndyCar and F2.

But earlier this month the team confirmed it would be back for 2019 and now Green has been unveiled as Carlin's first driver.

The 16-year-old finished ninth in the standings in his second season in the Ginetta category this term and becomes the first racer to be announced as competing in F4 next year.

Team boss Trevor Carlin said: "We're delighted to be back in the F4 British Championship and helping young, talented drivers in their first seasons in single-seaters. Fin represents this perfectly and has already shown a great deal of potential in testing."

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RACING NEWS

Photos: Steve Jones

DIJON HEADLINES THE CSCC'S 2019 11-ROUND CALENDAR

Ex-Formula 1 venue will be visited in October



Grids will race at Dijon next year

By Matt Kew

The Classic Sports Car Club has unveiled its 11-round 2019 calendar, which includes a headline first visit to Dijon.

Blue riband visits to Formula 1 circuits have become a semi-regular fixture on the club's schedule.

The addition of Dijon, from October 4-6, follows a maiden meeting at Magny-Cours last weekend for the season finale

and a return to Spa – which holds its place next year – in June.

Club director David Smitheram said: "It's the usual CSCC thinking where we want to offer the members something new. We're running out of UK circuits to try for the first time so we looked out where else we haven't been that's within a sensible distance."

Angelsey's International circuit will also get its first run out with the CSCC next year,

the club previously having used the Coastal layout. It is hoped that both configurations will be used throughout the July 20/21 meeting.

Also of note, the final meeting will include night races at Donington Park. The National loop will host the televised races on October 26/27. In previous years, the equivalent meeting has been held at Brands Hatch – the Indy circuit now featuring on August 17/18.

CSCC Saloons and Modsports will also race at Mondello

Mondello Park will also feature on the Classic Sports Car Club's schedule for the first time.

The Special Saloons and Modsports will break away from the other series for a one-off and have three races at the Irish venue across July 13/14.

Plans to race at the former British Touring Car venue were tabled for 2018, but had to be

put on hold due to a date clash.

The Special Saloons and Modsports will support the Formula Vee Festival, a charity meeting that raises money for Irish children's campaign The LauraLynn Foundation.

Howard Dawson, who races a Porsche Boxster S in the CSCC Modern Classics series and is acting managing director of both Lola and

Mondello, said: "We've been talking with [CSCC directors] David [Smitheram] and Hugo [Holder] for two or three years about getting part of the club to come over.

"It's club racing at its best – a technically demanding circuit and the people have a great time. Maybe in future years more of the programme can come."



BMW Car Club Racing series was new this year but is proving popular

Championship status for BMW Car Club series

The BMW Car Club Racing series is to become a points-paying championship for its second year in 2019, after an opening season which has "exceeded expectations" according to the organiser.

The series was launched by the only officially recognised BMW Car Club in the UK, intended as a fun and affordable form of racing, and grids have been healthy in its inaugural year with a season-high of 31 cars at Silverstone in May.

It will now take the next step for 2019 by shifting from a series

to a championship.

"It was always the plan," series coordinator Neil McDonald told *Motorsport News*.

"It just looks better on the outside and it will pull other drivers in who want to take part in a championship, and we can still cater for those who just want to take part. We can do both.

"The first season has been absolutely incredible, it's exceeded expectations, it's been very enjoyable. It's just been great fun without blowing loads and loads of money."

New BRSCC-run Ferrari series for 2019

A Ferrari Challenge UK series organised and run by the British Racing and Sports Car Club will be launched next year.

The championship will cater for Ferrari 488 Challenge cars and will hold four rounds; at Brands Hatch, Snetterton, Croft and Silverstone, with two races taking place at each venue next year.

Dominic Ostrowski, competitions director

at the BRSCC said: "We have worked with Ferrari over several years for its Ferrari Racing Days at Silverstone and it was a natural fit [for us to run this series].

"Ferrari has put a lot of research into it and there seems to be an appetite to do it.

"I think it's one [championship] that's going to grow over a few years but we'll see what the numbers are like in 2019."

Roberts plans Mazda return and title bid

Two-time BMW Compact Cup champion Steve Roberts is aiming to return to the Mazda MX-5 Supercup in 2019 and challenge for the title, having made his debut in the series this year.

Roberts has taken two wins in his maiden season of Mazda racing after engine problems hampered him early in the season.

After an engine change, Roberts took his first win at Castle Combe in July, but suffered a crash in the second race and missed the next round as he battled to repair his car. He ended the season in style



Roberts took maiden Mazda win before car was wrecked

with a win at the final race of the season at Donington Park earlier this month and is eyeing the title next season.

"I wouldn't be doing it if I wasn't aiming for the championship," said Roberts,

who claimed his Compact titles in 2013 and '15,

"It's a great championship, it's probably one of the best quality grids in the country.

"There are 10 drivers that are quality."

Frankie Taylor's Citroen Saxo entered the Junior Saloon Car Championship round at Oulton Park sporting a bonnet livery decorated with coloured tape and signed by his rival drivers. Taylor hit the back of Molly Dodd's Saxo in practice for the previous round at Silverstone which left the front of the car severely damaged. His rivals came together to offer replacement parts and redecorated the car in its original livery using sticky tape before adding their own messages prior to it racing.

Photo: Matt Barrington



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HISTORICS

'Mallock clinched the FJunior title'
Engineer to the fore, below



DOWN THE WORKSHOP

1961 LOTUS 21

Ex-Jim Clark F1 car
Current owner: John Delane

It's the ex-Clark F1 car

"It is the last of the works 21s and Jim Clark was the only person to race it in period. They saved it for a brief appearance at the 1961 Modena non-championship race where he qualified it but elected not to race it and saved it for the Italian Grand Prix at Monza."

It is very original

"I've lusted after Jim Clark cars and owned another one. This one is special as it is a car that unequivocally was his car, and only his car. He raced it that fateful day [where Clark was involved in an accident which killed rival Wolfgang von Trips and 15 spectators] and the reality is that the car was only mildly damaged. You can see the repairs that were made to two of the chassis tubes. They were sleeved and the aluminium upper bodywork was damaged. Beyond that, the lower and rear bodywork was saved."

It was stored in Italy

"After the accident with von Trips, the car sat in an Italian lock-up at Monza for seven years. Colin Chapman was apparently able to get the engine and gearbox, because the ZF gearbox was on loan and had to go back and the engine had to go back to Climax."

Tom Wheatcroft acquired it

"When the seven years was up, Tom Wheatcroft decided to write a letter to Colin Chapman and enquire if he would consider selling the car, as Tom was starting his collection. Colin wrote back and said: 'I've told the authorities to dispose of it. If you can get it, you can have it. I'll donate it to the museum.'"

It went to Donington Park

"Tom Wheatcroft despatched his lads and they returned with the car. They repaired the chassis damage, had a new aluminium upper body made and the car sat on display at Donington Park for 30 years. Everyone got to see it in the Donington Collection. He somehow acquired a ZF gearbox and a proper motor."

It came back to racing four years ago

"Then, as they began to release some of the cars, Tony Best acquired it. Tony owned it for about three years and if you count Lotus, I'm the fourth owner, which is very special. It is such a low mileage car, so original and completely unmolested. It is unbelievably special and I'm very thrilled to own it. I hope Jimmy, rest his soul, doesn't mind as I like to wear a helmet with his colours."



The last works Lotus 21



Photos:Paul Lawrence

Owen battled hard at Silverstone

OWEN STUNS WITH SWAP TO MUSTANG

Versatile racer makes debut in V8 monster at Silverstone

By Paul Lawrence

All-rounder Geraint Owen made a mighty Historic Touring Car debut at Silverstone in his first experience of racing the ex-Henry Mann/John Young Ford Mustang with a brace of second-placed finishes.

A week after he drove an even older Ford saloon, a Model A, for the first time in a VSCC trial, Owen forsook the 1950s Kurtis Indy Roadster he campaigns with the HGPCA to race the well-

known Mustang, which is one of the newest cars he has ever raced.

"It is a bit modern for me," the university lecturer said of the 1965 Mustang. "Charles Knill-Jones and I have got a Triumph TR4 for the Spa 6-Hours and we just thought: 'shall we get something else?' We are selling the TR4 and we bought the Mustang. We went to look at Mustangs and ended up spending too much and buying a really cool one.

"I've never raced a touring car before," said Owen, who

has raced extensively in 1950s and Pre-War cars as well as the former Indycar. "It is an experience and the steering is very heavy. So you end up steering it far more with your right foot," he said after finishing a close second to Mustang expert Warren Briggs in both races.

The Mustang joins the 1928 Model A in his stable. "We wanted a saloon to go trialling to take

my son Freddie," said Owen. "What other motorsport can you compete in with your eight-year-old son? We had a great run last weekend on the Welsh Trial until we blew the diff up."



Owen's Ford Model A racer



McDonald took a podium

Formula Ford racer McDonald makes his Formula Junior debut

Formula Ford racer George McDonald made his Formula Junior debut at Silverstone and scored a podium result in his first race in the Brabham BT6. McDonald, who races a Van Diemen RF04 in modern FF1600,

works at historic race preparation experts Hall and Hall, and looks after the Brabham for US-based racer Sharon Adelman. "Sharon offered me the chance to race the Brabham and then got an invite to race it at

Goodwood," said McDonald. "So I didn't want to race it until after Goodwood. I'd done about five laps in the rain at Donington before this weekend."

He will return to the RF04 for the Walter Hayes Trophy.

Edwards to press on in rare Fiat 131

British Rally Championship winner Matt Edwards and Darren Garrod will continue to develop the RallySport Developments Fiat 131 they drove for the first time on the Trackrod Rally Yorkshire last month.

The car is owned and also rallied by Edwards' backer Peter Smith, who wants to develop the car to be competitive with the top-level BDG-engined Ford Escort Mk2s



Edwards will develop Fiat

which dominate the MSA British Historic Rally Championship.

They finished second to Matthew Robinson's Escort on the Trackrod and will go up against him again on similar stages on the Malton Rally on November 4.



Thousands of rally fans lined the route of the Lombard Rally Bath on Saturday as the non-competitive tour relived the years when Bath was host city to Britain's biggest rally. Stig Blomqvist drove an Audi quattro at venues including the Porlock hillclimb.

Smits adds a rebuilt ex-Clay Regazzoni Ralt RT1 Formula 2 racer for a fresh challenge

Dutch historic racer Michiel Smits has brought the ex-Clay Regazzoni Ralt RT1 Formula 2 car back to racing after many years in storage in Switzerland.

Smits has tested the car

Smits commissioned UK-based Complete Motorsport Solutions to reprepare the car and it was ready for shakedown at Donington Park in

late September. "It was a 1977 Ron Dennis Project 4 team car," said Smits. "There were three cars for Eddie Cheever, Ingo Hoffmann and Regazzoni. I knew the car was in Switzerland and every couple of years I'd ring the

owner up and ask him to sell it, and he'd say no. Finally, he said yes. There is a nice atmosphere in F2 and respectful drivers."

He also has a Lola T70 Spyder and a replica Zakspeed Ford Escort Mk1.



IN BRIEF

Simac's F2 glory

Following the final two races of the Historic Formula 2 season at Dijon, Robert Simac (ex-Jean-Pierre Jaussaud March 712M) secured the Jochen Rindt Trophy for the 1600cc Formula 2 cars and ended the season as overall top scorer in Historic F2 for the sixth time in a row. It is a remarkable record for the Frenchman who does most of the preparation work on his car.

Baines returns

Historic FF2000 racer Jono Baines was back in action for the Silverstone final after his Royale RP30 was damaged at Oulton Park at the end of August. The Cumbrian school teacher went off at Druids avoiding a spinner but had the car back together in less than six weeks with the support of Tom Smith, who shook the car down at Silverstone on Friday while Baines was still at work.

Escort crew deliver

Simon Tysoe and Paul Morris have been confirmed as overall champions in the RACRMC Historic Asphalt Rally Championship. The Ford Escort Mk1 crew sealed the title on their first experience of the final rally of the season, the closed-roads Jersey Rally.

Blakeney's team up

Pat Blakeney shared his FF2000 Delta T81 with his son Scott at Silverstone over the weekend, with each of them doing one qualifying session and two races. Pat ran both Historic FF2000 races and then Scott took over to join the URS Classic FF2000 field alongside the Classic F3 pack. The busiest moment came with back-to-back races on Sunday, which required a rapid driver change and refuel.

Charteris's pole

Mark Charteris secured the Class A title in the Classic Clubmans Championship before the opening race at Silverstone. The bonus point for pole was enough for Charteris to retain his crown. In the B Sport contest, Clive Wood missed qualifying and the opening race due to a wedding in Scotland on Saturday, but took the class in Sunday's race and the championship after starting his Mallock Mk20 from the back of the grid.

Mallock's title

Ray Mallock clinched the front-engined Formula Junior title at Silverstone on Sunday in his U2 Mk2 to score his first championship success as a driver since winning the 1981 British Formula Atlantic title in a Ralt RT4. It was his first crown in a Mallock U2 from the company founded by his father since winning the 1971 Shell Clubmans title.

F3 dead heat

The Classic F3 title was only decided by a tie-breaker at Silverstone on Sunday after Keith White (Ralt RT1) and Pat Gormley (Safir) ended the season level on points. With more second places to his credit, Evesham racer White just got the verdict to claim the title he last won in 2006 in his ex-Elio de Angelis Ralt.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Team boss thinks he can manage three fast drivers

The three Yaris will run "in harmony"

MAKINEN CONFIDENT OF KEEPING PEACE AT TOYOTA

By David Evans

Tommi Makinen is confident he has lined up the world's fastest rally team in Ott Tanak, Jari-Matti Latvala and Kris Meeke next season – and he says he has no worries about managing them.

Meeke was the headline news from last week, but Latvala's deal to remain in a Yaris WRC for another season was also confirmed by the Japanese giant.

Makinen has confirmed to *Motorsport News* that all three of his drivers will start the season with the same chance to win, but he's also aware that could bring potential conflict.

"Kris is fast and he is helping to give us a very, very strong line-up for next season," Makinen told *MN*. "We have three drivers who are all able to be on the podium everywhere, but at the same time we know these drivers cannot win everywhere – even if Ott for sure would like to!"

Asked what his tactic would be in an event like Finland, where all three drivers have won before and all would be pushing for another victory at the World Rally Championship's annual festival of speed.

"We will let them to decide who wins in Finland," said Makinen.

"They need to drive that rally for themselves, but we know that the most important is to concentrate at the highest level and be accurate all of the time – if you do that, then the speed is coming."

Meeke praised Makinen's approach to driver management, saying: "Who would have thought that Ott Tanak, Jari-Matti Latvala and Kris Meeke would have been in the same team? I honestly believe a character like Tommi Makinen, who understands the sport so well, he's been there and done it. He's not just a businessman looking to create a business, he wants to create a motivated team to have success – that's the number one priority. I think Tommi can manage that very well."

Makinen is delighted with his line-up, particularly with the recent upturn in speed coming from Latvala, who has been on the podium on three of the last four events and finished second in Turkey and Wales.

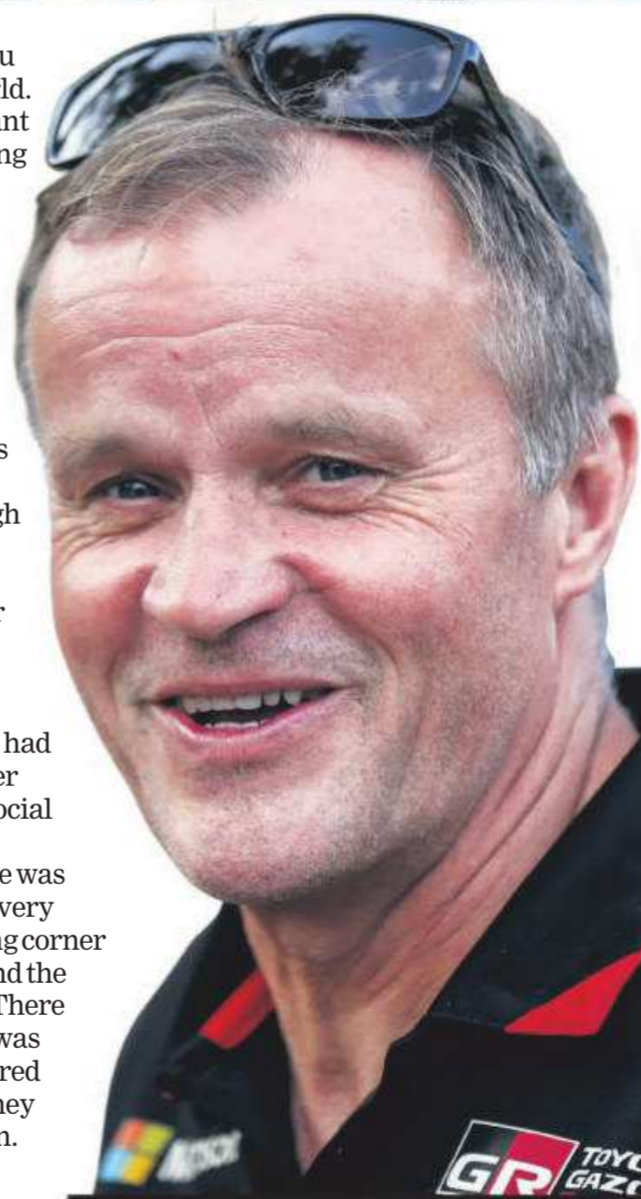
"Jari-Matti has shown some absolutely brilliant speed with no mistakes," said Makinen. "In the start of the year and maybe also in the middle we were a little bit worried: he had some bad luck with the car, but also there were

some small mistakes, but you know he is in a sensitive world. Look at Wales, he was brilliant there because he was enjoying the driving.

"We have the strong team for next season. Everybody is happy for this. I understand Kris is a pretty good name in Japan and that's important for us – and we have seen that in Europe and, of course, in the UK he is coming with a big interest."

Makinen was quick to laugh off talk of Meeke's first accident in a Yaris WRC, when the Dungannon driver put the car on its side while testing last week. There was considerable speculation about whether or not Meeke had damaged the car and whether or not pictures circulating social media were even authentic.

Makinen said: "The picture was not a joke. It was some very, very small mistake. It was in a long corner which came more narrow and the speed was completely zero. There was no damage to the car, it was just on its side. I'm not bothered about that at all. The guys, they can push it back and carry on. It was no drama."



Makinen: Three drivers will be equal

Meeke to run Condroz in a Skoda

Having enjoyed being back in a rally car at the demonstration element of RallyLegend earlier this month, Kris Meeke will be back to competition when he drives a Skoda Fabia R5 at next weekend's Condroz Rally.

The Northern Irishman will drive a private car run by Italian team Metiorsport with DMACK tyres. The deal was brokered by Renaud Jamoul, DMACK's Belgian distributor.

Meeke said: "It's an event I've done before, so I know it's really challenging and there's usually a top-class field there. It's an ideal way for me to get back into competition."

Meeke last contested the Huy-based Condroz Rally when

he drove a DS 3 R5 in 2014, narrowly missing out on victory to local hero Kris Princen and his Subaru Impreza WRC.

He is, of course, no stranger to Belgian rally fans, having won the nation's biggest event – the Ypres Rally – on his first attempt in 2009.

DMACK's Dick Cormack told *MN*: "It's great to see someone like Kris on DMACKs. Our tyres have proved to be competitive on national and regional asphalt events on a number of occasions this year, especially in the sort of mixed conditions you find in Condroz. We wish him well, expect he'll be challenging for victory and look forward to extremely useful feedback to help future developments."

▶ PEUGEOT PULLS OUT OF WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

▶▶▶▶ PAGE 29



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'Kristoffersson looks to rallying challenge'
WRX champion on stages, p16



NEUVILLE KNOWS SPAIN TEST IS CRUCIAL



Hyundai has improved



Neuville needs a good start

Thierry Neuville has admitted Friday's opening day of Rally of Spain action could be crucial to his hopes of lifting this year's World Rally Championship title.

The Belgian's Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC will be the first into the gravel stages where, if the forecasted warm, dry weather prevails, he is expected to suffer the biggest time loss of the three title protagonists.

"The good thing is that my main rivals are very close to me," Neuville told *MN*. "So the conditions shouldn't be too different."

Sebastien Ogier, seven points down on Neuville, and Ott Tanak, 21 off the front, will

follow him into Friday.

Neuville said: "The opening day on gravel will be particularly vital in setting the tone for the rest of the weekend, so we have to start strongly. We know we have had some deficiencies on Tarmac this season, but we have worked hard on that and hope we can see the fruits of that hard work."

Hyundai brings new parts to the weekend's asphalt stages with new geometry and a centre differential set-up aimed firmly at offering more stability and less understeer from the Tarmac-specification i20.

"These two final rallies of the season are massively important

for us in the championship fight," said Neuville. "We have lost some ground in the past couple of events, but we are still on top and we won't give up without a fight."

Still short on development mileage, M-Sport's latest engine parts won't make it to Spain, but should be in time for Australia. Despite that, Ogier was upbeat following his pre-event running in Spain last week.

"I like Spain, I like this event a lot," he said. "The championship is getting really hot now, but we go to this week on a high after winning in Wales and reducing the gap – but we need to deliver another strong result again this

week if we want to defend our crown. You can count on Julien [Ingrassia, co-driver] and I to give it everything."

Tanak's retirement from the lead in Wales three weeks ago on Saturday makes the Estonian's task much more straightforward in Salou.

"We just have to win the last two rallies and see what happens," said Tanak. "I can be confident about our performance on both gravel and asphalt, as we have been strong on both surfaces recently. We had a good pre-event test where we were able to work on some things to make everything as good as possible before the rally."



Loeb will make last outing

Loeb plays down speculation on his pace on Rally of Spain

Despite eight Rally of Spain wins and nine World Rally Championship titles, Sebastien Loeb has warned against an expectation that he'll be immediately on the pace in Tarragona this week.

The Frenchman, making his third and final WRC outing with the Citroen squad at the Rally of Spain this season, says his focus will be on a trouble-free run through the season's

only mixed-surface event.

Earlier this year, Loeb starred in both Mexico and Corsica, leading in Leon before a puncture and setting fastest times on the French island after sliding off the road on day one.

Loeb said: "After setting some good times on both surfaces in Mexico and in Corsica, I'd love to get through an entire rally without making any mistakes. My two days of testing went well.

It's now up to me to put it all together, from start to finish.

"The standard is so high it would be pretentious to say that I'll be able to challenge the three title contenders, but I hope to be more or less on the pace. If it's dry on day one, we'll need to make the most of the potential advantage of our road position, because lots of things always happen on this leg, with hidden rocks pretty much everywhere."

Toyota's fond farewell to Citroen recruit Lappi

Toyota Motor Corporation president Akio Toyoda has thanked Esapekka Lappi and his co-driver Janne Ferm for their contribution to his team's success after the Finnish pair confirmed their departure to Citroen last week.

Toyoda said he expected Lappi's pace in a C3 WRC would only serve to drive his former employer even harder.

"To Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm: thank you for battling together with us as part of our team over the last two years," said Toyoda. "I have no doubt that next season Esapekka and Janne will again make us stronger – this time as our rivals."

Lappi admitted he was looking forward to further his WRC education alongside five – and possibly six-time world champion Sebastien Ogier.

Lappi said: "Having learned many things from Jari-Matti Latvala last year and from Ott Tanak this year, I'll have everything it takes to be even better if I also manage to draw inspiration from Seb!"

"I'm convinced the car has a lot of potential, as does the team, which has a long history and lot of experience in the WRC. The fact that Pierre [Budat, team principal] clearly wanted to recruit me also counted a lot when it came to making my decision. It's also going to be a great challenge, trying to win together."



Skoda might have withdrawn from the Asia Pacific Rally Championship officially, but the winning goes on as Japanese privateer Yuya Sumiyama ensured a seventh APRC title for Skoda. Sumiyama has won all five APRC rounds in his Fabia R5, sealing the title with a maximum score on last weekend's China Rally Longyou.

A finish is on the radar for World Rally returnee Ken Block

Back in the World Rally Championship for the first time in four years, Ken Block has told *Motorsport News* his focus is firmly on the finish in Spain this week.

This week's Salou-based event will be the American's first start in a latest-specification Ford Fiesta WRC and he admits two days' testing is nowhere near enough to bring him up to speed.

"I'm being extremely realistic about the race weekend," said

Block. "I'm also being very up front about my personal expectations. The goal is to get out there, drive as fast as I can, but to bring it home clean and just have a great time."

"The rest of the top teams have almost two full years racing this car and can fully exploit all the aero work these new cars feature. I simply don't have that comfort level to lean into it on the high-speed corners and blindly trust it yet. And that's OK! I'm just thrilled I

have this awesome opportunity to come out and drive the best car in the field among the best drivers on the planet on some of – what I feel, at least – are some of the best roads in the championship as well.

"So yeah, I'm stoked to get onto the stages here in Spain."

Block, who completed a nine-round WRC programme in 2011, last competed at world championship level when he finished 12th on the 2014 Rally of Spain.

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"His speed will not have dimmed one bit"



See that Meeke thing happened then. What now?

Now we wait and see what Kris Meeke makes of his season in the last chance saloon. And let's be under no illusions here, this really is a final roll of the dice for the Northern Irishman. And rightly so. He's had plenty of opportunities to demonstrate his worth and world championship potential and, so far, he's come up short.

Citroen might well be the anti-Christ in Dungannon these days, but it's worth remembering the millions it invested in Meeke down the years, including a spell in the Junior team when the Briton had the edge, but not the temperament, over Dani Sordo.

That said, Citroen's method in showing Meeke the door remains as shocking today as it did back in May.

And the decision itself just as bewildering. A decision which grows ever odder by the rally. Here we are this week, staring down Spain – an event Meeke and co-driver Paul Nagle bossed in one of their strongest and most self-assured drives ever last season.

Undoubtedly, that crazy post-Portugal WRC week has left its mark on Meeke, but it's time to move on.

As my children constantly remind me: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow's a mystery and today's a gift – that's why it's called the present."

Don't forget that Meeke. Be the bigger man here. Ignore the temptation to talk down where you've come from in search of favour and friends where you're going. Focus on the task in hand and make the very best use of the year ahead.

We will now see if Kris has learned anything in his time away from the sport. If he has, he has nothing to fear. His speed has never been in doubt and that won't have dimmed one bit while he's been riding his bike up and down mountains in Andorra.

But what we need to complement that pace is a level-headed, mature driver who can secure employment with Toyota across the following two or three seasons in the way, say, Carlos Sainz would have done in the later part of his career.

If Kris can capture that, if he can walk the most narrow and tricky line towards the podium (and its top step two or three times) in 2019, then he'll be back, bigger and better than ever.

If he can't. If he crashes, makes mistakes and then crashes again... well he's had his chance.

Regardless of the outcome, it's fair to say we're already lining up for a sensational 2019. Already the story lines are forming: Ogier back to Citroen to finish the job he started and Meeke taking aim at a former employer who he will – regardless of all of the above – be desperate to topple.

Watching Toyota's trio and Tommi's management of those three fast and forceful fellas will be fascinating as the season starts to unfold.

Finally, good luck to Meeke and his new co-driver Seb Marshall (we all know it's going to be him). It takes balls and self-belief to dive into a team and go up against two of the fastest drivers in the world – both of whom have a far superior understanding of the car and the team around them. Now, to the small matter of this year's world championships...

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

RALLY NEWS

Rovanpera Jr with Skoda for two years

Kalle Rovanpera will remain a Skoda driver for the next two seasons – despite growing interest from factory teams to sign the Finn for 2020.

Rovanpera had been tipped for a move to Toyota in 12 months and the news that both Jari-Matti Latvala and Kris Meeke have single-season 2019 agreements with the Puuppola-based squad further fuelled speculation the 18-year-old could be getting ready to move up to the sport's top level.

Rovanpera told *MN*: "I have another year with Skoda after next year, it's to the end of 2020. Next year we have to do the rallies we haven't done yet – then it's much easier if we get to another team, [we go there] knowing all of the rallies."

Asked if he thought he would be ready to step into a World Rally Car instead of staying in a Skoda in 2020, he replied: "We will know next year better, but now it looks quite good. We have been fast in every rally, but if we can get experience in the other rallies then who knows?"

"I'm happy with this year. In Wales we went back to a rally for the first time and we were going much, much better – but the pace I managed there was still a surprise for me."

Rovanpera dominated the WRC2 class of Wales Rally GB and will be looking to do the same when he makes his debut at this week's Rally of Spain.



Rovanpera: Stays with Skoda



Kristoffersson could add a rally attack



Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

KRISTOFFERSSON TO TAKE ON SWEDISH RALLY SERIES

World Rallycross champion keen to fight on the stages in a VW

By David Evans

Two-time World RX champion Johan Kristoffersson is hoping to contest next year's Swedish Rally Championship alongside his regular commitments.

The Swedish star has long been a fan of rallying and competed at this year's Rally Sweden, where he drove a Skoda Fabia R5 and stunned WRC2 regulars with a fastest time on the second run at the Rojden test.

Kristoffersson's family motorsport team KMS is looking to purchase a pair of Volkswagen Polo GTI R5s next season and

its one of those cars the 29-year-old is hoping to use in his domestic series next season. In addition to his back-to-back world RX success Kristoffersson won this year's TCR Scandinavia title and feels ready to move away from circuit racing.

"I have done some rallying," Kristoffersson told *MN*, "but not as much as circuit racing. I want to drive as much as possible next year, I want to defend my [RX] title and I want to do some rallying. If I could dream out loud, I would like to do the Swedish Championship in a Polo R5."

Kristoffersson enjoyed a programme of Swedish and Norwegian rallies in 2016

when he used a Mitsubishi Lancer and Skoda Fabia S2000.

Kristoffersson added: "I've done the TCR thing, I've won that title and it would be good to look for something new. [TCR] was six rounds and the Swedish Championship is six rounds next year, so it wouldn't mean any more time away."

"I think it's possible [to do Swedish Championship] I will try to work hard to make it happen. It would be a new challenge for me, I have never driven a rally car on gravel before, so it would be nice to have something new. RX has been fantastic for the last two years, but you

have to try to learn new things and have more experience all the time – you have to spread your skills because the competition is really high."

Kristoffersson admitted he felt his time at Rally Sweden this year helped him become more competitive in World RX.

"In rallying, you get into situations that you can't plan for," he said. "You don't know what will be the grip and you come to some things blind. When you do the joker lap only once every four laps, the grip is different and being able to adapt to this quickly is important and something competing in Sweden helped me with."



Last appearance in the top class was in 2005 for Mitsubishi

Mitsubishi unlikely to return to the World Rally Championship despite Toyota's desires

Sources in Japan have scotched talk of Mitsubishi's return to the World Rally Championship.

Representatives from the former giant of the series are expected to attend next month's Rally Shinshiro – Japan's WRC candidate event – but insiders have indicated no immediate desire to build a rally car under the current

petrol-based regulations. Computer generated pictures of a Mirage-based WRC prompted speculation of a return as soon as 2021, but *MN*'s sources in Japan said: "Mitsubishi is assessing its options in motorsport, it's looking at everything and it's true, they will go to the [candidate] event. If there was the chance to run

an electric or hybrid car, it might have been different.

"Mitsubishi wasn't interested and didn't homologate the Mirage rally car produced in Sweden and based on R5 regulations and the production of the Mirage is expected to end soon. I don't think Mitsubishi has the plan to come back."

Toyota Motor Corporation

president Akio Toyoda and Toyota Gazoo Racing team principal Tommi Makinen have both tried to persuade both Mitsubishi and Subaru back. Makinen, who won all four of his drivers' titles in a Lancer, said: "It would be absolutely brilliant news if some more Japanese manufacturers were joining the championship."

Rally Japan bosses to fight for a place on future World Rally Championship calendar

Rally Japan will fight on for its place in the World Rally Championship despite missing out on a 2019 slot to Corsica.

Japan had been widely expected to return to the WRC for the first time since 2010 next year, but the FIA's meeting of the World Motor Sport Council sanctioned a 14-round schedule with Corsica

included and Japan left on the sidelines. *MN*'s sources have revealed a 15-round calendar came within one vote of being passed – such a move would have provided a date for Japan, but the manufacturers were all vehemently against 15 events.

A statement from Rally Japan's headquarters in Tokyo reads:

"The [Rally Japan organising] Committee had been applying for Rally Japan to join the FIA World Rally Championship in 2019, but unfortunately Rally Japan was not one of the 14 countries granted a place on next season's calendar."

"The WRC Japan Round Bid Committee will now set its targets

to return Rally Japan to the WRC Calendar in 2020 and shall continue to work with full commitment to achieve its target. "The plans to host the FIA observers at its WRC candidate event, at Rally Shinshiro on 2-4 November 2018 remain in place. We thank you for your continued support."



The WRC had a spell on Rally Japan between 2004 and 2010

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Photos: Chicane Media, rallyonline.be, Paul Evans

HARPER v PRITCHARD FOR MSA ASPHALT TITLE

MSA ASPHALT PREVIEW



Dan Harper and Jason Pritchard will fight for the MSA Asphalt Rally Championship this weekend on the Cheviot Stages in a winner-takes-all finale.

Points leader Wayne Sisson hasn't entered the event in his Mitsubishi Lancer E10 as he would be unlikely to keep up with the World Rally Cars that dominate the series on this event. On dropped scores Harper (Mini John Cooper Works WRC) leads Ford Focus WRC05 driver Pritchard by a single point (see info box).

Pritchard took maximum points on the Manx National and last time out on the Mewla Rally, while Harper has proven more consistent despite winning only one event – the Down Rally – to Pritchard's two.

"I don't think it matters too much what anyone else is doing other than Jason," said multiple Manx Rally champion Harper. "We're both in the same situation, we both have to finish in front of each other to take the championship."

"If we're fast enough then great, if we're not I don't want to destroy the car."

"I look at every event in the same way, it's a piece of Tarmac, if your preparations are good and your notes are good then you'll go right. If you don't get the preparation right then you don't stand a cat in hell's chance."

Lancashire driver Harper does have the advantage of having rallied on Otterburn before, on the Tyneside Stages last year, while Pritchard is visiting for the first time.

ENTRY LIST

MSA Asphalt Rally Championship, round 6/6, Cheviot Stages Rally, Otterburn, October 28

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Damian Cole/Jane Nicol	Ford Focus WRC05
2	Peter Taylor/Andrew Roughead	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
3	Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell	Mini JCW WRC
4	Jason Tauber Pritchard/Phil Clarke	Ford Focus WRC
5	John Stone/Jack Morton	Ford Fiesta S2500
6	Stephen Simpson/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5
7	Dave Turnbull/Chris Purvis	Ford Fiesta WRC
8	Paul MacKinnon/Rob Fagg	Ford Fiesta
9	Gordon Morrison/Calum MacPherson	Subaru Impreza
10	Mark McCulloch/Michael Hendry	Subaru Impreza



Pritchard: Title chaser

POINTS

MSA Asphalt Rally Championship points

DRIVER	RD 1	RD 2	RD 3	RD 4	RD 5	TOTAL	DROPPED SCORES
Dan Harper	-	28	27	30	27	112	112
Jason Pritchard	27	30	1	24	30	112	111

"We're a point behind, but whatever happens I just have to concentrate on myself," said Welshman Pritchard, three-times British Historic Rally champion.

"I've never done the event. The only time I've been through Otterburn village is on the Roger Albert Clark. We have a recce so I'll make my notes and drive to them."

Pritchard's car has been taken to Focus expert Paul Benn for a check over ready

for the event, while Harper's Mini has had some work done after an off on the Rally of Charlemagne in France, with a test scheduled for this week to check the cars.

Whatever happens the series will crown a new champion as neither have had the honour before.

The event has had a boost in entries this year, having started under 70 cars last year while over 90 have entered in 2018.



Cole's Focus is a regular title winner

Cole back to title-winning Ford Focus WRC for the Cheviot

Damian Cole will switch back to his five-time title-winning Ford Focus WRC05 for the next round of the MSA Asphalt Championship on the Cheviot Stages Rally.

Cole, who will start as number one on the event, is out of title contention for the Otterburn event and wants to use the opportunity to see if the Focus would work better for the Welshman compared to his Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

"I've never found the Fiesta

the easiest thing to drive, and Paul Benn [preparation expert] has said to me for the last two years that the answer to the problem is sat under a dust sheet [meaning the Focus WRC05]," said Cole, who last drove the Focus in 2015 on the ALMC Stages.

"Jason [Pritchard] has won two rounds of the championship this year in a 2005 Focus. We thought the result on the Cheviot Stages makes no difference to me

championship-wise so we thought we'd bring it out and see how it compares to the Fiesta."

Scottish Rally Championship-winning co-driver this year, Jane Nicol, will navigate, as Cole's usual co-driver Jamie Edwards is unavailable.

"She seems to be winning everything else this year!" said Cole of Nicol, who is based near to the event in Edinburgh.

MacKinnon to make rallying return with rare Cheviot Stages entry in a Fiesta R5

Two-time Mull winner Paul MacKinnon will make his first rally appearance of the year this weekend on the Cheviot Stages.

The 2008 and '11 Mull winner hasn't competed since last November's Pokerstars Rally – when he finished second – on the Isle of Man due to work.

The Tobermory driver will field a Ford Fiesta R5 from Dom

Buckley RSC, which has been converted to right-hand-drive.

"We operate a ferry boat that runs through the summer, from April until around now," explained MacKinnon.

"There's no such thing as a day off, so we miss all these nice rallies and the good weather!"

"We try to have a good season [with work] and then try and

fit in a few rallies."

MacKinnon has competed at the Otterburn Military Range once in the late 2000s, although the route and venue has changed significantly since then.

MacKinnon said the ability to drive a RHD car was key to choosing the RSC Fiesta.

"The biggest problem for me, not doing very much rallying,

is a lot of the cars are left-hand-drive," he added. "Which only doing one or two a year is no use for me. Dom has these right-hand-drive R5s and it suits me really well and they are great wee cars. They're great fun and that's what we're trying to find these days."

MacKinnon has also entered the Pokerstars Rally again.

A VISIT TO THE JERSEY RALLY

BEN BUESNEL

"Jersey Rally: You won't be disappointed"



After a season with the British Rally Championship as press officer and just a week after Wales Rally GB, another rally loomed. This time it was a busman's holiday to Jersey.

Known for Bergerac, potatoes, and Henry Cavill – aka Superman – Jersey is also home to the most southerly rally in the British Isles, aptly named the Jersey Rally.

The two-day Tarmac test, first established in 1983, has hosted the likes of Tony Pond, Derek Warwick, Jimmy McRae, Derek Bell and many more thread exciting machinery down the challenging island lanes. Dominated by the Ford Escort Mk2 – Group B, WRC and R5-specification machines have had their day too.

But why is it special, you might ask? For me, the Jersey Rally has many things going for it and was the reason for fueling my love for rallying. Stood with my dad in fields at a young age on the Friday night stages watching bright lights and great sights through the likes of Longueville and Waterworks was spine-tingling.

As a proud Jerseyman I always hoped of home glory – and as it stands it's 17 wins to Jersey and 19 for the UK. Dave Carrell, Chris Le Bonniec and Steve Leonard have taken the fight to the visitors and become multiple winners. The future looks bright too with 2018 winner Ross Le Noa and rising star Ed Fossey showing the island has promising talent for the times ahead.

As the fever builds before each stage, the kind and friendly house owners, whose properties line the stages, are always wonderful and add to the event. Don't be surprised if you are offered tea, cakes and a tour of an impressive private motorcycle collection. I have had them all!

For the competitor it offers a unique challenge. Its compact route and 100-plus stage miles is a real favourite for visiting crews and gives local drivers a chance to compare themselves against their UK counterparts – creating an intensive rivalry on the stages, but a friendly social scene away from the time cards. The post rally party is legendary in many circles.

Nicky Grist – a 21-time World Rally Championship event winner no less – took Jersey Rally glory on the event in 2009 alongside Peter Lloyd in a Subaru.

"The schedule of stages and the shortness of service times over the two days is as tough as most national and world class rallies and would even test most of the top class teams," said Grist.

I may be biased but the event is one treasure that has yet to be properly discovered by most of the rallying fraternity. It has solid foundations and needs to not shy away – but bang its own drum and grow even more. If you are at a loose end next October, put Jersey in the diary for a long weekend. You won't be disappointed. A great example is Englishman Mark Lowe, who has caught the Jersey bug and enjoyed his 13th consecutive event as a spectator and marshal.

I keep pestering my boss Iain Campbell to have a look and include it in the BRC calendar. One can dream...



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RALLY NEWS

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McCOMBIE SWITCHES TO FOCUS WORLD RALLY CAR

Mitsubishi frontrunner targets Scottish success with new machine



McCombie was rapid in Mitsubishi Lancer E9



Gallacher won '18 SRC in Focus

By Luke Barry

Scottish Rally Championship frontrunner Bruce McCombie has bought an ex-Peter Taylor Ford Focus WRC02 and will run the car for the first time on the Grizedale Rally ahead of an SRC bid next year.

Wales Rally GB National winner

in 2016, McCombie finished fourth in the SRC this year in his outgoing Mitsubishi Lancer E9, claiming one overall podium finish on the Argyll Rally.

"It's nice to have a change and try something different," McCombie said.

"We did contemplate R5 but I think they're more of a young man's car. The WRC is maybe slightly easier

to drive. My biggest bugbear with them is age and reliability, but you just have to maintain them. Andrew [Gallacher]'s was exceptional this year so we'll just have to see."

Despite his experience with four-wheel-drive machinery, McCombie admitted the WRC will take a lot of getting used to.

"We are hoping to do Grizedale

and see how the car is," he said.

"I gave it three miles last week without [turbo] lag on, and it felt good. Everybody's saying 'expect to go backwards before you go forwards', so it'll be a learning curve as it's a lot different to what we're used to.

"We've been so used to keeping the Evo neat and tidy, but I think we can be more sideways with the Ford

Focus as the car sorts it out for you."

McCombie is coy about what he can achieve in a WRC, but admits the 2019 Scottish title is an "unrealistic" aim.

"We're up against quick guys, so the title in the first year with the car is tough," he added. "If we can be as quick as were in the Evo, that's realistic. We're just going to go out, hopefully with a grin, and see what we can do."



Scot joins strong Neil Howard Stages entry with M-Sport

Laffey and M-Sport to Motorsport News Circuit Rally opener

British Rally Championship frontrunner Alex Laffey will bring his M-Sport-backed Ford Fiesta to the opening round of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship at Oulton Park in two weekend's time.

Laffey, who finished third in the BRC this year with a best finish of second on Wales Rally GB, will join the strong Oulton entry list with his R5-specification machine.

An R5 has never won the event, with Stephen Simpson and James 'JJ' Yates finishing runner-up in similar cars in the

last two years respectively. Kevin Procter's turbocharged Ford Fiesta S2000 has won the last two events overall.

"It's a bit of fun and we had a bit of budget left over from this season with some of the rallies being cancelled," said Scot Laffey, the Border Counties and Rally Isle of Man being the cancelled events.

"It's down the road, I'm based in Knutsford, so I'm looking forward to it."

Laffey acknowledged that he will face strong opposition for the event.

"It's a strong entry at the top and with the circuit rallying thing the top boys seem to know what they're doing," he added. "I want to challenge for the podium, that's the aim."

M-Sport will bring a show car to the Cheshire venue for the event on November 4, and will have presence in the service park.

The timetable for the event has been confirmed with the traditional firework display following the rally, tickets are available at: oultounpark.co.uk.

Hyde heads to Malton after baptism of fire

After jumping in at the deep end with his first gravel rally on Wales Rally GB National, Thomas Hyde and co-driver Harry Stubbs will compete on the Malton Rally on November 4.

After being diagnosed with cancer in February, Hyde fought back and completed his treatments to contest Rally GB in his 1600cc Peugeot 205 GTI, finishing 40th overall.

"My last treatment was May 31 and the Woodpecker, which is the event we were planning to do, was just a bit close," he said. "I spoke with Dave and he said 'why don't you do GB, if anything happens on day one, you can restart under Rally2. We didn't want to prove anything, we just wanted to get to the end and it was an absolute baptism of fire."

Hyde is hoping to compete in the British Historic Rally Championship next year after converting the car to historic-spec.

● MN would like to make a correction, Thomas Hyde and Harry Stubbs were not the Peugeot 205 crew that crashed on Brenig in the Wales Rally GB National event. It was Thomas Lloyd and Ian Jones. The car hit a tree and Lloyd broke his knee. Both are hoping to return to competition next year.

Binnie takes prize for tuition with BRC ace Tapio Laukkanen

Scottish Rally Championship regular Michael Binnie will receive driving tuition from 1999 British Rally champion Tapio Laukkanen tomorrow (October 25) after winning last week's John Horton Star Driver Award.

After almost winning the prize last year, Binnie beat competition from Paddy Munro, Marty Scott, Lawrie, Ross Hughes, Steven Wood, John Wink,

and Alasdair Currie in a shootout at Knockhill.

"It didn't really sink in until I was back on my tractor and thought 'I've just won a really cool award'," said Binnie. "Thank you very much to everyone who's organised today, and thank you to Claire [Mole, co-driver] for everything she's done for me over the past three seasons."

The chance to work with one of his childhood heroes

is an opportunity Binnie is relishing.

"I remember sitting on the Bothwell stage of the Jim Clark Rally at 0200hrs and waiting for boys like Tapio Laukkanen to come round," he said.

"He's a name that's been stuck in my mind and I've known all my life, you don't forget him after seeing that."

Binnie wants to work on left-foot braking with Laukkanen.



Strong results in his Lancer this season for Binnie with Mole

FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL

Oldfield man defeats dominator Murray after fraught final. By Ian Sowman

SMITH SNATCHES THE FESTIVAL TRIUMPH



Three fantastic getaways launched Smith into contention



Smith took the win on the last lap of the final

In between the semis and the Formula Ford Festival final, it was hard to find any neutral who really believed that poleman Niall Murray – a man with two Festivals, two National championships and a Walter Hayes Trophy to his name – would be beaten.

Josh Smith confounded all expectations, though, taking the lead on the last lap to claim his biggest win yet, a result that meant as much to his Oldfield Motorsport team as it did to the Cumbrian himself.

The build up to the final had been far from plain sailing for the 19-year-old, who had finished sixth in the National championship this year. He'd tested only in the wet on Wednesday – missing dry running later in the week – but nevertheless claimed pole for his heat. He soon lost out to Murray in that but, in spite of a front upright failure, clung on to third. Second – again behind Murray – put him on row two for the final, when he had one last chance to defeat the dominant Irishman.

Through no fault of his own, his bid to do so was disjointed. Carter Williams (Ray GR10) spun out of seventh at Paddock Hill Bend on lap two and was collected by the GR15 of Gary Sykes; the race was stopped. At the second attempt, John Svensson's Van Diemen JL12 tangled with the Swift SC18 of Max Marzorati, who had won the Last Chance race barely an hour earlier. The Swift clattered into the pitwall, Marzorati escaped with bruising. Separately, Joey Foster and Team USA Scholarship entrant Jake Craig exited the fray, the pair making contact at Paddock before beaching their Firman and Ray GR18 respectively into separate gravel traps.

On the latter occasion, the red flags took a few laps to appear, so Smith's second successive "ballistic" launch, to get ahead of front row starter Oliver White's Medina JL17, was not annulled. He lined up closer to Murray for the eight-lap dash for glory.

Smith completed a hat-trick of fantastic getaways, cancelling out the grid stagger and being alongside Murray, on the outside, into Paddock. On the exit, the move was sealed. A lap later, however,

and Murray took the high line at Paddock, got the switchback at the foot of the hill and hauled himself back into the lead on the climb to Druids.

The middle phase of the race – all five laps of it – went into a holding pattern up front, with Murray, in his faithful Van Diemen RF99, ahead of Smith and White. All three were well clear of fourth, the gap exaggerated when Peter Dempsey retired after a front rose joint came loose on his Ray GR18.

With three for the lead onto the final lap, Smith's team boss James Oldfield was watching on anxiously outside the commentary box as the trio ascended to Druids. "Ollie [White] was playing his patient waiting game, he's a very calculating driver," recalled Oldfield. "He made a good challenge, but Josh was able to see what he was doing."

White had gone to the outside, trying to drive around both of his rivals and he was very late on the brakes. "I thought 'I'm in third, now, Christ!'" said Smith. "But Niall must have decided to go late on the brakes and they both outbraked themselves. It just opened the door and

slid right through. Then I just hung on for the rest of the lap."

Smith's victory margin was less than a tenth of a second, with third-placed White – who rued the much-reduced race distance – only a quarter of a second behind Murray.

The 19-year-old is keen that his blue riband victory – which earned him a Mazda Road to Indy shootout ticket, as well as the Neil Shanahan Memorial Trophy – is a platform for greater things. "I hope it does me the world of good, I hope people are watching because it is just getting better," he said. "I am looking forward to a trip to America."

For Oldfield, who rated Smith and was keen to run him in 2018, the success was the culmination of much hard work. "This is his own car, but we have rebuilt it endless times to make it a little bit better every time. That's the result when you get a driver in it like that," he said. "We've been second [at the Festival], second, third – and now this."

On his return to UK racing, Matt Cowley took fourth in his Van Diemen JL13, hampered by a lack of speed out

of Graham Hill Bend and a missed gear at the start, which dropped him behind Dempsey. Neil MacLennan was fifth – the first of five cars separated by a second – which he regarded as a satisfactory Spectrum debut weekend. Keith Donegan – up from row six in spite of a slipping clutch on his Van Diemen JL13 took sixth, ahead of Canadian scholarship driver Guillaume Archambault and American counterpart Colin Mullan.

An enthusiastic drive from 23rd on the original grid earned Medina-mounted Matt Round-Garrido ninth and the John Nicol Trophy, for the most outstanding performance by a British driver. David McCullough, in his Van Diemen, completed the top 10.

With Smith victorious, though, Murray has unfinished business at Brands. "Every time I have finished this event I have won it, and I kind of wanted to keep that record up, so it is fairly heart-breaking," he said. "Hopefully we will be back, I want to be the first person to get my name on that board three times."



Round-Garrido recovered well for ninth



Murray led for most of race but Smith was close



The final was red-flagged twice, the first triggered by this spin for Williams at Paddock

Tilley take two victories after tremendous Classic FF1600 dices with Mansell

A busy Festival supporting programme also highlighted single-seater excitement, and the weekend's first race provided a preview of the main event when Benn Tilley and Scott Mansell engaged in a titanic battle for **Classic Formula Ford 1600** honours.

New champion Tilley steered his Merlyn to another win, but between pole position and victory by 0.016s lay 15 hectic laps. Mansell grabbed the advantage in traffic but Tilley wasn't beaten, drawing level off the last corner to steal the win by less than a nosecone. Rick Morris followed, ready to take advantage of any slip.

Tilley suffered from starting in the shade on a damp pole on Sunday morning, and fell to fifth before fighting back. He forced an opening at Druids to take the lead from Mansell, who reclaimed it when they met a tailender. Again like race one, Tilley outdragged his rival in the final dash to win this time by 0.022s.

The **Festival Masters** race was also a consolation outing for drivers in trouble in the main event, but the winner was

Noel Robinson, fresh from 11th in the semis and therefore a qualifier for the final. He beat Tom McArthur and Ivor McCullough, third from the back of the grid.

Alan Davidson drove a wide Mondiale to beat Tom McArthur's Reynard in a close **Historic Final** which was notable for Stuart Kestenbaum's sixth appearance of the weekend (with a Last Chance outing still to come) in his venerable Crossle.

Ninth place in the first **Fiesta** race was enough for Harry Gooding to be crowned Class C champion, down the order behind winner Sam Watkins who finished ahead of Simon Horrobin. However, Horrobin's unruly conduct in race two earned ejection from the whole meeting, including his race one result.

Watkins finished second to Ryan Faulconbridge in race two with brother Josh third, but hit winning form again in race three, which ended in controversy when Gooding made an ill-judged bid to pass Tom Hutchins.

But with Jamie White taking two Class

D wins and a third place, he sealed the overall championship.

Main focus of two **Fiesta Junior** races was the title duel between Magnus Kriklywi and James Waite. Kriklywi won the first race after Waite had an overnight engine change and failed power steering during the race. Kriklywi stayed out of trouble in third place in race two to be sure of the championship, enabling Josh Steed to secure his third win of the year.

Cameron Fenton and Jake Byrne dominated their respective classes in two guest appearances by the **Irish Supercar and Global GT Lights** championships. Each also celebrated an overall win, Byrne's in race two despite the Global cars having a handicapped start.

Tom Stoten secured the **Sports 2000** title by dominating the first of two races in his Gunn. Series debutant Ben Cater was second, and took a fine win in race two when Stoten's car was sidelined before the start with alternator problems. Tim Tudor closed on Cater towards the end but couldn't deny him the win.

Brian Phillips



Tilley (l) and Mansell had excellent scrap in Classic FF1600



Watkins (c) took a brace of Fiesta victories at Brands Hatch

SUPPORTS

Eastwell among Festival frontrunners left down and out

The driver who set the fastest lap of the entire Festival weekend didn't even get to take part in the final. Michael Eastwell headed the list of big names to fall before the last hurdle when his Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum 011C retired from semi-final one with a broken rear-suspension bolt.

"Gutted is an understatement," said a dejected Eastwell, who had finished second in the National Championship this year despite not winning a race. "It's no-one's fault - failures happen sometimes."

"We made a statement this weekend. We had a pole, we won the heat race with arguably some of the best drivers of the weekend in it, like Joey [Foster] who won it [the Festival] last year and Ollie [White] who won the other semi-final. We'll come back stronger in two weeks' time for the [Walter] Hayes [Trophy]."

Eastwell's fellow National series regular Luke Cooper did make the final but only after a weekend dogged with mechanical issues. The Swift Cooper team worked until 0100hrs on Saturday morning rebuilding his engine after a testing

failure, but it remained down-on-power in qualifying, leaving Cooper eighth on the grid for his heat. The engine blew altogether in the race but Cooper had gone far enough to scrape onto the back of a semi-final grid. Using a motor borrowed from Alan Slater, whose Nike Mk4 had been sidelined by chassis damage in testing, Cooper stormed from 29th to 12th. But he called it quits when a misfire hit in the final.

Chris Middlehurst, third in the 2016 Festival and fifth last year, also had an eventful weekend. Third in his heat, he tangled with Team Dolan team-mate Matt Round-Garrido in semi-final two after hitting the kerb at Graham Hill Bend. The collision broke Middlehurst's Van Diemen LA10's suspension and then he was collected by Rory Smith.

Making the Last Chance race as a reserve, Middlehurst spun at the first corner but recovered to ninth. He joined the final as a reserve after the first stoppage but could only take 13th.

Having finished third twice in the past



Eastwell was quick but also unlucky

three years, 2014 National champion Stuart Gough had high hopes but struggled with his Oldfield Motorsport-prepared Van Diemen JL16 throughout. The team changed his engine after a 10th-place semi-final finish but when a misfire returned in the final, Gough parked the car.

Northern Irishmen Noel Robinson and Ivor McCullough saw little reward for their strong pace. Two-time Kent Festival winner McCullough suffered gearbox failure in his heat. Robinson, fourth in the 2014 Festival, was sidelined

by a loose plug-lead, having had only an hour's sleep the night before after taking his blown engine to Cannock for a rebuild.

Ex-British Touring Car Championship racer Vincent Radermecker lost a place in the final when he was penalised for an out-of-position start after winning the Last Chance race on the road in his Van Diemen RF91.

"It's my mistake," he admitted after being caught out by the sloped grid. "We'll see next year," he added. "Why not?"

Mark Paulson

WINNERS

Formula Ford Festival
Heat 1: Niall Murray (Van Diemen RF99)
Heat 2: Matt Cowley (Van Diemen JL13)
Heat 3: Michael Eastwell (Spectrum 011C)
Semi-Final 1: Niall Murray (Van Diemen RF99)
Semi-Final 2: Ollie White (Medina Sport JL17)
Last-chance race: Max Marzorati (Swift SC18)
Final: Josh Smith (Van Diemen JL13)

Classic FF1600 Championship
Race 1&2: Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20A)

Formula Ford Masters
Noel Robinson (Van Diemen JL012K)

FF1600 Historic Final
Alan Davidson (Mondiale M89S)

Ford Fiesta Championship
Race 1&3: Samuel Watkins (ST)
Race 2: Ryan Faulconbridge (ST)

Fiesta Junior Championship
Race 1: Magnus Kriklywi
Race 2: Josh Steed

Irish Supercars/Global GT Lights
Race 1: Cameron Fenton (Supercar)
Race 2: Jake Byrne (Global GT Light)

Sports 2000 Championship
Race 1: Tom Stoten (Gunn TS11)
Race 2: Ben Cater (MCR)



White was a semi-final winner and was in the thick of the action throughout event

Murray, Cowley and White among the winners in frenetic heats and semi-finals

The Festival heats and semi-finals provided a taste of things to come as the eventual top two of Josh Smith and Niall Murray were drawn together at each preliminary stage. While Smith laid a marker with pole position for their heat, it was Murray who came out on top in both races.

Team Dolan's Murray passed Oldfield Motorsport man Smith for the lead of heat one into Druids early on but only built his eventual seven-second winning margin after Smith slowed in the second half of the 15-lap race with a broken front upright. That allowed last year's Festival runner-up Keith Donegan to catch and pass Smith at Paddock Hill Bend to claim second, despite carburettor problems causing his engine to stutter exiting corners.

Smith completed an all-Van Diemen podium, holding off a train comprising the Rays of Carter Williams (Don Hardman Racing) and Cliff Dempsey Racing duo Guillaume Archambault and Jonathan Browne.

Despite suffering from oversteer, Murray was untroubled in the semi-final rematch as he led from start to

finish. Fellow front row starter Michael Eastwell initially applied the pressure before mechanical drama. From fourth on the grid, Smith jumped into third at the start but lost out to Neil MacLennan, making his first appearance in a Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum, at Paddock Hill Bend a lap later. When MacLennan ran wide at the same corner shortly before half-distance, Smith reclaimed the position, then dived past the ailing Eastwell there with five laps to go.

MacLennan fended off Joey Foster's Firman for third, with Team USA Scholarship drivers Jake Craig and Colin Mullan and Team Canada scholar Archambault following closely, having traded places with Foster in what was reckoned to be the stronger semi-final.

The second semi was won by the Medina JL17 of Ollie White, who benefited from running new tyres rather than saving them for the final. He passed Team Dolan's Matt Cowley into Paddock Hill Bend mid-race. Three-time Walter Hayes Trophy winner Peter Dempsey was third but remained frustrated at being just shy

of the frontrunning pace. Whatever changes CDR made, including an overnight engine change on Thursday, seemed to make little difference. He was followed by Williams and Browne, with Donegan recovering to sixth after spinning at Druids on the opening lap.

Cowley had earlier won heat two, recovering after wheelspin dropped him from second on the grid to third. MacLennan led from pole position but lost pace on an oily track, suffering with a loose rear-end as he acclimatised to the Spectrum. As MacLennan backed up the leading group, Cowley dived inside Craig for second at Graham Hill Bend, then passed MacLennan at Paddock on the penultimate lap. Chris Middlehurst further demoted Craig to complete the podium, with the top four covered by less than a second.

Eastwell dominated heat three, which was interrupted by a lengthy safety-car period, to win comfortably from White, Foster and Matt Round-Garrido. Max Marzorati took a maiden win in the Last Chance race after Vincent Radermecker was penalised for an out-of-position start.

Mark Paulson

RACING REPORTS

SILVERSTONE: HSCC BY PAUL LAWRENCE
OCTOBER 20/21

Photos: Mick Walker

Jackson took a brace of wins


WINNERS

Historic Formula Ford Race 1&2: Cameron Jackson (Lola T200)	Charteris (Mallock Mk20/21)
Formula Junior Rear Engine Race 1: Peter de la Roche (Lola Mk3)	Historic Formula Ford 2000 Race 1&2: Andrew Park (Reynard SF81)
Race 2: Cameron Jackson (Brabham BT2)	Guards Trophy: Greg Caton (Lenham P69)
Formula Junior Front Engine Race 1&2: Ray Mallock (U2 Mk2)	Classic Formula 3 Race 1: Greg Caton (Ralt 1)
Historic Touring Cars Race 1&2: Warren Briggs (Ford Mustang)	Race 2: Gaius Ghinn (Ralt RT3)
Derek Bell Trophy Race 1: Michael Lyons (Lola T400)	Historic Formula 3: Jon Milicevic (Brabham BT12B)
Race 2: Mark Charteris (March 742)	70s Road Sports: John Dickson (Ferrari 308GTB)
Classic Clubmans Race 1&2: Mark	Historic Road Sports: Kevin Kivlochan (Morgan +8)

FF1600 TITLE GOES TO JACKSON

Cameron Jackson signed off his racing season with a remarkable hat-trick of wins over the HSCC Finals Weekend at Silverstone.

The first of two Historic FF1600 victories was enough to clinch the title and with that mission accomplished he brought his Formula Junior Brabham out for Sunday's Formula Junior final and promptly won from the back of the grid.

Both Formula Ford races were typically ferocious but Jackson was twice able to work his Lola T200 to the head of the battling pack to seal his crown in style. Title rival Ben Mitchell, Richard Tarling, Callum Grant and Ben Tusting were the major threats to Jackson, but the Lola was always in the right place at the right time. Mitchell's bid for the title was effectively dashed when he was edged onto the grass on the final rush down the Wellington Straight in the opening race.

Jackson won again on Sunday but this time Tarling was kicking himself as a missed gear on the sprint to the flag allowed Jackson to snatch victory by six-thousandths of a second.

Having secured the FF title on Saturday, Jackson made late plans to contest Sunday's rear-engined

Formula Junior race from the back of the grid and duly stormed through to win and add the Class E1 title to his season's tally. "What an unbelievable way to finish the year," said Jackson.

Newly-crowned Junior champion Peter de la Roche was a surprise winner on Saturday in his drum-braked Lola after oil sent both Nick Fennell and Andrew Hibberd spinning at Luffield. They led the challenge to Jackson the following day.

In the front-engined contest, Ray Mallock was peerless in his U2, but missed an anticipated battle with the similar car of Will Mitcham when the latter's engine blew in qualifying. That misfortune was good news for Mallock as he was able to borrow Mitcham's distributor to cure a persistent misfire problem.

Warren Briggs and Geraint Owen had never raced each other before the weekend but had two tremendous Ford Mustang battles in the **Historic Touring Cars**, with the second contest one of the races of the season.

Owen learnt about racing a Mustang from an acknowledged expert and they ran bumper to bumper in the second race, with Briggs out in his Mustang for the first time this season.

It seemed as though Owen was going to win until Briggs outfumbled his rival in the Complex to get the verdict by just seven-hundredths of a second and take his second win of the weekend.

Michael Lyons was easily the class of the **Derek Bell Trophy** field and thundered the family's Lola T400 to a half-minute victory on Saturday. Sunday's race was restarted after Neil Glover's Chevron B37 stopped but Lyons was quickly in control again only for an inlet manifold issue to send him to the pits. Mark Dwyer took over the lead in his March 742 but then fell foul of oil at Copse and a slower car, so victory finally went to a rather surprised Mark Charteris in his 742. Earlier, Charteris bagged a **Classic Clubmans** double, but only after two spirited challenges by John Harrison.

Andrew Park concluded a hat-trick of **Historic Formula Ford 2000** titles with two resounding wins as Ian Pearson gave valiant chase in his Royale RP30. "We're still looking for the last few tenths," said Pearson of the ever-improving challenge to the Reynards. Paul Allen wrapped up a fine debut season in the category with two thirds but had to work very hard on Sunday to fend off a determined



Briggs (1) and Owen had a fantastic Mustang duel in Historic Touring Cars

challenge from Benn Simms. A broken wishbone on Saturday sent Simms back to base for repairs and his charge from the back of Sunday's grid was another highlight.

The often over-looked talent of Greg Caton was put to good use with two wins on Sunday. He went solo in Brian Casey's Lenham P69 in the **Guards Trophy** and headed a rare 1-2 for the marque with Jon Waggitt/Peter Needham behind as the pair of Lenhams saw off the Chevrons.

Earlier, Caton took a late call to race David Shaw's ex-Piquet Ralt RT1 in the **Classic F3** opener and beat the later RT3 of Gaius Ghinn. Caton didn't start the

second race and so Ghinn was clear to fend off the Safrir of Pat Gormley and close his limited season with a win. Chris Levy (Van Diemen RF83) and Andrew Lancaster (Pilbeam SP1) shared concurrent Classic FF2000 spoils after some fine battling.

Jon Milicevic ended his **Historic F3** title-winning season with another victory and his winning margin was boosted when arch-rival Andrew Hibberd had a quick spin out of Brooklands. Hibberd had to get his head down and pass a bunch of cars, including the Tecno of his father Michael, to get back up to second place.

"It was good to go to Silverstone and do it in a straight fight", says Jackson

With his seventh win of the season, Cameron Jackson sealed the HSCC Historic Formula Ford 1600 title at Silverstone in the first of the weekend's pair of races.

The Lincoln racer swept ahead in his Lola T200 to clinch the title over rival Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20) at the conclusion of one of the most hotly-contested championships in historic racing.

All season, the Historic Formula Ford pack has raced wheel-to-wheel and delivered some breath-taking action across 17 races at nine race meetings.

Despite constant action, the racing has been commendably clean and by the later stages of the campaign it was clear that a two-way title fight had developed between Jackson and Mitchell.

Another victory on Saturday at Silverstone was enough to confirm Jackson as champion, after his first serious title challenge in an on-off racing career.

"I did some Historic FF1600 races last year and really enjoyed it, because the

racing is always close," he said.

"I decided to do a full campaign this year with Neil Fowler. I really enjoy driving the Lola T200: it's a short wheelbase and wide-track car and to drive it fast you have to get it moving around. The Merlyn doesn't change direction as quickly and isn't as exciting to drive. The Lola is more like a kart.

"It's been a challenging season in every event and there has always been someone to race with, especially with Ben Mitchell. Every single race we've been next to each other on the track.

"The season didn't start so well when we had a fifth at Donington with the car overheating. That wasn't the best start for the year, but with having to drop four scores it can work for you or against you.

"It was definitely the right decision to miss the Oulton Park race when our new baby arrived. That gave Ben the advantage going to Brands but it was all to play for here at Silverstone.

"I'm just so delighted to have won the title in a clean race at Silverstone, where

it is really hard to win because it is always a lottery on the last lap.

"There were six of us all going for it and it was another classic race. You don't want to lead onto Wellington Straight on the last lap so I left Richard Tarling space to go into Copse ahead of me. I knew I'd get a decent tow from him.

"We all got through Becketts cleanly and I went to the right of Tarling. Ben could either have got a tow from me on the right, or Richard on the left and go for a gap. But I don't think the gap was there and he ended up on the grass and dropped to fifth. I saw him having a moment in my mirrors.

"I knew I was good enough on the brakes to overtake around the outside into Brooklands. It was a move I'd rehearsed over and over again and I felt very confident on the brakes into there.

"I know I can brake a length later and still get to the apex: the Lola is such a good car to drive. It's been a tough season and it was good to go to Silverstone and do it in a straight fight."



Historic FF1600 battle lasted all year between Jackson (above) and Mitchell

OULTON PARK: BARC BY GRAHAM KEILLOH

OCTOBER 20

Photos: Matt Barrington

Connor O'Brien only needed to stay out of trouble in the Oulton Park season-closer to secure the Super Mighty Minis championship, which he did by taking second and fourth places in the double-header.

"It's a bit of a surreal feeling," O'Brien said. "It's only my second season racing so I didn't expect to be right up there this early on. Shows a bit of talent I suppose!"

"With the first one [race] I was hoping to finish as high as I can, and I did get second. In the second one I was quite far in the [championship] lead so I just enjoyed it."

Both victories were taken by Jeff Smith, continuing his recovery from his British Touring Car Championship crash last year. He led all the way in race one then rose from eighth on the reverse grid in race two, getting into the lead before half-distance.

The Mighty Minis class finale was a tighter affair, with Stuart Combes hanging on to take the championship despite his pursuer Lee Poolman winning both races. Having finished third – lacking power with an ignition timer problem – in race one, second place in race two was enough for Combes. He pipped Dan Heywood for the place by a tenth in a three-way victory fight with Poolman.

"Just," said a relieved Combes afterwards, "I've been doing it 12 years and been close so many times. Everything clicked into place this year, I've had no failures." Combes' near misses include losing the title on the last corner in 2015.

The Junior Saloon Car Championship had a three-way title showdown, Lewis Saunders holding off a Joel Wren challenge to claim the honours. Wren finished third to Saunders' fourth in race one, which Scott McIntyre won after a long fight with second-placed Ben Kasperczak. Wren then led from Saunders in race two where double points were on offer and initially held the advantage after a red flag stoppage – following a multi-car incident at Shell Oils corner.

Kasperczak relegated Wren and Saunders to second and third respectively in the two-lap second

SMITH DOMINATES AS O'BRIEN TAKES MIGHTY MINIS CROWN



Rose took double Sports and Saloons win

WINNERS

Mighty Minis Race 1&2: Jeff Smith (Super Mighty Mini)	Kasperczak (Citroen Saxo VTR)	Race 1&2: Ken Lark (Volkswagen Corrado)
Junior Saloon Car Championship Race 1: Scott McIntyre (Citroen Saxo VTR) Race 2: Ben	Sports/Saloon Championship Race 1&2: Paul Rose (Saker RAPX S1-400)	BARC Saloons including Honda VTEC Challenge Race 1&2: Ben Rushworth (Honda Integra DC2)
	Classic VW Cup	



Smith dominated both of the Mighty Minis races

part as Wren took the title.

Paul Rose clinched the Sports/Saloon Championship with a double win in his Saker RAPX, despite starting both races from the back after missing qualifying due to arriving at the track late. Spectators were denied a possible grandstand finish in race one when the MG Modsport of long-time leader Andrew Southcott dropped a cylinder then had an exhaust pipe break. Table runner-up Jamie Cryer did his part by taking two Class E wins.

Ken Lark won both Classic VW Cup races in his Corrado. He led all of race one from pole after his fellow front-row

starter and usual closest challenger Tony Absolom had driveshaft failure on his Golf and pitted at the end of the formation lap. Lark then won race two despite choosing to start from the pitlane, taking the lead from Alex Kite's Vento late on after a frenzied battle.

Ben Rushworth won both Honda VTEC Challenge races in his Integra. He held off Chris Sparks' Civic in race one and won race two easily as Sparks stopped on lap one with gearbox failure. The Hondas shared a grid with BARC Saloons and Alexander Owen's Civic took both wins in that category.



Lark leads the Classic VW Cup field on his way to a brace of Oulton victories

DONINGTON PARK: BRSCC BY KYRAN GIBBONS AND ANNA DUXBURY

OCTOBER 20/21

Photos: Steve Jones

BLACKWELL-CHAMBERS SEALS TITLE AFTER DRAMATIC END

The battle for the Mazda MX-5 Championship was decided in the most dramatic of fashions with Will Blackwell-Chambers trailing Sam Smith by a mere four points going into the third and final race, in which Smith lined up three places ahead of his title rival.

Reigning champion Blackwell-Chambers (right) made the most of the skirmish for the lead to get ahead of Smith before oil on the track at Coppice changed the complexion of the title.

Smith spun into the gravel and retired alongside nine others who were affected by the oil, all of whom were unable to take the restart as they needed to be running when the stoppage was called.

It meant Blackwell-Chambers won the title regardless of where he finished but it was Ben Short who took eventual victory,



Watton sealed the F1000 crown

with Blackwell-Chambers in fourth.

The opening races were similarly eventful with race one winner Jason Greatrex labelling it the "most intense race I've ever been in". It was a drag race to the line for second with Smith losing out to Short for the position. Short got a good start to take the lead of the incredibly close second race but it was John Langridge who took the win.

Richard Avery took victory twice in his first Porsche Championship outing of the season before retiring in the final race after steering damage, while Richard Styryn stayed ahead of the scrap for second to win. Gavin Johnson took the 924 title.

The Mazda Superseries completed its inaugural season with a now familiar story, as Joshua Jackson and Jake Bailey battled for victory. Bailey struck first with a win in the opening race but Jackson had the last laugh as he made it two out of three wins.

The duel for F1000 title honours was decided in the opening race of the weekend. Dan Clowes, who entered the weekend as the only driver who could deny reigning champion Michael Watton the title, suffered an oil pressure



WINNERS

Mazda MX-5 Championship Race 1A: Jason Greatrex Race 1B: Rafal Drzazszcz Race 2A: John Langridge Race 2B: Mike Comber Race 3A: Ben Short Race 3B: Michael Fisk
Porsche Championship Race 1&2: Richard Avery (Boxster) Race 3: Richard Styryn (Boxster)
Mazda Superseries Race 1: Jake Bailey Race 2&3: Joshua Jackson
F1000 Race 1: Lee Morgan Race 2: Colin Brown
Production GTI Race 1&2: Simon Hill (Mk 5)
Fun Cup 2Rent Domino's (Henry Dawes and Chris Hart)

problem which ended his chances.

Watton was beaten to race one victory by Lee Morgan, who also led in the closing minutes of the second race before being wrong-footed by backmarkers at Old Hall.

Morgan's grassy excursion allowed former World Karting champion Colin Brown to seal victory from seventh on the grid in only his second single-seater race since 2003.

Despite a brace of victories for

Simon Hill, James Colbourne was able to secure the Production GTI championship title in the Mk5 class.

Hill entered the weekend 17 points adrift of Colbourne but reduced the deficit to just 11 points prior to the final race of the weekend. The two shared the front row for the deciding race, in which Colbourne shadowed Hill throughout to seal the title by a slender five points.

Tim Hartland, who entered the weekend with a sizeable advantage in

the Mk2 points, twice finished third in class to secure title honours.

Henry Dawes and Chris Hart propelled the 2Rent Domino's car to the Fun Cup title, despite victory at Donington being the team's first win of the season.

Dawes and Hart only took the race lead on the penultimate lap when reigning champions Fabio Randaccio and Scott Fitzgerald (JPR UVio) dramatically ran out of fuel.

BRITISH GT REVIEW

Partnership with the experienced Adam proved key to British GT title. By **James Newbold**

GT3

Haigh defended well at Donington to secure title

HAIGH FLICKS AWAY THE ROOKIE NERVES

As the green light signalled the start of qualifying for the British GT season opener at Oulton Park, Flick Haigh could be forgiven for feeling nervous.

Coming from two confidence-damaging years in Europe – racing the twitchy Audi R8 LMS, first in the Creventic 24H Series on Hankooks, then in the Michelin Le Mans Cup – Haigh had pitched up in arguably the championship's strongest year yet with no experience of either the control Pirellis or the Aston Martin V12 Vantage, so was unsure of how she would stack up.

But she needn't have worried. Putting it on pole first time out and following up with a debut victory was a good way to quell any lingering doubts and served as a serious statement of her title intentions.

"I had lost a lot of self-belief and before Oulton I didn't expect too much, so that really lifted my spirits," Haigh reflects. "It was a new start, a new championship, a different car, [and was thinking] 'let's just forget about the last two years and just focus on improving every race'."

Come the end of the season at Donington Park, she had done just that. A cautious drive to fourth as chaos reigned all around may have been the most "non-race" of Haigh's career to date, but it was enough for

her to become the first outright female champion, and gave Optimum Motorsport co-driver Jonny Adam his third series title.

Given the 27.5-point buffer the pair enjoyed coming into the weekend, with 37.5 to play for, any other outcome was a long shot. But one paddock stalwart had predicted it much sooner.

Joe Osborne, Haigh's team-mate for the preceding two campaigns, had signed a McLaren factory deal that would preclude him from partnering her in the Aston, so arranged a 'handover' call with Adam to talk the Scot through Haigh's strengths and weaknesses.

He finished by telling Adam that they should win the championship "easily". Anyone watching the madcap opening stint at Donington might take issue with the easily part, but Haigh kept her eye on the bigger picture and brought the car back in one piece, which was more than could be said for most that day.

It was a real contrast from Brands Hatch, where Haigh blew the field away and had built a 12-second lead prior to the first of two quick-fire safety cars, Adam overcoming the Lamborghini of Jonny Cocker late on to seal the victory. She had also been in control at Spa until a loose wheel-arch caused her to spin at Les Combes and dropped her to the back, before storming up to third.

"She's driven differently at different points of the year that have added up to the championship," Adam agrees. "When we needed to towards the end of the year, Flick upped a gear. Around Spa especially, we spent two days testing there and it definitely showed."

After acquiring the former Macmillan Motorsport chassis, Optimum started testing in the final week of January and completed a total of "14 or 15" days, according to Adam. This, combined with 26 hours on the simulator, meant Haigh was as prepared as she could possibly be.

"British GT was a two-year programme for Flick, so I think it's a surprise for her to achieve it in year one, but it's off the back of her being

really determined to squeeze that last little bit of performance out of herself," says Adam. "It was no surprise to me that she smashed it on pole at Oulton because she had tested well there before, she was getting more and more confident with the car and I think that set her bar quite high for the rest of the year."

Other than a blip at Oulton when Adam floated off the road on his way to the dummy grid for race two and damaged the suspension, Optimum was a model of consistency and never finished lower than fourth. Already well established at GT4 level having won the title in 2016, Shaun Goff's team beat a bevy of more experienced Aston crews that benefitted from extensive factory support in the final year for the V12 Vantage, which claimed six out of nine race victories.

Aided by the World Endurance Championship's 'superseason' calendar featuring just five races in 2018, Aston works drivers Nicki Thiim, Marco Sorensen and Maxime Martin all took turns atop the pile, but none could topple Adam. The original development driver for the V12 Vantage, his knowledge from title-winning campaigns at Beechdean AMR and TF Sport in 2015-16 was invaluable for Optimum's learning curve and gave Haigh the confidence to put everything together.

"Jonny just was able to reassure her that she had the ability to be very close to him," says Goff. "Not only has he been great with Flick at the track, he's also worked behind the scenes with his knowledge of the car to engage with me and the mechanics and he works closely with Flick on the sim, so he's kept things sharp between testing and races."

Of the remaining Aston contingent, Thiim made the strongest impression in his first season on the UK circuits. Sharing with Mark Farmer at TF Sport, a team he knew from the European Le Mans Series last year, the duo recovered from a sluggish start to take the championship lead



with wins at Snetterton and Silverstone, before opening lap contact at Spa ripped the sump off and caused a dramatic oil fire that consumed the chassis and effectively put paid to their title hopes.

That meant the Barwell Lamborghini of Phil Keen and Jon Minshaw was the closest challenger to Optimum and they claimed the runners-up spot for a third successive year. As three pole positions attest, the speed seen in previous years was still there, but it was a strange year for the Demon Tweaks crew with both of their two wins coming in unconventional fashion – in the second Oulton 'race' conducted entirely behind the safety car before being abandoned and at Donington, after on-track victor Thiim was penalised for abusing track limits.

"Jon has really come on throughout the year, the results don't show it because we won more in 2017 but the competition wasn't there," says Keen, whose talents were recognised with a Lambo factory deal at the season's end. "You look at the drivers on the grid today compared to last time, it's really come up a level. It's a good thing for the championship – it's a bad thing for me and Jon because it's making our lives more difficult!"

Aside from a DNF at Brands due to an overheated radiator, the biggest dent to their title challenge came at Rockingham, where Minshaw led the opening stint until he parked at 45

degrees in the pits, was berated by Keen, and subsequently took his helmet off, earning a drivethrough penalty. "You could argue that it's my fault for losing my temper with him," was Keen's honest appraisal. Team boss Mark Lemmer wasn't amused.

Victory at Rockingham instead went to the ERC Sport Mercedes of Yelmer Buurman and Lee Mowle, who finally broke his duck in GT3 after six years of trying. Buurman was often the quickest driver in the field, but Mowle often struggled to get the Pirellis into the operating window – having raced the Merc on Michelins last year in the Le Mans Cup – meaning they regularly started low down the grid on aggregate. Still, they finished fourth in the standings ahead of Beechdean's Darren Turner and Andrew Howard, the only Aston Martin not to win a race.

Defending champion Team Parker Racing had a disappointing season with its previous generation Bentley Continentals. With Seb Morris moving on, Rick Parfitt was joined by Ryan Ratcliffe, reuniting the 2013 GT4 championship-winning pairing. A plucky defensive drive at Spa yielded second, but it was the nearest they got all year to the top step, a result matched by the sister car of Callum MacLeod and Ian Loggie at Rockingham.

The 2018 campaign truly was the year of the Aston. Not bad for a seven-year-old beast. ■



Buurman showed impressive speed



New Adam and Haigh partnership worked well



Thiim/Farmer's title bid went up in flames at Spa

TOP 5 GT3 DRIVERS

1 Nicki Thiim

Proved local knowledge was no prerequisite in a superb debut season, on pole at Snetterton by half a second – in the dry – and pumped in a crucial sequence of laps to put Farmer in the box seat for victory in showpiece Silverstone 500. Made up 14-second deficit on Keen in monster stint at Donington before the officials' intervention, although academic after Spa fire.



2 Flick Haigh

Well-prepared for rookie campaign and it showed. Demonstrated a cool head under massive pressure at Donington, but laid the groundwork with supreme pace for wins at Oulton and Brands. Rockingham qualifying performance is easily overlooked, but quickest by nine tenths over wet weather master Minshaw and 2.5s quicker than the second-best Aston of Farmer.



3 Jonny Adam

Aquaplaning off on the way to the grid at Oulton aside, Adam again proved he is the master of working with Am drivers. Proved a galvanising force in Optimum's first year with Aston, instilled confidence in Haigh but matched it with strong pace himself, at Brands especially, where his late pass on Cocker for victory cut a decisive blow in the title race.



4 Phil Keen

Destroyed everybody in wet qualifying at Rockingham – to the tune of 0.9s – but once again ended the year as the bridesmaid, in the Sunoco Challenge too. Two wins both a little hollow, but did the hard work by getting pole for abandoned second Oulton race. Fully deserving of Lambo works drive.



5 Yelmer Buurman

Often started too far back to make an impact, but seized his one shot at victory with both hands at Rockingham. Carved through the Pros like they were standing still for brilliant podium at Donington, including a rarely-seen around-the-outside pass at Goddards on champion-elect Adam.



GT4



Mitchell claimed GT4 crown by single point

In a season that produced eight different winners from nine races, it would seem logical that as the only repeat victor, Jack Mitchell should have been crowned GT4 champion. But that hardly does justice to a title race that was decided by a single point, with the top three crews separated by just two points.

Having scored two pole positions in GT3 last year, Mitchell was set for another season in the top class before his drive fell through and forced him to find refuge at Century Motorsport in the new BMW M4. But it was to prove a blessing in disguise for the 2014 Ginetta Junior champion.

Despite only completing 15 laps on the media day prior to Oulton Park, Mitchell got the season off to a strong start with a brace of thirds alongside guesting BMW junior Ricky Collard, before two below-par weekends at Rockingham and Snetterton with new co-driver Aleksander Schjerpens yielded only four points. Significantly, his two wins came in the longer races which carry the greatest share of points, in back-to-back rounds at Silverstone (with Schjerpens) and Spa with his third different team-mate of the season, Dean Macdonald.

Both wins had an element of fortune about them – broken suspension robbed Equipe Verschuur McLaren pair Finlay Hutchison/Dan McKay of a 35-second lead at Silverstone before an opportunely-timed safety car at Spa vaulted him from seventh to the lead, despite the 20s success penalty – but Mitchell still had to deliver his end of the bargain to capitalise. His drive at Spa to hold off the clearly quicker McLaren 570S of Charlie Fagg was judged to perfection and was the turning point in his title campaign.

“The big attribute to Jack is he’s very laid back, he doesn’t get flustered,” says Century boss Nathan Freke. “He gets in the car, knuckles down and does the job, very seldom does he blame the car, he’s always very self-critical which is important because it’s normally the driver that needs to make the difference, not the car.”

“We’ve seen some gritty drives from him

and some amazing overtaking moves, he is a very worthy champion.”

With ex-Williams chief mechanic Les Jones as team manager, customer support from BMW in the form of a spares truck and on-site engineer Timo Vogt working with experienced race engineers Chris Hubbard (Mitchell) and Tim Wright (Ben Tuck/Ben Green), either one of Century’s two cars could have won the title.

Tuck/Green, who had been demoted from second to seventh at round one due to a too-short stop, only fell short at Donington when Green was penalised for passing under yellow flags. Although Mitchell then had to serve a penalty of his own when the team was unable to connect the earthing cable at his pitstop, it wasn’t quite enough for the duo. As Freke put it, “a messy way to do it, but it worked out”.

Yet it was a crew that didn’t win a race and ultimately finished third that had the greatest cause for disappointment. Tolman Motorsport’s Fagg and Historic Formula Ford graduate Michael O’Brien dominated at Spa – the scene of Fagg and Phil Glew’s brace of victories in the Ebor Maserati last year – and would certainly have won but for the safety car, described by Freke as “a one in a million”. That only compounded the frustration of failing to score at Silverstone after contact with Kelvin Fletcher at Brooklands broke the suspension and a puncture on Fagg’s inlap at Brands Hatch that dropped them to ninth. Another second at Donington meant they finished just two points behind Mitchell.

McLarens did however win three times. Tolman pair Joe Osborne and David Pattison capitalised on the shorter pitstop time for Pro-Am teams at Snetterton when the pit window overlapped a safety car brought out by Graham Johnson/Mike Robinson’s stranded Balfé Motorsport example, which ended its run of bad luck with victory at Brands Hatch. Meanwhile Equipe Verschuur’s evident promise was realised at Donington as McKay recovered from a trip into the gravel in the first stint to deny the chasing Fagg/O’Brien the title.

TOP 5 GT4 DRIVERS

1 Ben Tuck

The pick of the BMW drivers missed out on the title, but through factors out of his control. Consistently had a slight edge on Green, whose yellow-flag infringement at Donington proved decisive and on par with more experienced Mitchell. Unlucky with safety cars at Snetterton and Brands Hatch when leading, but stormed back to second in a photo-finish at the latter.



2 Jack Mitchell

Unfussed by stepping back to GT4, Mitchell coped well with limited time in the M4 pre-season and constant changing of team-mates to claim the title, despite a nervy finish. Crucial Spa win owed much to luck, but kept Fagg behind brilliantly in much slower car to give himself a points buffer. Ended the year with China GT4 title to boot after a nail-biting last round.



3 Charlie Fagg

Had the edge on his fellow McLaren development drivers all year and was unlucky not to end the season with a victory and the title to show for it. Showed superb car control to hold onto his three-wheeled McLaren when the right-rear let go at Brands. Still only 19, has a very bright future in GTs.



4 Scott Malvern

One of the GT4 benchmarks finally had equipment to match his talents this year and prevailed in the tight Pro-Am title battle alongside the much-improved Nick Jones. Got the best out of the ultra-agile Merc to earn pole at Oulton, which yielded victory in the four-lap ‘race’, and managed well with its lack of grunt in combat.



5 Joe Osborne

Drove like his newly-earned factory driver status suggested with class, but was left to rue non-scores at Silverstone (contact) and Spa (overheating). Took an optimistic win at Snetterton and came from the back to a brilliant fifth at Brands before giving co-driver Pattison a successful swansong with Pro-Am victory at Donington.



CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

British GT3 Championship

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM/CAR	POINTS
1	Jonny Adam/Flick Haigh	Optimum Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage	167.5
2	Phil Keen/Jon Minshaw	Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan	159.5
3	Nicki Thiim/Mark Farmer	TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage	148
4	Yelmer Buurman/Lee Mowle	ERC Sport Mercedes-AMG	133.5
5	Darren Turner/Andrew Howard	Beechdean Aston Martin Vantage	102.5
6	Marco Sorensen/Derek Johnston	TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage	98

GT4

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM/CAR	POINTS
1	Jack Mitchell	Century Motorsport BMW M4	124
2	Ben Tuck/Ben Green	Century Motorsport BMW M4	123
3	Charlie Fagg/Michael O'Brien	Tolman Motorsport McLaren 570S	122
4	Callum Pointon/Patrik Matthiesen	HHC Motorsport Ginetta G55	116.5
5	Will Moore/Matt Nicoll-Jones	Academy Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage	87
6	Joe Osborne/David Pattison	Tolman Motorsport McLaren 570S	82.5

TEAM POINTS

GT3 teams

POS	TEAM	POINTS
1	TF Sport	249
2	Barwell Motorsport	240.5
3	Optimum Motorsport	167.5

GT4 teams

POS	TEAM	POINTS
1	Century Motorsport	251
2	Tolman Motorsport	249.5
3	HHC Motorsport	147

Fagg/O'Brien were unlucky not to win



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BRITISH F3 REVIEW

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Stefan Mackley looks back on how the Swede nearly threw away the British F3 crown



Lundqvist crashed at Donington (inset) after early season wins

LUNDQVIST LEAVES IT LATE

Brought to his knees in the Donington Park gravel after a first-corner collision, Linus Lundqvist could almost feel the 2018 BRDC British Formula 3 championship begin to slip through his fingers.

It was the first real sign of adversity for the Double R driver who up until that point had dominated the season.

"I just felt like 'damn it, am I going to get anything on my side or is this just going to be a weekend where everything goes wrong?'" recalls the Swede.

Six months earlier the British F4 graduate began his campaign with a win in race one at Oulton Park but it was Carlin's Nicolai Kjaergaard – in his second season of British F3 – who led the standings after the first meeting courtesy of his own victory and another podium.

But then Lundqvist's dominance began as he recorded five wins from the next four weekends, including an impressive double at Spa – where he made his British F3 debut in 2017 – as well as an additional four podiums. Perhaps more importantly though, he didn't record a single retirement.

"Linus was just a little bit too good this year for us and too consistent," says Kjaergaard.

"I think that's the key in his championship campaign, he's just been good on every track, everywhere all the time."

While Lundqvist was having a fault-free season, Kjaergaard wasn't. He retired in the opening race at Rockingham after being caught up in a first-corner melee and crashed out in the second race at Snetterton after a collision with Fortec's Tom Gamble.

There was a win at Snetterton and a further three podiums in that time to keep

the pressure on Lundqvist, but then came his mid-season slump.

"I'm not sure if it was the car that wasn't 100 per cent or me not using the car 100 per cent," says the Dane, "but we definitely didn't have a good package with me and the car that we had at the start and at the end of the season."

Kjaergaard's issue was understeer which caused him trouble through the middle, and more importantly, on the exit of a corner. The high-speed turns at Silverstone and Spa followed by long straights exasperated the problem and on the return from Belgium he trailed Lundqvist by 120 points with three rounds to go having not scored a podium in six races.

"At Spa I was quite down but then obviously we came away and then we revised the strategy again. We were like 'OK, now we need to consolidate second [in the championship] and go for wins and then we'll see what happens'," recalls Kjaergaard.

There was a return to form at Brands Hatch with a win and another podium as Lundqvist failed to stand on the top step of the podium at a round for the first time. Then came Donington.

On the cusp of the title, Lundqvist endured a torrid weekend. An engine problem in qualifying put him back on the grid for race one before he salvaged eighth, but in the full reverse-grid race two he was caught up in a first-corner accident and found himself in the gravel. He was again forced to start down the field for race three but could only finish 11th.

Kjaergaard, in comparison, had an almost perfect weekend, recording his fourth and fifth wins of the season and closed the championship gap to just 50 points heading to the final round at Silverstone.

"I read Adrian Newey's autobiography *How to Build a Car* and I think it said 'the

only thing you learn whilst you're winning is how to smile' and it's true," recalls Lundqvist.

"It's only when you have tough weekends like at Donington where you actually learn from your mistakes and learn a bit about yourself as well, how you cope with that.

"I'll definitely say that I've come out stronger because of Donington."

Come back stronger he did as Lundqvist took a dominant lights-to-flag victory in race one while Kjaergaard, who was nursing a fractured left-hand from a testing crash, slid off the road on the opening lap. Unbeknown to him, Lundqvist crossed the finish line as champion.

Including Lundqvist and Kjaergaard there were 10 different winners across the season, helped by the addition of a full reverse-grid second race for 2018 with points awarded per position gained.

Lanan Racing's Kush Maini appeared to be the driver most likely to break the Scandinavians' hold on the standings, collecting seven podiums in the first four rounds including a race-two win at Rockingham, but his pace dropped away.

In his single-seater rookie campaign Gamble surprised many with his outright pace, securing seven fastest laps across the season and three poles, as well as two wins.

But arguably the biggest story of the British F3 season was the return of Billy Monger to racing less than 12 months after his life-changing accident at Donington.

His debut at Oulton was a fairytale as he claimed a podium in race one and would record a further three podiums across the season. On his first competitive return to Donington he secured two pole positions and it's a sign of how competitive the 19-year-old has been that he was bitterly disappointed to miss out on both of the wins due to his own mistakes. ■

TOP 5 DRIVERS

1 Linus Lundqvist

Team: Double R

Championship position: 1st

Wins: 7

Class of the field, taking most wins and podiums as well as leading more laps than any other driver. Highlights included three rostrums at Rockingham as well as a double victory at Spa. Bounced back superbly from a disastrous Donington Park weekend to seal the title in race one at Silverstone.



2 Tom Gamble

Team: Fortec Motorsports

Championship position: 5th

Wins: 2

Arguably the surprise of the season in his single-seater rookie campaign. The 2017 Ginetta Junior champion claimed the most fastest laps across the year and three poles, including an impressive double at Spa. A lack of experience showed at times with silly mistakes but took impressive wins at Rockingham and Silverstone.



3 Nicolai Kjaergaard

Team: Carlin

Championship position: 2nd

Wins: 5

The only man to challenge Lundqvist throughout the season. Led the standings after the opening round at Oulton Park and was dominant at Brands Hatch and Donington Park. Lacklustre performances at Silverstone and Spa cost him dearly, as did four DNFs across the year.



4 Jamie Caroline

Team: Carlin

Championship position: 13th

Wins: 2

Only competed in three rounds but took two wins, on his British F3 debut at Spa and again at Brands Hatch, as well as a further two podiums. The 2017 British F4 champion would more than likely have been a title contender if he competed for the whole season.



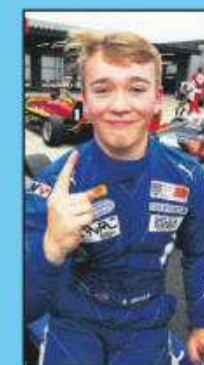
5 Billy Monger

Team: Carlin

Championship position: 6th

Wins: 0

Remarkable return to racing less than a year after his life-changing accident and took fairytale podium on debut at Oulton Park. Improved throughout the season taking a further three rostrums. Claimed two poles on his return to Donington Park and should have won but for his own mistakes.



CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

BRDC British F3 Championship

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Linus Lundqvist	Double R	531
2	Nicolai Kjaergaard	Carlin	446
3	Kush Maini	Lanan	366
4	Krish Mahadik	Double R	358
5	Tom Gamble	Fortec	346
6	Billy Monger	Carlin	301

Race two featured full reverse grids, as well as points per position gained



RALLY REPORTS

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Guy Woodcock took his third win in three years on the **Devils Own Rally**. In addition, Ali Procter, who had finished second last year, became his third different winning co-driver in a row. The Ford Escort pair, who put in the best performance over the event's eight regularity sections, had led all day and despite drowning their car out in a ford, they finished almost a minute and half in front of runners up Geoff Hall/Paul Bosdet.

Ian Crammond/Matthew Vokes were looking for a steady run to secure the HRCR title. However, they lost time after their Mercedes ground to a halt in a ford on the second section. They got going again and finished in 15th place, which was sufficient to give Crammond and Vokes the championship crowns.

Matt Warren/Andy Pullan were delayed by Crammond's stranded Mercedes, but recovered to challenge for the lead until the propshaft failed on one of the night sections.

The Porsche 911 of Howard Warren/Iain Tullie ground to a halt 100 yards into the first test and wouldn't restart. Then, after they had waited for all 65 cars to finish the test, the car started and ran faultlessly for the rest of the day. They had to cut route to stay on schedule and finished in 19th place.

Ian Mills

Results

1 Guy Woodcock/Ali Procter (Ford Escort) 10m56s; 2 Geoff Hall/Paul Bosdet (Mini Cooper S) +1m24s; 3 John Haygarth/Bob Hargreaves (Opel Kadett Rallye); 4 Thomas Bricknell/Roger Bricknell (VW Golf GTI); 5 Steve Head/Graham Raeburn (Escort); 6 Simon Mellings/Cath Woodman (Nissan Stanza); 7 Nick Bloxham/Richard Crozier (Escort); 8 Paul Wignall/Mark Appleton (Alfa Romeo Giulietta); 9 Richard Isherwood/Ian Canavan (Stanza); 10 Andrew Buzzard/Robb Lyne (Escort). **Class winners:** Owen Turner/Alan Pettite (Austin Mini); Philip Wood/Iain Miller (Volvo P1800).



Winners: Woodcock/Procter

McCLOSKEY WINS AS CREIGHTON IMPRESSES ON R5 DEBUT

Photo:William Neill, pro-rally.co.uk



Fiesta driver dominated

Tyrone Stages

By Jason Craig

Organiser: Cookstown MC **When:** October 20 **Where:** Benone, County Londonderry **Championships:** Northern Ireland Rally Championship **Stages:** 14 **Starters:** 58

Connor McCloskey overcame early brake trouble to win Saturday's Tyrone Stages Rally.

It was McCloskey's first victory on a closed-road asphalt event since the 2011 Tipperary Stonethrowers Rally.

He punched in nine quickest times in his Ford Fiesta R5+ to end the drought by 11s.

"It was a last-minute decision to go to the event," said McCloskey. "This was my first time in the car on a proper Tarmac rally. We ran the suspension on a European set-up, and it worked well." A half-spin and some brushes with bale chicanes during the course of the rally – which consisted of short, sharp technical stages near Magilligan Point – were the only real blots on his copybook.

New Northern Ireland Rally

champion Derek McGarrity was McCloskey's main pursuer early on but rear differential issues with his ex-Keith Cronin Citroen DS3 R5 left him with no handbrake. Unable to negotiate hairpins and junctions with the assistance the handbrake brings, it cost him precious time and R5 debutant William Creighton took full advantage to clinch second place with co-driver Liam Regan.

Creighton – who refused to look at timesheets all day – was given the opportunity to drive his Citroen DS3 R5 after reaching a deal with its owner – David Greer Motorsport – and Race and Rally.

Husband and wife duo James and Heather Kennedy were the eventual winners in a tight two-wheel-drive battle, but only after some late drama. The pair were handed a stage maximum for missing a chicane on the penultimate test, dropping them outside the top 10 and handing the spoils to John Devlin.

They decided to challenge the decision

– and successfully overturned it.

Like Creighton, fellow Junior British Rally Championship regular Josh McErlean was as impressive on his four-wheel-drive debut. After initially struggling with the set-up of his borrowed Subaru Impreza, he soon found his groove and romped to a 24-second victory in the Production Class.

Philip White (Nissan Micra) was the top junior and Drew Wylie the leading historic (Ford Escort).

Results

1 Connor McCloskey/Noel O'Sullivan (Ford Fiesta R5+) 46m38s; 2 William Creighton/Liam Regan (Citroen DS3 R5) +11s; 3 Derek McGarrity/Paddy Robinson (Citroen DS3 R5); 4 James Kennedy/Heather Kennedy (Ford Escort Mk2); 5 John Devlin/John McCarthy (Escort Mk2); 6 Josh McErlean/Aaron Johnston (Subaru Impreza N12); 7 Barry Morris/Declan Campbell (Ford Escort Mk2); 8 Gareth Sayers/Gareth Gilchrist (Subaru Impreza S9 WRC); 9 James Lavery/Paul Hughes (Impreza N12B); 10 Alastair Cochrane/Paddy McCrudden (Escort Mk2). **Class winners:** Gareth Deazley/Dean O'Sullivan (Honda Civic); McErlean/Johnston; Philip White/Sam McMullan (Nissan Micra); Dermot O'Hagan/Pierce Doherty Jr (Civic); Andrew Bustard/Stephen Griffith (Escort Mk2); J Kennedy/H Kennedy; Barry Morris/Declan Campbell (Escort Mk2); McCloskey/O'Sullivan; McCloskey/O'Sullivan; Drew Wylie/Stephen McAuley (Escort).

Payne takes second asphalt win of the year

Fairfield Merlin Stages

By Simon Gronow

Organiser: Carmarthen MC **When:** October 21 **Where:** Welsh Motorsport Centre, Pembrey **Stages:** 5 **Starters:** 70

On an unusually dry day at Pembrey, forestry regular Charlie Payne scored his second Tarmac rally win of the year as he took victory on the Fairfield Merlin Stages Rally in his Ford Fiesta WRC.

Partnered by Carl Williamson, the pair were fastest on every stage to win comfortably. Unfortunately, his son, Elliot wasn't so fortunate, rolling his Citroen C1 whilst leading the Junior 1000 section.

Behind Payne, Oliver Hopkins had a successful debut outing in a Mitsubishi Mirage, as he and brother Philip were pleased with their pace, finishing in the runners-up spot. Last year's winner Thomas Cooper regretted not buying some new tyres for his Mitsubishi Lancer E9, as he and Ian Davis rounded off the podium positions.

They were followed home by Tom Barber/Dorian Jones who had a "brilliant" run, finishing fourth overall and leading the two-wheel-drive runners home in their BMW Compact, while fifth placed Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon did their hopes of a third Welsh Championship no harm as they took another class win in their Darrian T90.

Following Elliot Payne's retirement, Riley Banks/Mike Jode had a good run in their Peugeot 107 to take their first Junior 1000 Rally win.

Results

1 Charlie Payne/Carl Williamson (Ford Fiesta RS WRC) 48m39s; 2 Oliver Hopkins/Philip Hopkins (Mitsubishi Mirage) +1m34s; 3 Thomas Cooper/Ian Davis (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 4 Tom Barber/Dorian Jones (BMW Compact); 5 Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon (Darrian T90); 6 Neil Williams/Lyr Jones (Ford Escort RS1800); 7 Malcolm Jones/Rhys Jones (Peugeot 207); 8 Roger Thomas/Dale Bowen (Fiesta R5); 9 Craig Fleming/Sacha Kakad (Subaru Impreza N11); 10 Ian Sutton/Karen Phelps (T90). **Class winners:** William Mains/Aled Edwards (Vauxhall Nova); Jones/Jones; Cory Williams/Sion Jones (Peugeot 205 GTI); Merriman/Curzon; Barber/Jones; Payne/Williamson; Jonathan Davies/Wayne Jones (Peugeot 206); Riley Banks/Mike Jode (Peugeot 107).

SPORTING SCENE

NATIONAL HOT RODS

National Hot Rods: Ipswich

By Graham Brown

Organiser: Spedeworth **When:** October 20 **Where:** Foxhall Heath **Starters:** 24.

Not for the first time, Chris Haird proved to be the class of the field at Foxhall. He was never out of the top three all night and went away with a dominant heat and final double into the bargain. But perhaps the biggest news of the night was the appearance of no less than five new or returning drivers in the pits, including the stunning Vauxhall Tigra of Perry Cooke.

Despite the field being greeted by a beautifully prepared raceway for their first race, the opening heat was something of a scrappy affair peppered with incidents and yellow flags. Shaun Taylor took immediate charge from the green flag but was under pressure for many laps from Ivan Grayson until they were halted by the first bout of yellows, caused by Billy Wood becoming stranded on the kerb between Turns 3 and 4.

The resumption only lasted a couple of laps before Colin Hitch and Grayson tangled, sparking off a multi-car shunt at Turn 1. These caution periods naturally closed the field right up which was all the help Haird needed to bring him right into the mix, particularly as he'd already worked his way through into the top six prior to the hiatus. And with several of

those who'd been ahead of him getting wiped out in the crash, he restarted second and was swiftly down the outside of Taylor and away to the win.

Peter Elliott made a great start to heat two and, clearly buoyed by a better-than-usual result from the first race, got his head well down and was soon working on a decent enough lead. The fast pace took its toll with Jason Kew and Gavin Murray both coming to grief up against the wall.

It was Paul Gomm who eventually began to eat into Elliott's lead but it was slow progress and he ultimately fell victim to a charging Aaron Dew. The Ginetta man (in the newer of his two cars) was revelling in the outside line and rapidly slashed the leader's advantage too, going ahead along the back straight to collect a well taken victory, with Elliott still good value for second.

A final front row that pitted Haird, from pole, against Dew looked like it might produce an interesting first lap at least, which it certainly did. Haird took off like a rocket but with Dew matching him yard for yard and actually drawing ahead along the back stretch. It was still the familiar black Tigra B that had the lead as they crossed the stripe at the end of the lap though and the triple world champion wasn't going to be headed or even challenged again, not even a caution period breaking his stride.

Behind him though it was a very different story.

HAIRD CLIMBS HIS WAY TO THE TOP OF THE PACK



Haird fended off Dew early on

Dew's heat two pace suggested he might easily be 'best of the rest' but that was clearly not the case, as he first came under the cosh from Kym Weaver and then Rob McDonald after the Scot slipped past Weaver coming off Turn 2. Their dice had allowed Dew a bit of breathing space but his car was obviously not quite what it had been earlier and McDonald was soon able to chase him down and move up to second at mid-distance.

Dew lost places hand over fist after that as Weaver and then Wood also

relegated him, Wood moving up to the final podium place at Weaver's expense five laps from home.

Results

Heat 1: 1 Chris Haird (Vauxhall Tigra); 2 Kym Weaver (Vauxhall Tigra); 3 Rob McDonald (Vauxhall Tigra); 4 Jason Kew (Ginetta G40R); 5 Gavin Murray (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Aaron Dew (Ginetta G40R); 7 Colin Smith (BMW Z4); 8 Shaun Taylor (Vauxhall Tigra). **Heat two:** 1 Dew; 2 Peter Elliott (Peugeot 206cc); 3 Haird; 4 Paul Gomm (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Billy Wood (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Weaver; 7 Chris Crane (Vauxhall Tigra); 8 Carl Waller-Barrett (Vauxhall Tigra). **Final:** 1 Haird; 2 McDonald; 3 Wood; 4 Weaver; 5 Dew; 6 Waller-Barrett; 7 Smith; 8 Crane; 9 Lee Pepper (Peugeot 206cc); 10 Dick Hillard (Vauxhall Tigra). **Standings (after 6/14 rounds):** 1 Haird 241; 2 McDonald 234; 3 Kew 222; 4 Murray 202; 4 Weaver 202; 6 Wood 200.



Haird now tops the points

SPORTING SCENE

IRISH RALLYCROSS

Victory for Tohill seals a hat-trick of titles

Irish Rallycross

By Paul Phelan

Organiser: Mondello Park Sports Club When: October 21 Where: Mondello Park, County Kildare Starters: 45.

Derek Tohill's fifth double of the year, with victories in both the Supercar Final and the Super Final, clinched the Dubliner's hat-trick of Irish Rallycross titles with one round remaining.

Transmission problems on his ERX Ford Fiesta in the previous round at Tynagh had ended his unbeaten record this year, but it was back to business as usual at Mondello. That was despite the new challenge from former title holder Tommy Graham, who made a return in a recently acquired Fiesta to finish as runner-up in both races.

Peter McGarry's hopes of closing off the Modified title were put on hold until next month's final round when his Vauxhall VX220's throttle stuck open, forcing him to retire from his semi-final and leaving victory in the final to the similar car of John Ward. Regular Production Final winner Ciaran Murphy could only manage fourth this time, with Graeme Colfer making a successful return to take a clear win.

Following her historic outright win in Tynagh, Trish Denning took her Mitsubishi Lancer E9 to another comfortable Rally Car Final win, 10 seconds ahead of the Peugeot 205 of Jack Deegan. David Maher again turned the tables on Denis McCrudden among the Fiesta Zetecs, with Jamie Ferris splitting the rivals this time. Conor Kehoe beat Jack Byrne to score a first Junior win, with Russell Woods top in the Buggy Final.

Results

Super Final: 1 Derek Tohill (Ford Fiesta); 2 Tommy Graham (Ford Fiesta) +10.52s; 3 Michael Coyne (Vauxhall Nova). **Supercar Final:** 1 Derek Tohill (Ford Fiesta); 2 Tommy Graham (Ford Fiesta) +11.60s; 3 Declan Kelly (Ford Fiesta). **Modified Final:** 1 John Ward (Vauxhall VX 220); 2 Michael Coyne (Vauxhall Nova) +5.33s; 3 Andrew Twomey (Citroen C2). **Production Final:** 1 Graeme Colfer (Peugeot 106); 2 Damian Farrell (Peugeot 106) +4.37s; 3 Dermot Gargan (Peugeot 106). **Rally Cars Final:** 1 Patricia Denning (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 2 Jack Deegan (Peugeot 205) +10.36s; 3 Michael Nolan (Peugeot 106). **Ford Fiesta Zetec Final:** 1 David Maher; 2 Jamie Ferris +3.84s; 3 Denis McCrudden. **Junior Final:** 1 Conor Kehoe (Fiesta); 2 Jack Byrne (Fiesta) +1.11s; 3 Michael Ryan (Fiesta). **Buggy Final:** 1 Russell Woods (Semog); 2 Paul Lennon (Semog) +2.97s; 3 Owen Skelly (Semog).

PEUGEOT QUILTS WORLD RX SERIES

French firm walks away from top level of rallycross

By Hal Ridge

Peugeot will end its World Rallycross Championship programme after the season finale in South Africa next month.

Having increased its presence in the series to a full works effort for 2018, the French marque's strategy had been to market its electric road car range by competing in the planned electric World RX switch in 2020. But, with the transition to electric cars postponed to 2021 and Peugeot launching a new

range of electrified sports vehicles from 2020, Peugeot's CEO Jean-Philippe Imparato decided to terminate the project.

"This announcement is not linked with our results in the competition or our drivers," said Imparato. "The decision to stop WRX appears as very brutal, but my mission as a CEO is to make decisions at the right moment to ensure the sustainability of the company and the employees and the actual context pushed us to react quickly. Last

October 3, during the Paris Motor Show, the European institutions decided to tighten up the regulation in Europe with a 40 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions in 2030, on the basis of the 95g already fixed for 2020. We have no other choice to be compliant with the new thresholds if we don't want to disappear by inertia.

"The uncertainty of a future EWRX championship is not compatible with the calendar of our electrified offensive, which is starting now! That's why we are withdrawing from WRX."

The news came less than two months after Audi withdrew its support for Mattias Ekstrom's EKS Audi Sport team in the series, instead deciding to focus on Formula E and DTM. Peugeot and Volkswagen had committed to 'EWRX' for 2020, but Audi's exit forced the 12-month delay to give other manufacturers more time to sign up.

Peugeot's decision leaves Timmy and Kevin Hansen without seats for 2019, and also casts uncertainty over nine-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb's future programme.

Peugeot will quit the WRX



Constantine heads the points going to Croft Circuit

Lynch and Constantine go toe-to-toe for BTRDA title honours

The final round of the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship takes place this weekend at Croft.

Super Modified driver Tony Lynch must score victory to stop unbeaten Junior racer Luke Constantine taking the overall BTRDA rallycross crown in his maiden season.

Dave Bellerby will return to the Super Modified category

driving his daughter Paige's Lotus Exige as a precursor to the final round of British RX at Silverstone the following week, while British RX points leader Ollie O'Donovan will also use the Croft event to prepare for the final round of the domestic calendar in his Ford Fiesta Supercar.

Fellow Irish drivers Derrick Jobb and Tommy Graham will also return to Supercar

competition on British soil at the event. Jobb racing an ex-Andy Scott, Roger Thomas Ford Focus while Graham will drive the Ford Fiesta originally built for Dermot Carnegie and subsequently raced by David Binks and Dave Bellerby.

Polish driver Slawomir Woloch will debut a new, yet to be revealed BMW in the Super Modified category.

AUTOTEST

Northern Ireland team conquers the home nations challenge

Ken Wharton Memorial

By Paul Phelan

Organiser: Hagley & District Light Car Club When: October 20 Where: Chateau Impney, Droitwich Starters: 28.

For the first time in almost half a century, the Ken Wharton Memorial Autotest returned to its original home, the Chateau Impney at Droitwich. Just as in 1969, when this venue was last used, the winning team represented Northern Ireland.

They improved their amazing record to 37 victories in the 62 years of the event, including the last seven in a row. The Ulstermen took the lead on the opening test with a 7.4s margin over Ireland and although this advantage was reduced to a mere 0.1s at one point thanks to an uncharacteristic number of penalties, they were never headed all day.

After the second test, the leading

quartet had already amassed five penalties between them, but still held top place, such was their superiority over their rivals.

Ireland's David Thompson and Ian White headed the individual section after two runs through the first test layout, ahead of Robin Lyons and BTRDA champion Malcolm Livingston, who was one of the many to collect a pylon.

Two tests later, the lead had increased to 8.7s, as Northern Ireland reduced their penalty strike rate, with runners-up Ireland a clear 26s in front of England.

White was best individual, from the home team's Richard Pinkney and NI sportscar driver Ashley Lamont, with Lyons and Thompson leading their respective classes.

The final test layout was tackled three times, but made little difference to the now established pecking order. At the finish, NI had

won yet again, by 33s, with England another 50s down.

NI's Paul Mooney drove his Vauxhall Nova-engined Mini Special to victory in the reserves' competition ahead of Guy Foster and Alastair Moffatt.

Results

1 Northern Ireland (Steven Ferguson, Robin Lyons, Ashley Lamont, Mark King) 1997.4s; 2 Republic of Ireland (Ian White, Chris Grimes, Darren Quille, David Thompson) +33.0s; 3 England (Malcolm Livingston, Dave Fox, Richard Pinkney, Mark Thornton); 4 Scotland (Paul Fobister, Charlie Lower, Willie Keating, Warren Gillespie); 5 Wales (Dave Evans, Charlie Lower, Ian Chapman, Dafydd Roberts). **Individuals:** 1 Ian White (Mini Special) 487.3s; 2 Richard Pinkney (Caterham) +4.3s; 3 Steven Ferguson (Mini-Nova Special); 4 Robin Lyons (Mini); 5 Malcolm Livingston (Lindsay Special); 6 Ashley Lamont (Westfield); 7 David Thompson (Nova); 8 Mark King (Nova); 9 Dave Fox (Mini-Nova); 10 Chris Grimes (Mini); 11 Willie Keating (Striker); 12 Darren Quille (Westfield). **Class winners:** Lyons; Thompson; Pinkney; White. **Reserves:** 1 Paul Mooney (Mini-Nova Special) 487.2s; 2 Guy Foster (Mini Special) +6.7s; 3 Alastair Moffatt (Mini Special); 4 Peter Grimes (Mini-Nova Special); 5 Jamie McMillan (Nova); 6 Chris Chapman (Striker). **Class winners:** Charlie Lower (Mini); McMillan; Chapman; Mooney.

Steven Ferguson was part of the winning NI crew



BRISCA F1

Wainman wins, while Harris (right) crashed



WAINMAN ENTERS THE SHOOT OUT TITLE BATTLE

BriSCA F1: King's Lynn

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Trackstar When: October 20 Where: King's Lynn Starters: 54.

Frankie Wainman Jr forced his way back into contention for the National Series Shoot Out title with a heat and final double on Saturday night.

Wainman had trailed Stuart Smith Junior by 42 points going into the meeting but after his final win and Smith's low-scoring round, the gap closed to just three marks at the conclusion of racing.

Jake Harry grabbed the lead of the final from the drop of the green flag and opened up a sizable advantage. Further back, Smith and Tom Harris started to slice their way through the field and began to close on the race leader but a

fierce battle raged between the duo which resulted in them punting each other into the wall.

This allowed Wainman to sneak into second and chase after the race leader. Wainman eased by Harry with just under five laps to go. Harry, who is in his first season of racing, held onto second until there were two laps to go, when he was forced wide. He eventually took ninth place.

"Some people have written me off but I will keep fighting until the end," said Wainman Jr. "The car came good as the track dried out and I was able to catch Harry, but he drove a great race and he was difficult to overhaul. I saw Smith and Harris take each other out and I was able to pull away from them. Both the shale and

Tarmac cars are going good, but there are still four rounds to go and a lot of racing to be done."

Starting from a one-lap handicap in the Grand National, Wainman was able to take advantage of the continuation of the Smith/Harris feud, which left their cars locked together before hitting the infield marker tyres. That enabled Wainman to pass them both and record a fifth place finish. The race was won by Richard Woods, who led from start to finish. Harry rounded out a good night for the Solihull-based driver with a third place. The National Series continues this weekend at Birmingham Wheels.

Result

1 Frankie Wainman Jr; 2 Danny Wainman; 3 Mat Newson; 4 Lee Fairhurst; 5 Frankie Wainman Junior Jr; 6 Paul Hines; 7 Mark Gilbank; 8 Tom Harris; 9 Jake Harry; 10 James Morris.

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MN SAYS...

Meeke handed a lifeline with Toyota

As the Northern Irishman's deal is confirmed, he has to make it work for him

Our World Rally Championship reporter David Evans got one of the scoops of the year two weeks ago when *Motorsport News* was able to print that Kris Meeke was going to be joining Toyota for the 2019 season.

The confirmation materialised last week that the deal had indeed been inked. Meeke was off testing with the factory team in Finland almost straight away, and there is a hope that he will use the car in a competition before the end of the season. There is a genuine feeling of optimism surrounding this deal, and both Meeke and team boss Tommi Makinen are making the right noises.

Make no mistake though, Makinen is not a man to be messed with and he is direct with his drivers should they mess up – after all, he has climbed to the top of the tree himself and knows all the excuses. This could be a highly positive thing for Meeke, or it could make life very tough for him indeed. But then again, he has had very few places to hide during the course of his career...

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S
FAVOURITE OF
THE WEEK!

Justin Ward's captured Matt Rozier flying at Snetterton



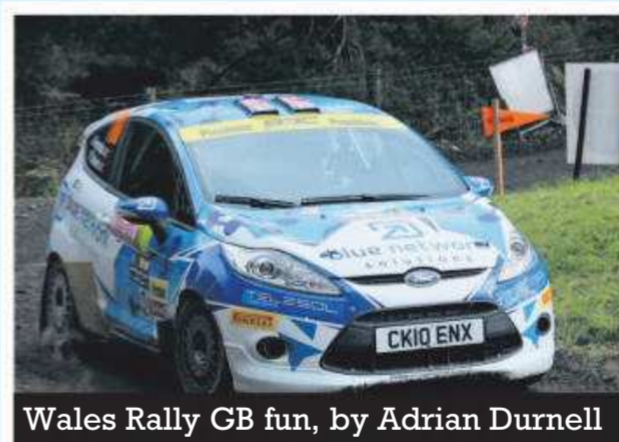
Hannah Doran's Locost shot from Snetterton, featuring some sideways motoring



Braving the mud was Graham Lomax



John Henderson's pic from Knockhill



Wales Rally GB fun, by Adrian Durnell



Rich Cranston's shot from Silverstone



Bruce Grant-Braham's Hawthorn tribute



Tanak on Rally GB, by Ian Francis



The weather tried its worst at Snetterton recently, but that didn't stop Sam Nudd



David Harbey enjoyed historic action at a soaking Donington Park recently

GOT AN OPINION?

LET US KNOW: LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

TV GUIDE

Tune in for highlights of the final round of the **BRDC British Formula 3 Championship** from Silverstone (Thursday, 0830-0930hrs, BT Sport 2). Double R driver Linus Lundqvist was still in a strong position to take the title despite a disastrous round at Donington Park but

Carlin's Nicolai Kjaergaard could still stop him. And travel back in time with **F1 Classic Races** to the 2008 Monaco Grand Prix (Thursday, 2030-2300hrs, Sky Sports F1). In atrocious conditions, Lewis Hamilton put in a superb drive to take his first win in Monaco.



Hamilton took his first win in Monaco 2008 in wet conditions

LIVE WRC

Rally Spain, BT Sport

Thursday
SS1: 1100-1200hrs, BT Sport 2
Friday
End of day review: 2200-2230hrs, BT Sport 1
Saturday
SS10: 0900-1000hrs, BT Sport 1
SS13: 1400-1500hrs, BT Sport ESPN
End of day review: 2245-2300hrs, BT Sport 1
Sunday
SS16: 0730-0830hrs, BT Sport 1
SS19: 1100-1230hrs, BT Sport 1
End of day 3 review: 2230-2300hrs, BT Sport 1

Red Bull TV

End of day 1 review: Friday, 2100-2130hrs
SS13 Saturday, 1345hrs
End of day 2 review: Saturday, 2100-2130hrs
End of day 3 review: Sunday, 2100-2130hrs

Channel 5

Highlights: Wednesday, 1900-2000hrs

LISTINGS



Birkett Relay is taking place at Silverstone this weekend

RACING SATURDAY

Silverstone, Northants
Birkett Six-Hour Relay Starts racing from 1130hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** £15 **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Contact** 08704 588260

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

Brands Hatch, Kent
BARC meeting: Tin Tops, Monoposto, Max 5, Intermarque, Modified Saloons, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre '03 Touring Cars, Pre '05 Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons **Starts Saturday,** racing from 1200hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Sunday,** racing from 1100hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

RALLY SUNDAY

Otterburn Training Area, Northumberland
The Ford Parts Cheviot Stages Rally

Starts 0830hrs
Admission TBC
Web cheviotstages.org.uk
Bantry, County Cork
Westlodge Hotel Fastnet Stages **Starts** 0900hrs
Admission free
Web skibbdcc.com

SPORTING SCENE SATURDAY

Birmingham, West Midlands
BrisCA F1 **Starts** 1800hrs
Admission TBC
Web brisca.com
Croft, N Yorks
BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross **Starts** 0930hrs
Admission adult £11, under 15 free
Web btrda.com

SUNDAY

Northampton, Northants
BrisCA F1 **Starts** 1300hrs
Admission TBC
Web brisca.com

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

LIVE F1

Mexican Grand Prix Sky Sports F1 HD coverage

Drivers' press conference: Thursday, 1700-1730hrs
FP1: Thursday, 1545-1750hrs
FP2: Thursday, 1945-2150hrs
FP3: Saturday, 1545-1715hrs

Qualifying: Saturday, 1800-2045hrs
Race: Sunday, 1730-2210hrs

Channel 4 HD highlights

Qualifying: Saturday, 2200-2330hrs
Race: Sunday, 2300-0115hrs

LIVE TV

Porsche Supercup: Mexico City

Race 1: Saturday, 2120-2220hrs, Sky Sports F1/2045-2145hrs, Eurosport 2
Race 2: Sunday, 1555-1700hrs, Sky Sports F1/1600-1700hrs, Eurosport 2

WTCR: Suzuka

Race 1: Saturday, 0600-0705hrs, Eurosport 1
Race 2: Sunday, 0245-0400hrs, Eurosport 1
Race 3: Sunday,

0400-0515hrs, Eurosport 1

NASCAR: Martinsville

Race: Sunday, 1800-2230hrs, Premier Sports

NEXT WEEK

OUT WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31



WRC RALLY SPAIN

TITLE BATTLE REACHES ITS CLIMAX



BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW

HOW EDWARDS AND GARROD BECAME CHAMPIONS



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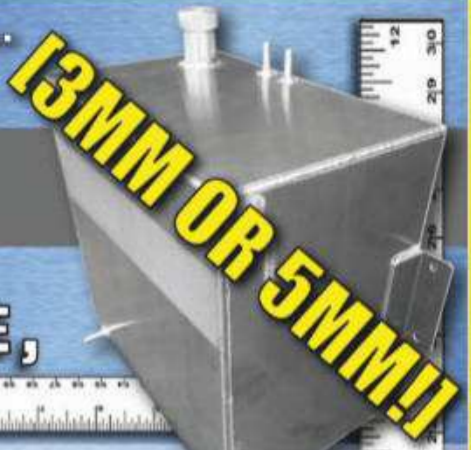
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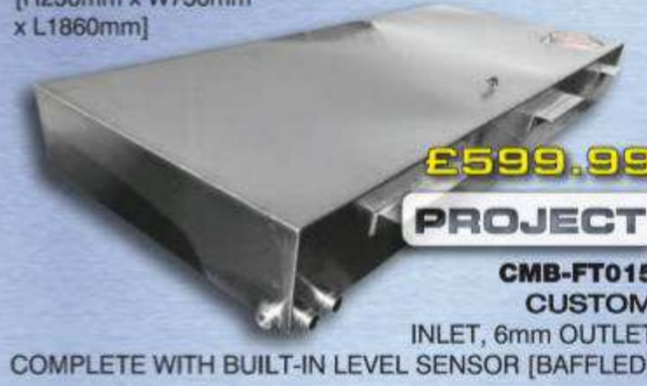


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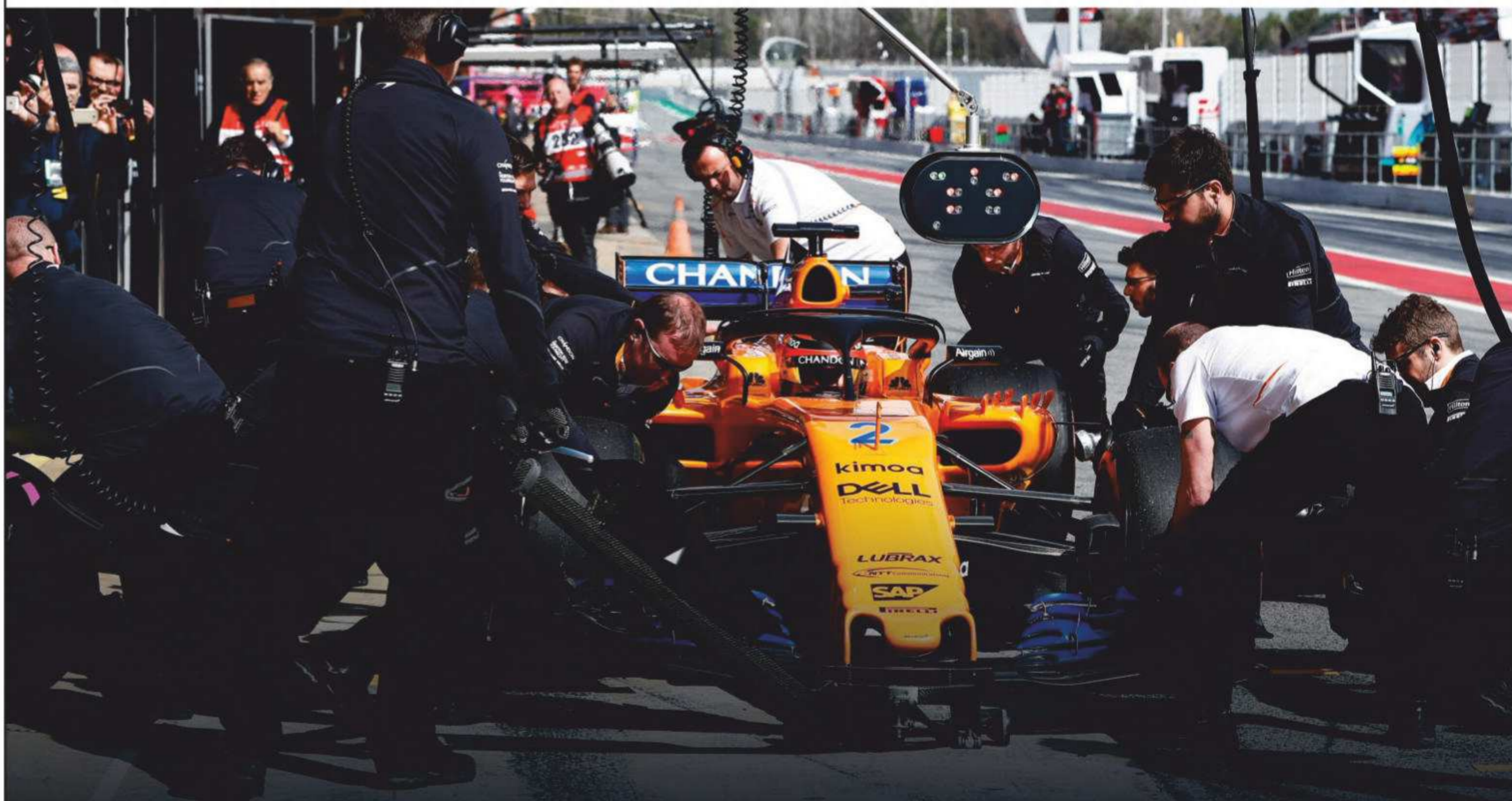


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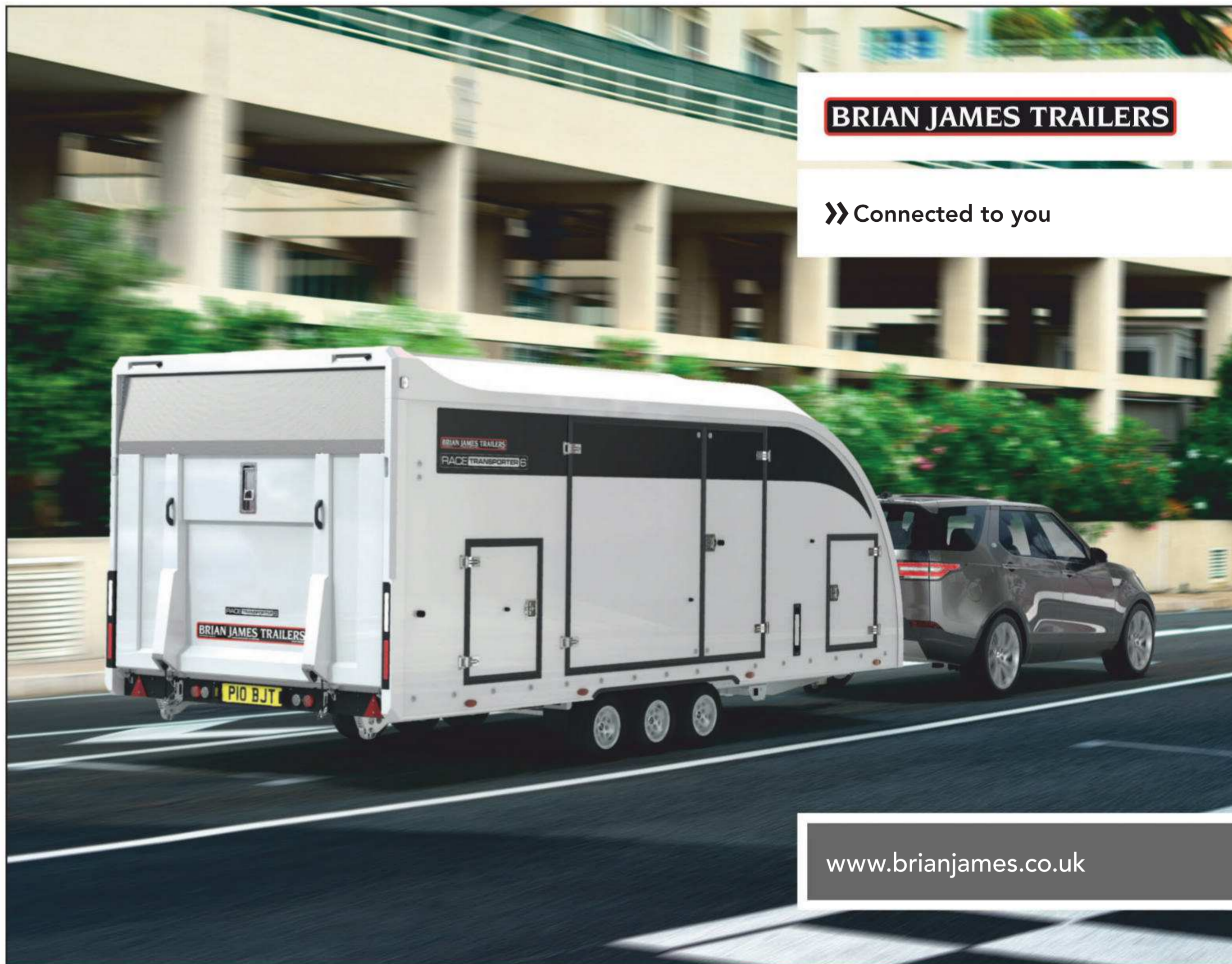
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