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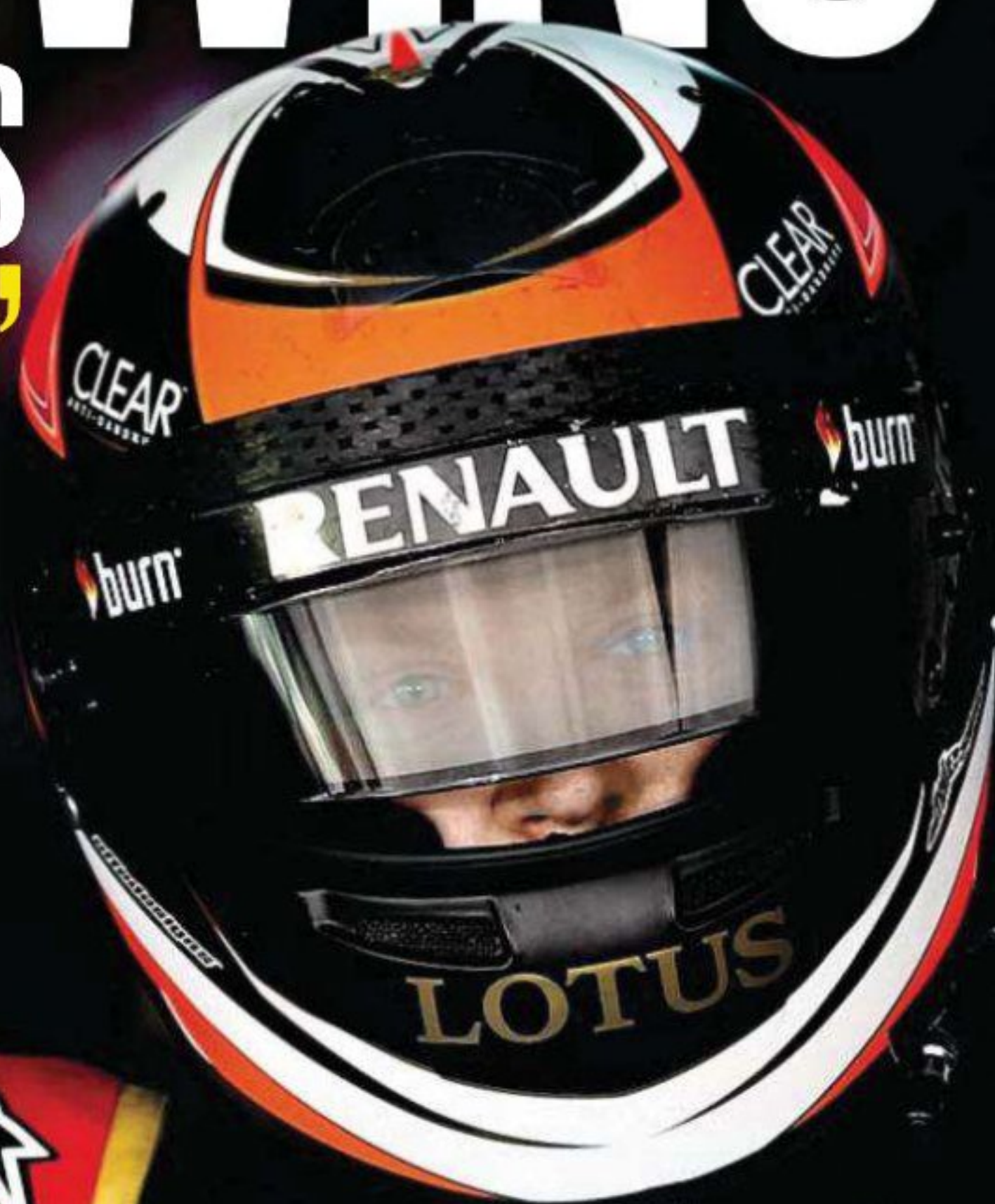
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MARCH 21 2013

New-look F1 race report • Exclusive columns

KIMI WINS

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NEW PEUGEOT RCZ

MOTION & EMOTION



PEUGEOT

Pole Position

F1 2013 gets off to a fantastic start

NOT A BAD START TO FORMULA 1 2013 THEN – UNLESS you're McLaren, Williams, Caterham or Nico Hulkenberg. Despite the damp squib of Saturday's qualifying session, raceday was far more enjoyable. Lots of overtaking, alternate strategies that kept us guessing, and popular winners in Kimi Raikkonen and Lotus.

Was Melbourne a one-off, or will it set the trend for the season? And was it Pirelli's choice of bringing supersoft tyres, which were only good for a handful of laps, that created the scenario for big pace fluctuations? Then again, how about the uber-swift Red Bull's significant drop-off in speed after a few laps on the mediums, too?

Let's take nothing away from the boys at Enstone. On-board the Lotus, the ride was as smooth as a Rolls-Royce, protecting its tyres from the rubber-shredding loads; I've not seen that much suspension movement since the 99T! Or as many sparks since the early '90s...

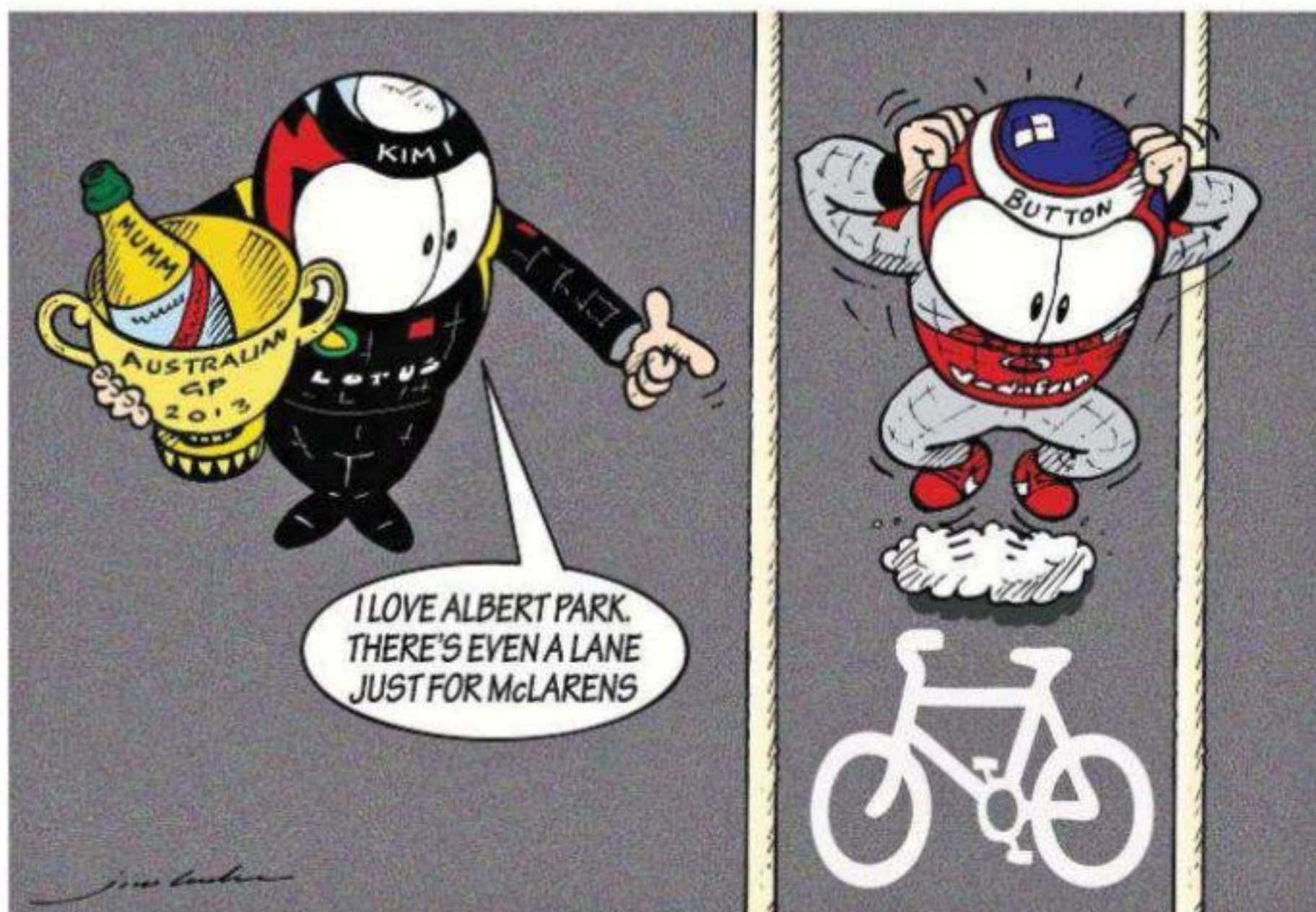
Malaysia will no doubt bring different challenges. It's the hard/medium tyre combo, with the wets on standby for those tropical monsoons. My concern is that if it does lash down (as it so often does) bearing in mind what happened on Saturday, will we get to see a race at all?

Bradley

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Find us on



THE BIG PICTURE

Australian GP, lap one: Vettel is already well clear and the Ferraris are in hot pursuit, but who's that bloke all locked up in the chasing pack? The 'Iceman' cometh...

4





The key stories from the past seven days

This week in F1

Tie-up with
McLaren began
in 2007 season



VODAFONE McLAREN DEAL TO END

Vodafone has confirmed that, as expected, it will not continue as McLaren's title sponsor beyond its current contract, which expires at the end of this season. A team statement confirmed that a replacement title sponsor will be announced on December 2. Vodafone has been McLaren's main sponsor since 2007.

McLAREN'S TITLE SPONSORS

YEARS	SPONSORS
1972-1973	Yardley
1974-1996	Marlboro
1997-2006	West
2007-2013	Vodafone



Mercedes to protect data from Honda

Mercedes will move to ensure that Honda does not benefit from knowledge of its 2014 engine if, as expected, the Japanese manufacturer returns to the sport with McLaren in two years' time. McLaren has confirmed that it will run Mercedes engines in '14, with the door open for Honda

to return in '15. Mercedes motorsport boss Toto Wolff said: "It is going to be essential for us to guarantee that there is no chance of IP [crossover]."



CHASSIS SWITCH FOR HULKENBERG

Sauber driver Nico Hulkenberg will race with a new chassis in this weekend's Malaysian Grand Prix after a fuel leak with his previous one prevented him from starting the Australian Grand Prix last Sunday.

Gonzalez becomes Marussia reserve

Perennial GP2 backmarker Rodolfo Gonzalez has joined Marussia as its reserve for 2013. The 26-year-old Venezuelan has previous F1 test experience for Caterham and Force India.



Red Bull snaps up Sauber man

Sauber head of vehicle dynamics Pierre Wache is set to join Red Bull. Wache is still officially a Sauber employee, but a spokesperson confirmed to AUTOSPORT that he "will leave the company in the near future". Former Red Bull man Ben Waterhouse, who moved to Sauber three years ago, has held Wache's old Sauber role since January 1.



McLaren: ECU not to blame for Webber's start problems

McLaren Electronic Systems managing director Peter van Manen insists that the standard McLaren ECU was not responsible for Mark Webber losing telemetry and KERS before the start of the Australian Grand Prix. Red Bull initially believed that the ECU was the cause.



Robert Kubica on his F1 hopes

I would pay all the money I have to be back in the cockpit of a Formula 1 car. At the moment [racing at] Barcelona would be possible, Monaco would not be possible

MELBOURNE TELEMETRY FAILURE

The FIA's race-control telemetry suffered reliability problems over the Australian Grand Prix weekend, forcing the decision to run without in-cockpit lights and the ability to disable DRS. The problem is not expected to be repeated at this weekend's Malaysian Grand Prix.

Ferrari: windtunnel return will compromise 2014

Ferrari chief designer Nikolas Tombazis has admitted that the switch back from the Toyota windtunnel to its refurbished facility in Maranello later this year will compromise development work on the 2014 car. "Any change of windtunnel has got some associated risks, so yes you are right," he said when asked by AUTOSPORT about the matter.



Williams had a weekend to forget

WILLIAMS STEPS BACK

The Williams team has been forced to revert its FW35 to close to launch specification as a result of problems with the car. Pastor Maldonado labelled it "undriveable" after qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix, even though the latest version of the exhaust/sidepods was dropped after Friday practice. Technical director Mike Coughlan said: "The philosophy is to backtrack a little bit to where we thought we had made a significant step forward. Let's start again from there and have a look at what directions we took."

Coughlan steps in for Williams

Williams technical director Mike Coughlan acted as temporary team principal at the Australian GP. Both Frank and Claire Williams did not attend the race following the death of Frank's wife Ginny Williams. "It's for this weekend only," said Coughlan.

0 THE BIG NUMBER
Total racing laps completed by Nico Hulkenberg in his three Australian grands prix.

RECORD BREAKERS 27y51d

The average age of the drivers who qualified for the Australian GP was 27 years and 51 days. This makes it the youngest in history, beating the 1997 French Grand Prix.



OZ GP QUALIFYING GETS RAINED OFF

Qualifying for last weekend's Australian Grand Prix was held on Sunday morning because of heavy rain on Saturday. This is the third time in recent years that this has happened, with qualifying for the Japanese grands prix in 2004 and '10 also being hit by bad weather.



Track was flooded on Saturday

Castrol EDGE GRAND PRIX PREDICTOR

Piromodoinua scored the most points in the first round of the 2013 Castrol EDGE Grand Prix Predictor. An accuracy rate of 67 per cent yielded a haul of 177 points. Not only did they correctly predict a Kimi Raikkonen victory as well as the entire podium, they also nailed six of the top ten finishers, pole and fastest lap. Don't forget you can make your predictions for the Malaysian GP. Visit predictor.autosport.com to play.



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Poker player Jack Diamond was celebrating after being dealt some terrific news by his local Nissan dealer.

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The deal also included 3 years' 0% APR Representative and 3 years' Pan-European Nissan Roadside Assistance. As Diamond raised a smile, he commented, "It was unbelievable. I knew I had been dealt a winning hand."

Since taking delivery of his Juke, Diamond has admitted that poker has had to take a back seat as he's far too busy enjoying his new car to return to the table. "My usual group of players think I'm bluffing," said Diamond. "But then they haven't experienced the thrill of driving the Nissan Juke."



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Mark Hughes

MPH



He led less than half the race en route to victory in Australia, but Kimi Raikkonen's performance was more dominant than you might realise

READ MARK HUGHES' FRIDAY GP FORM GUIDE ON
AUTOSPORT+

Kimi Raikkonen's victory for Lotus in Melbourne was actually much more dominant than it may have looked to the casual observer. He led for only 22 of the race's 58 laps but that was just the result of having qualified on row three and the playing out of the various strategies. In terms of race performance, nothing else came close to it.

Conversely, the Red Bull RB9 was 0.7s clear of the field in qualifying, over 1s faster than the Lotus. But it was at least 0.5s slower than the Lotus in the race, a net swing of 1.2s in the Lotus's favour compared with qualifying. It was easy enough on its tyres to be able to do the distance on one pitstop fewer.

"The Lotus' combination of tyre range and performance is something we couldn't even begin to think of," said Red Bull's Christian Horner. Raikkonen's tyres were 22 laps old when he set the race's fastest lap – a 1m29.274s. In the same stint, Vettel's were past their best after five laps at which point his best was a 1m30.409s. By the time his fuel load was as low as Kimi's had been when he set the time, his rubber was totally spent and he was lapping 2s slower than the Lotus.

With a delicate tyre, there's a huge performance advantage to be had if you can limit the degradation and no-one else can. This is worth much more than the



"It's clear the Lotus has continued the trait of last year's car being very easy on the rubber"

typical couple of tenths even the most controversial aero appendage may produce under these regulations. For decades the chase of downforce has been the holy grail of F1 designers, but there have been several tell-tales in the past few years that sometimes the downforce is too powerful for the control tyre. In which case, if there is effectively a ceiling on how much downforce can effectively be used, there are then bigger gains to be made in getting the rubber to behave more consistently.

It's clear that the Lotus has continued the trait of last year's car by being very easy on the rubber. To see it in action or from an on-board camera is to have at least some insight as to why: it rides softly and the tyres are not receiving the same peak loads by being bounced from bump to bump. With the tyres in good shape it's far easier to keep a consistent balance in the car as the stint wears on. What was happening in Melbourne with a lot of cars was the worse the tyre became, the more unbalanced the car became, which in turn abused the tyres at one end or the other yet more.

This year's Pirellis are very different to last year's and

no-one really yet knows if the high degradation rates we saw in Melbourne (on most cars, at least) are going to be typical. The choice of supersoft for the option tyre was certainly aggressive, but teams were experiencing big problems on the medium too, so perhaps it was about something else entirely.

"Well we go to Malaysia next," says Lotus tech director James Allison, "and the limitation there is unlikely to be the graining we had here, but wear. It would be foolhardy to say that the advantage we had here in Melbourne will carry through there. It may do, it may not. There are different mechanisms at play."

But what if it does carry through? What if it's just a set trait of these tyres that they are way more critical, way less forgiving of aggressive aerodynamic characteristics and, by extension, much more rewarding of the sort of compliant car Lotus was already producing? Are we about to see a new sort of 'softly-softly' domination? From row three or four of the grid, one stop fewer than everyone – and only then a decisive flourish of devastating performance.

As Kimi himself might say: 'Let's wait and see.' ❧

The key stories from the past seven days

This week in motorsport

KUBICA READY FOR RALLY ACTION

Robert Kubica will drive his Citroen DS3 RRC on the first of at least four European Rally Championship rounds when he starts this weekend's Canaries Rally. It was announced last week that Kubica will also tackle the Azores, Corsica and Polish events.

The Pole's preparations aboard a car specially adapted around his weakened right arm have, however, been far from perfect after his two-day test was cut short when storms hit France and a tree blocked the test road. He tested in Gran Canaria again earlier this week.



RICHIE SWITCH

Richie Stanaway confirmed his switch from single-seaters to the Porsche Supercup with fellow series newcomer DAMS this week. The Kiwi, who will be partnered by Porsche junior driver Michael Christensen, was due to contest the Carrera Cup Australia races in Melbourne last weekend, but was unable to race as Team Kiwi Racing had not filed his entry before the pre-race deadline.

Wilson's IndyCar test

Stefan Wilson tested for Dale Coyne Racing at Barber last week. Ana Beatriz will race the car at this weekend's St Pete season-opener.



MEEKE IN FRAME FOR CITROEN

Citroen World Rally Team boss Yves Matton has confirmed he is talking to Kris Meeke about driving a factory DS3 WRC on this summer's Rally Finland.

The former IRC champion is one of four drivers linked to replacing Abu Dhabi's Khalid

Al-Qassimi on the event.

"Kris is on the list is because of his experience and his speed," said Matton.

Meeke, who tested a DS3 WRC earlier this year, said: "I'd sell my granny to get in that car."

Q&A

SAM BIRD

NEW RUSSIAN TIME GP2 DRIVER

Was it a shock to land a late GP2 deal?

It's amazing. When you don't have a drive and something comes up it makes you realise how lucky you are. And it makes you more hungry. I'm grateful to Russian Time for the opportunity to showcase my skills in front of the F1 paddock again.

Is the team's target of fighting for the title realistic?

I know it's a new team but they have a good base so I see no reason why we can't prove that we are a title contender. This team wants to win and they are going about it right.



PRODRIVE HINTS AT RX MINI

Prodrive is evaluating the possibility of developing a version of the Mini WRC that could compete in the Supercar category of the European Rallycross Championship next year.

The team brought a modified Mini WRC to last weekend's opening round of the British championship at Lydden.

Liam Doran unofficially lapped the car a second slower than a Supercar in similarly damp conditions.

"We are here to see how far away the pace of the car is to a Supercar," said Paul Eastman, Prodrive's head of rally engineering.

"The car is as it would be on a WRC

event, running a 1600cc engine and 33mm turbo restrictor.

"We've taken weight out of the car to bring it in line with the 1600cc weight limit in Supercars. The main thing we are scared of is the power, the Supercar teams all talk of having 600bhp and we only have 300bhp".



F2 CHAMPION BACHETA MAKES AUTO GP SWITCH

Formula 2 champion Luciano Bacheta will race in Auto GP, starting at this weekend's Monza season-opener after the 22-year-old Briton sealed a late deal to drive for Zele Racing.

Championship boss Enzo Coloni said: "Luciano is an experienced driver and I think he will find himself well-suited to one of our powerful race cars."

Super Nova, which won the 2012 title with Adrian Quaife-Hobbs, last week signed Vittorio Ghirelli and Antonio Spavone while Max Snegirev (Virtuosi UK), Robert Visoiu (Ghinzani Arco), Yoshitaka Kuroda (Euronova) and GP2 race winner Giacomo Ricci (MLR71) have also joined.



JORDAN EXTENDS BTCC STAY UNTIL 2015

British Touring Car independents' champion Andrew Jordan will stay in the series with Eurotech Racing until at least the end of 2015 following the extension of the team's title-sponsorship agreement with Pirtek.

Jordan's father Mike, who runs the

squad, made the announcement at the championship's media day at Donington Park today (Thursday).

"We want to challenge the big three in the BTCC: Honda, MG and WSR and contend for the title," said Jordan Sr. "We've quietly worked

our way forwards since 2006 to get ourselves into this position."

Jeff Smith will partner the younger Jordan in Eurotech's Honda Civics.

Keep up with all the news from BTCC Media Day

AUTOSPORT+

Schumacher in quit shock

Mercedes DTM driver Ralf Schumacher has retired from motor racing to take on a management and advisory role with RSC Mücke Motorsport.



The six-time grand prix winner, who was due to drive for HWA this year, has been replaced by Robert Wickens with Pascal Wehrlein taking the Mücke drive previously earmarked for the Canadian.

Wehrlein, 18, had originally planned to contest the Formula 3 European Championship with Mücke this year and will remain in the series for this weekend's Monza season-opener.

Hamlin drops fine appeal

Denny Hamlin has withdrawn his appeal against the \$25,000 fine imposed upon him by NASCAR for making comments detrimental to the sport. The Joe Gibbs Racing driver got into trouble after the Phoenix event two weeks ago by criticising the quality of the racing in Cup competition since the introduction of the new Gen-6 cars at the start of this season.

US sportscars' new name

North America's top sportscar series, that will be created by a merger of Grand-Am and the American Le Mans

Series next year, will be called United SportsCar Racing.

The new name, unveiled last week, will be sanctioned by IMSA. The combined DP/LMP2/DeltaWing top class will be known as Prototype, while LMPC will be renamed the Prototype Challenge. GT Le Mans will feature cars built to Le Mans GTE-spec while those from Grand-Am's GT division will contest the GT Daytona class.



Jenzer man tops testing

Jenzer Motorsport's Patric Niederhauser topped last week's official GP3 test at Barcelona, lapping 0.4s quicker than his team-mate Alex Fontana. ART's Conor Daly was fastest on day one.



American DTM gathers pace

A North American series running to the DTM rulebook is set to be confirmed in New York later this month. Grand-Am has confirmed that an announcement of some kind is imminent, but has given no

further details. Wolfgang Ullrich and Jens Marquardt, motorsport chiefs of, respectively, Audi and BMW, have both expressed their keenness to see their cars compete stateside.

In Brief

CAMPOS SIGNS PAIR

European Touring Car Cup winner Fernando Monje will contest a full season at world level with Campos Motorsport. He will be partnered in the two-car SEAT squad by Hugo Valente.

ECOSSE TO ELMS

The Barwell-run Ecurie Ecosse team has entered the European Le Mans Series. Ollie Millroy will contest a full season and will be partnered in the BMW Z4 GT3 by Alasdair McCaig, Andrew Smith and Joe Twyman on an alternate basis.

MURPHY ON ITS OWN

Murphy Prototypes has split with RLR and will run its own programme in the ELMS. Brendon Hartley is set keep his drive in the LMP2 ORECA-Nissan 03.

JORDA'S GP3 SEAT

GP3 squad Bamboo-Engineering last week signed Carmen Jorda to replace Roberto la Rocca, who has switched to the European F3 Open with West-Tec.

THOMPSON TO EURO F3

Gary Thompson, who has competed in Japanese Formula 3 since 2010, has switched to the European championship with Romeo Ferraris. The Irishman tested the Italian team's car at Monza this week.

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Eric Boullier

The inside line



Lotus's team principal is delighted with Melbourne win, but knows that keeping development pace is key to more success

Winning the Australian Grand Prix is the perfect start to the season for us not just because of the result itself, but because we achieved it on merit. That's the best reward that you can have for everybody who has worked so hard on the car. When I got back into the office at Enstone, to be able to walk around the factory and see everybody happy and congratulating each other was a great feeling. But it wasn't a normal weekend and I don't think that we can expect it to be so easy again in the future!

The race certainly wasn't as easy from up on the pitwall as Kimi Raikkonen said it was from inside the cockpit. After the first pitstops, we realised that we had a chance of a podium finish but it wasn't until we saw how good our pace was, along with how we were making the tyres last, that we realised we were in such a good position.

When the others pitted on a three-stop strategy, it was just a question of being careful in traffic and making sure we could run long enough. We all remember what happened to Kimi in China last year, where he was second but dropped out of the points in two laps because he couldn't run as long as expected on the final set of tyres!

rear wheels twice during the whole race!

Of course, one win does not make a big difference to the team in terms of how we approach the rest of the season. We already have a development plan underway both for this year and for next year. If we can keep winning and are in a position to fight for the world championship, we could adjust it depending on the circumstances, but you have to avoid the danger of putting everything into one year with such big changes coming in 2014.

ESTABLISHING LOTUS AS A 'PERMANENT' TOP TEAM

For now, we do have to improve the car but we have some very interesting developments in the pipeline that could be enough to keep us on the pace at the front. Last season, we lost ground mid-season but caught up at the end of the year so there's no reason to believe that we can't keep up with the development pace. After all, Red Bull, Ferrari, Mercedes and McLaren all have the same headache over 2014 and when to switch their focus as we do.

There are still 18 more races to go, but the most important thing to come from the Australian Grand Prix is the proof that we can deliver a car straight

“We have very interesting developments in the pipeline that should keep us on the pace”

But I can see us being able to keep fighting for the first three rows in qualifying. From there, it's about how you manage the tyres and the strategy. If we do that right, we can keep scoring podiums this season.

For the Malaysian Grand Prix, the track layout and the weather should suit us. We know that there are some cars faster than us on a qualifying lap but we'll see if we can get into a good enough position to fight for podiums and maybe a win as well. It's very important to bank as many points as we can at this stage in a season in which we are strong.

It's a big boost to know that we have Kimi in the car because, as we saw last year, he is so consistent. You know that you can count on him to extract the best from the car. His mental abilities are amazing because he can manage the race and the tyres effectively as well as being quick. He only spun the

out of the box that is capable of winning. That is a condition of a true top team and it shows that every year we can be capable of delivering race-winning cars. That can only help with the commercial discussions for bringing in any more funding we need to establish ourselves as a top team in the long run.

Achieving this has been our ambition for the team. Except in 2011, when we started strongly but had a few issues that made it difficult to stay at that level, over the past four seasons we have been able to make a step forward every time. But it's harder to stay at the top than to reach it in the first place and we have to remember that when looking at the current championship standings. The important thing is to establish ourselves as a permanent top team.

Winning in Australia was a great moment but we must make sure that it is not a one-off. ❖

AUSTRALIAN GP

THE RACE REPORT

QUALIFYING • TRACKSIDE VIEW • LAP CHART • DRIVER BY DRIVER • RESULTS

Raikkonen goes against the grain

Thanks to the car's silky touch on its tyres, Lotus went for the two-stop two-step and the 2007 world champion did the rest. MARK HUGHES reports from Melbourne

14

AUSTRALIA

At a glance



AUSTRALIAN GP

Albert Park, Adelaide, March 17

ROUND 1/19

LAPS 58

WINNER

Kimi Raikkonen
1h30m03.225s

POLE POSITION

Sebastian Vettel
1m27.407s

FASTEST LAP

Kimi Raikkonen
1m29.274s

RACE RATING

★★★★★ Great start to the season,
which bodes well for the rest of 2013.DRIVERS'
STANDINGS

Raikkonen	25pts
Alonso	18pts
Vettel	15pts

Qualifying 17.30, 16.3.2013 & 1100, 17.3.2013



Vettel even found time to mow lawn, such was superiority

MASON/GETTY



The postponement of qualifying after Q1; the running of Q2 and Q3 on Sunday morning, smack-bang in the middle of a tricky intermediate-tyres/slicks changeover: none of these things diverted Red Bull's magnetic attraction to the front row.

In the heavy rain of Q1 and the wet of Q2 it had been all about the Mercedes of Nico Rosberg, hugely confident immediately and much more successful than anyone else in getting heat into the tyres. He was immensely disappointed that the crucial part of Q3 was well into

slick-tyre territory. In these conditions his advantage evaporated and Red Bull reality returned. That reality had been first apparent during Friday practice, when Sebastian Vettel's pace revealed that the RB9s must have been running at Barcelona testing with a baseline weight of around 80kg – at least 30kg heavier than anyone else.

This advantage, perhaps accentuated by how far McLaren has fallen, ensured Red Bull's main challenge was just an operational one: getting the timing of the runs right; not making any unnecessary left-field calls on tyre

choices; finding the gaps in the traffic; leaving Vettel and Mark Webber to simply express the car's performance while keeping those slick super-soft tyres within the hazardously narrow dry groove. Beyond that line lay glistening treachery, gravel traps and solid park circuit furniture.

Vettel went around 0.4s quicker than Webber for his 37th career pole, smooth and safe through the damp fast sections of Turns 10/11/12, twitches of power-oversteer through the tight turns at the end of the lap. Webber all but matched his team-mate through the fast middle sector, and most of the deficit came at the end of the lap into and through the slow turns where Vettel was happy, as ever, using the car's roll-oversteer to pivot it around the outer-front tyre. This section of track was where most of the Red Bull's advantage was coming from, but from Vettel in particular. He was finding 0.7s over Ferrari, Mercedes and Lotus through there.

Lewis Hamilton was running a much lower-downforce rear wing than Mercedes team-mate Rosberg (he was 5km/h quicker through the speed trap) and it was partly this that was allowing Rosberg to switch on the tyres better in the wet. Hamilton had managed to claw

himself to within 0.5s of Rosberg on inters in Q2, but as soon as it came time to switch to slicks the positions were reversed. Lewis's lap at the end got him to within a couple of tenths of Webber to put him third, and most of his half-second advantage over sixth-fastest Rosberg came in the fast middle sector. The Mercedes was driveable and consistent but simply nowhere near Vettel through the slow-corner direction changes at the end of the lap – but then neither was anything else.

It was a salient point how much Hamilton's acrobatics were contributing to the Merc's performance, for he was 0.4s clear of fourth fastest – the Ferrari of Felipe Massa. This was nonetheless a good effort from Massa around a track at which he has historically lagged badly behind team-mate Fernando Alonso. This time he went a scant 0.003s faster, though that was partly because Alonso had just failed to cross the line in time to get in another lap on the drying track.

The Lotus pairing of Kimi Raikkonen and Romain Grosjean snatched sixth and seventh places with their only slick-tyred laps right at the end. Both drivers had made small errors on those laps, without which they would have been vying with the Ferraris and Rosberg.



Hamilton and Webber wonder how to stop Vettel

Paul di Resta's Force India and Jenson Button's McLaren were at the tail of Q3. Both had gambled too early for slicks in Q2, made corrective stops for inters and got through quite comfortably, helped by three others – Button's team-mate Sergio Perez, Toro Rosso's Jean-Eric Vergne and Williams's Valtteri Bottas – vainly sticking with slicks. Once into Q3 Button went straight onto slicks. It was a choice that allowed him the luxury of three flying laps, but which ensured his tyres were past their best when the track was at its driest. It left him 10th, a full 1s away from di Resta.

With hindsight, Button would have been better off to sit out Q3, saving himself from having to start on four-lap-old super-softs. The McLaren looked horrible, rocking on its stiff suspension over bumps, understeering into turns and looking unresponsive to any subsequent driver input. Something is clearly not working as it

'The final sector was where most of Red Bull's advantage was coming from'

should. The car appeared to be around 2s off the pace around Albert Park.

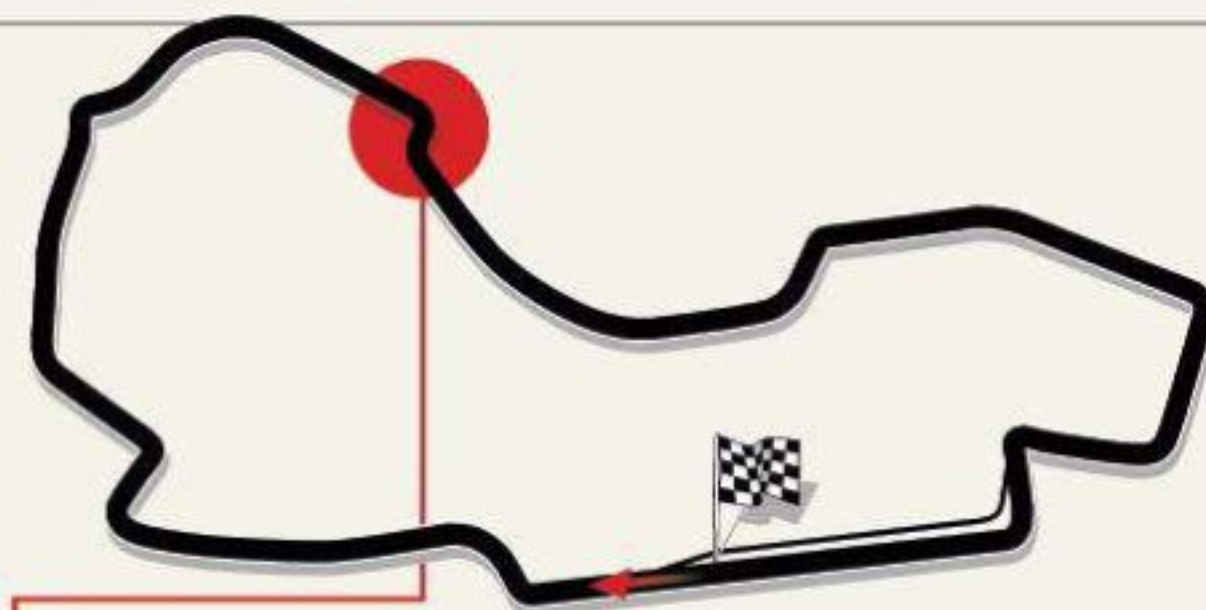
Nico Hulkenberg's Sauber headed those not making it into Q3, but missed it by a good chunk. The returning Adrian Sutil placed his Force India just behind, admitting to not feeling entirely comfortable in the wet. Vergne had been lapping the Toro Rosso very competitively in the wettest part of Q2 and was irritated afterwards that the team had brought him in for a change to slicks that proved premature and left him 13th. This was one place ahead of team-mate Daniel Ricciardo, who stayed on inters that were past their best by the time the track was at its driest. Perez's struggles with the McLaren and the mystifying choice of having new slicks fitted even after he'd aborted on his previous set left him 15th, ahead of the similarly slick-shod Williams of Bottas. The FW35s were struggling even more than the McLarens.



The Grid

1 VETTEL RED BULL 1m27.407s Super-soft	2 WEBBER RED BULL 1m27.827s Super-soft
3 HAMILTON MERCEDES 1m28.087s Super-soft	4 MASSA FERRARI 1m28.490s Super-soft
5 ALONSO FERRARI 1m28.493s Super-soft	6 ROSBERG MERCEDES 1m28.523s Super-soft
7 RAIKKONEN LOTUS 1m28.738s Super-soft	8 GROSJEAN LOTUS 1m29.013s Super-soft
9 DI RESTA FORCE INDIA 1m29.305s Super-soft	10 BUTTON McLAREN 1m30.357s Super-soft
11 HULKENBERG SAUBER 1m38.067s DID NOT START	12 SUTIL FORCE INDIA 1m38.134s Medium
13 VERGNE TORO TOSCO 1m38.778s Super-soft	14 RICCIARDO TORO ROSSO 1m39.042s Medium
15 PEREZ McLAREN 1m39.900s Medium	16 BOTTAS WILLIAMS 1m40.290s Super-soft
17 MALDONADO WILLIAMS 1m47.614s Medium	18 GUTIERREZ SAUBER 1m47.776s Super-soft
19 BIANCHI MARUSSIA 1m48.147s Super-soft	20 CHILTON MARUSSIA 1m48.909s Super-soft
21 VAN DER GARDE CATERHAM 1m49.519s Super-soft	22 PIC CATERHAM 1m50.626s Super-soft

Trackside View Mark Hughes GRAND PRIX EDITOR



As we wait at the Turns 9-10 chicane, from across the lake made choppy by a stiff breeze comes the first noise of the season. It rises high in the air, subsides after a few seconds as the car changes direction and that breeze steals the noise and carries it off. But as the driver threads his way through 6 and 7 now it's coming back, a rapid-fire of downshifts, then accelerating, the volume building as quickly as the pitch, a brief spike of wheelspin audible – and here in full view is Daniel Ricciardo's Toro Rosso. More confident each time through, his car looks pliable and forgiving and the braking zone shortens accordingly. Jules Bianchi is smooth but committed here in the Marussia, nice and early on the throttle after plenty of brake/cornering overlap on the way in, and he is the first to get a twitch of entry oversteer. The two Williamses are running different exhausts and that in Valtteri Bottas's sounds more guttural under acceleration, perhaps amplified by the downforce-enhancing tunnels the exhaust is pointed at. Kimi Raikkonen is audaciously late on the brakes, the Lotus beautifully flowing and adjustable, Kimi fine-honing the placement of the car through playing tunes on the throttle. The biggest possible

'The McLaren is stiff-limbed and stubbornly understeery'

contrast to this is the McLaren of Jenson Button, stiff-limbed, stubbornly understeery and rocking backwards and forwards over the mid-corner bump that is barely noticeable in most cars. The Ferrari doesn't have a great front end, but at least its understeer looks driveable, Felipe Massa happily sawing away at the wheel and keeping up plenty of momentum. The session's in full-swing intensity now.



Turns 9/10: good place to watch first free practice

Race

17.00, 17.3.2013



The three guys on the podium, with the cheering Melbourne crowd swarming the track beneath them, had each delivered classic performances, reflecting perfectly their respective characters.

Kimi Raikkonen, the victor, had clinically and unemotionally used the only car that seemed immune to the spectacular tyre graining that was the bane of everyone else's weekend. Calm and collected off the start, just clearing a space for himself, he picked Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes off early, then simply waited for the others to peel into the pits as he kept going. That's all that was required of him, conserving and occasionally banging in a fast one, but mainly just letting it all flow.

Fernando Alonso, the fighting warrior at his best, was cunning, smart and ruthless all in one drive. His Ferrari couldn't hope to do the two stops of the Lotus. But he'd dealt with both a challenging team-mate and Sebastian Vettel by a decisive – though risky – tactical call all his own, then made it work, unblocking the stalemate he'd been in. After calmly dealing with the brief fire and brimstone of Hamilton, he set to trying to take the challenge

'Each time Vettel got onto a new set he'd be super-quick before tyres pulled him back'

to Raikkonen in his final stint. But as his tyres surrendered so he was obliged to do the same.

Vettel, the mercurial world champion who'd been at his brilliant best in qualifying earlier that day, sprinted away just like normal. But as early as the second lap they were pegging him – and soon they would be coming back at him. The Red Bull was even harder on the tyres than the Ferraris, all that downforce just asking of the Pirellis more than they had to give in these conditions. Each time he'd get onto a new set he'd be briefly super-quick before the tyres pulled him back



DUNBAR/LAT

to their speed rather than his. But he was still standing on the podium, even after a bad day at the office.

The shape of the race, as two stops and three interwove to give six leaders in the first 20 laps, was to the casual onlooker bewildering or exciting. In reality it was readily explainable by an aggressive choice of Pirelli compounds – super-soft and medium. The former was capable of just a handful of laps, overwhelmed by the demands of the parkland surface, the combination of the high lateral forces of sector two and the stop-start demands of the rest. The latter was more durable, albeit still very prone to graining. So Adrian Sutil, by starting his Force India outside the top 10, was able to use the benefit of a new set of mediums for a good long-and-fast first stint that would catapult him to the front, so short were the super-soft stints of those who'd started ahead of him.

The driver who'd been best placed to do that, 11th fastest in qualifying and thereby the first man to have free choice of starting tyres, was Nico Hulkenberg.

Dejected Hulkenberg was a spectator after his Sauber failed





Here was a perfect opportunity to get his Sauber career off to a spectacular start: every single driver ahead of him was on the 'wrong' tyre and consigned to a very short stint. It's easy to sympathise with his door-kicking fury when he was informed that there was a fuel-system problem with the car that could not be repaired in time for the race, making him a non-starter. So 12th fastest Sutil got the full benefit instead.

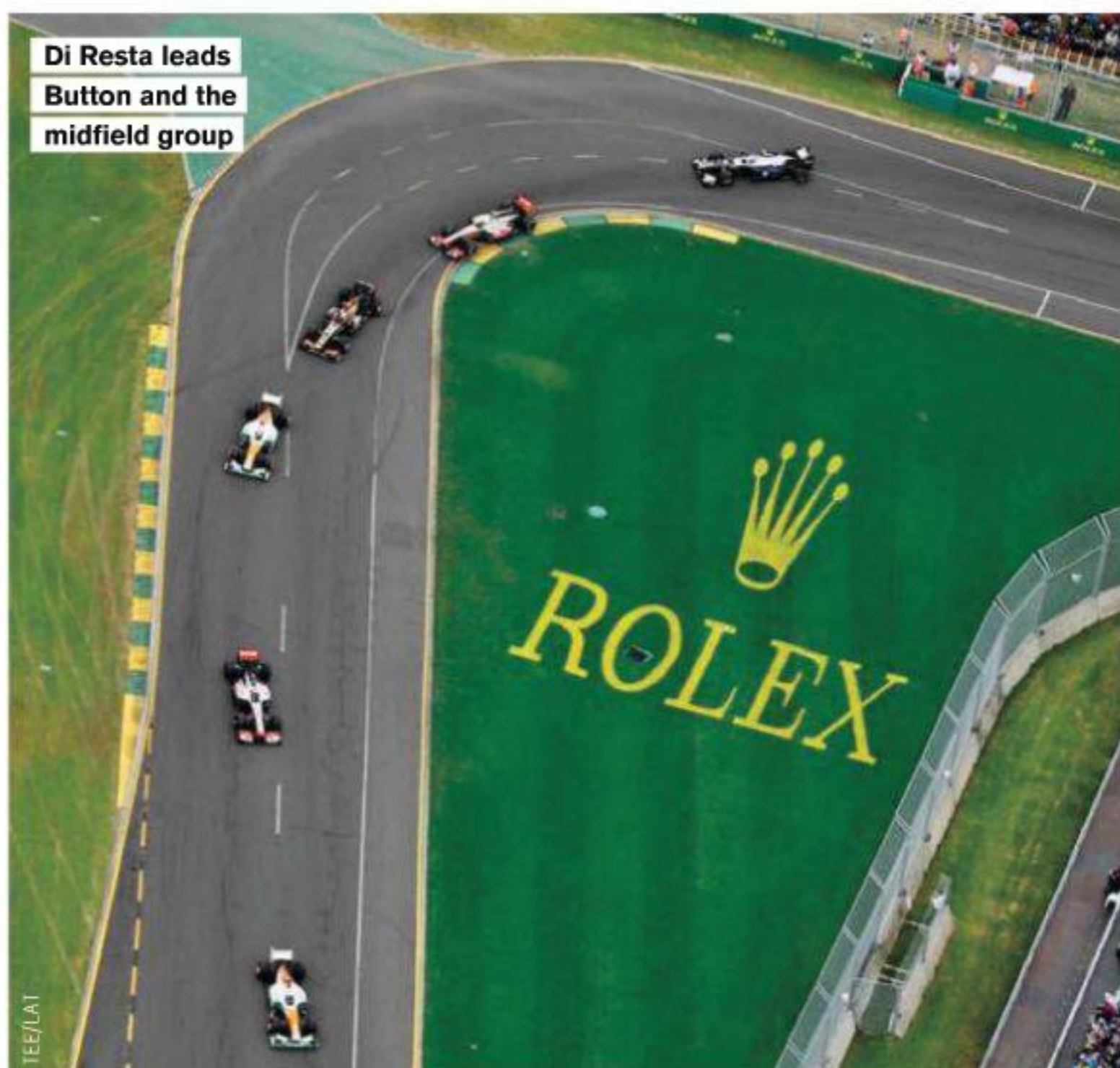
'Hulk' wasn't the only one with dramas before the race had even started. Mark Webber, still searching for the elusive home win at his 12th attempt, found his Red Bull lacking both telemetry and KERS on his out-lap to the front row of the grid, the result of an ECU glitch. Fervent efforts were made to fix it, but to no avail. He sat there knowing he was going to be swamped at the start — and he was. As one Red Bull — Vettel's — sprinted into the lead, the other fell back to seventh by Turn 1. The Ferraris, as ever, were dynamite off the line, Alonso's in particular.

'Raikkonen's Lotus was geared longer than Hamilton's Merc and he was all over it'

Felipe Massa had got instantly alongside Hamilton's Mercedes, with Alonso looking set to go between them, but as they swerved towards each other so Fernando was forced to lift. Massa was second, Hamilton got through Turn 1 third but, in blocking the inside of Turn 3 from Alonso, he put himself on the outside for the run up to Turn 4, where the other Ferrari sliced past him. Similarly, Raikkonen had lost out to an aggressive Nico Rosberg for fifth at Turn 1 but made his way past the Mercedes through T3-4.

Vettel was already over 2s clear of the Ferraris at the end of the opening lap, and it seemed all was normal. But by the second lap they were snapping at his heels. That big advantage of qualifying was not evident now. Part of Red Bull's strategy when its cars qualify at the front is to swerve everything towards all-out performance in the opening lap, in fuelling and tyre pressures. Running higher tyre pressures gives more instant performance, but ensures that they are then overpressured as the temperatures come up in subsequent laps. This time the spectacular graining of Vettel's super-softs ensured the first-lap gap he'd built was quickly eaten up again, and now his tyres were overpressured as well. But even the enabling of DRS didn't allow Massa an opportunity to pass.

Raikkonen's Lotus was geared longer than Hamilton's Mercedes and he was all over it, hassling Lewis on the run up to Turn 4 on the second lap and then ▶



Friday



1230 **Daniel Ricciardo** (above) becomes the first driver to hit the track in an official session in 2013.

1237 **Charles Pic** complains his Caterham is pulling to the right. 


1320 **Esteban Gutierrez** becomes the first to have an off-track moment, taking a bite of the grass at Turn 5.

1332 **Gutierrez** in response to a question about the tyres: "They are quite consistent... a little degradation." 

1356 **Felipe Massa** runs off the track at Turn 6 and recovers.

1358 **Paul di Resta** touches the grass on the outside of the track under braking for Turn 6 and spins into gravel.

1637 **Nico Rosberg** straightlines the first chicane after losing it mid-corner.

1643 **Jules Bianchi** grumbles about the low sun: "The visibility is really low right now." 

1700 **Giedo van der Garde** goes off into the gravel at Turn 3.

1724 **Sebastian Vettel** radios in with an intermittent KERS issue. 

1729 **Hamilton** locks up at Turn 9 and cuts across the grass (right).




1751 **Hamilton** goes off at Turn 6. "I had separation of the front splitter, so it was pushed right up underneath, touching the underneath of the chassis. I turned in and nothing really happened, I just went straight on."

1755 More woe for Merc: **Rosberg** pulls off the track with a gearbox failure.

1834 McLaren team principal **Martin Whitmarsh** admits that this is "one of the hardest days I can remember" after his cars finish outside the top 10 in FP2.

1920 **Hamilton** on Red Bull: "Obviously, they have been sandbagging the whole time in winter testing."

2054 @SChecoPerez: "Not the best Day, tomorrow is a new Day and we got the Best Team to come back!! #nevergiveup" 

◀ thrillingly close through the long curving flat-out link between the Clark chicane and the fast Turns 11-12 switchback. Lewis was defending but couldn't hold back the inevitable as Kimi went around the outside into Ascari (Turn 13), thanks to a better exit from 12 that had resulted from Hamilton's compromised line. This put Kimi a few seconds behind Alonso and he quickly closed on him. If the Ferrari's tyres were holding up better than the Red Bull's, the Lotus's were doing better than either.

The cool temperatures made the aggressive Pirelli compound selection of super-soft/medium brittle, and the front tyres of everyone except Lotus were ripping up their surfaces. With understeer, especially into the slow corners, the tyres would finally grip mid-turn, but with lock applied that would then trigger oversteer. A few laps of this would have the rears graining – and then you were on borrowed time. But the Lotus had balance and, with its supple suspension, it treated its tyres beautifully. In-car footage from other cars around the uneven Albert Park

'Sutil was driving well after his sabbatical, but knew he was in for a troubled final stint'

circuit showed them leaping from bump to bump, keeping their drivers busy, their tyres stressed. The Lotus looked like a limo.

"When tyre deg is high you can build a lot of pace," related Lotus tech director James Allison. "This year's tyres do seem to be more susceptible to that than before. The car is good on its tyres, the traits of its suspension help it, and Kimi has a great feel for them. He had a very, very confident air about him going into this race."

On super-softs that had already done four laps in qualifying, McLaren's Jenson Button knew he wasn't going to last long before pitting. He'd got away OK, up to ninth, aided by high tyre pressures, but it was soon time to come in. "We thought I'd only be able to get two laps in," he related in smiling resignation of his current plight, "but actually I managed four. But by the time of my in-lap I could see the

Button scraped a couple of points



front tyres just throwing rubber off."

Webber by this time was despairing of being able to pass the Mercs ahead of him when he was still without KERS. He was brought in on lap five for a set of mediums, but at his stop the car fell off the front jack. This delayed him sufficiently that he exited now behind Button, making his situation even worse. Meanwhile he was following instructions on which buttons to press to reset the electronics in the hope of getting back his telemetry and KERS.

Lap seven was leader Vettel's in-lap and Massa was almost nudging the Red Bull aside, with Alonso in turn almost on his team-mate's gearbox – and Raikkonen closing down fast on them both. Earlier, Alonso had got himself alongside Massa, but Felipe had refused to yield. Now, as the leading Ferrari driver, Massa got pitstop priority and came in on the eighth lap, one before Alonso and Raikkonen. This left the Mercs of Hamilton and Rosberg first and second and, as they stayed there for the next four laps, it became clear they were going to try to get through on just two stops. Their tyres were holding up better than most thanks to a Lotus-like ride and balance. Lotus's stopping of Raikkonen on the 10th lap was quite early for a two-stop but it left rivals uncertain. The reality was the Lotus's tyre deg was so good that it could afford the luxury of a relatively early stop and still do the remaining distance with just one more.

As the Mercs finally pitted on laps 13 and 14, so Sutil assumed the lead. The slow pace forced upon the super-soft cars had allowed him to stay in touch; the Force India was looking after its medium tyres well enough that a two-stop looked perfectly feasible and Adrian was driving well on his return from sabbatical. But all along, he knew he was in for a troublesome final stint on the super-soft that would see him tumble down the order. Meantime, he led the field with Vettel, Massa, Alonso and Raikkonen snapping at his heels.

Into the race's second stint both Hamilton and Rosberg were finding their Mercedes' balance on the medium tyre was nowhere near what it had been earlier, and understeer was creeping in. Those front tyres were not going to be able to do the stint length necessary for a two-stop and the call was made to switch to a three – which of course meant that they had stayed too long on those old super-softs for an optimum three-stop spacing. Lewis and Nico circulated 6s apart, some way behind the closely-bunched top six.

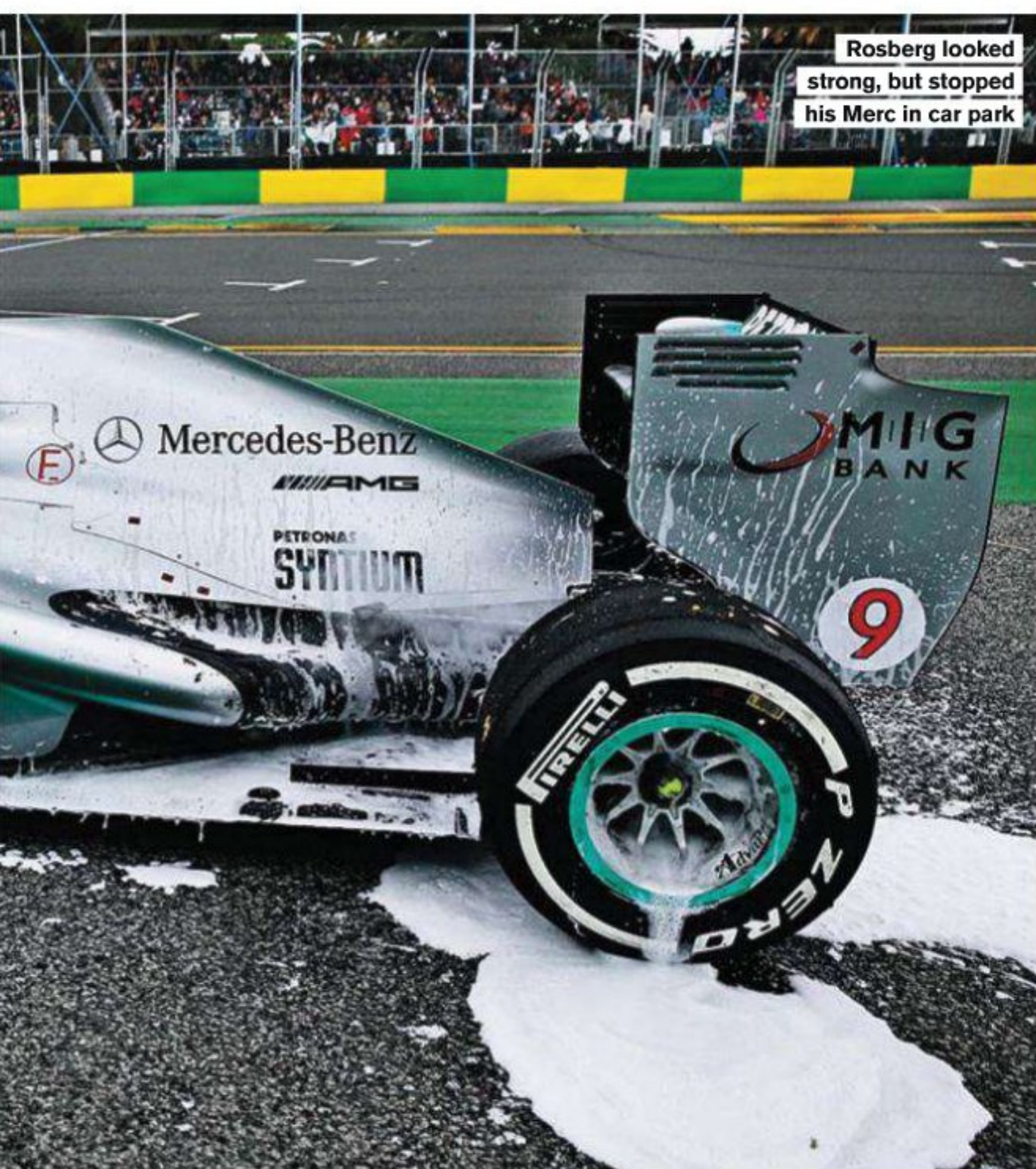
Alonso was getting frustrated sitting in that queue. It looked to him as though Massa wasn't able to do anything about passing Vettel, even though they were now being held up as the Red Bull understeered ever more. By the same token, Massa had already shown that he wasn't about to let Fernando through to



Raikkonen had to battle past Hamilton early in the race



CIANFLONE/GETTY



Rosberg looked strong, but stopped his Merc in car park

see if he could do anything. Meantime, Alonso had Raikkonen all over him. At very short notice – just enough to get the tyres ready – Alonso came in on lap 20 to get himself out of his stalemate, thereby jumping him ahead not just of Vettel but Massa too who, as the leading Ferrari man, would normally have been expected to get first call. “It was risky

‘There is invariably a special edge when Hamilton and Alonso go wheel to wheel’

what Fernando chose to do in cutting short the planned length,” Massa told the Brazilian media. “It meant that he risked having to even make a fourth stop later on. But in hindsight it worked for him.”

Red Bull responded by bringing Vettel in next lap for his second stop, just as leader Sutil was making his first. The Force India left the pits still ahead of the reigning champion, but was passed by Alonso as it exited. Massa stayed out for a couple of laps more, briefly considering trying to beat Alonso by two-stopping, then realising there was no way the tyres were going to hold up. Alonso’s was the right call – it got him ahead of Vettel – and he was as forceful as necessary in making it. But Massa can at least reflect that he matched him on pace all weekend, so continuing the resurgence of the latter part of last year.

Shortly after their stops Vettel duly dispatched Sutil around the outside of Turn 4. This would later turn out to be crucial because, in getting stuck behind the Force India, Massa lost touch with Vettel and was thereby unable to capitalise on his better tyre usage. At around this time a light drizzle began falling, mainly over Turns 6-10, and it was briefly trickily greasy, increasing lap times by a couple of seconds, before drying out once more.

So with the planned three-stoppers having made their middle stops, two-stopping Raikkonen led comfortably from the two Mercedes of Hamilton and Rosberg, both of whom – as well as now knowing they would have to make two more stops – were not far clear of the charging Alonso, who had already made his second stop. Just as the Ferrari was arriving on Rosberg’s tail, Nico suddenly lost power: electrical failure. He pulled to the side, disappointed but far from disheartened at the prospect of the season ahead of him.

Hamilton was running out of grip as Alonso tracked him down. Although they weren’t in reality fighting for overall position, given that Hamilton was effectively a pitstop behind, there is invariably a special edge when these two go wheel to wheel, and so it came to

Saturday

1415 Rain starts to fall during Saturday’s free practice session (above).

1450 **Sebastian Vettel’s** Red Bull grinds to a halt in FP3 at T4 with an electrical problem. **“Do not shift, stop the car on track,”** he is told.

1657 Start of qualifying put back by 10 minutes because of rain. This delay is then extended by further 20 minutes.

1730 Q1 finally gets underway.

1733 **Giedo van der Garde**

breaks his front wing after an off exiting Turn 5.



1734 **Lewis Hamilton** spins at T2, hitting the wall with his rear wing. He selects reverse and continues.

1735 **Hamilton’s engineer:** “Looks like you’ve got rear-wing damage – so box, box.” **Hamilton:** “The car’s fine.”

1738 **Felipe Massa** loses his front wing after spinning into the barrier exiting Turn 12, just as **Mark Webber** cuts across the grass just behind him.

1742 **Di Resta’s engineer:** “Is it ready for an inter?” **Di Resta:** “Not far away, it’s just the puddles.”

1744 **Jenson Button** sets a trend by pitting for intermediates in Q1.

1749 **Charles Pic** noses into the barrier exiting Turn 10 after losing control of the rear of the car. **Esteban Gutierrez** does the same exiting Turn 12.

1813 **Lotus operations chief @AlanPermane:** “The Technical Director has just left the pitwall to make tea for the rest of us!”

1833 **@H_Kovalainen:** “C’mon, rain’s not that bad, get on with it...”

1837 **@GvanderGarde:** “Wow... What a first qualy session for me! It was really crazy, wet, inters, hardcore session..!”

1847 Q2 and Q3 are officially postponed until Sunday morning.

1952 McLaren’s Martin Whitmarsh admits that reverting to the 2012 car is “possible”, albeit not a favoured option.

DUNBAR/LAT



Third-placed Vettel congratulates race winner Raikkonen

"That was one of the easiest races I've ever had," Kimi reckoned'

be again. Lewis wanted to hold him off for as long as possible but was on compromised lines as Alonso tracked him on lap 31. The Ferrari got out of the quick Turn 12 faster than the Mercedes and made for the outside as they raced up to Ascari. Alonso was partially ahead but on the outside as Hamilton braked late. At this moment the Merc's outside-front tyre hit a bump and locked. Seeing at the last moment that Lewis was still there, Fernando opted not to turn in. Remarkably, Hamilton got it all under control and made the apex but, on his compromised inside

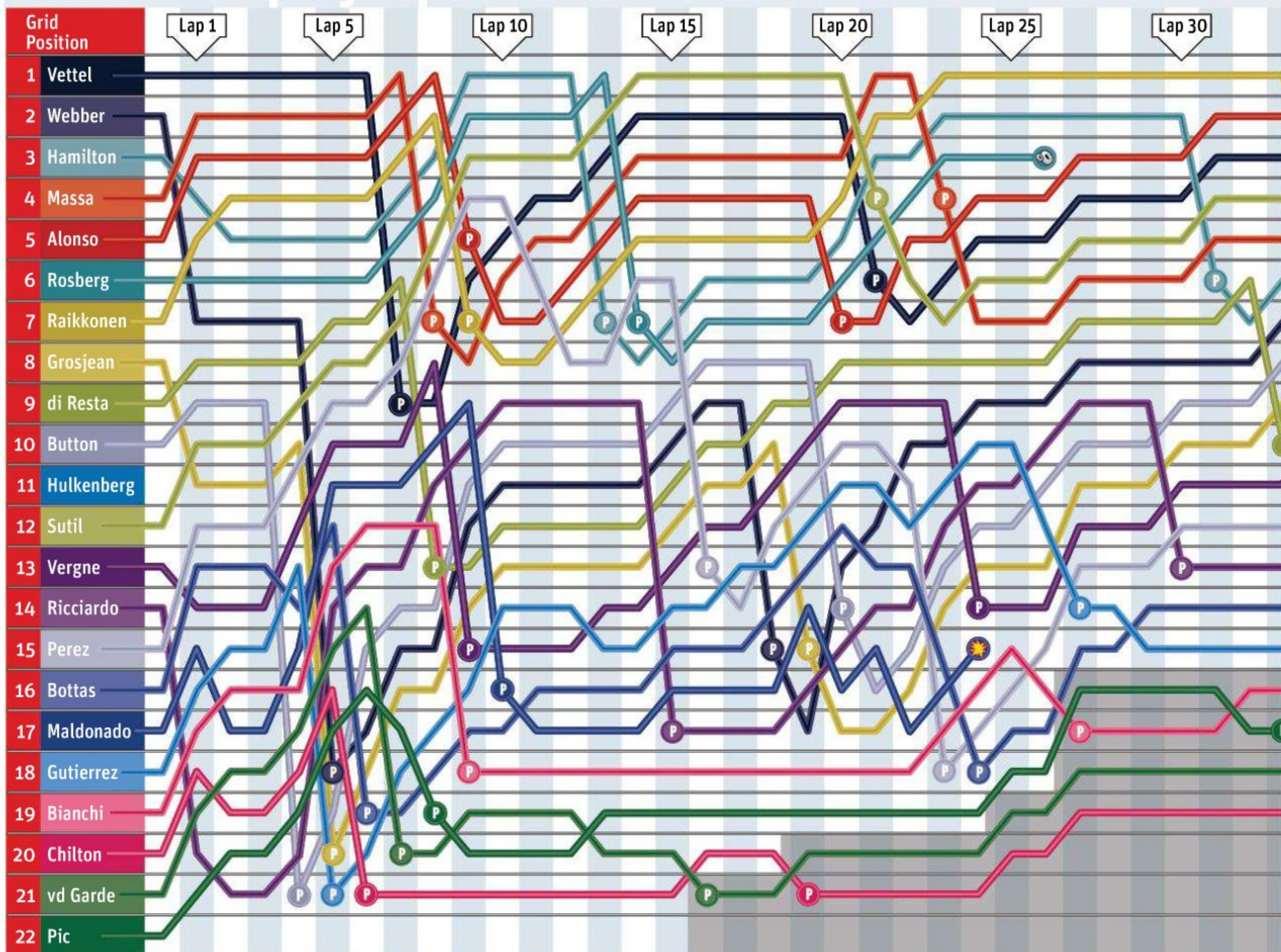


line and flat-spotted tyres, he was easy prey for Alonso as they exited the turn. Hamilton immediately made for the pits and a fresh set of mediums. He rejoined about 20s behind Massa.

Raikkonen peeled in from the lead at the end of lap 34, having completed a 25-lap stint on his mediums. He now had 24 laps to do on his final set, exiting only 13s behind leader Alonso. Between them were Vettel, Sutil and Massa. They all had their final stops to come, so Kimi was effectively now in full control of the race.

Massa's tyre usage stuck behind

The race lap by lap





Raikkonen spent minimal amount of time in the pits

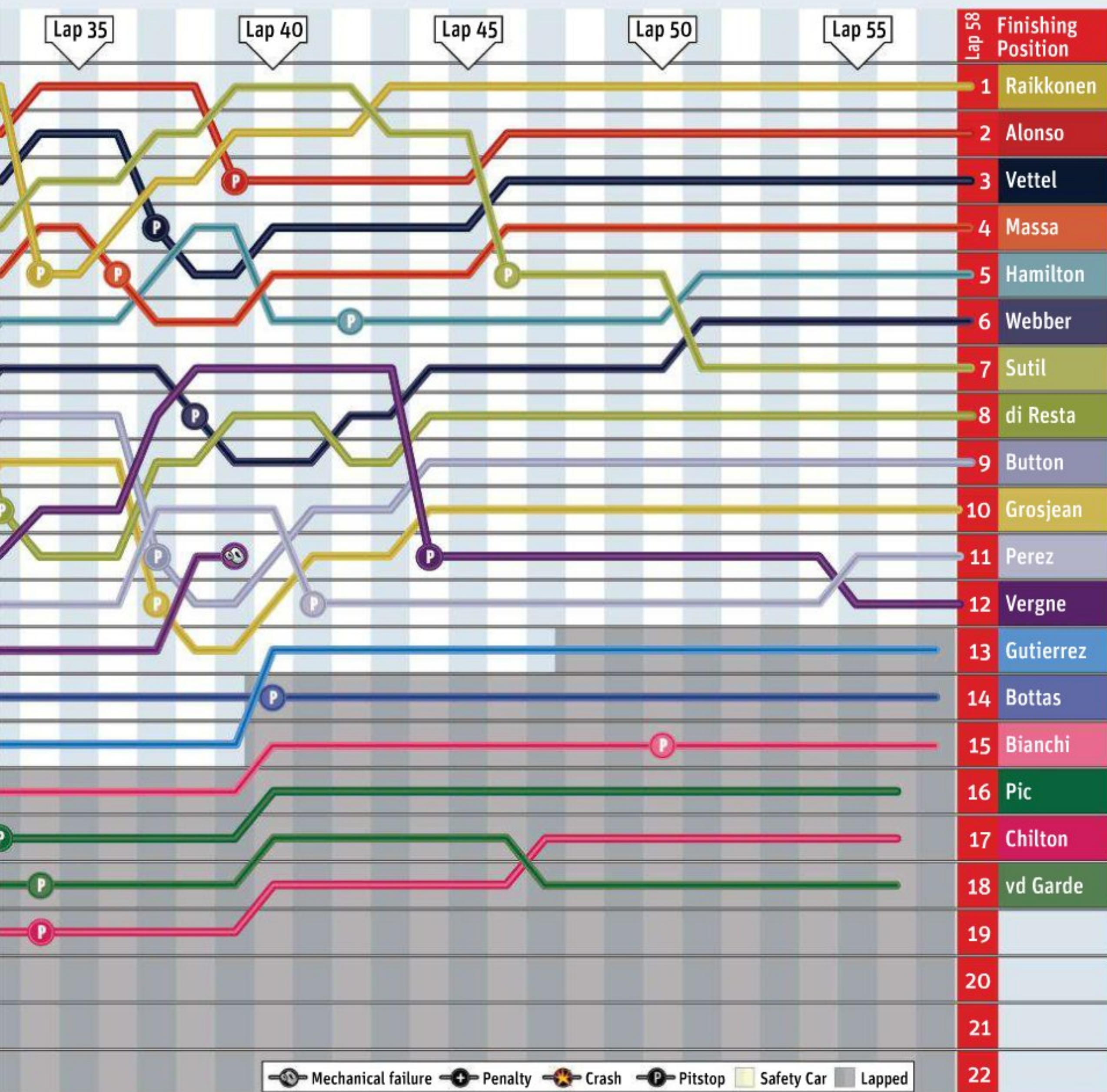
Vettel had been higher than Alonso's and he came in on the 36th lap for his final stop. Red Bull responded by bringing Vettel in next lap, getting him out still ahead. Alonso made his way in from the lead on lap 39, while Sutil made his second and final stop on lap 46 and exited now behind Massa and on those delicate super-softs. Raikkonen assumed a 7s lead over Alonso.

For a couple of laps Alonso began to cut dramatically into that lead before realising he was again running out of rubber. A close squeak when lapping

Charles Pic's Caterham also didn't help. Raikkonen let rip with the race's fastest lap three from the end, his tyres in perfectly good shape despite being five laps older than Alonso's. He could probably have gone plenty faster than that if needed. "That was one of the easiest races I've ever had," Kimi reckoned.

Alonso, Vettel, Massa and Hamilton duly filed in with plenty of questions in their minds about just how typical this Lotus-Pirelli performance may turn out to be. Webber rescued something from his weekend after finally

succeeding in restarting his KERS 20 laps in. Sutil, without any experience of these super-softs, probably took too much out of them after rejoining and he was a sitting duck for Webber, who took sixth place. Sutil only just managed to hang on ahead of team-mate Paul di Resta, who had started on the super-softs, while Button was able to fend off Romain Grosjean's Lotus to the line. Grosjean had dropped into the pack after a poor start and had never re-emerged, complaining later that this Lotus did not feel right. The other one had felt just fine though. ☼



Sunday



1100 Q2 starts in damp conditions. **Valtteri Bottas** goes off early on (above).

1106 **Mark Webber:** "The first sector is dry, the second and third are still quite wet."

1109 Both McLarens gamble on slicks. **Button** is told: "If this is wrong, we can pit." He replies: "Yes."

1115 **Sergio Perez** slithers to P15. His engineer admits: "We got the tyre option slightly wrong."

1135 Vettel takes pole in Q1. His engineer Rocquelin says: "P1. Atta-boy." **Vettel:** "Wooooo! Yes!"

1633 @OfficialSF1Team: "There is a problem with the fuel system @NicoHulkenberg. For safety reasons he will not start."

1702 Vettel takes lead as **Webber** drops to seventh with poor getaway.

1706 **Kimi Raikkonen** passes **Lewis Hamilton** for third at Turn 14.

1711 **Max Chilton:** "I've front wing damage." He is told to pit.

1742 **Pastor Maldonado** spins off at Turn 1. His engineer asks: "Can you keep going? OK, switch off the car."

1744 The electrics of **Nico Rosberg's** Mercedes fail while he's running in third.

1748 **Raikkonen:** "It's starting to rain in last sector." He's told: "If you can stay out it would be good."

1808 **Hamilton:** "I'm just losing positions. These tyres are not going to last." He's told: "Stay at it." Replies: "I'm already flat-out, man."

1819 @MarioAndretti: "So far #Kimi seems to be master of overtakes. #funtowatch"

1830 **Raikkonen** wins: "I told you that the car was good. I hope we get many more wins."

2049 @LewisHamilton: "Today was a good day. Thank you for all your support. I'm happy with that, positive start to the season. Next week will be better!!"

Team by team

Red Bull



Qualifying pace goes unrewarded

1

7/10
Event rating



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Red Bull-Renault RB9

Start: 1st; Finish: 3rd

Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



There were a lot of things to like about the world champion's weekend. His pace straight out of the box was impressive and his pole-position lap in tricky conditions was inevitable. That said, it was far from the optimum lap as his own split times proved. The qualifying pace advantage didn't carry into the race and given the effect that both Red Bulls had on the Pirelli rubber, third place was about par on what proved to be a frustrating day for Vettel.

2

6/10
Event rating



MARK WEBBER

Red Bull-Renault RB9

Start: 2nd; Finish: 6th

Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



Nobody had more pressure on their shoulders going into the weekend than the home hero. But don't jump to the conclusion that his poor start was a consequence of this. It was actually down to a telemetry failure that meant the team was flying blind in terms of start preparation, a problem compounded by a KERS failure. His final stint was as good as identical to that of team-mate Vettel, proving that his race pace was there even if qualifying speed wasn't.

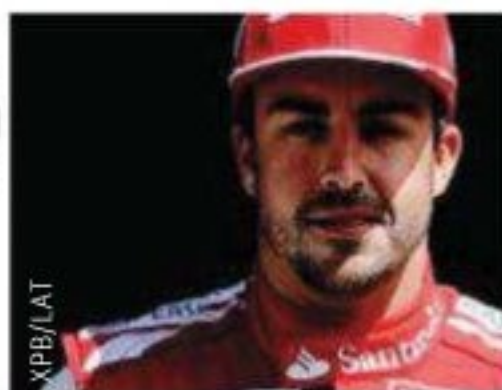
Ferrari



Strong race nets constructors' lead

3

8/10
Event rating



FERNANDO ALONSO

Ferrari F138-299

Start: 5th; Finish: 2nd

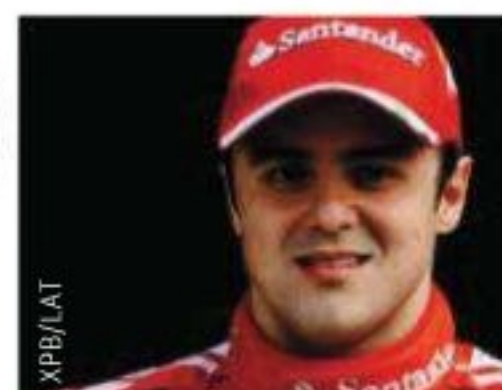
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



For the third consecutive race, Alonso was outqualified by Felipe Massa, albeit only by three thousandths of a second. But given the Brazilian's resurgence, that's not as damning a statistic as it once would have been. His race drive was typically tenacious, jumping Massa with a proactive early second stop, although ultimately the Ferrari wasn't kind enough to its tyres to attack Raikkonen. But Alonso did comfortably beat Vettel in a straight fight, something that is never easy.

4

7/10
Event rating



FELIPE MASSA

Ferrari F138-300

Start: 4th; Finish: 4th

Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



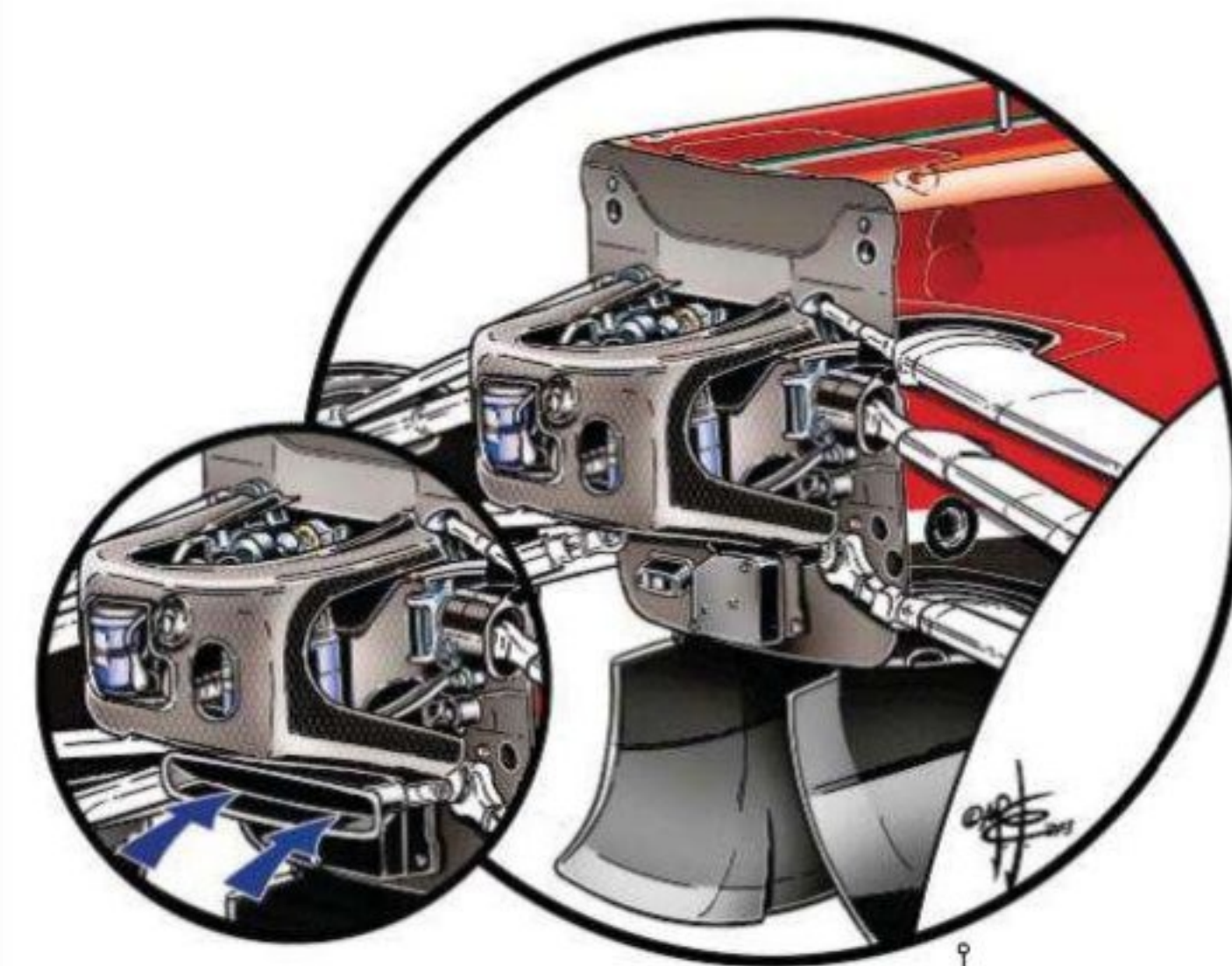
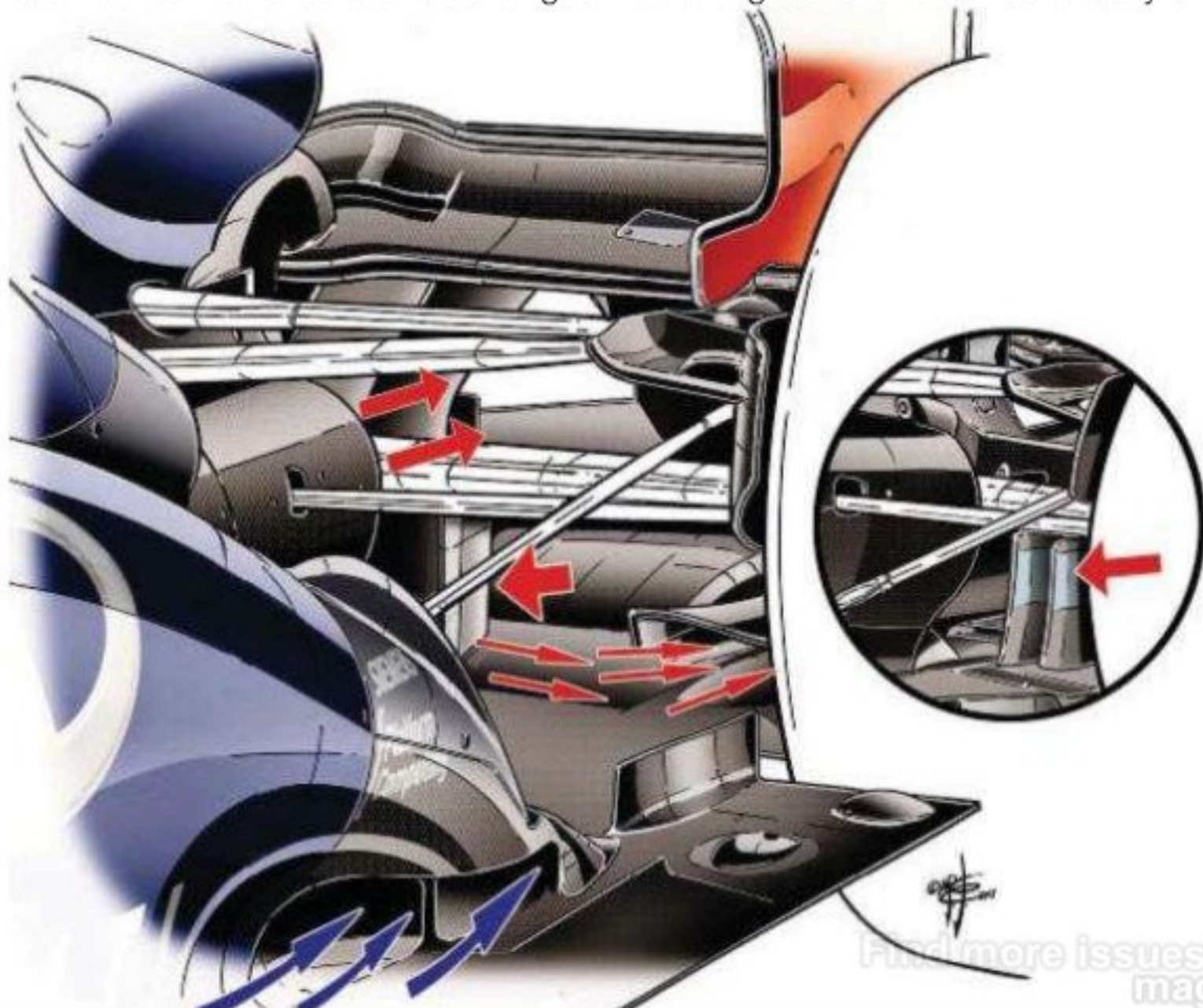
The new-look (or should that be old-look) Massa proved that he is here to stay by shading Alonso in qualifying and giving his team-mate a hard time in the first half of the race. There were suggestions that Ferrari did him over strategically to help Alonso but Massa's race pace was, in reality, not quite as strong as his team-mate's, which was reflected by the eventual gap between the pair. If he keeps up this level of performance, Massa's Ferrari future looks bright.

Spliters sacrificed for brake ducts

➔ Red Bull had a different rear brake duct/splitter arrangement to that seen so far, with smaller splitters and enhanced brake ducts. The diffuser detail has changed as a consequence, the gurney flap no longer extending around the diffuser's top corners.

GARY ANDERSON In the old set-up, with the vertical splitters (inset), the exhaust gases blow down inside the splitters, the objective being to make the brake duct work harder aerodynamically. It turns the airflow around and scavenges

the underfloor, helping it not leak so much – especially at higher ride heights. With the new version the team had to get rid of some of the splitter to make a bigger brake duct, thereby getting more downforce on the tyre. By getting the exhaust gases to work on the duct, the diffuser has had to be modified as well, because that's what the exhaust gases are coming around. They feed the exhaust gases onto the diffuser and the low-pressure area behind the tyre pulls on that gas and takes it around the tyre.

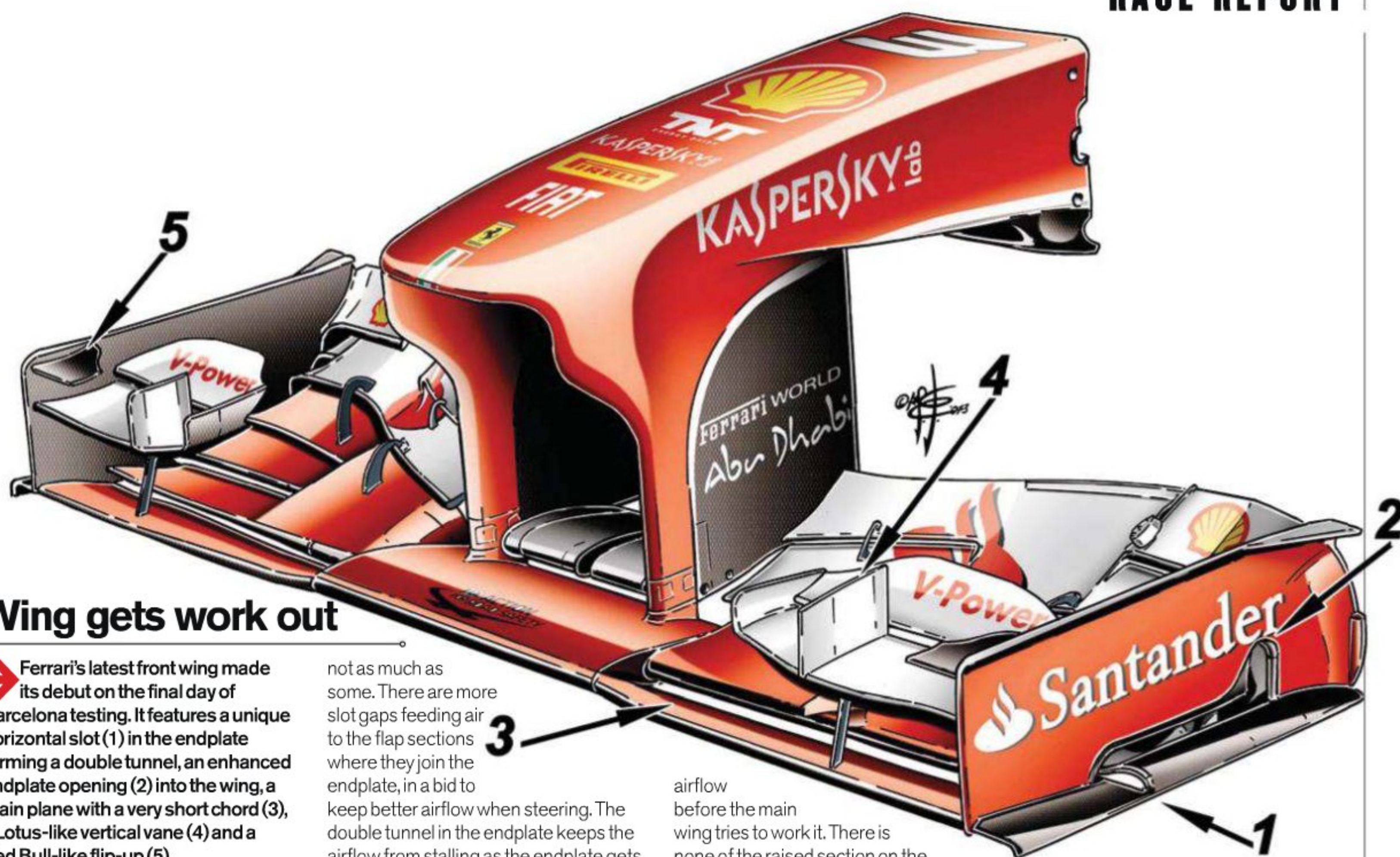


Slot vanishes for race

➔ Ferrari tried a ducted hole in the front of its chassis (inset) but elected not to use it in the race.

GARY ANDERSON There are two reasons you might have this – either for cooling some components or for an aerodynamic advantage, or both. If it's for cooling it could have an unintended detrimental effect on the aerodynamics. To prevent the air overflowing and spilling

you would need quite a big exit for an inlet of this size. If it's there for aero reasons, it would be to pull more airflow through the front wing. It would be using the low pressure on the top of the nose to pull more flow from beneath the nose, giving better airflow beneath the car, pulling the air harder over the front wing. But if it's not working right it will give inconsistency. This is a very critical area of the car.



Wing gets work out

→ Ferrari's latest front wing made its debut on the final day of Barcelona testing. It features a unique horizontal slot (1) in the endplate forming a double tunnel, an enhanced endplate opening (2) into the wing, a main plane with a very short chord (3), a Lotus-like vertical vane (4) and a Red Bull-like flip-up (5).

GARY ANDERSON: This endplate design is more elaborate than before but

not as much as some. There are more slot gaps feeding air to the flap sections where they join the endplate, in a bid to keep better airflow when steering. The double tunnel in the endplate keeps the airflow from stalling as the endplate gets close to the ground as the car rolls. The leading-edge slat (3) re-aligns the

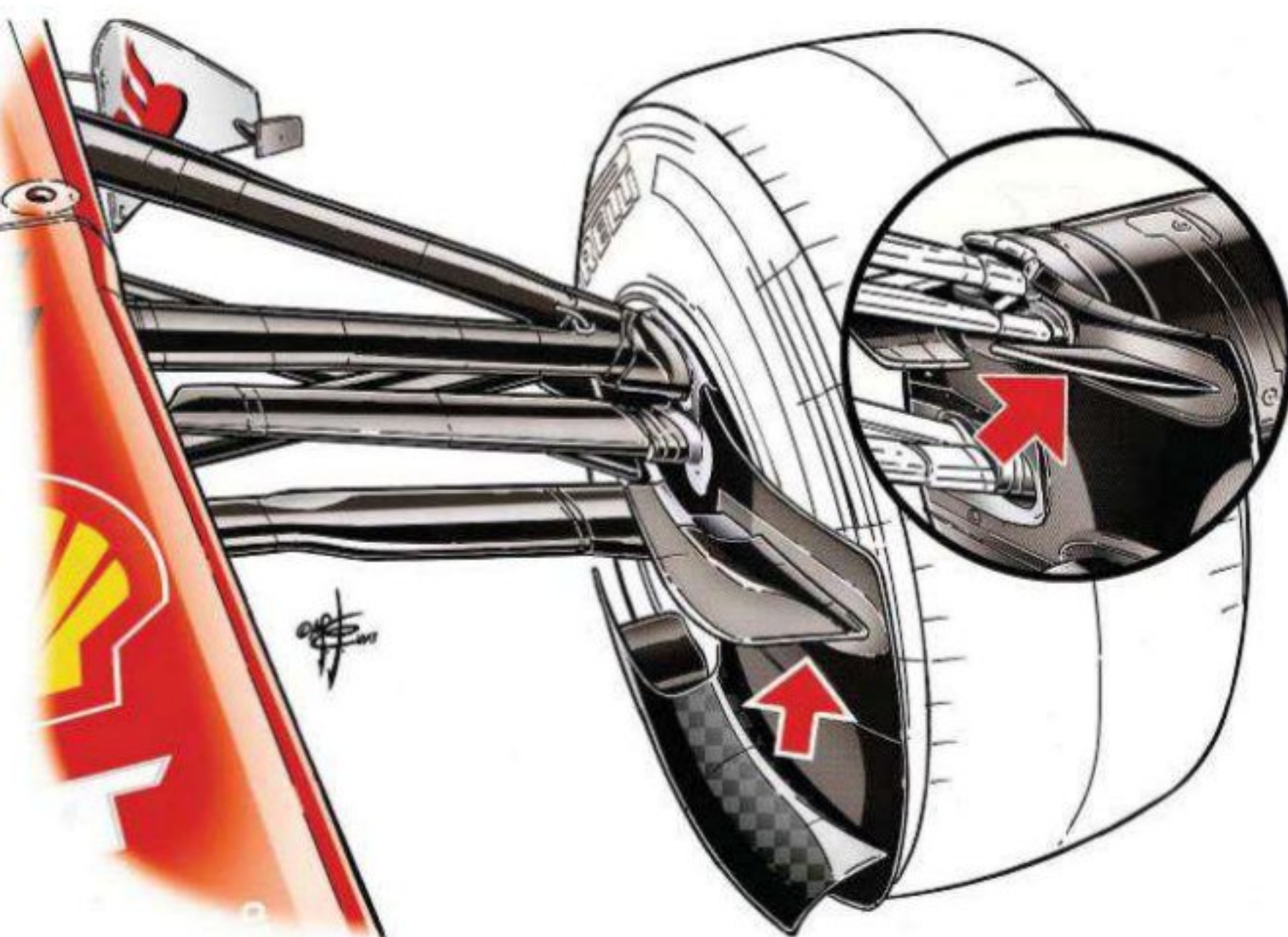
airflow before the main wing tries to work it. There is none of the raised section on the outer part of the wing's underside that most cars have to prevent stall in roll.

How ducts produce downforce

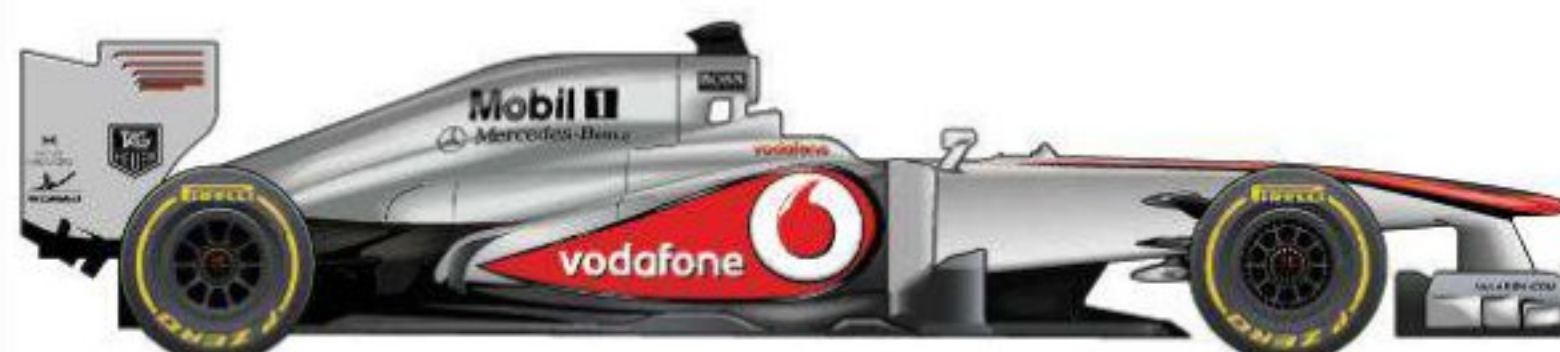
→ Ferrari introduced refinements to its front brake duct.

GARY ANDERSON: This is all about putting downforce directly onto the wheel. It's not about being a brake duct at all. With the lower turning vane, a lot of airflow is displaced as the tyre turns and meets the ground and if you just let that air go round the tyre it will get sucked under the car. It's very turbulent, so will decrease the performance of the

underfloor. The idea is to make the low-pressure area behind the contact patch take the air from the high-pressure area in front. The top vane is a similar device but controls the front-wing wake. You don't want too much of that wake going above the tyre and creating lift. Instead you have it going round the tyre. Teams can now measure tyre forces in the windtunnel through belts – and that's led to brake duct and exhaust development.




McLaren



Points prove to be small consolation

5
8/10
Event rating




XPB/LAT

JENSON BUTTON
McLaren-Mercedes MP4-28-05
Start: 4th; Finish: 9th
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



It's difficult to evaluate Button's performance accurately now that the usual barometer – Lewis Hamilton – has defected to Mercedes. The McLaren is an average car at best right now, but Button made the best of wet conditions to haul it to fourth in Q2, even though the good work was undone by his Q3 run starting bafflingly early. In the race, he kept his nose clean and, given the pace of the Force Indias, P9 was probably the maximum. A decent result given the machinery.

6
7/10
Event rating



XPB/LAT

SERGIO PEREZ
McLaren-Mercedes MP4-28-06
Start: 15th; Finish: 11th
Strategy: 3 stops (medium-supersoft-medium-medium)



Amid the hullabaloo about McLaren struggles, it escaped most people's notice that Perez finished the race within two seconds of Button. Given that some have tipped him to sink without trace at his new team, it was quietly impressive. Less impressive was persevering with slick tyres in Q2 rather than returning to intermediates, although it perhaps shows commendable fighting spirit. Will be kicking himself for not beating the hobbled Grosjean though.

Lotus



Team takes first blood over its rivals

7

9/10
Event rating

KIMI RAIKKONEN

Lotus-Renault E21-03
Start: 7th; Finish: 1st
Strategy: 2 stops (supersoft-medium-medium)



By his own admission, qualifying wasn't perfect, even though it's hard to see that Raikkonen would have been able to pick up more than the odd place without the mistake on his final Q3 lap. He referred to his victory as easy, but often a driver executing his strategy to perfection can make it feel that way and he deserves huge credit for his performance, particularly the efficiency with which he passed ailing cars in the first stint.

8

5/10
Event rating

ROMAIN GROSJEAN

Lotus-Renault E21-01
Start: 8th; Finish: 10th
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



Did what he needed to do in qualifying, avoiding mistakes to back up team-mate Raikkonen on the fourth row. But his race never really got going. A bad start relegated him to 11th and he never showed anything like the pace of his team-mate even when he had a tyre advantage thanks to having to go for a three-stopper. After the race, he and the team blamed an as-yet diagnosed car problem, which is consistent with the lacklustre run to P10.

Mercedes



Encouraging pace for both drivers

9

7/10
Event rating

NICO ROSBERG

Mercedes F1 W04/03
Start: 6th; Finish: DNF
Strategy: 1 stop (supersoft-medium-retired)



Eyebrows were raised when Rosberg thumped team-mate Lewis Hamilton during Q1 and Q2, although it later emerged he had been running more wing to better suit the damp conditions. Had qualifying been completed, his prediction of being on the front row could have come true, but in the dry he was over four-tenths off Hamilton. Raced well and was only a few seconds shy of Hamilton when electrical woes struck.

10

8/10
Event rating

LEWIS HAMILTON

Mercedes F1 W04/04
Start: 3rd; Finish: 5th
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



There were a few wild moments for Hamilton, who took to the grass a couple of times in practice and was fortunate to survive backing the car into the wall at Turn 2 during Q1 without more damage, but he certainly revelled in his new surroundings. Looked on for a big result when both he and Rosberg made the supersofts last well, but the car was trickier on the mediums, leaving Hamilton to keep Webber at bay for a strong fifth.

Sauber



Frustration over what might've been

11

7/10
Event rating

NICO HULKENBERG

Sauber-Ferrari C32-02
Grid: 11th (DNS); Finish: N/A
Strategy: N/A



It sums up Hulkenberg's misfortune that not only is he still in a midfield outfit when he obviously merits a race-winning car, but that he couldn't even start in Australia after a fuel leak was detected before the race, forcing Sauber to withdraw his car for safety reasons. Comfortably outpaced Gutierrez when he did run, although had he started he wouldn't have taken up the Sutil role as the team planned to start him on supersofts. His day will come.

12

6/10
Event rating

ESTEBAN GUTIERREZ

Sauber-Ferrari C32-03
Start: 18th; Finish: 13th
Strategy: 2 stops (supersoft-medium-medium)



Of all the 2013 rookies, Gutierrez has the toughest task in that he is being measured against Hulkenberg. The rain in qualifying didn't help and led to him crashing exiting Turn 12 in Q1. But having set out his stall to finish at all costs, the Mexican brought the car home a lapped 13th. Despite slightly inconsistent pace, considering it was his debut, it's only fair to make a few allowances.

Force India



Double points finish for British team

14

8/10
Event rating

PAUL DI RESTA

Force India-Mercedes VJM06/04
Start: 9th; Finish: 8th
Strategy: 2 stops (supersoft-medium-medium)



After a difficult end to 2012, di Resta got things off on the right foot by qualifying a strong ninth. Unfortunately, that condemned him to starting on used rubber, burying him in the pack at a time when his team-mate was grabbing the headlines after starting on mediums. His race pace was pretty much the same as Sutil's, and but for the team telling him not to attack in the final laps, he'd have had a good chance of emerging in front.

15

8/10
Event rating

ADRIAN SUTIL

Force India-Mercedes VJM06/03
Start: 12th; Finish: 7th
Strategy: 2 stops (medium-medium-supersoft)



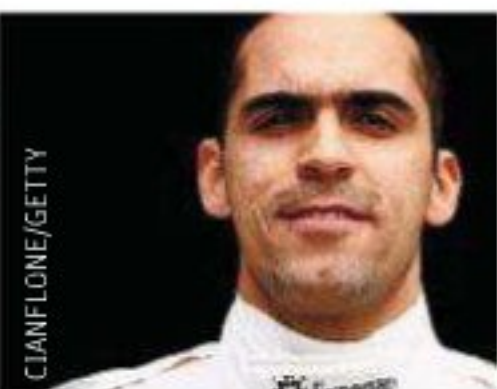
Considering that Sutil spent 2012 on the sidelines and had fewer laps in testing than anyone, his performance was impressive. Qualifying was so-so, despite the German typically excelling in damp conditions, but thanks to being the best-placed medium-shod starter he came to the fore. While his race-leading turn was somewhat artificial, he drove well, but was always going to ship time when he went onto the supersofts.

Williams



Nothing to really write home about

16

3/10
Event rating

PASTOR MALDONADO

Williams-Renault FW35-02
Start: 17th; Finish: DNF
Strategy: 1 stop (medium-medium-retired)



Maldonado branded his car "undriveable" in Australia. Unfortunately, he didn't react to his troublesome mount in the most constructive way and continued to attempt to wring impossible times out of it. Was on to make Q2 until he happened upon Max Chilton in the final sector. His race was lairy, straightlining Turn 1 when he found Alonso exiting the pits before dropping a wheel onto the grass on the approach to the same corner later in the race and spinning into the gravel.

17

7/10
Event rating

VALTTERI BOTTAS

Williams-Renault FW35-01
Start: 16th; Finish: 14th
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



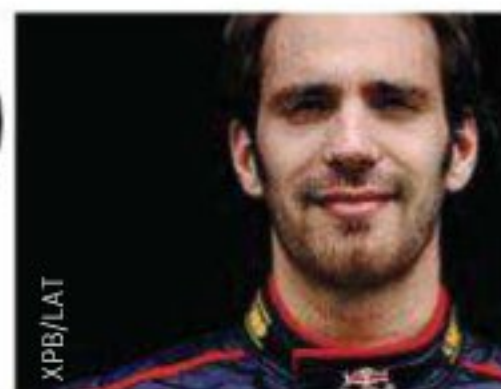
In the circumstances, all Bottas could do was keep his nose clean in qualifying and the race, which he almost did to perfection. He managed to scrape through into Q2 in wet conditions but could go no further, gamely gambling on a switch to slicks. In the wet, he had one off-track moment that cost time, without which he would have been closer to heading Gutierrez but the troublesome Williams had no business beating a Sauber. A mature drive in adversity.

Toro Rosso



Up-and-down start for both drivers

18

6/10
Event rating

JEAN-ERIC VERGNE

Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR8-03
Start: 13th; Finish: 12th
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



Although his mighty pace on intermediate tyres in qualifying went unrewarded after an unsuccessful gamble (the team's, not his) on slicks, he still did enough to outqualify his team-mate. Given that Vergne's weakness last year was qualifying, don't underestimate how important that was. It was a case of almost, but not quite, in the race. After a difficult first stint, the race came to him and he was on for points when he got over-excited and flat-spotted his tyres attacking Button.

19

4/10
Event rating

DANIEL RICCIARDO

Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR8-01
Start: 14th; Finish: DNF
Strategy: 2 stops (medium-medium-supersoft-retired)



Australia's other driver had a difficult weekend. During practice, his pace was much of a muchness in comparison with Vergne's, but in both wet and intermediate conditions he struggled to match him. Come the race, Ricciardo struggled with tyre temperature early on, dropping as low as 20th, and gave away too much time to his mid-pack rivals. An exhaust problem forced him to retire shortly after half-distance, ending a mediocre weekend.

Caterham



Top effort by drivers with flawed car

20

6/10
Event rating

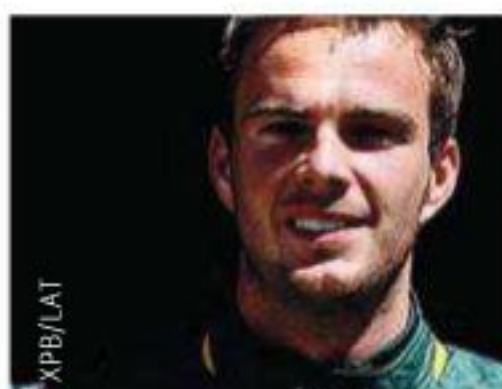
CHARLES PIC

Caterham-Renault CT03-06
Start: 22nd; Finish: 16th
Strategy: 2 stops (supersoft-medium-medium)



Pic must be wondering exactly what he has let himself in for at Caterham and you could excuse him for glancing enviously at the faster Marussias. Shunted in Q1 trying to stay ahead of his former team but was allowed to start despite missing the 107 per cent qualifying cut-off. A poor start dropped him to the back, but his race pace was plenty good enough to get ahead of both his team-mate and Chilton despite a late KERS failure.

21

6/10
Event rating

GIEDO VAN DER GARDE

Caterham-Renault CT03-05
Start: 21st; Finish: 18th
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



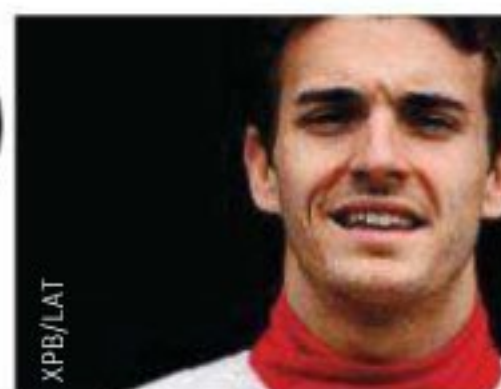
The Dutchman had a baptism of fire, with several offs punctuating his weekend. That was forgivable given that the Caterham looked by far the hardest car to drive. He came through qualifying as the team's better-placed driver thanks to Pic's off. Had a solid race, losing time with a puncture after his first pitstop. That accentuated the gap to Pic by the finish, although his underlying pace wasn't as good. A solid, if uneven, debut.

Marussia



Bianchi flatters car with strong pace

22

8/10
Event rating

JULES BIANCHI

Marussia-Cosworth MR-02-02
Start: 19th; Finish: 15th
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-supersoft)



The Frenchman was hugely impressive on track despite having had only 136 laps in the car under his belt. Bianchi showed that the car wasn't too far off the midfield stragglers on race pace, bothering the Williams of Maldonado in the early stages and keeping Pic well and truly at bay despite having to make an unexpected late pitstop for supersofts. His pace on the quicker tyre netted him as fast a lap as Vettel at the end.

23

7/10
Event rating

MAX CHILTON

Marussia-Cosworth MR-02-03
Start: 20th; Finish: 17th
Strategy: 3 stops (supersoft-medium-medium-medium)



While Chilton didn't grab the attention as forcefully as his team-mate, that wasn't a big surprise given his relative lack of F1 experience. Damage to his front wing, sustained when van der Garde ran wide and rejoined just in front of him cost time early on, as did blue flags and the time lost before eventually passing the Dutchman. That added up to a deficit of over 30s to Pic. Overall, an accomplished start to build on.



PRACTICE 1: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	VETTEL	1m27.211s
2	MASSA	1m27.289s
3	ALONSO	1m27.547s
4	HAMILTON	1m27.552s
5	WEBBER	1m27.668s
6	RAIKKONEN	1m27.877s
7	ROSBERG	1m28.013s
8	SUTIL	1m28.426s
9	BUTTON	1m28.440s
10	GROSJEAN	1m28.520s
11	PEREZ	1m28.597s
12	HULKENBERG	1m28.786s
13	DI RESTA	1m28.910s
14	MALDONADO	1m29.443s
15	BOTTAS	1m29.928s
16	GUTIERREZ	1m30.203s
17	VERGNE	1m30.729s
18	RICCIARDO	1m30.969s
19	BIANCHI	1m31.263s
20	CHILTON	1m32.176s
21	PIC	1m32.274s
22	VAN DER GARDE	1m32.388s

Weather: dry

PRACTICE 2: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	VETTEL	1m25.908s
2	WEBBER	1m26.172s
3	ROSBERG	1m26.322s
4	RAIKKONEN	1m26.361s
5	GROSJEAN	1m26.680s
6	ALONSO	1m26.748s
7	HAMILTON	1m26.772s
8	MASSA	1m26.855s
9	SUTIL	1m27.435s
10	HULKENBERG	1m28.187s
11	BUTTON	1m28.294s
12	DI RESTA	1m28.311s
13	PEREZ	1m28.566s
14	RICCIARDO	1m28.627s
15	GUTIERREZ	1m28.772s
16	MALDONADO	1m28.852s
17	VERGNE	1m28.968s
18	BOTTAS	1m29.386s
19	BIANCHI	1m29.696s
20	PIC	1m30.165s
21	CHILTON	1m30.600s
22	VAN DER GARDE	1m32.450s

Weather: dry

PRACTICE 3: Saturday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	GROSJEAN	1m26.929s
2	ALONSO	1m27.000s
3	MASSA	1m27.241s
4	DI RESTA	1m27.533s
5	RAIKKONEN	1m27.625s
6	RICCIARDO	1m27.849s
7	VERGNE	1m27.860s
8	SUTIL	1m28.069s
9	HULKENBERG	1m28.253s
10	GUTIERREZ	1m28.253s
11	ROSBERG	1m28.486s
12	VETTEL	1m29.808s
13	WEBBER	1m30.073s
14	BIANCHI	1m30.388s
15	VAN DER GARDE	1m30.598s
16	PIC	1m30.959s
17	BUTTON	1m33.236s
18	PEREZ	1m33.527s
19	MALDONADO	1m39.232s
20	BOTTAS	1m39.779s
21	CHILTON	1m42.872s
22	HAMILTON	1m47.246s

Weather: dry then wet



Oz world champions
Brabham (left) and
Jones were honoured

QUALIFYING TIMES

POS	DRIVER	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2	QUALIFYING 3
1	VETTEL	1m44.657s (7)	1m36.745s (8)	1m27.407s
2	WEBBER	1m44.472s (5)	1m36.524s (3)	1m27.827s
3	HAMILTON	1m45.456s (10)	1m36.625s (4)	1m28.087s
4	MASSA	1m44.635s (6)	1m36.666s (7)	1m28.490s
5	ALONSO	1m43.850s (2)	1m36.691s (10)	1m28.493s
6	ROSBERG	1m43.380s (1)	1m36.194s (1)	1m28.523s
7	RAIKKONEN	1m45.545s (11)	1m37.517s (9)	1m28.738s
8	GROSJEAN	1m44.284s (3)	1m37.641s (10)	1m29.013s
9	DI RESTA	1m45.601s (12)	1m36.901s (9)	1m29.305s
10	BUTTON	1m44.688s (8)	1m36.644s (6)	1m30.357s
11	HULKENBERG	1m45.930s (13)	1m38.067s	-
12	SUTIL	1m47.330s (16)	1m38.134s	-
13	VERGNE	1m44.871s (9)	1m38.778s	-
14	RICCIARDO	1m46.450s (14)	1m39.042s	-
15	PEREZ	1m44.300s (4)	1m39.900s	-
16	BOTTAS	1m47.328s (15)	1m40.290s	-
17	MALDONADO	1m47.614s	-	-
18	GUTIERREZ	1m47.776s	-	-
19	BIANCHI	1m48.147s	-	-
20	CHILTON	1m48.909s	-	-
21	VAN DER GARDE	1m49.519s	-	-
22	PIC	1m50.626s	-	-

QUALIFYING STATISTICS

	HEAD TO HEAD		
VETTEL	1	0	WEBBER
ALONSO	0	1	MASSA
BUTTON	1	0	PEREZ
RAIKKONEN	1	0	GROSJEAN
ROSBERG	0	1	HAMILTON
HULKENBERG	1	0	GUTIERREZ
DI RESTA	1	0	SUTIL
MALDONADO	0	1	BOTTAS
VERGNE	1	0	RICCIARDO
PIC	0	1	VAN DER GARDE
BIANCHI	1	0	CHILTON



COATES/LAT

BAD BOYS & ENGINE USAGE

	PENALTIES	FINES	ENGINES
VETTEL	0	€0	1
WEBBER	0	€0	1
ALONSO	0	€0	1
MASSA	0	€1400	1
BUTTON	0	€0	1
PEREZ	0	€0	1
RAIKKONEN	0	€0	1
GROSJEAN	0	€0	1
ROSBERG	0	€0	1
HAMILTON	0	€0	1
HULKENBERG	0	€1000	1
GUTIERREZ	0	€800	1
DI RESTA	0	€0	1
SUTIL	0	€1000	1
MALDONADO	0	€0	1
BOTTAS	0	€2800	1
VERGNE	0	€0	1
RICCIARDO	0	€0	1
PIC	0	€0	1
VAN DER GARDE	0	€0	1
BIANCHI	0	€0	1
CHILTON	0	€0	1

THE RACE: 58 laps, 191.126 miles

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	LAPS	TOTAL TIME	FASTEST LAP	PIT STOP	TIME IN PITS	GRID	TYRE CHOICE
1	KIMI RAIKKONEN	LOTUS-RENAULT	58	1h30m03.225s	1m29.274s	2	44.890s	7	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
2	FERNANDO ALONSO	FERRARI	58	+12.451s	1m29.560s	3	65.102s	5	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
3	SEBASTIAN VETTEL	RED BULL-RENAULT	58	+22.346s	1m30.409s	3	66.107s	1	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
4	FELIPE MASSA	FERRARI	58	+33.577s	1m30.239s	3	64.774s	4	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
5	LEWIS HAMILTON	MERCEDES	58	+45.561s	1m29.759s	3	65.948s	3	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
6	MARK WEBBER	RED BULL-RENAULT	58	+46.800s	1m29.732s	3	67.472s	2	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
7	ADRIAN SUTIL	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	58	+1m05.068s	1m30.710s	2	45.442s	12	Medium Medium S-soft
8	PAUL DI RESTA	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	58	+1m08.449s	1m30.894s	2	46.061s	9	S-soft Medium Medium
9	JENSON BUTTON	McLAREN-MERCEDES	58	+1m21.630s	1m30.198s	3	67.391s	10	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
10	ROMAIN GROSJEAN	LOTUS-RENAULT	58	+1m22.759s	1m30.395s	3	66.906s	8	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
11	SERGIO PEREZ	McLAREN-MERCEDES	58	+1m23.367s	1m29.926s	3	67.386s	15	Medium S-soft Medium Medium
12	JEAN-ERIC VERGNE	TORO ROSSO-FERRARI	58	+1m23.857s	1m29.498s	3	70.922s	13	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
13	ESTEBAN GUTIERREZ	SAUBER-FERRARI	57	-1 lap	1m31.415s	2	44.631s	18	S-soft Medium Medium
14	VALTTERI BOTTAS	WILLIAMS-RENAULT	57	-1 lap	1m30.652s	3	70.803s	16	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
15	JULES BIANCHI	MARUSSIA-COSWORTH	57	-1 lap	1m30.454s	3	69.427s	19	S-soft Medium Medium S-soft
16	CHARLES PIC	CATERHAM-RENAULT	56	-2 laps	1m32.261s	2	46.903s	22	S-soft Medium Medium
17	MAX CHILTON	MARUSSIA-COSWORTH	56	-2 laps	1m32.210s	3	90.350s	20	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
18	GIEDO VAN DER GARDE	CATERHAM-RENAULT	56	-2 laps	1m32.636s	3	71.855s	21	S-soft Medium Medium Medium
R	DANIEL RICCIARDO	TORO ROSSO-FERRARI	39	exhaust	1m30.881s	2	47.612s	14	Medium Medium S-soft dnf
R	NICO ROSBERG	MERCEDES	26	electrics	1m32.259s	1	22.274s	6	S-soft Medium dnf
R	PASTOR MALDONADO	WILLIAMS-RENAULT	24	spin	1m32.915s	1	23.099s	17	Medium Medium dnf
NS	NICO HULKENBERG	SAUBER-FERRARI	0	fuel leak	-	-	-	-	-

Weather: damp then dry. Winner's average speed: 127.341mph. Fastest lap: RAIKKONEN 1m29.274s (132.883mph) on lap 56.

Lap leaders: 1-6 Vettel; 7 Massa; 8 Alonso; 9-12 Hamilton; 13 Rosberg; 14-20 Sutil; 21-22 Massa; 23-33 Raikkonen; 34-38 Alonso; 39-42 Sutil; 43-58 Raikkonen

Option tyre in bold; new set in red; used set in black

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	GB	D	H	B	I	SGP	ROK	J	IND	UAE	USA	BR
1	RAIKKONEN	25	1 st																		
2	ALONSO	18	2 nd																		
3	VETTEL	15	3 rd																		
4	MASSA	12	4 th																		
5	HAMILTON	10	5 th																		
6	WEBBER	8	6 th																		
7	SUTIL	6	7 th																		
8	DI RESTA	4	8 th																		
9	BUTTON	2	9 th																		
10	GROSJEAN	1	10 th																		
11	PEREZ	0	11 th																		
12	VERGNE	0	12 th																		
13	GUTIERREZ	0	13 th																		
14	BOTTAS	0	14 th																		
15	BIANCHI	0	15 th																		
16	PIC	0	16 th																		
17	CHILTON	0	17 th																		
18	VAN DER GARDE	0	18 th																		
-	RICCIARDO	0	ret																		
-	MALDONADO	0	ret																		
-	ROSBERG	0	ret																		
-	HULKENBERG	0	ns																		



SECTOR 1 TIMES

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ALONSO	29.885s
2	RAIKKONEN	29.905s
3	WEBBER	29.926s
4	BUTTON	29.932s
5	VERGNE	29.973s
6	HAMILTON	30.011s
7	PEREZ	30.059s
8	MASSA	30.158s
9	VETTEL	30.162s
10	BIANCHI	30.166s

SECTOR 2 TIMES

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ALONSO	23.607s
2	WEBBER	23.644s
3	RAIKKONEN	23.646s
4	VETTEL	23.735s
5	PEREZ	23.737s
6	HAMILTON	23.753s
7	MASSA	23.789s
8	VERGNE	23.808s
9	BOTTAS	23.959s
10	BIANCHI	23.967s

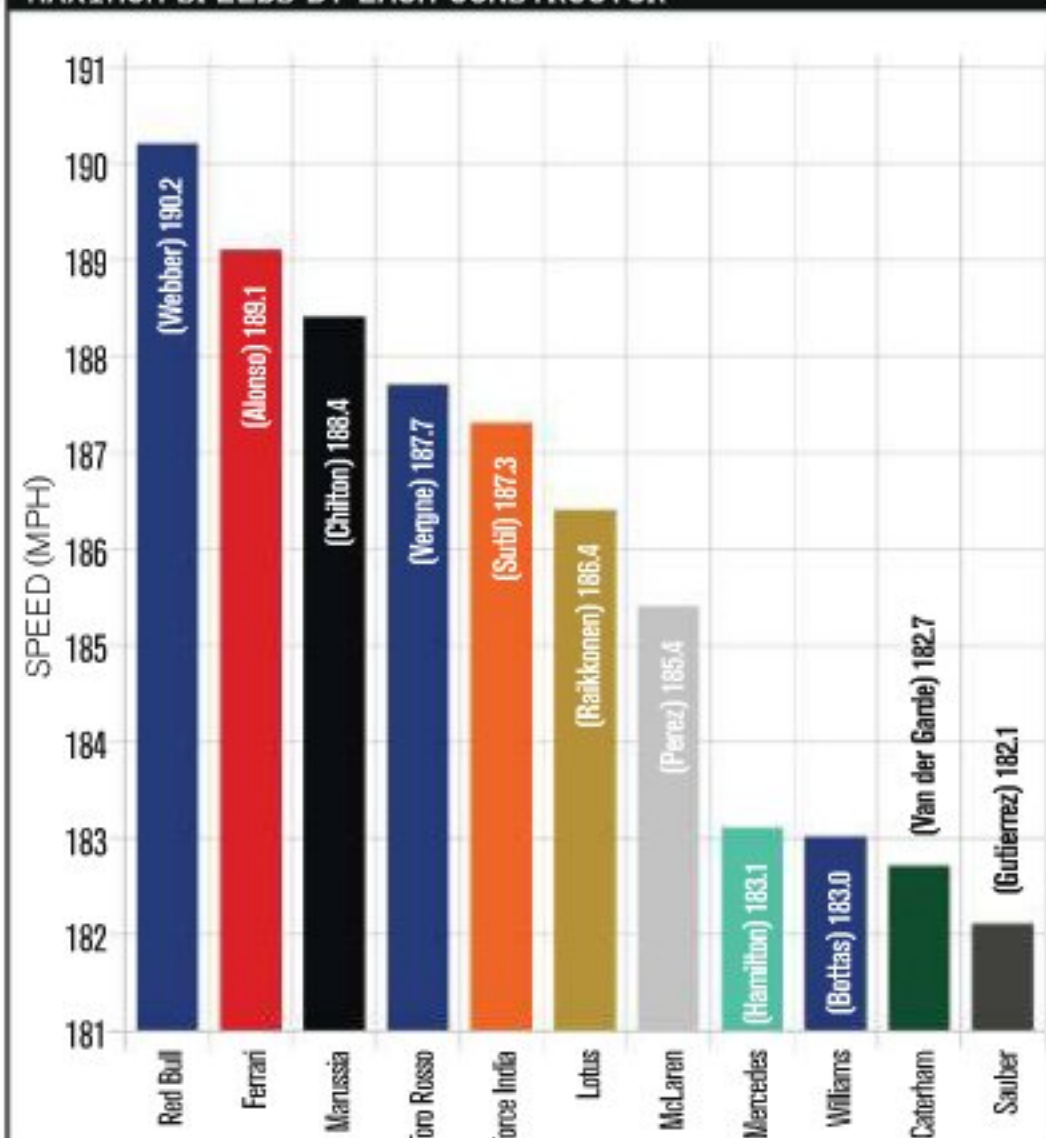
SECTOR 3 TIMES

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	VERGNE	35.653s
2	RAIKKONEN	35.723s
3	HAMILTON	35.835s
4	ALONSO	35.913s
5	WEBBER	35.955s
6	VETTEL	35.966s
7	PEREZ	36.063s
8	MASSA	36.066s
9	GROSJEAN	36.103s
10	BUTTON	36.116s

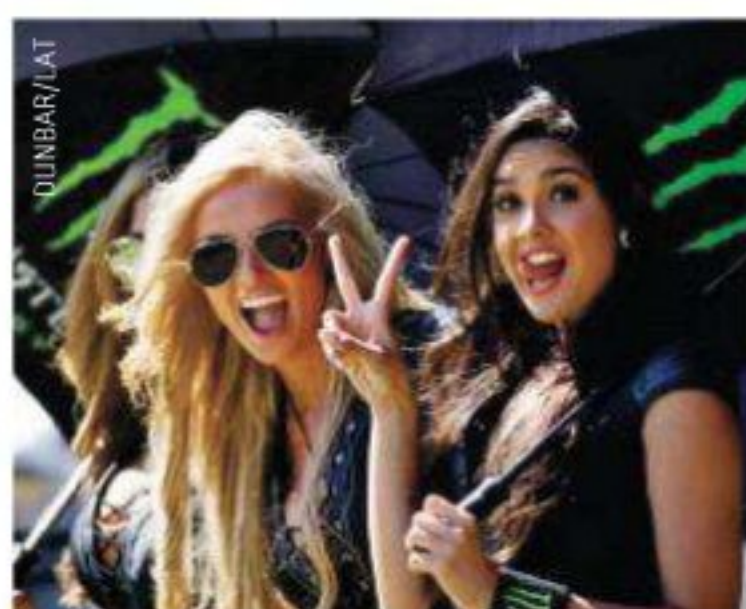
MAX SPEEDS (MPH)

POS	DRIVER	SPEED
1	WEBBER	190.2
2	ALONSO	189.1
3	CHILTON	188.4
4	VETTEL	187.8
5	VERGNE	187.7
6	SUTIL	187.3
7	RAIKKONEN	186.4
8	GROSJEAN	186.3
9	MASSA	185.8
10	PEREZ	185.4

MAXIMUM SPEEDS BY EACH CONSTRUCTOR

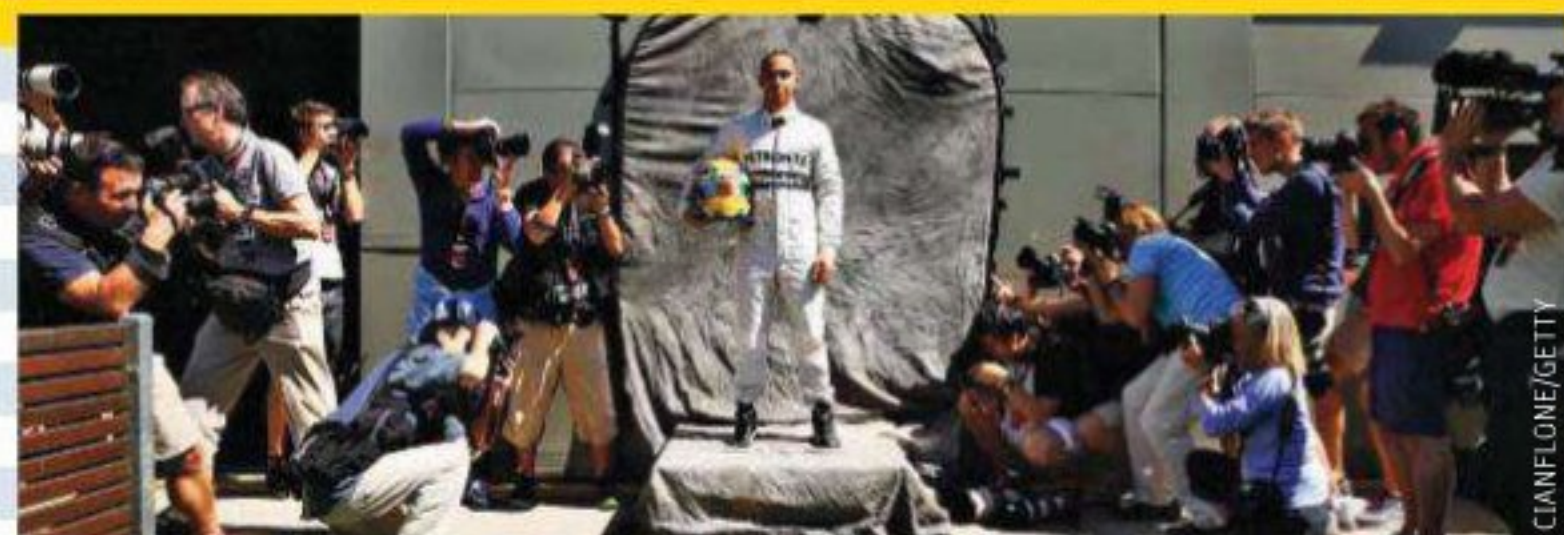


FOR IN-DEPTH F1 RESULTS FORIX



CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	GB	D	H	B	I	SGP	ROK	J	IND	UAE	USA	BR
1	FERRARI	30	30																		
2	LOTUS	26	26																		
3	RED BULL	23	23																		
4	MERCEDES	10	10																		
5	FORCE INDIA	10	10																		
6	McLAREN	2	2																		
7	TORO ROSSO	0	0																		
8	SAUBER	0	0																		
9	WILLIAMS	0	0																		
10	MARUSSIA	0	0																		
11	CATERHAM	0	0																		



'Team Enstone': the third coming?

In the Benetton and Renault days, a first-race win led to a championship.

EDD STRAW talks to Lotus tech chief

James Allison to analyse whether it can happen again in 2013

Kimi enjoyed "easy" win in Melbourne

Ones count for little in Formula 1; what matters is the next race. But on the four occasions that the Enstone-based team now called Lotus has won the first Formula 1 race of the season (1994, '95, 2005 and '06), one of its drivers has gone on to win the world championship.

It doesn't mean that Kimi Raikkonen, who also won the season-opening Australian Grand Prix to herald his 2007 title-winning campaign with Ferrari, is now automatically title favourite. But the circumstances are right for Lotus to mount Enstone's first serious bid since Fernando Alonso led it to a championship double in 2006 under the Renault name.

Key to Lotus's success will be to unlock more raw pace. While it had a



Schumacher on his way to the '95 championship

decisive tyre advantage in Melbourne, and could continue to do so in the early races, the trend in the Pirelli era has been for teams to gain a greater understanding of the rubber as the season progresses. This, harnessed with Pirelli's tendency to become

more conservative with its compound allocations towards the end of the season, means that closing on the speed of Ferrari and Red Bull will be essential. Technical director James Allison in particular accepts that it is not a given that Lotus's tyre advantage

will continue to play out as successfully as it did last weekend.

With Lotus's limited budget compared to the leading teams, and question marks over its cashflow, there are always doubts over its ability to match the development rate of rivals. But last season it was able to do so and a successful start to this season will have given the team a boost.

"It's a fantastic reward for the entire 550 or so people in this team who have put their heart and soul into the car," said Allison after the race. "Certainly, it will make it much easier than if we were tooling around at the back having a nightmare! We are finding the car reasonably fertile for improvements but it's all about relative gains, so it depends on what everyone else is doing. But we are not stuck for ideas."

If Lotus can make greater progress



MELBOURNE FORM 2010-12

These tables show the order of the teams based on lap times in Melbourne compared to the average over the first four races of that season, before upgrades could have a significant impact on performance. It also shows how this early-season form related to final championship positions.

2010

In the final year of Bridgestone tyres, Melbourne proved to be a relatively accurate predictor both of pace over the first four races and of eventual championship position.

PACE IN AUSTRALIA

1 Red Bull	
2 Ferrari	
3 McLaren	
4 Mercedes	
5 Renault (Lotus)	

PACE OVER FIRST 4 RACES

1 Red Bull	
2 Ferrari	
3 McLaren	
4 Mercedes	
5 Renault (Lotus)	

FINAL CONSTRUCTORS' POINTS

1 Red Bull	
2 McLaren	
3 Ferrari	
4 Mercedes	
5 Renault (Lotus)	

2011

Red Bull was fastest in Melbourne, over the first four races and over the whole year in a dominant season for Sebastian Vettel. Lotus's underachievement in qualifying in Australia created the only real distortion.

PACE IN AUSTRALIA

1 Red Bull	
2 McLaren	
3 Ferrari	
4 Lotus (Renault)	
5 Mercedes	

PACE OVER FIRST 4 RACES

1 Red Bull	
2 McLaren	
3 Lotus (Renault)	
4 Ferrari	
5 Mercedes	

FINAL CONSTRUCTORS' POINTS

1 Red Bull	
2 McLaren	
3 Ferrari	
4 Mercedes	
5 Lotus (Renault)	

2012

McLaren set the pace in Melbourne last year and continued to do so, with the competitive order in line with the average of the first four races. Red Bull and Ferrari had slow starts to the season, but improved.

PACE IN AUSTRALIA

1 McLaren	
2 Lotus	
3 Mercedes	
4 Red Bull	
5 Ferrari	

PACE OVER FIRST 4 RACES

1 McLaren	
2 Mercedes	
3 Lotus	
4 Red Bull	
5 Ferrari	

FINAL CONSTRUCTORS' POINTS

1 Red Bull	
2 Ferrari	
3 McLaren	
4 Lotus	
5 Mercedes	

IS MELBOURNE A GOOD FORM GUIDE?

Soundbites about the Albert Park track not being a good indicator of form for the coming season are a Melbourne tradition. Following his team's win, Lotus technical director James Allison was quick to point out that neither Melbourne nor this weekend's Malaysian Grand Prix are representative.

"This is certainly not a middle-of-the-bell-curve circuit," he said. "It hasn't got very many slow corners or fast corners – they are all of a certain speed. But to a certain extent, so is Sepang. So I wouldn't necessarily say that either Melbourne or Sepang are



Melbourne is a better guide than some believe

perfect predictors of the way the season will unfold."

An analysis of the raw pace over the past three years shows that dramatic divergences in Melbourne performance versus the average over the first four races are rare, even though there is

inevitably some variation.

Williams technical director Mike Coughlan said: "It's low roughness, low degradation like Montreal so it is a little bit [unrepresentative]. But we were good here last year and we were competitive at most circuits."

with its car than its rivals, there is little doubt that Kimi Raikkonen is now ready to gun for a second drivers' title. Last year he started slowly and several potential victories went begging early in the campaign, but his measured drive to victory in Melbourne proved that he is back to 100 per cent race sharpness. He also showed that he can combine the necessary pace with the ability to manage the Pirellis effectively, which should allow him to capitalise on any tyre advantage early in the season and then go toe-to-toe with likely title rivals Sebastian Vettel and Fernando Alonso if the car does get quicker.

"It's going to be quite an advantage for us that we get Kimi at ten-tenths right from the start this year without having to play himself back in, which is what he had to do at the beginning

of last year," said Allison. "He has been relaxed, confident and absolutely on it through the winter and this first race. He looked after his tyres beautifully in the race and won in formidable style.

"I came away from the last Barcelona test thinking we were the third or fourth-quickest car and I think, on absolutely one-off laptime in qualifying, that's probably where we are. But we also came away from Barcelona having done one of the better race simulations and the feeling that we could make the tyres work reasonably well.

"It's certainly a formula where a guy who is very sensitive and tender with the tyres will profit. Interestingly, Kimi tends to be slightly harder on the fronts than Romain [Grosjean, his team-mate] and slightly easier on the rears. We saw last year that on some

circuits Romain prospered and at others Kimi. But we are lucky with both our drivers that they both have a good feel for the tyres."

The positive feeling that this strong start to the season has generated at Enstone must not be underestimated. There have been several occasions over the past year when staff payments have been delayed, and the highly-rated Allison has been a target for rival teams, including McLaren, Ferrari and Mercedes.

Pre-season, Allison told the team that he remains committed and that, provided the budget to fulfil Lotus's potential is there, he is happy to stay. There are signs of the team being stretched, with its supply of spares not at full strength in Australia. That means that the implications of this victory could have a significant impact

on Lotus's future in terms of securing the investment it needs.

"This sport is ever so difficult on every level; intellectually, physically and emotionally," said Allison on Sunday night. "Everybody at Enstone goes through the mill just to get a car to the grid and this one wasn't at all easy.

"To be P1 at the end of the first race is such an overwhelming feeling that you run out of vocabulary when you try to describe it. It's just a complete whole-body contentment. It's wonderful!"

This weekend's Malaysian Grand Prix, where hotter temperatures mean that the conditions for the tyres will be very different, will tell us a lot about whether that feeling is likely to continue at Enstone to the end of the season.

McLaren in more trouble than first thought

Two points for the team's new car on its debut was considered a good salvage job

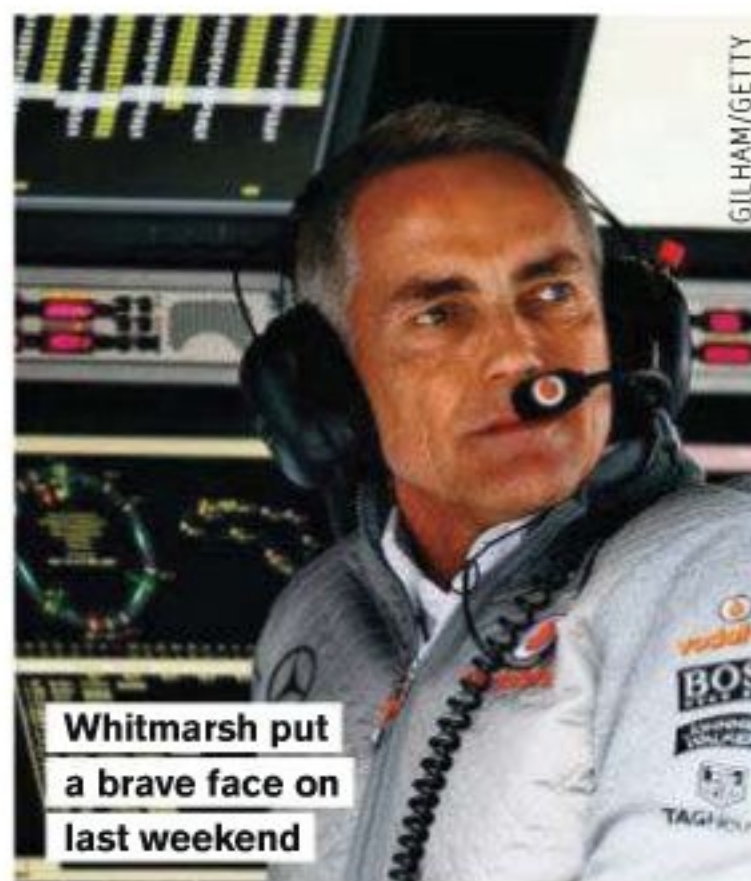


32

Everyone at McLaren knew that their MP4-28 was off the pace heading into the Australian Grand Prix weekend, but it came as a shock to realise how uncompetitive its new car really is.

The team's hopes of fighting for the Formula 1 World Championship were dealt a massive blow by the revelation that the car is not only lagging behind the other four 'big' teams — Ferrari, Red Bull, Lotus and Mercedes — but doesn't even appear to be the best in the midfield pack, with Force India comfortably beating McLaren in Sunday's race.

Team principal Martin Whitmarsh seemed shell-shocked after Friday practice. "It was one of the hardest days I can recall," he said. "We were lacking overall grip, consistency. We had understeer, poor ride..." That Jenson Button was delighted to have



Whitmarsh put a brave face on last weekend

"Running the old car is not an option for Malaysia. We have to work with this"

finished ninth and bag a couple of points in the race tells you everything you need to know about the scale of McLaren's plight.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Given that the team still isn't fully on top of its issues, it's impossible to pinpoint. But it could be related to the fundamental changes of design concept with this year's car. The biggest changes are the switch to the high front of the chassis, in order to maximise the airflow underneath the car and increase downforce, and the move from pushrod to pullrod front suspension.

These changes contributed to McLaren's struggles to understand the car during testing. Because of that, some of the parts that were intended for the baseline car for the start of the Australian Grand Prix weekend were dropped. But the team remains

convinced that this year's car has more potential than an evolution of its 2012 contender would have.

Sporting director Sam Michael said: "We looked at last year's car and said that we could try and squeeze a little bit more out of it and probably be competitive for the early races. But then where is it going to stall out in terms of the championship? We made some reasonably bold changes. Over the season, it offers us a lot more development potential."

McLaren remains committed to realising that potential, but for now you could make a convincing argument that the MP4-28 is slower than even an unchanged Brazilian Grand Prix-specification MP4-27 would have been. Yet as far as McLaren is concerned, the new car should be superior.

AUTOSPORT technical

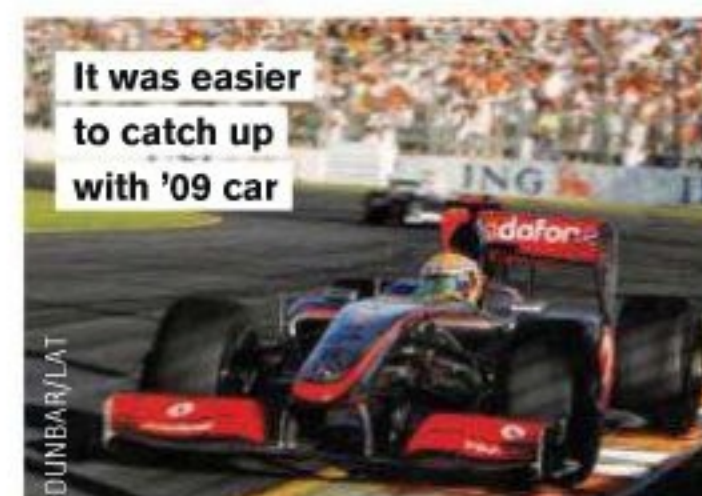
A REPEAT OF 2009 IS NOT GUARANTEED

When McLaren's deficit to the pace is converted to a percentage, it makes 2013 the fourth-worst start to a season in its history. Jenson Button's best lap was 2.777 per cent slower than the fastest overall lap of the weekend, set by Sebastian Vettel. Even with the caveat that rain compromised

running in both Saturday practice and qualifying, potentially distorting the picture, there is no compelling evidence to suggest that this wasn't a fair reflection of the McLaren MP4-28's speed in Australia.

Many cited 2009, when McLaren produced a poor car out of the box but was able to develop it fast enough

to win twice that season, as proof that the situation is recoverable. But in Melbourne that year, the car's deficit to the front was only 1.184 per cent, under half of the current disadvantage. And a big chunk of that was down to McLaren missing the boat on the double diffuser, something that it quickly rectified.



It was easier to catch up with '09 car



correspondent Gary Anderson believes McLaren should not find itself in such a bad situation during a period of stable rules.

"With the data they have, they shouldn't be able to build a car that is worse than its predecessor without a change of regulations," he said. "All the work they have done indicates that this car should be an improvement."

"But no team knows 100 per cent what makes a car go quick. Aerodynamically, they have opened doors with the high front of chassis and the more aggressive Coke bottle and there is more to come here. But the danger is in chasing ways to open up that potential, you change something that you don't realise is so important. Now it's something that has to be found again and understood."

JEREZ TESTING MYSTERY

Much intrigue surrounds the impressive laptime that the car did on the opening day of pre-season testing at Jerez. Button was over a second faster than anyone else straight out of the box, a performance that was held up as proof of the car's prodigious potential. But it has emerged that this was a red herring.

"It was quick on the first day of testing, but was not a set-up you can work with," said Button of what rival Felipe Massa dubbed an "incredible" lap. When quizzed about this

subsequently, Whitmarsh suggested it was down to a part being incorrectly fitted in the front suspension, which allowed the car to run lower and artificially boost its performance.

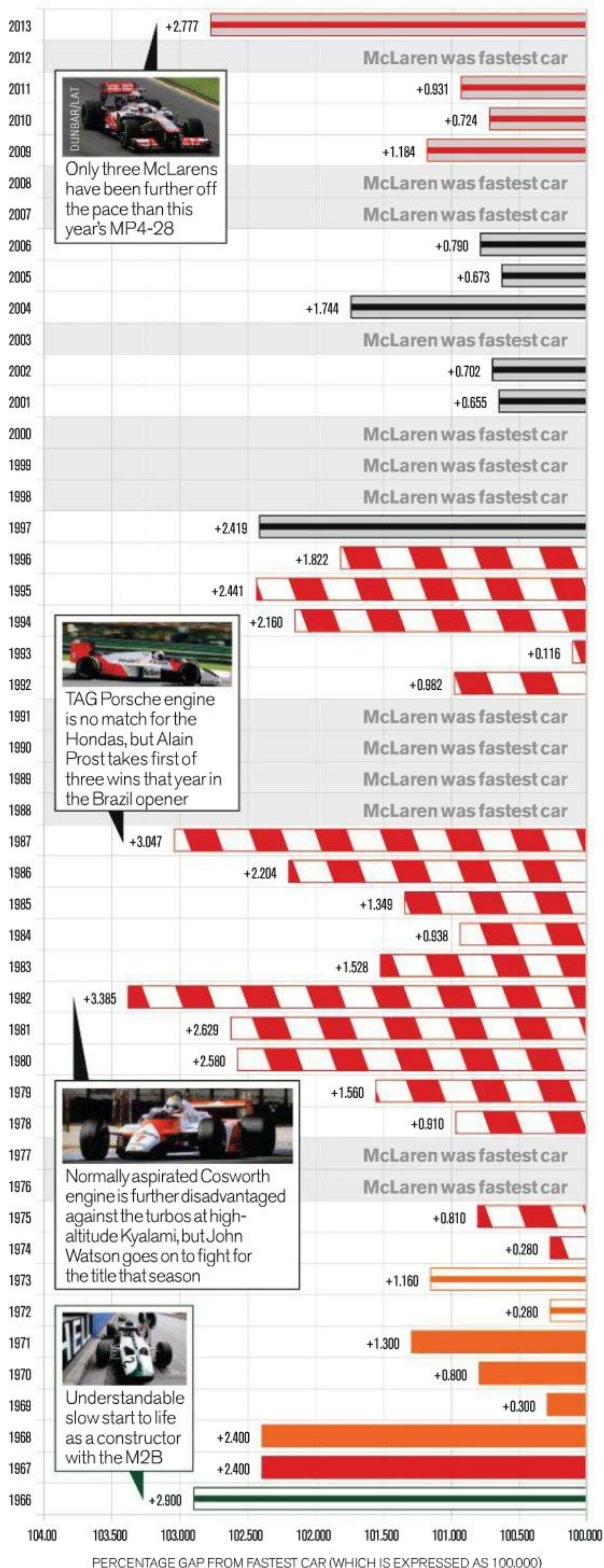
An alternative hypothesis is that the problems may be related to the introduction of a new torsional front-wing deflection test, designed to prevent the wing flexing for aerodynamic gain. At Jerez, McLaren ran a 2012 wing, but thereafter ran the new-spec version, so the 'flexi' characteristics of the old wing may prove to have been key. McLaren has gone to a three-piece front wing for this year, which carries with it an increased risk of stalling. With the front wing key to the aero performance of the whole car, there's a possibility that it is at the heart of the problem.

Whitmarsh did not rule out the possibility of the 2012 car being brought back into active service, but that would only be as a last resort should the team continue to struggle. For now, the focus remains on understanding a car that he still has confidence in.

"[Running the old car] is not a serious option for Malaysia [scene of this weekend's race]," he said. "At the moment, we have got to work hard on this car. We know it has got some areas of high potential and we know it has potentially more downforce than last year's car."

McLAREN'S FOURTH-WORST PACE

This graph shows how uncharacteristically bad McLaren's start has been this year. To allow for variations of circuits, the deficit of the best McLaren lap to the best overall lap is expressed as a percentage.



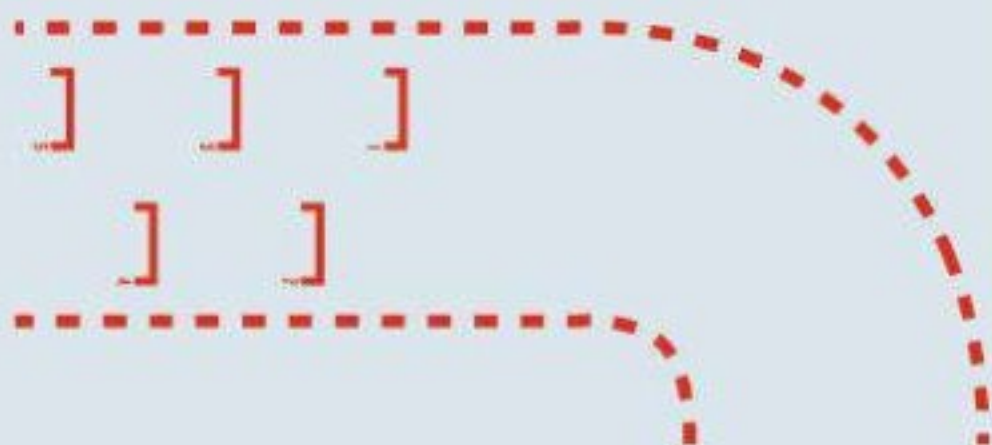


MALAYSIAN GP PREVIEW

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **sky SPORTS** HD

FIRST CORNER

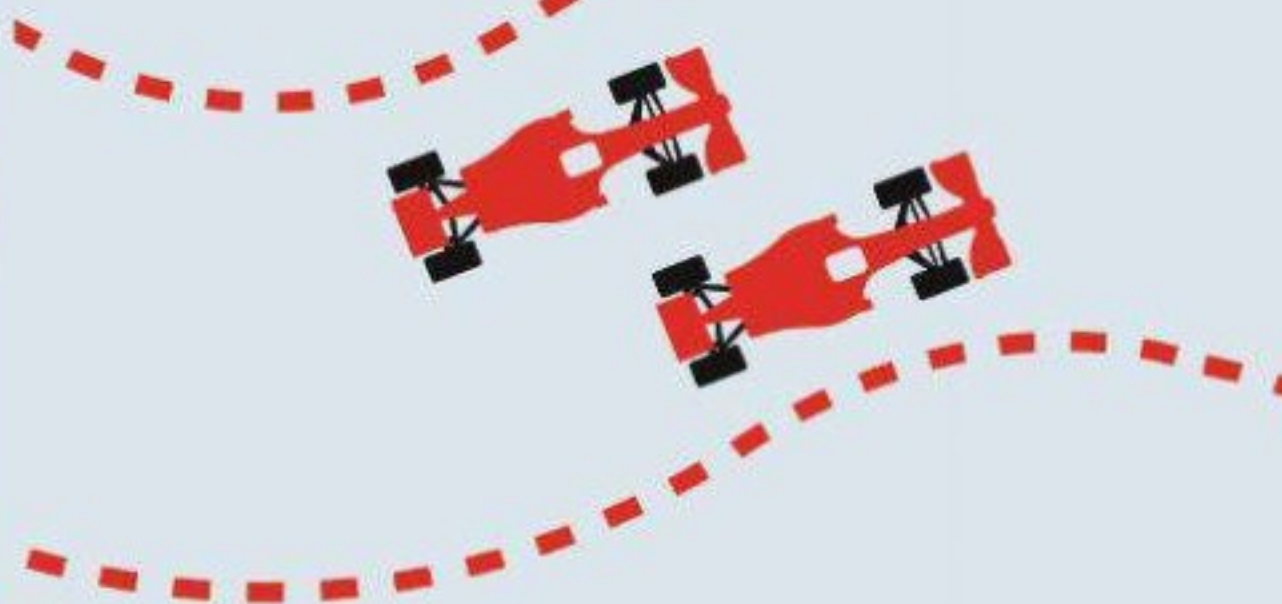
660m



At 660m, it's one of the longest hauls down to Turn 1 off the grid all year, with only Barcelona being longer. The acceleration off the line gives way to high-energy braking from 180mph into the right-hand hairpin, which is taken in second gear. The T1/T2 double hairpin has made it a favoured overtaking spot, as witnessed by last year's scramble behind the leading McLarens on lap one.

OVERTAKING STATS

The 2012 Malaysian GP ranked as the third highest for on-track passes all season, stimulated no doubt by the rare affection the drivers have for this Tilke circuit. With long straights, high speeds, numerous hard braking areas and a wide track, all the ingredients are there to promote overtaking. Now throw in some tropical rain...



FULL THROTTLE



65%

It's full throttle for 65% of the lap at Sepang, although the high speeds require heavy braking, with some 17% of the lap spent on the brake pedal, which means it ranks seventh on the calendar for throttle demand.

PITLANE

After the shortest pitlane in Melbourne, F1 heads to a circuit with one of the longest of the season. At 419m, the Sepang pitlane comes with an associated pitlane loss of 23s plus stationary time.



MELBOURNE

SEPANG

Pitlane length	419m
Length rank	Third longest
Pitlane loss	23 seconds



SILVERSTONE

SAFETY CARS

Over the past decade, the safety car has only taken to the track in Malaysia on two occasions, putting Sepang at the lower reaches of the probability table for safety-car interventions.



USA/INDIA



SINGAPORE

FUEL PENALTY



With 2.6kg of fuel consumed per lap, Sepang is precisely mid-table for fuel consumption. Every 10kg of fuel costs the driver 0.3s per lap, again about average for the season.

GEAR CHANGES

Despite its wholly different profile, Sepang demands around the same number of gear shifts as Melbourne, at 54 selections per lap, or around 3100 gear changes over the course of Sunday afternoon's race.



SEPANG	
Circuit Length	3.444 miles
Race Laps	56
Race Distance	192.887 miles
Lap Record	Juan Pablo Montoya 1m34.223s (2004)
Corners	15 (5 left, 10 right)
Circuit Direction	Clockwise
Corners <62mph	4 (Turn 1, 2, 9, 15)
Corners >155mph	0

WEATHER



With almost six times the average monthly rainfall of Melbourne and 20 days of rain in March on average, tropical rain remains an ever-present threat at Sepang, while the humidity makes the race physically demanding.

MONTHLY AVERAGES

Rainfall	206mm
Mean humidity	85%
Min temp	23.7°C
Max temp	31.7°C

COMPLETE COVERAGE OF THE ENTIRE RACE WEEKEND ON **sky SPORTS** HD

THURSDAY

0700 Sky Sports F1
LIVE Drivers' Press Conference

FRIDAY

0145 Sky Sports F1
LIVE Free Practice 1
0545 Sky Sports F1
LIVE Free Practice 2

1000 Sky Sports F1
LIVE The F1 Show

SATURDAY

0445 Sky Sports F1
LIVE Free Practice 3
0700 Sky Sports F1
LIVE Qualifying

SUNDAY

0410 Sky Sports F1
LIVE GP2 Sprint Race
0630 Sky Sports F1
LIVE Malaysian GP

ALL WEEK

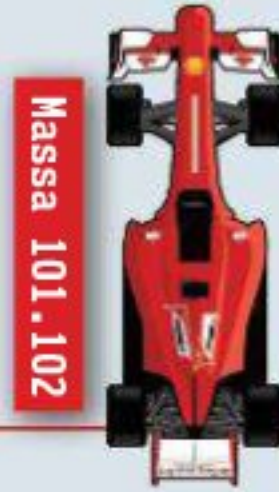
Classic Malaysian GP races shown throughout the week as a build-up to the 2013 race.

100%



GRAND PRIX SUPERGRID

AUTOSPORT's technical correspondent Gary Anderson has compiled this index, created by taking each driver's percentage deficit to the outright pace in Melbourne. The graphic shows each driver's average after the first grand prix weekend, compared with the theoretical absolute pace, which is expressed at 100.



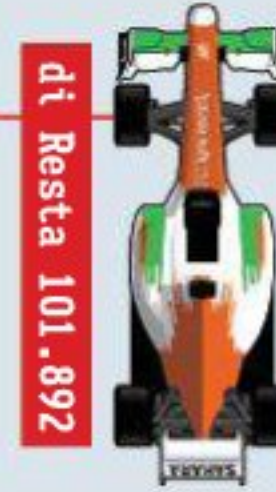
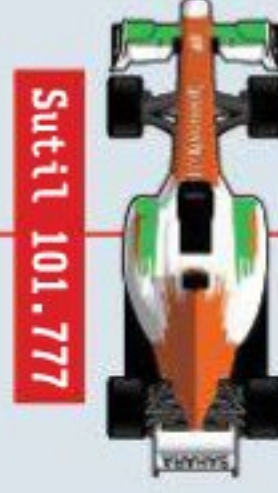
101%

Massa ended last year 0.442 per cent slower than Alonso. Although Felipe outqualified him in Q3 on Sunday, he remained 0.124 per cent off in terms of weekend raw pace.



The most closely-matched team-mates in Melbourne were the Toro Rossos, Ricciardo just 0.02 per cent quicker than Vergne.

102%



103%



Button's position on our supergrid shows just how much trouble McLaren was in around Albert Park. Only Williams, Marussia and Caterham are slower.

AND THE REST...

Unsurprisingly, the two backmarker teams, Marussia and Caterham, remain at the bottom of the pile after the opening GP in Melbourne, with Williams rookie Valtteri Bottas also in the bottom five.

Bottas (Williams)	104.049
Bianchi (Marussia)	104.408
Pic (Caterham)	104.955
Chilton (Marussia)	105.462
Van der Garde (Caterham)	107.543

Watch the Malaysian Grand Prix exclusively live on Sky Sports F1 HD – go to sky.com/F1 or call 08442410826



MALAYSIAN GP PREVIEW

Stay cool under pressure

The most important technical aspect of the Malaysian Grand Prix is keeping the car's engine cool, as GARY ANDERSON explains

This weekend's Malaysian Grand Prix will be very demanding on the cars in terms of cooling. There was a time when cooling was a very inexact science and you went to the track, had a look to see if the car cooled and if not you'd put a scoop on it or cut a hole. But in the past dozen or so years things have moved on significantly.

When I was first in F1, we would generally run cars at 95-100C, but today they are up to around 125C, which is very near to the critical point. To run with such narrow margins, it's essential to be on top of the cooling. The engines are all built to work

within these tight tolerances. You can't start the current V8s cold without damaging them so you have to pump hot water and hot oil through them. Some teams even keep their engines hot doing this overnight, which is allowed, because they don't want the engine to cool down again.

The reason for running engines so hot is that it requires less volume of air to cool the car. There was a time when people were running as hot as 150C and with five bar of pressure in the water system, but the FIA regulated against that by introducing a pressure-release valve, meaning that you can only run up to about 125C.

Any airflow that you are using to cool the car is not being used to generate downforce, which is why those old-fashioned emergency cooling packages tend to cost you in terms of performance.

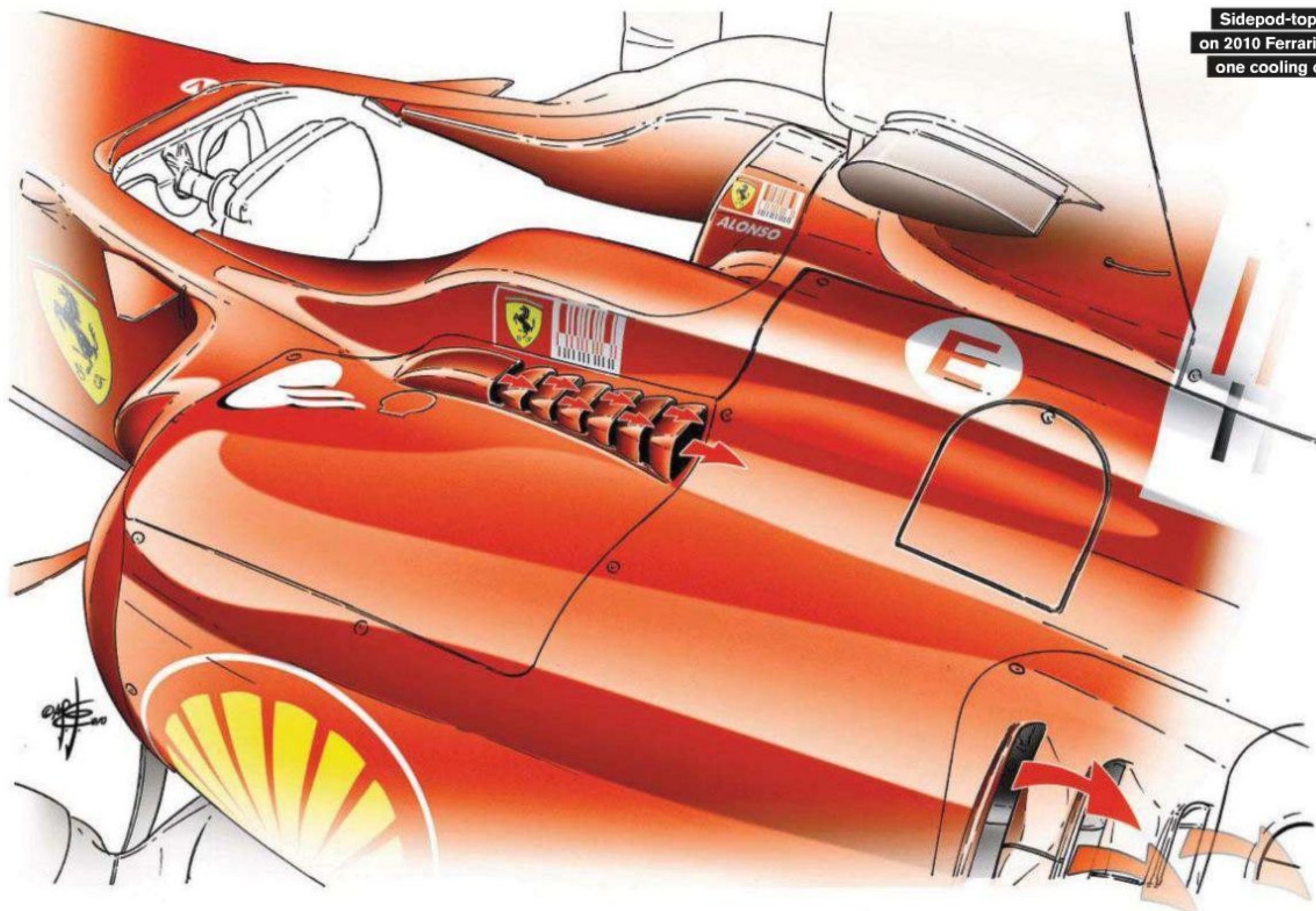
Cooling is more complicated than it might seem. If you take the bodywork off a car, there's another set of bodywork underneath covering the engine and gearbox designed to help it. Where you put the radiator exit is also vitally important. Red Bull, for example, stick it on the back of its engine cover, pointing to the middle section of the beam wing. With the crash box being located there, it's

about the least-efficient part of the car so you might as well put it there.

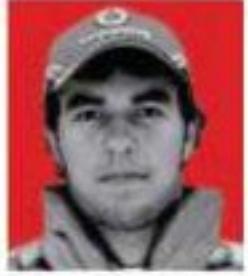
The best place for cooling is to have the exit in front of the rear tyre, but that is where the Coke bottle section of the car is working very hard and you can compromise performance significantly. But there are cars out there that do this.

With the Sepang circuit being such an extreme case when it comes to keeping cars cool, it will be interesting to see if anyone encounters any problems this weekend. Realistically, however, the depth of knowledge is such that there shouldn't be too many problems.

Sidepod-top vents on 2010 Ferrari show one cooling option



THE CIRCUIT BRIEF



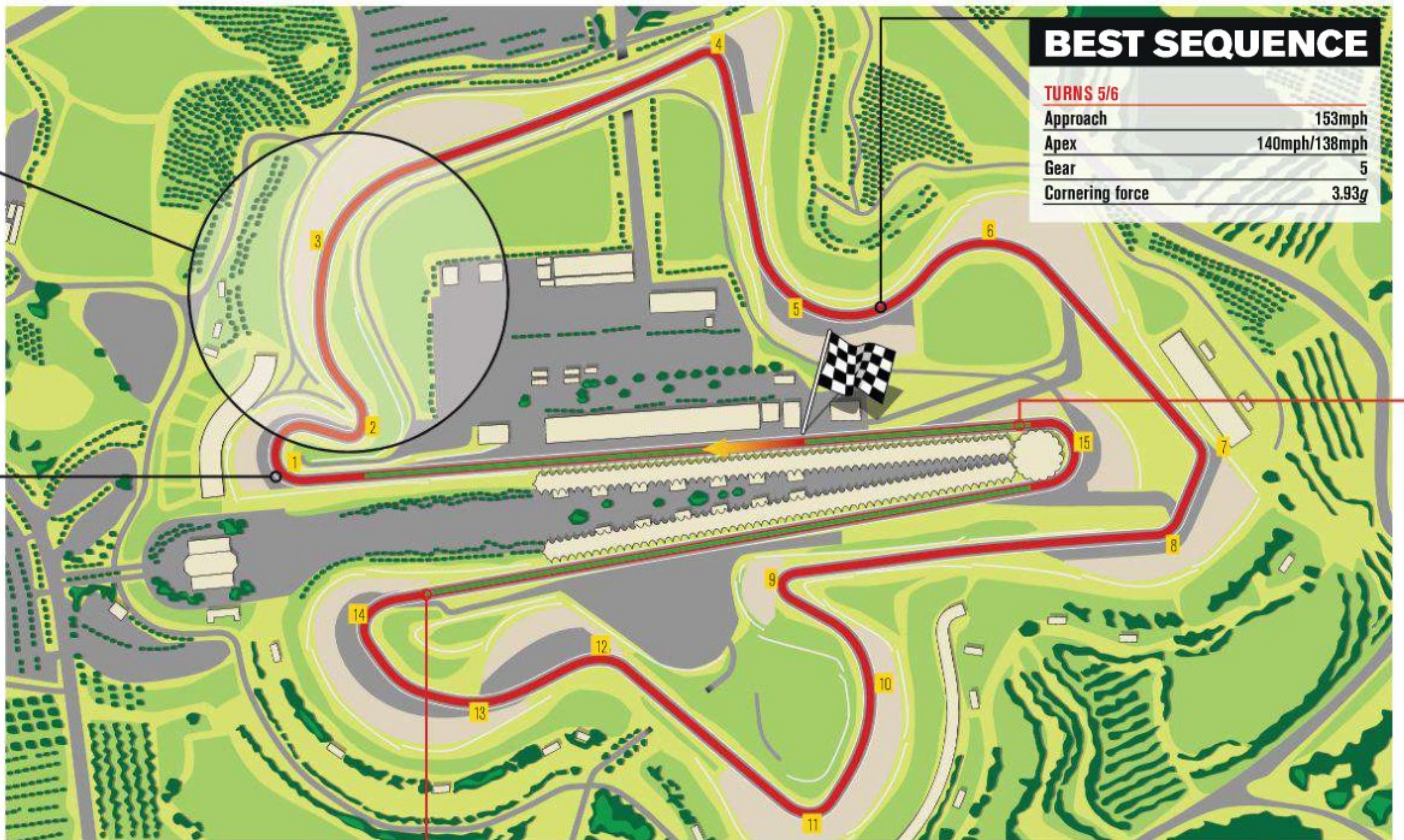
SERGIO PEREZ
McLaren driver

The circuit itself I don't really enjoy that much even though I had a good race there last year. I don't find it so interesting, but there is always the weather and you can have some great grands prix there. That's what I like about Malaysia – it's so unpredictable.

It's one of the most physical circuits of the season. The heat is demanding for the drivers and it is also demanding in terms of tyre degradation. It's not an easy circuit to race on and is quite technical. I like the first section of the lap with its long corners and hard braking.



Perez almost won for Sauber last year – at a track he doesn't like!



BEST SEQUENCE

TURNS 5/6

Approach	153mph
Apex	140mph/138mph
Gear	5
Cornering force	3.93g

PASSING SPOT

TURN 1

Approach	194mph
Apex	47mph
Gear	2
Braking distance	121m
Braking time	2.57s
Braking force	517g

Turns 1 and 2 offer overtaking sequence



POTENTIAL FLASHPOINT



Rain played havoc with the 2009 race

THE WEATHER

Considering that Malaysia is famed for its monsoon showers, only three of the 14 races at Sepang have been rain-affected.

But since the race moved to a later start time, two of the past four races have been red flagged due to the weather conditions.

THE STORY OF 2012

Fernando Alonso took a shock win in his unfancied Ferrari. A heavy rain shower just after the start caused chaos and a red flag, and from eighth on the original grid Alonso took advantage of the conditions. His unlikely challenger was Sauber's Sergio Perez, who could have won but for a brief off-track moment while reeling in Alonso. Despite that, he finished just 2s in arrears.



Alonso was surprise winner last year

New BMW levels the BTCC playing field for WSR

Former title-winning team believes its new 1-series can get it back on terms with the series' frontrunners. By KEVIN TURNER

The newest British Touring Car NGTC challenger broke cover last week in the shape of the BMW 125i. WSR raced versions of its S2000-spec BMW 320si for six seasons, but team boss Dick Bennetts finally has his hands on a new toy to challenge for the 2013 title.

Since taking Colin Turkington to the 2009 title, WSR has been labouring with one disadvantage or another. First it lost Turkington, then it struggled with an underpowered normally aspirated engine as rivals went turbocharged. Turbos were bolted in to the ageing BMWs last year, but the bigger tyres and brakes of the NGTC runners again left the squad with technical disadvantages.

Now, apart from being a year or so behind rivals like MG/Triple Eight and Honda/Team Dynamics on development, WSR finally has parity.

"If there's time to get myself in the seat this is it," said race winner and team regular Rob Collard at the car's launch at main sponsor eBay Motors HQ last week. "The championship's going to be really strong and this gives us an equal chance."

Nick Foster was the first man to try the new machine at Brands Hatch. Although there were fuel tank and brake issues, he could feel the improvements – including the 18-inch tyres compared with the S2000's 17-inch – straight away. "The brakes

are better and you can feel that little bit extra grip, which is what we lacked last year," he said. "It felt quick."

Collard, who finished fifth in the S2000 3-series last year, added: "I feel the brakes will be a big advantage. That's where we were weak last year; the NGTCs could pass us under braking for hairpins."

As well as the inherent advantages of NGTC, Bennetts also points to other positives about the new BMW – it's no accident the car is closer in size to the title-winning Honda Civic than it is to an MG6 or Toyota Avensis.

"We chose the 1-series over the 3-series because of the overall weight, as well as the wheelbase," revealed Bennetts. "The new 3-series is starting to get too big."

"Having studied the wheelbase and the overall length of the Honda, which is a very successful car, if we can do the same with rear-wheel drive we'll be looking good."

"It's also a wider-track car. The track was one of the disadvantages last year – we were way under the width of an NGTC car. A wider-track car is better for stability."

And it's not just the kit that has been improved in WSR's line-up. Turkington returns, and ex-Triple Eight man Kevin Berry, Jason Plato's former engineer, joins to help speed up the team's NGTC learning process.

So can the car, which runs the same



GARY HAWKINS



L to r: Foster, Turkington and Collard at launch

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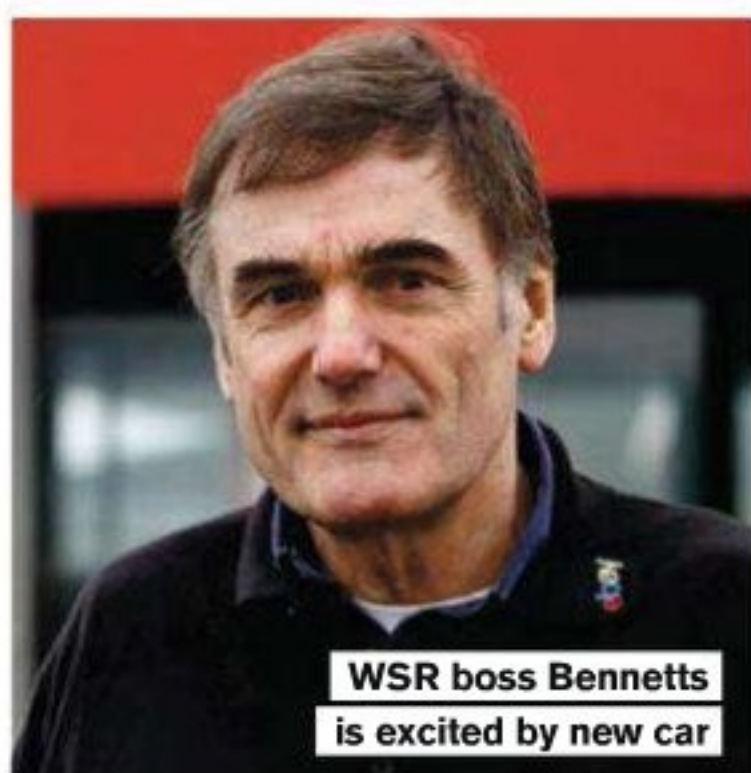
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WSR boss Bennetts is excited by new car

proven engine and gearbox as the 3-series did in 2012, win in its first year? Bennetts remains, as ever, cautiously optimistic.

"I'd love to challenge for the championship in year one, but there are three other top teams who are a year ahead so it's for us to play catch-up," he said.

"We're planning to do three years with this car because of the initial cost. To actually say we can win the

championship may be a bit of a tall order, but we'd like to be in the top four or five.

"We have to learn about the car with these regulations and how we can make it work. Having Kevin on board will hopefully short-cut some of the unusual characteristics of these cars."

There are, of course, a number of unknowns. How will the boost equalisation in the series work this year? How much more speed can Honda and MG find in their cars? Will there be any niggles making the RWD car work on a FWD-dominated grid? But WSR is a proven title-winning outfit that has managed to minimise its potential pitfalls for 2013.

"We're really looking forward to it," said Bennetts, whose turbocharged 320si took a win first time out at Brands Hatch in 2012. "We know we've got some challenges ahead of us, but we believe this is the right decision."

"We were in a similar boat this time last year and we did pretty well at the first round."

KEVIN TURNER
FEATURES
EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com



"IT'S NICE TO DESIGN AND
build a car again – the last one was the MG ZS – so it's good to sharpen us up again."

Despite the wranglings over cost and reliability of some NGTC parts, there's no doubt it has allowed teams to become constructors, as Dick Bennetts's comments show.

Motorbase and WSR are the two biggest independent teams to have built their own machines. It gives the industry a boost and helps squads exercise their expertise, as well as welcoming new models and makes at a time when manufacturers can't be relied upon to do it themselves.

All we need now is for everyone to be happy with whatever system of boost equalisation is decided upon.

EX-CHAMP SHARPENS LINE-UP

The return of Colin Turkington has been one of the BTCC's biggest stories over the winter. Team boss Dick Bennetts is confident the 2009 champ will be able to get up to speed immediately ("he's a very talented lad"), but he also thinks his 'new' driver will provide a boost for incumbents Rob Collard and Nick Foster.

Collard, in particular, was one of the stars of 2012, seeing off Tom Onslow-Cole in the same car.

"I never expect Rob not to be close to Colin," said Bennetts. "We've worked hard on Rob to keep his nose clean, which he did last year."

"Having Colin back on board I think will lift Rob's game as well, and that in turn will lift Nick. We believe it's good to have a healthy challenge within the team."

WSR'S BTCC FORM

The team's top result in the BTCC drivers' table and number of team wins for the past five seasons



2008 4th (4 wins)



2009 1st (8 wins)



2010 8th (0 wins)



2011 8th (0 wins)



2012 5th (3 wins)



How Solberg got his mojo back

After years of frustration in the World Rally Championship, Petter Solberg has a new project for 2013. He tells **DAVID EVANS** why rallycross has fired his enthusiasm



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Solberg's Subaru
WRC glory days
came in 2003

The phone rings. Again. The drilling starts. Again. An engine is fired up. Again. Talking to Petter Solberg at the moment is not a straightforward operation. He'll call me back. Again.

And then, quiet. He's left the workshop and is taking a breather outside in a Scandinavian winter that is still spilling over into spring. He struggles to contain his excitement for a moment.

Then doesn't bother.

"I. Am. So. Excited," he says. From the emotion in his voice, it seems his last statement might be something of an understatement...

Solberg's entry for the FIA European Rallycross Championship has him fired up again; he's 100 per cent full of beans. This Solberg, the infectious one, is not a version of the 2003 World Rally champion we have seen much of recently.

As much as he loved being lead driver of the Subaru World Rally Team, Solberg is also a great one for engineering. Some would say that, for a driver, he blurred the line regarding where his job behind the wheel ended and where the team's technical director's job began. Solberg's known to be one for getting involved.

And that's why he's in his element right now.

"I was in before the guys this morning and every morning," he says, "and then I'm leaving with them at two in the morning. We are working 17-hour days to get this thing sorted right now."

This thing is Solberg's Citroen DS3 Supercar. As I type, the thing is still being created. By the time you read this, it should be thundering its way through its first test.

There's a moment when Solberg takes that in.

"I can't..." he says, before a pause — is the phone going to ring, an engine going to start? No, he's just taking the whole thing in. "...wait

for that. I just want to start it up and see what we can do."

Solberg's obsessed with cars. It's all he knows and all he wants to know. And when he knows about a car, he wants to make it go faster.

And, right now, he's busy with planning and building the fastest Citroen on the planet.

The passion is plainly back for Petter. Last year didn't work for him. He returned to a factory world rally championship team for the first time since 2008 and tried too hard. He wanted the win too much.

"I think it's fair to say that," he said. "I think I did want it too bad. I tried so hard and there were events we really should have won."

It's incredible to think Solberg's last WRC event win came in 2005, on that fated Rally GB that claimed the life of Michael 'Beef' Park — the event nobody wanted to win.

In 2006, having gone a few months without spending any time on the top step of the podium, Solberg stopped cutting his hair. He refused to cut it again before he won another WRC round.

"I would have quite long hair now," he says, quietly. Indeed he would.

Solberg's chances of winning went dramatically downhill when Subaru — the team with which he'd won all his rallies and his sole world title — withdrew. The response was typical Petter.

Instead of going home, licking his wounds, and waiting for the phone to ring, he picked up the phone and didn't put it down again for a couple of months. By then, he had the financial and personnel backing to start his own WRC team.

Given that Solberg has reformed that team, you'd expect him to sound as stressed as in 2009. He doesn't.

Don't get me wrong, Solberg is stressed, but he's also very happy. Talking to him while he built up his Citroen Xsara WRC team at the end of 2008 and the start of the following year, he still sounded aggrieved — because he was. The sport

had dropped him in spectacular, unexpected and dramatic fashion.

It's different this time. Solberg could have driven in the WRC if he'd wanted to. But it wasn't going to be right for him.

"I did have," he reveals, "the chance to drive a Fiesta on five rallies or a Citroen on nine. But what's the point? I'm the guy who has to do the complete championship or none of it. I have to have the chance to win."

Rally Mexico earlier this month was frustrating for Solberg.

"We were talking about Mexico here in the workshop," he said, "and I'm sure I would have been with [Sebastien] Ogier. But what can I do? For the teams to be looking at the younger guys and giving them a go is part of the game. But it is frustrating, I would have liked to have been there and been in the fight."

The difference this time is that Solberg is building something he knows he can win in. Doing this for the first time after Subaru's December bombshell, Solberg knew he had to be out there competing; he felt obliged, duty-bound by world rallying. But he was never going to be champion. There was Citroen and there was Sebastien Loeb standing squarely in his path.

This time around, there's no Loeb to get in his way. And Solberg's no stranger to rallycross. And there's no bitterness.

"I don't feel let down by the WRC," he says. "I let it go. But I never close the door on anything."

There's a door to a new life and a better title chance than for a long time right in front of him. Unsurprisingly, Solberg has taken a giant leap through it. In fact, there were two doors open. Both involved going around in circles, but one involved getting muddy — and that was the one.

"I could have gone racing," he adds. "I had offers from Le Mans and World Touring Car Championship teams, but this is what I wanted."

But making this decision was only half the job. He then had to make the team and find the cash to run it. After struggling to scrape the cash together for the WRC for three years, deals for the European Rallycross Championship have been much more straightforward.

"It hasn't been nearly as difficult as it was for the WRC," says Solberg. "If I was starting out like I was in 2009 then I really don't think I could have done it. The money was getting a bit crazy."

The money was, and is, getting a bit crazy in ▶

"We are working 17-hour days to get the car sorted"



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◀ the WRC, but of equal concern is the relatively limited exposure on offer in certain markets. That's not going to be a problem for Petter's team this season, with IMG bankrolling live television on five of the nine European rounds in 2013.

"The television is fantastic," says Solberg. "It's through this that you can get close to the fans and this is so important. We are going to entertain people again this year."

Entertaining is great, but winning is what it's all about. Will Solberg win this year?

"I don't know," he says. "The car is looking absolutely fantastic, I have to say. And, of course, winning is what we are aiming for, but I don't know what the competition will be like. There are some very good drivers and good cars out there."

Is Solberg worried about a lack of turbocharged match practice?

"No," in a word... "I'm keeping myself in the seat," he adds. "I'm driving rally cars and all sorts of things all the time to make sure I'm ready."

Solberg is ready, and he's sharp. And he's got the ability. Don't forget he was the man to beat Loeb across the spread of a WRC season.

And he's got the history. This new discipline is nothing new to Solberg, a man who lists Norwegian legend, and Mr Rallycross himself, Martin Schanche among his heroes.

And, in his native Norway, Solberg won the national rallycross title twice in the 1990s – and finished second twice. He knows just what's required to succeed in this sport. But his motor has certainly moved on a little bit.

"The last rallycross race I did was in 1996," says Solberg, "I was driving my Volvo with 350bhp..."

The Citroen will have almost twice that power

and four-wheel-drive transmission.

"I have a good feeling about this season," says Solberg. "I know it's a long time since I was driving in rallycross, but it's good to be back. IMG is really pushing hard with the RX series and I feel we can make a difference."

Above that, there's the potential for another world title next season.

"I think there will be a world championship for rallycross next year," continues Solberg. "And that's part of what makes this year so important."

So, Solberg the world champion again in 2014?

"Well, we can dream can't we!" he says.

"But we will be pushing and pushing like hell – winning is why we're here."

Solberg's Swedish-based team is a serious player in this year's series. No sooner will this first car be finished than work on the DS3 Supercar evolution will be underway. Solberg wants his second – faster – car up and running in time for the middle of the season.

Anybody who thought Solberg was switching codes with one eye firmly on a world rally return would be wrong. And right.

He is taking his unbelievably competitive spirit to rallycross this season and that's his total focus. But he will never be able to forget the WRC. There's still a feeling of unfinished business for Petter on that side of the fence.

The good news for IMG and RX is that they have landed themselves the ultimate showman. Not for nothing was Solberg labelled Hollywood earlier in his career. He loves nothing more than winning – except for hanging out of the car waving to his fans after winning.

The Solberg show will be a hit this season. ☼



Privateer WRC days brought much stress

RXGUIDE: WHO SOLBERG HAS TO BEAT IN 2013

SOLBERG'S WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP HIGHS AND LOWS

HIGHS

Rally GB 2002

The Norwegian takes his maiden World Rally Championship win for Subaru after a tight fight with Ford driver Markko Martin. The Estonian led going into the final morning of the event, but a brace of supercharged runs through Margam Park netted the Norwegian his first superstar moment.



Tour de Corse 2003

When Solberg slid off the road and into a telegraph pole, the chances of the Banbury-based Subaru team even getting the twisted Impreza to the start were laughable. Fastest time on the



long Col de Carrazi stage astonishingly gave him the lead on Saturday evening. The following afternoon, a dream came true...

Rally GB 2003

Twelve months after his first win in the series, Solberg was back chasing the world title – and he



celebrated that in the most dramatic fashion, edging Citroen nemesis Sebastien Loeb by a single point.

LOWS

Rallye Deutschland 2004

When Solberg's Impreza WRC went light over a quick left-hander, the car understeered off into one of the most frightening WRC crashes ever. Solberg and co-driver Phil Mills were very lucky to escape unscathed.



Subaru's WRC departure

He remembers the time and the date as though it were yesterday. Out of nowhere, Subaru was quitting the WRC. There would be no '09 season in blue – Solberg was out of work.

Rallye de France 2012

Forget Sebastien Loeb's ninth world title celebrations, the lasting memory of last year's French WRC



round will be Solberg tearing through the vineyards in his Ford Fiesta RS WRC. His trip only stopped when he levelled a power line and darkened a village.



Calado

Britain's next Formula 1 star?

He's hot favourite for this year's GP2 title, but has James Calado got what it takes to nail the crown? **CHARLES BRADLEY** asks him

Question: what have Jean-Eric Vergne, Valtteri Bottas and Esteban Gutierrez all got in common? Apart from the obvious fact they're all current Formula 1 drivers, the link that connects them is they've all been team-mates to James Calado in the past three seasons. While the trio was racing around Melbourne last Sunday, Calado was making his final preparations for joining them in Malaysia next weekend — albeit only on the support bill. A second GP2 Series season with ART Grand Prix (no longer Lotus-affiliated as they were last year) makes him the clear pre-season favourite.

As last year's standout GP2 rookie, Calado feels he's only one step away from F1, but he's acutely aware it's the biggest leap of all. There's little doubt he's in the right place to do it — after all, ART has run Nico Rosberg, Lewis Hamilton and Nico Hulkenberg to the crown in years past. But before we discuss his imminent title attack, what does he think today of those former team-mates who have made it to where he wants to go?

"They're all very good friends," says Calado. "Jean-Eric did very well to win British F3 with Carlin, and make the best of his Red Bull package to work his way through to F1 with Toro Rosso. Valtteri is very talented, probably the hardest driver I've ever come across, and he won the GP3 title [at ART] after we worked hard together to improve our

team's set-up — we had been really struggling and had a big meeting with our engineers, and the next race after that [at Budapest] we put our cars first and second by almost half a second.

"With Esteban in GP2 last year, I was ahead of him until the last round actually, then luckily for him he's got probably half of Mexico paying for him to be in F1. He's a good driver, but for me he's very lucky to get that level of support, as well as people like Max Chilton. I truly believe Valtteri and Jean-Eric deserve to be there... whereas the other two, I'm not so sure about."

Calado is no-nonsense on the subject of his peers, but he's self-critical, too. He labels his 2012 season as "quite good", and with two rounds remaining he was right in the title fight with eventual champion Davide Valsecchi and runner-up Luiz Razia, both seasoned GP2 veterans. However, his opportunity to join Hamilton and Hulkenberg in the super-rookie, GP2-champion bracket faded with two disappointing final rounds.

"I went into it as a rookie trying to win the championship, and we had some race wins [two], podiums [seven], poles [two] and a fastest lap. It was encouraging, but finishing fifth in the standings was also disappointing, because the potential was there to score more points. Singapore, in particular, was very disappointing because I had food poisoning, and we gave away points at Silverstone when the car broke down, and a safety car ruined my race at Valencia."

Now the challenge is to build on that otherwise cracking debut season, and convert what he's learned into strong qualifying and race drives.



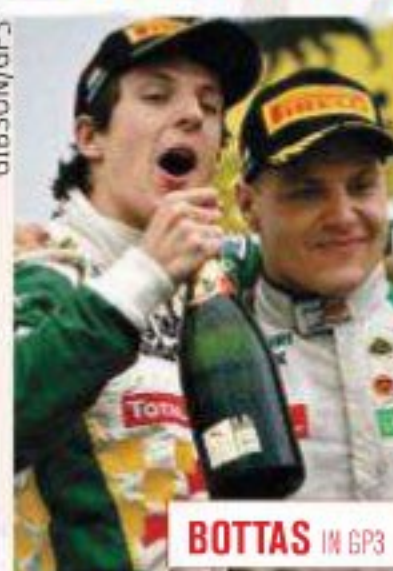


JAMES CALADO CV

Born Cropthorne, Worcestershire
Age 23 **Born** June 13, 1989
2012 5th in GP2 with Lotus (ART) (2 wins)
2011 2nd in GP3 with ART (1 win)
 GP2 'Final' with Lotus (ART) (1 win)
2010 2nd in British F3 with Carlin (5 wins)
2009 2nd in Formula Renault UK with Fortec (8 wins)
2008 7th in Formula Renault UK with Fortec (1 win)

EX-TEAM-MATES HE PLANS TO FOLLOW INTO F1

GIBSON/GP3



BOTTAS IN GP3



VERGNE IN F1



GUTIERREZ IN GP2

EBREY/LAT

BELLANCA/GP2

GP2 CALENDAR

DATE	LOCATION
March 23-24	Sepang (MAL)
April 20-21	Sakhir (BRN)
May 11-12	Barcelona (E)
May 24-25	Monaco (MC)
June 29-30	Silverstone (GB)
July 6-7	Nurburgring (D)
July 27-28	Budapest (H)
August 24-25	Spa-Francorchamps (B)
September 7-8	Monza (I)
September 21-22	Singapore (SGP)
November 2-3	Yas Marina (UAE)

STALEY/GP2



Leading fellow
2013 title favourite
Nasr last season

STALEY/GP2

"The aim is to win the championship," he affirms. "I need to, really. I think it's clear we have the speed; the challenge is to maximise the results."

"What was hard about last year was going to Monaco, for example, with only four sets of tyres, which means you have to practice on the tyres you're going to race on. So I had to learn Monaco in just six or seven laps, then went into qualifying feeling like it was a complete unknown! Where to brake? What gears to use? I got on with it – overcame it I suppose – and when I go back there I'll be a lot more prepared."

"In terms of building up a relationship with the team, getting used to the car, the increase in power and the Pirelli tyres, it all went pretty well. Now I can take that into this year."

Bring up the subject of the added pressure of pre-season favourite status, and Calado seems very relaxed with the notion.

"To be honest, I think every racing driver knows when they get to this stage of their career they have

to win a championship to move forward," he says. "Especially when you know you haven't got the money to, like some of the drivers who are in F1 at the moment have. There's no real added pressure to do what I do best. It's up to me to get on with the job, take it race by race."

Finances are a thorny subject when it comes to F1 graduation. Looking at the 2013 grid, while the majority of the drivers are salaried, the number of them bringing hefty sponsorship dollars is heading towards double figures.

"Winning the GP2 title would probably bring the cost down," says Calado of his situation, "and I've got good backing with Racing Steps Foundation behind me, and other supporters that can help me get into F1. But we'll have to see what happens."

Pre-season testing hasn't offered up too many clues to the destiny of the 2013 GP2 title race. As F1 found, Jerez's track surface didn't suit the Pirelli tyres in low temperatures, while poor weather kept the dry running at Barcelona to a minimum.

"Testing hasn't been very realistic, but in terms of speed I was quickest in two of the sessions," he says. "I feel much more ready and far more relaxed than I did this time last year. It actually feels like the year is going in slow motion compared to 2012!"

The big curveball faced by teams this year will be new-spec tyres, which feature not only a softer compound but different construction too.

"It's going to be interesting when we get to Malaysia, with the high temperatures. A lot of people have been struggling with front graining in testing; it degrades very quickly if you push it. It's going to be very challenging for teams and

drivers to get the best out of the tyres.

"Obviously I won the race in Malaysia last year, so I go back full of confidence that we're in good shape in terms of track knowledge and speed, and I believe we have the right approach, strategy-wise."

All four of the drivers who finished ahead of him last year are gone – three of the top six are now racing in F1, while Valsecchi is reserve driver at Lotus and Razia hangs in career limbo after his Marussia drive fell through. Of his title rivals for 2013, Calado identifies Felipe Nasr, Marcus Ericsson and Stefano Coletti as his main threats – and admits Nasr's team Carlin appears to have the edge in single-lap pace.

"That's where we have to improve," he says of qualifying speed. "We struggled to get close to them at Barcelona, we think we know what we need to improve, but even so eight-tenths is quite a lot of time to find. I think there's going to be seven or eight people up there fighting for wins, but some of them are only going to be quick on their good days. I think it's going to be a hard fight, and getting on top of the tyres will be key, so scoring points consistently is the most important thing."

There is a final hurdle Calado must overcome: like Mark Webber, he's yet to win a title – finishing runner-up in Formula Renault UK, British F3 and GP3 between 2009 and '11. Is that an anomaly, taking into account his pedigree and speed? Or is it a validation of the strength of his team-mates? Perhaps, more importantly, with all that insider knowledge of grand prix-standard racers, does Calado believe in himself that he can go on and beat them on the world's biggest racing stage? ❧

The young Brits taking on Europe

Forget the English clubs' failure in the football Champions' League.

There are some top UK drivers hunting for glory in European

Formula 3 this year. By **MARCUS SIMMONS**



Carlin runs three of the four British drivers in Euro F3

Looking at it in the light of British Formula 3 troubles, it's ironic that the F3 European Championship has attracted seven drivers – all with strong reputations – from the UK. At least two start this weekend's Monza opener as pukka title contenders, and more can be expected to battle for wins.

Up against them is some daunting opposition. Even within his own team, Alex Lynn faces Ferrari protege Raffaele Marciello at Prema Powerteam, while at Mücke Motorsport both Felix Rosenqvist and Pascal Wehrlein must count as major contenders, although DTM-bound Wehrlein is in for Monza only. Felix Serralles shows explosive form from time to time with Fortec Motorsport while, of the rookies at this level, Prema's Lucas Auer and Double R Racing recruit Antonio Giovinazzi look very promising indeed.

But how have the UK's magnificent seven been progressing? We asked their teams' technical chiefs and engineers for some insight into how we can expect them to fare.

Tom Blomqvist EuroInternational Dallara-Mercedes

It's the second year at this level for the Anglo-Swede. He's switched from Ma-con Motorsport to EuroInternational, with which he contested a parallel German F3 Cup campaign and the Macau GP last season. He's also become a Red Bull junior, giving him proper funding for the first time in his career.

EuroInternational team boss Antonio Ferrari: "I am very excited about Tom. I

think he's a fantastic talent and I couldn't hope to have anyone better. Last year we ran him on a shoestring budget, there was an opportunity to present him to Dr Marko [in charge of Red Bull's driver roster] and step by step he started to follow Tom. If there was no Red Bull, he would not be racing this year. We are only at the beginning, working on the different weight distribution after our [last-minute] switch from VW to Mercedes engines, but we have done a lot of windtunnel work – there will be a surprise at Monza!"



ALL PICS: SUE/EUROPEANF3

Harry Tincknell

Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen

The likeable Devonian darts ace (he's kept sharp over the winter with some bullseye action!) sticks at Carlin for a second year as he shifts into Europe. Needs to get his act together for qualifying to build on ultra-strong testing form that netted a 47.4 eye-opener at Pembrey.

Carlin chief engineer Mark Owen: "He knew where he needed to improve – keeping his head in qualifying instead of trying to get that last tenth in the wrong place. We're satisfied he's sorted things out. As a team we are benefiting from a year on the Hankook tyres – we knew we had to work really hard over the winter. Undoubtedly we've sorted the aero and mechanical set-up with some good steps. We were a little surprised to be right up there at the Barcelona test – we're not getting too bullish yet!"

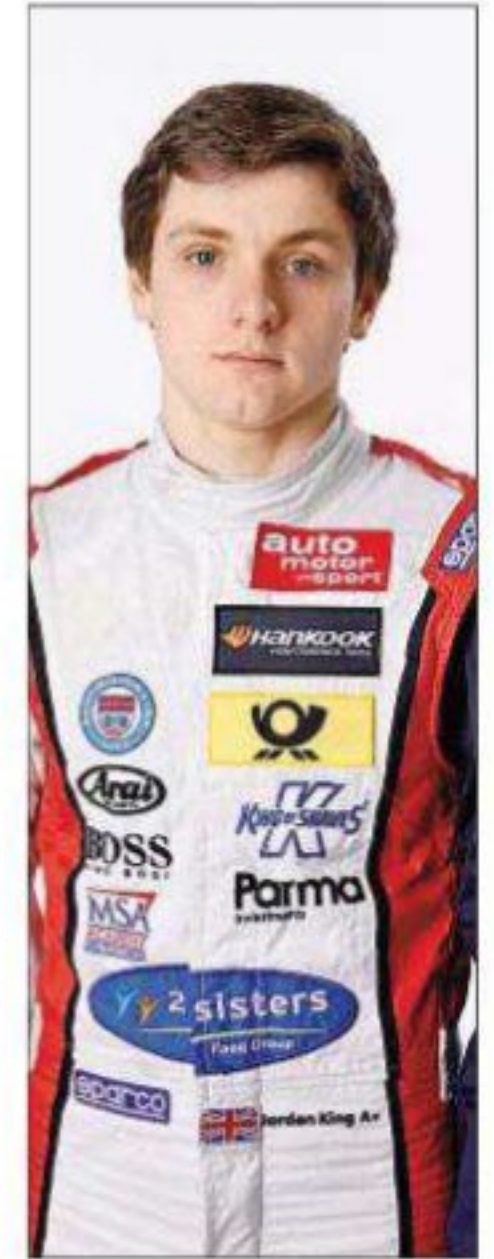


Jordan King

Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen

After two years in Formula Renault, including taking the runner-up spot in the North European Cup in 2012, the Warwickshire man makes the move up. He's had a good off-season – he would have won India's MRF Challenge if he hadn't missed two races to attend the AUTOSPORT Awards – and the Carlin team is impressed.

Carlin chief engineer Mark Owen, who runs King this year: "We had to work on fast corners with him. Pembrey is a great place to do that. He could see what Harry Tincknell was doing and he's risen his game. He's been very consistent, very cool and he will definitely be a regular points-scorer. He was quickest for much of the Barcelona test; he's still learning as far as getting the best out of the tyres but he's nearly there. No problems."

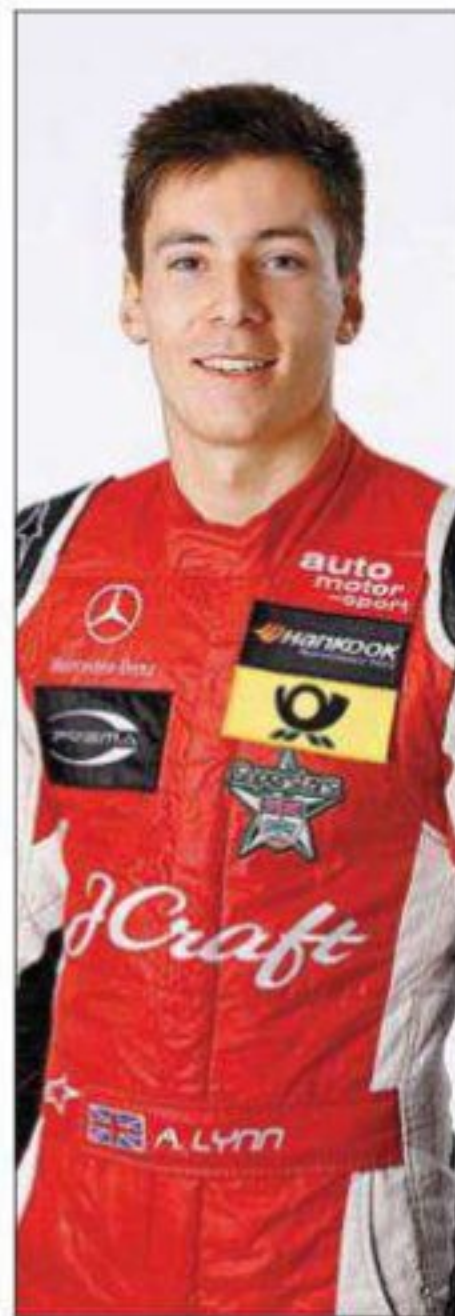


Alex Lynn

Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes

The amiable and articulate Essex lad has cut the ties from the British racing scene and Fortec Motorsport in favour of striking out and joining Prema Powerteam. Showed great speed last year and grabbed Macau pole, so expectations are high for a strong title bid.

Prema engineer Jean-Francois Levere, who runs Lynn this year: "After six days of testing I don't know him perfectly, but I'm starting to have a clear feeling. He has a strong character, a good attitude and the pace is there. It was quite easy from the start – he jumped in and said the car was good, and there was no difficulty adapting his driving style from what he was used to. All we have needed to work on is small details. He is very gentle and calm on the car – just right. He won't get pressure until qualifying, but I'm not worried about it."



Jann Mardenborough

Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen

Online-gaming whizz, under the mentorship of Nissan's GT Academy, makes the ambitious move to F3 with Carlin – after just one year racing against a load of Pro-Am drivers in a Nissan GT-R! The Cardiff racer looked quite handy when he went to New Zealand to contest the Toyota Racing Series for his single-seater debut.

Carlin chief engineer Mark Owen: "He's had some stunning performances in testing and adapted very quickly. He's a very hard worker – he never stops! I think he'll struggle in changeable conditions but you have to assume he's got the least experience of anyone on the grid. He's a real talent and it's a great story. It was a very good idea for him to race in New Zealand. His weak point there was starts, but we've worked very hard on that with him and he's one of the best now."

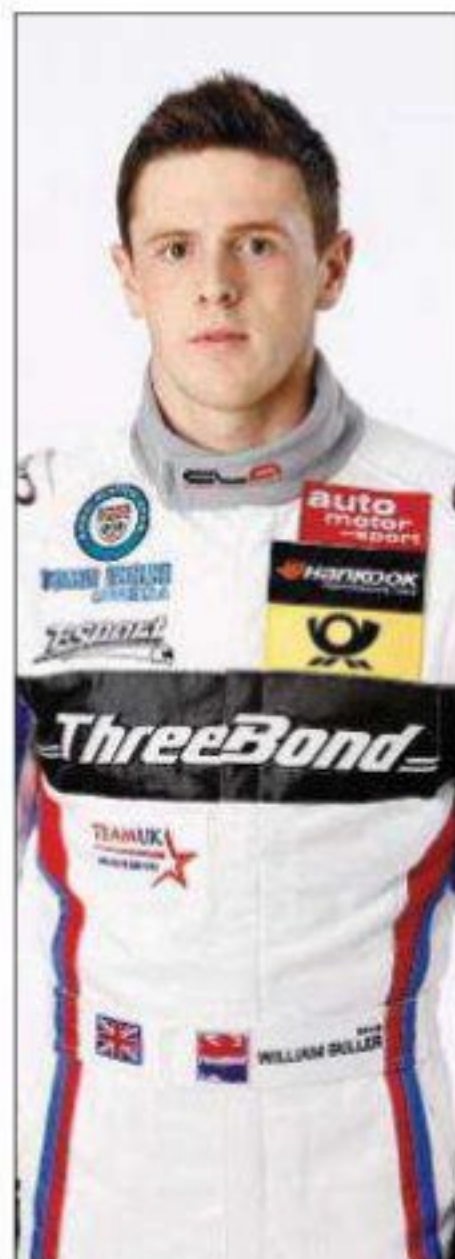


Will Buller

T-Sport Dallara-Nissan

For his fourth year in F3, and his second in Europe, the Northern Irishman has moved from Carlin to T-Sport, where he will lead the attack of the ThreeBond-funded, Tomei-tuned Nissan engine. A likely race winner and possible title contender.

T-Sport technical director Alan 'Skelly' Woodhead: "He tested with us at the end of 2011, and I'll be honest – he has matured a lot since then. We always knew he was capable and would respond well to the way we do things. He's professional in his approach but with an air of fun, and you can tell his experience. That's good for us because we can concentrate on what we're doing instead of spoon-feeding him. I've been impressed and there's no reason why we can't have a good year."

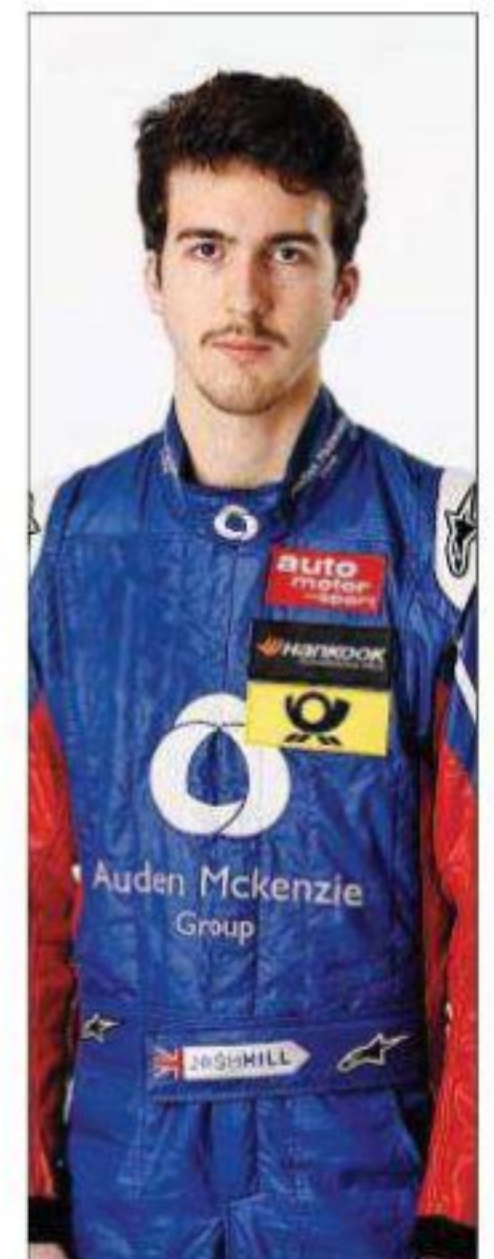


Josh Hill

Fortec Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes

There's been little to separate Damon's lad from Jordan King during their two years in Formula Renault – last year King finished ahead but Hill won more races. But he's up against it to start with, as his deal with Fortec came together late and the test programme didn't start in earnest until the official two-day session at Barcelona.

Fortec senior engineer Mick Kouros: "I think Josh is a better driver than Jordan... The Barcelona test was his first time in the new car, and he improved quite a bit from the first to the second day, but the field is so compact it wasn't obvious. We've not had him chasing lap times; he's on a different programme, with his engineer getting him to understand changes. He'll get quicker as he gets more confidence. I'm certainly not concerned."



JASON
PLATO

MATT
NEAL

GORDON
SHEDDEN

COLIN
TURKINGTON

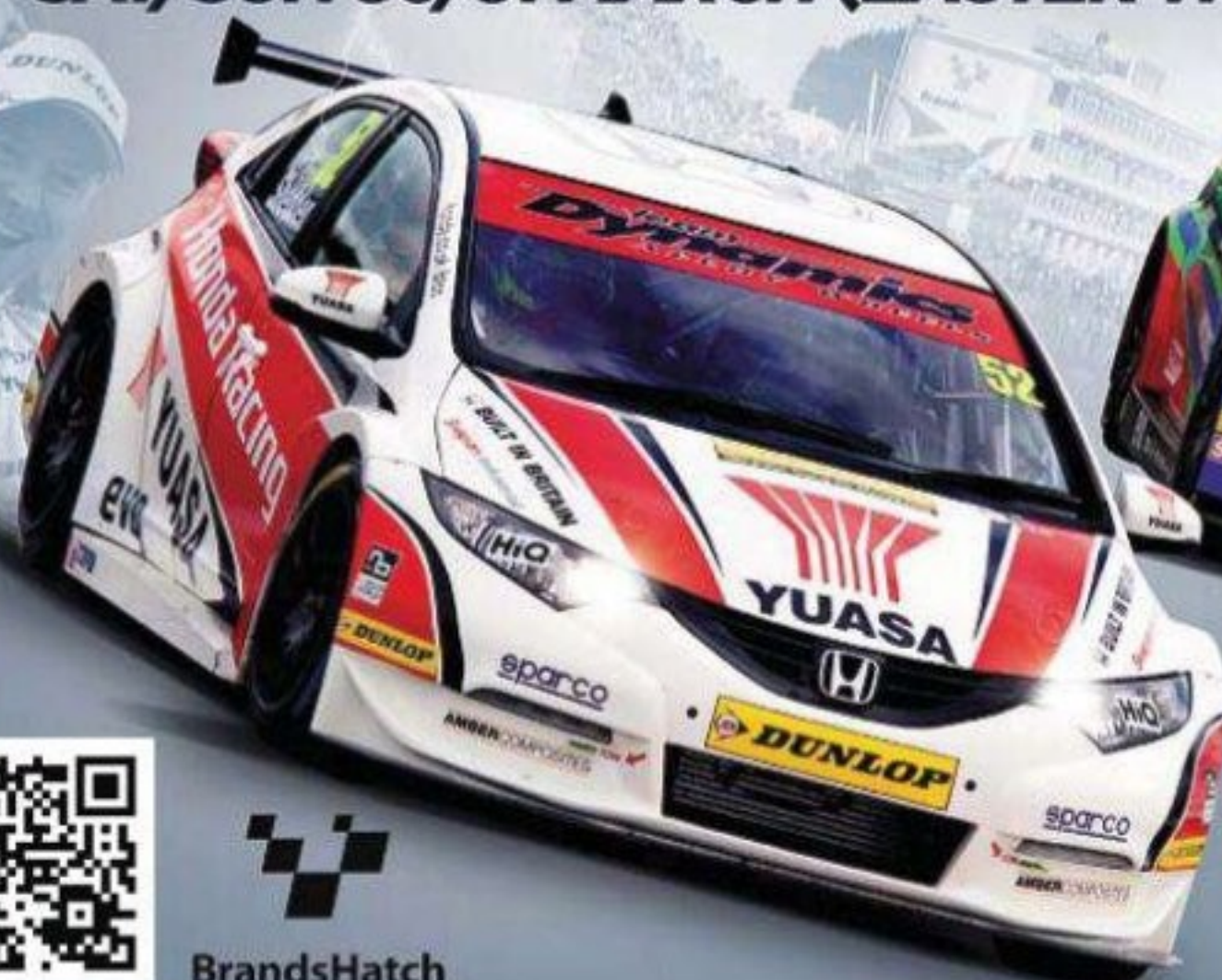
MAT
JACKSON



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Could Chevy's loss



be the WTCC's gain?

It has lost its biggest works squad, but the World Touring Car Championship now appears more interesting as a result, as **SAM TREMAYNE** explains

Somewhat ironically, the loss of a championship-winning works team could actually be a shot in the arm for the World Touring Car Championship. For a series that has long been one or two manufacturers shy of truly competitive, the Chevrolet factory squad's exit ahead of the 2013 campaign should by rights constitute far more of a setback. There are legitimate reasons, however, to suggest it could reinvigorate the championship.

For the past three years it has operated under incredibly narrow, parochial parameters: Chevrolet was dominant and therefore races were often settled before they had begun, at least in terms of the identity of the top three. Breaking that should unlock better, or at least more unpredictable, racing.

The WTCC has also accrued: in comes the Honda/JAS works effort – after three exploratory rounds and one Macau podium last year – and its Russian equivalent, the Lada/Russian Bears operation. Then there's last year's FIA World GT1 teams' and drivers' title-winner Munnich

Motorsport, running a trio of SEAT Leons, plus the Campos Racing squad and frontrunning Scandinavian Touring Cars outfit NIKA.

RML RETURNS...

And there's more: there's a kicker. RML, which ran the all-conquering Chevrolet works effort, will remain on the grid, running two Chevrolet Cruzes for Yvan Muller and Tom Chilton.

RML's involvement is perhaps the lynchpin that makes Chevrolet's exit a blessing in disguise.

For starters, the grid has a worthy benchmark again, particularly with Muller on board. For seconds, we won't be denied seeing Honda take on the Cruzes. RML may be lacking a works budget but, on track at least, it won't start any the poorer for it.

With such a wealth of past experience to draw upon, and with such an intimate knowledge of the car, don't expect RML to be anywhere other than the front. No change there then, but suddenly the sledgehammer Chevrolet was able to use to crack the walnut has morphed into something – well, far more reasonable. By accident rather than design, it looks like the WTCC has retained the most beneficial aspects of Chevrolet's past involvement while happily discarding the worst.

...AS DOES WORLD CHAMP ROB HUFF

It's not just RML's return that has given the series a major boost. After a winter of uncertainty, it will also have a defending champion in the shape of last year's title winner Rob Huff, with the added intrigue of his switch to a Leon.

While the Briton has past experience with SEAT – he started his tin-top career with the Spanish marque – his biggest asset will more likely be the abilities of Munnich Motorsport.

A newcomer it might be to World Tourers, but the team's arrival brings with it another FIA



L to r: Huff, Munnich
and Basseng spearhead
new SEAT effort

JAS Hondas add clout
to line-up in 2013



PHOTO-4

Thommo flies Russian
Bears Lada flag



TV deal until 2017
boosts the series'
global credibility



world title in the form of those two 2012 FIA GT1 crowns – both of which were incidentally secured after the team's first year running with Mercedes rather than Lamborghini.

To keep Huff honest – or possibly do even more – is one half of the aforementioned drivers' champions line-up, Marc Basseng. A Nurburgring 24 Hours and Bathurst 12 Hours winner with an extensive sportscar record, Basseng adds much needed quality to a grid that has become increasingly diluted in recent years.

Team owner Rene Munnich takes the third Leon, with Markus Winkelhock's decision to step down the happy origins of Huff's return.

HONDA IN CONTENTION

While the Munnich-run SEATs remain something of a mystery – a Leon hasn't won regularly in the WTCC since 2010 – Honda's late-season bow provided ample evidence of its frontrunning potential in 2013.

Ex-Formula 1 man Tiago Monteiro was tasked with the Civic's debut at Suzuka last year and duly delivered a brace of top-10 finishes. Shanghai was less fortuitous, but a podium and a fourth at Macau hinted at genuine title potential. Add to that the introduction of a certain Gabriele Tarquini, the only non-Chevrolet

man to have won races in both the past two seasons, and the package is even more potent.

Significantly though we shouldn't expect a parallel version of Chevrolet's past hegemony, and not just because of RML's presence. As Tarquini explains, the car has improved since Macau but remains a stronger prospect on the twisty stuff than it does on the open plains of a Monza or similar. There is, in other words, work to do to ensure the Civic is as versatile as its US cousin.

LADA'S UNKNOWN

While RML might be the safe-money bet for Honda's biggest on-track competition, there is also a rival for the 2013 works crown: Lada.

Whether the Russian Bears-run Granta can really challenge the Civic remains questionable, particularly after an inauspicious debut last year when James Thompson took a best finish of 11th – after starting 21st – from four attempts.

There were extenuating circumstances, not least the fact Thompson's Hungary and Portugal appearances came very early in the Granta's development. Extensive work has since been done to improve the car.

There's also value in having Thompson, a proven racewinner, to spearhead a works effort that includes 26-year-old Russian Aleksei

Dudukalo. Rivalling Honda may prove too ambitious for now, but the team should at least be able to keep the Japanese marque in check while adding another string to the WTCC bow.

VIEWING PLEASURE

One area the championship has not wanted for recently is TV coverage; in fact, such is Eurosport's involvement, it's arguably been at times its strongest asset.

A new deal, signed late last year, means Eurosport Events will continue to serve as the championship's promoter until at least 2017. That means guaranteed live coverage of qualifying and races. SPEED will also televise this year's US races, in addition to highlights from the remaining rounds.

All of that doesn't improve the on-track action, at least in the short term. But television eyes go hand in hand with sponsors, and an upturn in interest can only be a good thing for a series that has recently been struggling to justify the demand for a global production-based touring car series.

All this, combined with a 2014 rules package that promises greater performance, and there are several reasons to be optimistic. There might be life in the old dog yet. ▶

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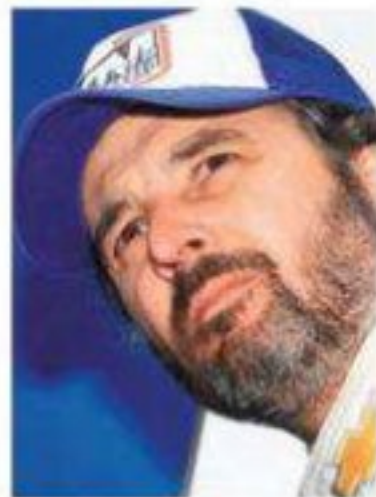
TEN AGES TO WATCH

1 Yvan Muller

(RML, Chevrolet Cruze)

Wins 30 Poles 14 Championships 3

An obvious choice given his return with RML, with whom he claimed 17 wins over the past two seasons, although his team's progress as a non-works outfit will be interesting to watch.



2 Rob Huff

(Munnich Motorsport, SEAT Leon)

Wins 23 Poles 11 Championships 1

The defending champion has new clothes in 2013. Munnich Motorsport may be new to the WTCC but it has exceptional pedigree from the world of GT racing.



3 Gabriele Tarquini

(Honda/JAS, Honda Civic)

Wins 17 Poles 15 Championships 1

The 51-year-old hasn't lost the winning habit just yet, and could prove a serious contender at the wheel of a Civic that proved worthy of a podium in only its third event.



4 Marc Basseng

(Munnich Motorsport, SEAT Leon)

Wins 0 Poles 0 Championships 0

Changing discipline is unlikely to trouble one half of last year's FIA GT1 championship-winning line-up. Logic would suggest, however, that he'll start with a deficit to Huff.

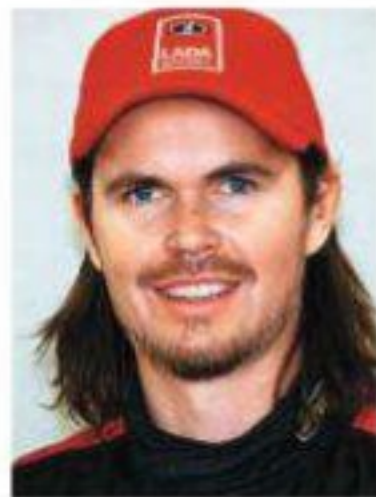


5 James Thompson

(Lada/Russian Bears, Lada Granta)

Wins 4 Poles 2 Championships 0

Thompson's Hungary and Portugal cameos last year weren't exactly unmitigated successes for Lada, but the works outfit has had time to improve and will be looking to him as its best hope in 2013.



6 Tiago Monteiro

(Honda/JAS, Honda Civic)

Wins 4 Poles 2 Championships 0

Monteiro's Macau podium gave Honda's new project the perfect start and suggested he could be a force in this year's championship even if his victory drought now stretches to 30 months.



7 Norbert Michelisz

(Zengo Motorsport, Honda Civic)

Wins 2 Poles 1 Championships 0

Last year's Yokohama Trophy winner stays with Zengo but has new boots to try on in the form of the JAS-developed Civic. Sharing data with the works team should put Michelisz in the mix.

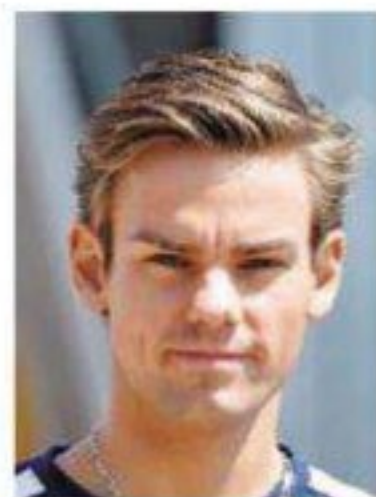


8 Tom Chilton

(RML, Chevrolet Cruze)

Wins 0 Poles 0 Championships 0

A first season in the WTCC spearheading Arena's Ford Focus programme met with difficulties, but a switch to RML – where he partners Yvan Muller – should be a dramatic tonic.



9 Tom Coronel

(ROAL Motorsport, BMW 320)

Wins 2 Poles 0 Championships 0

Coronel was Tarquini's main rival for the 'best of rest' tag last year, picking up five podiums over the season. Consistency will again be key, while a 10kg weight break for the 320 will be a welcome boost.



10 James Nash

(Bamboo-Engineering, Chevrolet Cruze)

Wins 0 Poles 0 Championships 0

Managed to outscore Arena team-mate Chilton last year, and now has the benefit of running with Bamboo and being engineered by ex-BAR F1 chief engineer Steve Farrell.

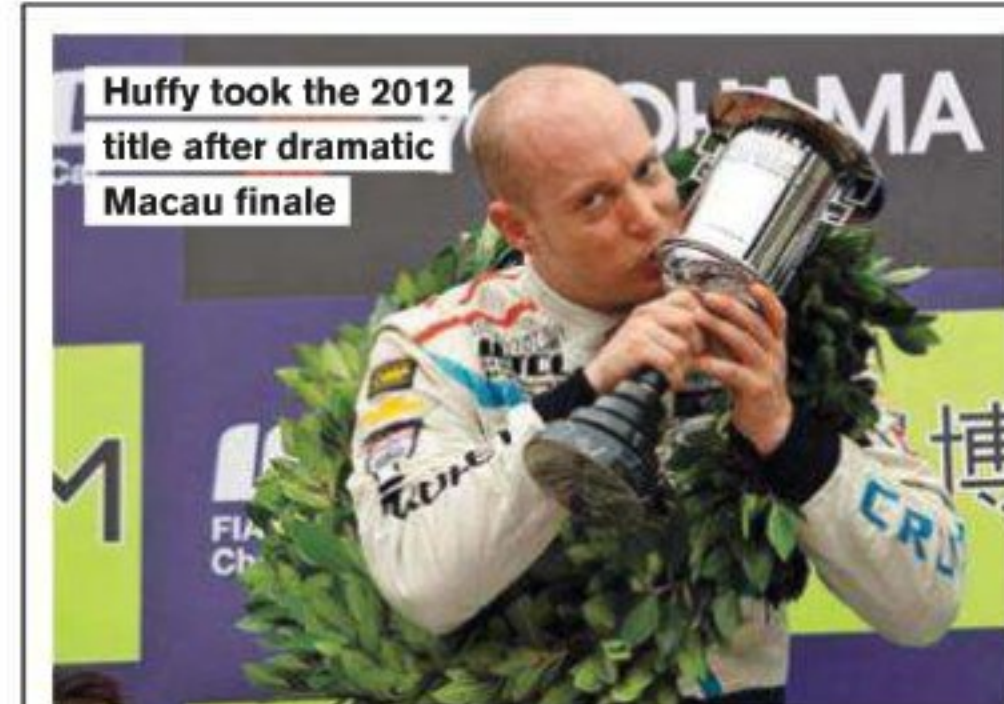


CALENDAR

DATE	LOCATION
March 24	Monza (I)
April 7	Marrakech (MA)
April 28	Slovakia Ring (SK)*
May 5	Hungaroring (H)
May 19	Salzburgring, (A)
June 9	Moscow Raceway, (RUS)*
June 30	Porto (P)
TBA	TBA**
August 9	Sonoma (USA)
September 22	Suzuka (J)
November 3	Shanghai (PRC)*
November 17	Macau (PRC)

*subject to ASN confirmation

**Brazil's Curitiba provisional July 28 date is subject to logistical considerations



Huff took the 2012 title after dramatic Macau finale

PAST FIVE CHAMPIONS

YEAR	DRIVER
2012	Rob Huff (Chevrolet)
2011	Yvan Muller (Chevrolet)
2010	Yvan Muller (Chevrolet)
2009	Gabriele Tarquini (SEAT)
2008	Yvan Muller (SEAT)

BMW 320s get a weight break for this season



NEW RULES Aside from a 10kg reduction in minimum weight for the BMW 320 and the Chevrolet Cruze – putting them on a par with the SEAT Leon and Honda Civic – major regulation changes come in 2014, with more powerful cars and better aerodynamic packages.

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RESULTS

364 LAPS, 1361.36 MILES

- 1** **BENOIT TRELUYER (F)/MARCEL FASSLER (CH)/OLIVER JARVIS (GB)**
LMP1 Audi Sport Team Joest Audi R18 e-tron quattro (Q1-1m43.886s) **12h00m11.638s**
- 2** **TOM KRISTENSEN (DK)/LUCAS DI GRASSI (BR)/ALLAN McNISH (GB)**
LMP1 Audi Sport Team Joest Audi R18 e-tron quattro (Q2-1m43.895s) **+7.679s**
- 3** **NICK HEIDFELD (D)/NICOLAS PROST (F)/NEEL JANI (CH)**
LMP1 Rebellion Racing Lola-Toyota B12/60 (Q3-1m46.456s) **-5 laps**
- 4** **KLAUS GRAF (D)/LUCAS LUHR (D)/ROMAIN DUMAS (F)**
LMP1 Pickett Racing HPD ARX-03c (Q4-1m46.478s) **-6 laps**
- 5** **ANDREA BELUCCHI (I)/MATHIAS BECHE (CH)/CONGFU CHENG (PRC)**
LMP1 Rebellion Racing Lola-Toyota B12/60 (Q5-1m46.689s) **-10 laps**
- 6** **SCOTT TUCKER (USA)/MARINO FRANCHITTI (GB)/RYAN BRISCOE (AUS)**
LMP2 Level 5 Motorsports HPD-Honda ARX-03b (Q7-1m51.159s) **-18 laps**
- 7** **RYAN HUNTER-REAY (USA)/SCOTT TUCKER (USA)/SIMON PAGENAUD (F)**
LMP2 Level 5 Motorsports HPD-Honda ARX-03b (Q8-1m51.271s) **-19 laps**
- 8** **TOM KIMBER-SMITH (GB)/CHRISTIAN ZUGEL (D)/ERIC LUX (USA)**
LMP2 Greaves Motorsport Zyltek-Nissan Z11SN (Q9-1m51.366s) **-22 laps**
- 9** **DAVID OSTELLA (CDN)/DAVID CHENG (PRC)/MIKE GUASCH (USA)**
LMPC PR1 Mathiasen Motorsports ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09 (Q16-1m54.311s) **-28 laps**
- 10** **KYLE MARCELLI (CDN)/CHRIS CUMMING (CDN)/STEFAN JOHANSSON (S)**
LMPC BAR1 Motorsports ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09 (Q17-1m54.520s) **-28 laps**
- 11** **TRISTAN NUNEZ (USA)/CHARLIE SHEARS (USA)/D HEINEMEIER HANSSON (DK)**
LMPC Performance Tech Motorsports ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09 (Q18-1m54.598s) **-29 laps**
- 12** **BRUNO JUNQUEIRA (BR)/ALEX POPOW (VV)/DUNCAN ENDE (USA)**
LMPC RSR Racing ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09 (Q13-1m53.674s) **-29 laps**
- 13** **ANTHONY LAZZARO (USA)/ED BROWN (USA)/JOHANNES VAN OVERBEEK (USA)**
LMP2 Extreme Speed Motorsports HPD-Honda ARX-03b (Q11-1m53.074s) **-29 laps**
- 14** **JONATHAN BENNETT (USA)/COLIN BRAUN (USA)/MARK WILKINS (CDN)**
LMPC CORE Autosport ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09 (Q12-1m53.404s) **-30 laps**
- 15** **OLIVER GAVIN (GB)/TOMMY MILNER (USA)/RICHARD WESTBROOK (GB)**
GT Pratt & Miller Chevrolet Corvette C6.R (Q21-1m58.934s) **-31 laps**
- 16** **GIANMARIA BRUNI (I)/OLIVIER BERETTA (MC)/MATTEO MALUCCELLI (I)**
GT Risi Competizione Ferrari 458 Italia (Q20-1m58.815s) **-31 laps**
- 17** **WOLF HENZLER (D)/BRYAN SELLERS (USA)/NICK TANDY (GB)**
GT Team Falken Tire (Walker) Porsche 911 GT3-RSR (Q31-2m00.365s) **-32 laps**
- 18** **BILL AUERLEN (USA)/MAXIME MARTIN (B)/JORG MULLER (D)**
GT Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing BMW Z4 GTE (Q27-1m59.736s) **-34 laps**
- 19** **MARC GOOSSENS (B)/RYAN DALZIEL (GB)/DOMINIK FARNBACHER (D)**
GT Riley SRT Viper GTS-R (Q29-1m59.898s) **-35 laps**
- 20** **MARCO HOLZER (D)/BRYCE MILLER (USA)/RICHARD LIETZ (A)**
GT Paul Miller Racing Porsche 911 GT3-RSR (Q26-1m59.543s) **-35 laps**
- 21** **RUSTY MITCHELL (USA)/TOMY DRISSI (USA)/CHAPMAN DUCOTE (USA)**
LMPC BAR1 Motorsports ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09 (Q19-1m55.282s) **-38 laps**
- 22** **DIRK MULLER (D)/JOEY HAND (USA)/JOHN EDWARDS (USA)**
GT Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing BMW Z4 GTE (Q28-1m59.847s) **-43 laps**
- 23** **DARREN TURNER (GB)/STEFAN MUCKE (D)/BRUNO SENNA (BR)**
GT Prodrive Aston Martin Vantage V8 (Q22-1m59.890s) **-46 laps**
- 24** **JEROEN BLEEKEMOLEN (NL)/COOPER MACNEIL (USA)/DION VON MOLTKE (ZA)**
GTC Alex Job Racing Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (Q33-2m05.747s) **-49 laps**
- 25** **SPENCER PUMPELY (USA)/NELSON CANACHE JR (VV)/BRIAN WONG (USA)**
GTC Flying Lizard Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (Q35-2m05.765s) **-49 laps**
- 26** **SEAN EDWARDS (GB)/HENRIQUE CISNEROS (USA)/MARCO SEEFRIED (D)**
GTC NGT Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (Q34-2m05.747s) **-50 laps**
- 27** **JAN HEYLEN (B)/MIKE HEDLUND (USA)/JOON FOGARTY (USA)**
GTC JDX Racing Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (Q37-2m05.936s) **-50 laps**
- 29** **ANDY LALLY (USA)/PATRICK DEMPSEY (USA)/JOE FOSTER (USA)**
GTC Dempsey Racing Del Piero Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (Q32-2m05.446s) **-53 laps**
- 33** **PEDRO LAMY (P)/PAUL DALLA LANA (CDN)/BILLY JOHNSON (USA)**
GT Prodrive Aston Martin Vantage V8 (Q23-1m59.208s) **-57 laps**
- 34** **TOMMY KENDALL (USA)/JONATHAN BOMARITO (USA)/KUNO WITTMER (CDN)**
GT Riley SRT Viper GTS-R (Q25-1m59.430s) **-61 laps**
- 37** **DAVID BRABHAM (AUS)/SCOTT SHARP (USA)/GUY COSMO (USA)**
LMP2 Extreme Speed Motorsports HPD-Honda ARX-03b (Q10-1m52.703s) **-83 laps**
- R** **ANTONIO GARCIA (E)/JAN MAGNUSSEN (DK)/JORDAN TAYLOR (USA)**
GT Pratt & Miller Chevrolet Corvette C6.R (Q24-1m59.348s) **213 laps-gearbox/withdrawn**
- R** **LEH KEEN (USA)/BILL SWEEDLER (USA)/TOWNSEND BELL (USA)**
GT Team West/AJR Ferrari 458 Italia (Q30-2m00.308s) **209 laps-accident**
- R** **CHRIS DYSON (USA)/GUY SMITH (GB)/BUTCH LEITZINGER (USA)**
LMP1 Dyson Racing Lola-Mazda B12/60 (Q16-1m48.407s) **81 laps-transmission**
- R** **ANDY MEYRICK (GB)/OLIVIER PLA (F)**
LMP1 DeltaWing-Elan/Mazda LM12 (Q15-1m53.866s) **10 laps-engine**

In each car, first-named driver started race and driver in italics set qualifying time.

Winners' average speed: 113.42mph. Fastest lap: Kristensen, 1m44.870s, 128.39mph; LMP2: Kimber-Smith, 1m52.691s, 119.48mph; GT: Turner, 1m59.780s, 112.41mph; LMPC: Braun, 1m55.614s, 116.46mph; GTC: Estre, 2m06.550s, 106.39mph. There were 42 starters. Championship positions not available at time of going to press.

FOR IN-DEPTH RESULTS

FORIX

Audi ends awesome Sebring era on top



There was never much doubt that the German make would take its 11th win in the 12 Hours. The intrigue lay in whether it would be the 'old' R18 or new. **GARY WATKINS** reports

THERE WAS NEVER ANY DOUBT THAT AUDI WAS going to win the Sebring 12 Hours one last time for the foreseeable future. There was, however, plenty of speculation throughout about which of its two cars was going to notch up the marque's 11th victory in a race it has pretty much made its own in the soon-to-end American Le Mans Series era. It was nip and tuck between the two R18 e-tron quattros virtually all the way last Saturday.

Benoit Treluyer, Marcel Fassler and Oliver Jarvis ultimately prevailed by a shade under eight seconds over team-mates Allan McNish, Tom Kristensen and Lucas di Grassi at the end of a race in which the duo of Joest-run machines were often separated by just a handful of seconds. The two cars – the 2012-spec version of the hybrid LMP1 coupe that

won the race and the updated version of the car – were evenly matched around the 3.74-mile Sebring International Raceway.

This was a real motor race that Audi's bosses on the pitwall allowed to rage all the way to the flag. Both cars left the track at least once during the race, each made contact with backmarkers and, in case there were still any doubters, the two Audis made contact with each other at high speed when their respective young chargers were at the wheel.

"I can promise you that we fought hard and there were no team orders," said Jarvis, who sideswiped di Grassi during the fifth hour. "That was flat-out racing."

McNish and co looked to have the faster car over the first half of the race, the Scot and di Grassi



Rebellion Lola was best non-Audi in LMP1



**Treluyer sets off for
12 hours in front of
team-mate Kristensen**

overtaking the sister car on track. The balance between the new and old R18s flipped around as the temperatures fell along with the sun, handing Treluyer and his team-mates the slightest of advantages despite a loose front undertray that was never properly fixed.

"We had the car for the first half of the race and they had it for the second," explained McNish. "But it was always going to be tight."

The Scot had established the #2 Audi in the lead after taking over from Kristensen when he was given a dubious 60s penalty for avoidable contact with an LMPC car. The Audi was going around the outside of the one-make prototype, and if there was any avoidance to be done it looked like it should have been on the part of the slower car.

The #2 car quickly made up the time lost when the safety car came out again, but McNish reckoned it was still crucial because afterwards he and his co-drivers were always playing catch-up.

"It did matter because if we had been in front we would have been able to control the race," he said. "It was significant in strategic terms."

The new car remained in the hunt almost to the end. Treluyer emerged from the penultimate pitstop sequence with a shade over an hour to go with a 2.6s advantage, only to be caught by Kristensen and very nearly lose the lead when he was baulked by a GTC Porsche.

Kristensen sensed his chance and tried to go all the way around the outside of the Porsche at Collier Curve, only for the driver of the slower car to move straight onto the bit of track for which the second R18 was aiming.

Even had Kristensen passed his team-mate, he still would have had to pull somewhere in the

region of 6s if he was to win the 61st running of the Sebring 12 Hours. He had taken over his Audi five laps earlier than Treluyer and would require a few extra litres of diesel at the final stop.

Treluyer emerged from the pits with 19s in hand, and the race was as good as over.

The significance of the 2012 e-tron triumphing over the updated version of the car with which Audi will try to haul back the advantage enjoyed by Toyota at the end of last year's World Endurance Championship was played down by the Audi camp. Instead, the team took positives out of the performance of the revised car, which has a Toyota-style extension to the rear wheelarches and a host of other detail changes.

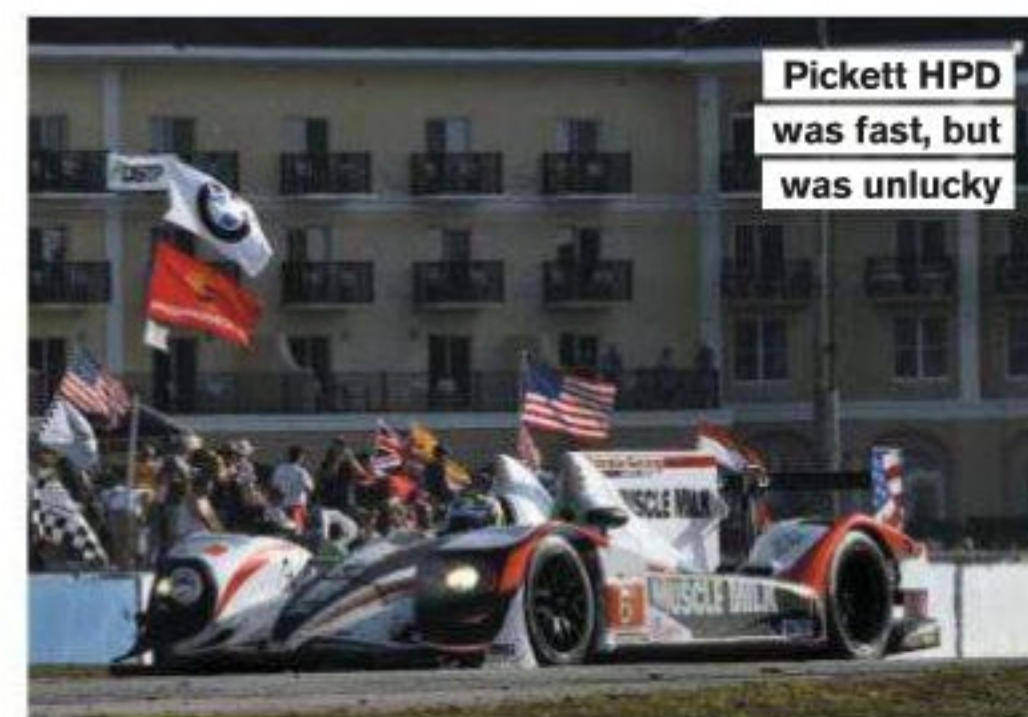
"In my experience it takes a while to get speed out of the car," said Joest technical director Ralf Juttner. "We're still learning, because we have different aerodynamics and aero distribution."

"All the complaints that we had with the old car last year have gone. The drivers of #1 really like the car they've got here."

The top privateer trio didn't like the car they had at Sebring, but a clean run for the lead Rebellion Racing Lola-Toyota B12/60 driven by Neel Jani, Nick Heidfeld and Nicolas Prost produced a podium finish ahead of the team that's going to be their major rival in the ALMS this season.

The Pickett Racing squad had the faster car in the HPD ARX-03c, and by some margin, but a series of misfortunes allied to Rebellion's faultless performance left Klaus Graf, Lucas Luhr and on-loan Porsche factory driver Romain Dumas fourth at the flag.

"We had 'em covered," said Graf after the race. "We were quicker here and that looks



**Pickett HPD
was fast, but
was unlucky**

promising for the rest of the season."

The Pickett squad took a tactical decision after testing at Sebring on Monday to effectively return its HPD to 2012 ARX-03a specification. The wider, taller front-tyre set-up and revised front aero were taken off the car in favour of last year's narrow rubber.

The move wasn't so much about outright performance as providing Graf, Luhr and Dumas with a more manageable car for 12 hours of racing over the Sebring bumps.

"It was all about driveability," continued 2012 ALMS champion Graf. "We thought it was the better package for this race and we were right."

The frustration began for the Muscle Milk-backed squad when Luhr lost the front-left wheel exiting the pits late in the second hour. The slow tour back to the pits resulted in the HPD dropping a lap behind, but by the halfway mark the machine was back in the best-of-the-rest position behind the Audis.

Two draconian 60s penalties for avoidable contact – at least one of which was a travesty of justice – put the car behind again, too far this time for Graf and his team-mates to claw their way back.

"I was fuming," said the German driver after the race. "The first time, an LMPC literally parked in front of me and the second one, Ed Brown [who was driving the Extreme Speed Motorsports HPD that hit Graf], came up afterwards and apologised for turning in on me. And I got 60s both times!"

The good news for the Pickett squad was that its HPD was more than a match for its main rival for the ALMS title this year, something Rebellion was happy to admit.

"That was the maximum we could do, but it appeared that they didn't want it today – so we took it," offered Jani. "They made mistakes and we did everything right, which is why we deserved third, even if we didn't have the pace."

The lead Rebellion Lola again ran triple stints on its tyres, and Jani reckoned that was crucial.

"They were only 40s behind at the finish," added Jani, "so if we hadn't run triples I don't think we would have won."

The #12 Rebellion car was only sporadically quick through Sebring week, and the team wasn't entirely sure why.

"It wasn't an easy car to drive and didn't have the same feel as last year," said Jani. "I was even missing apexes, and I never do that."

The second Rebellion entry, shared by Andrea Belicchi, Mathias Beche and Congfu Cheng, ended up fifth, four laps down on the HPD it was racing against.

The car didn't have the pace of the sister car and also received two stop-go penalties along the way.

How decisive McNish's stop-go proved in the outcome up front is not entirely clear. He wasn't best pleased about his treatment by the race officials, but he wasn't complaining too much.

"I was happy with my own performance," he said. "And it was a great race to be involved in."

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IN THE PADDOCK

Gary Watkins



Audi will be missed on the US sportscar trail. Missed because it has been such an integral part of the history of long-distance racing in North America over the past four years, but also missed because of the way it goes about its racing.

The German manufacturer has never been afraid to allow its cars to race each other. And so it was at Sebring, Audi's last hurrah in domestic US sportscar circles before the merger of Grand-Am and the American Le Mans Series for 2014 brings an end to the LMP1 class on the other side of the Pond.

Audi didn't have to allow its two cars to slug it out for victory throughout the 12 Hours. After all, it was crucial that the cars were intact at the end, because this week's test is just as important to the Audi Sport Team Joest squad as the race (the test having even been confirmed before its participation in the race).

It did the right thing in honour of a race that is central to its story in endurance racing and should be applauded for doing so.

Team orders have been part of Audi's gameplan on and off down the years, but when the situation arises it allows its boys to fight – and fight long and hard. The six Audi drivers at Sebring to a man insisted that there were no team orders.

If there were any doubters, surely they were silenced when Oliver Jarvis and Lucas di Grassi made contact on the entry to the ultra-fast and ultra-bumpy Turn 17.



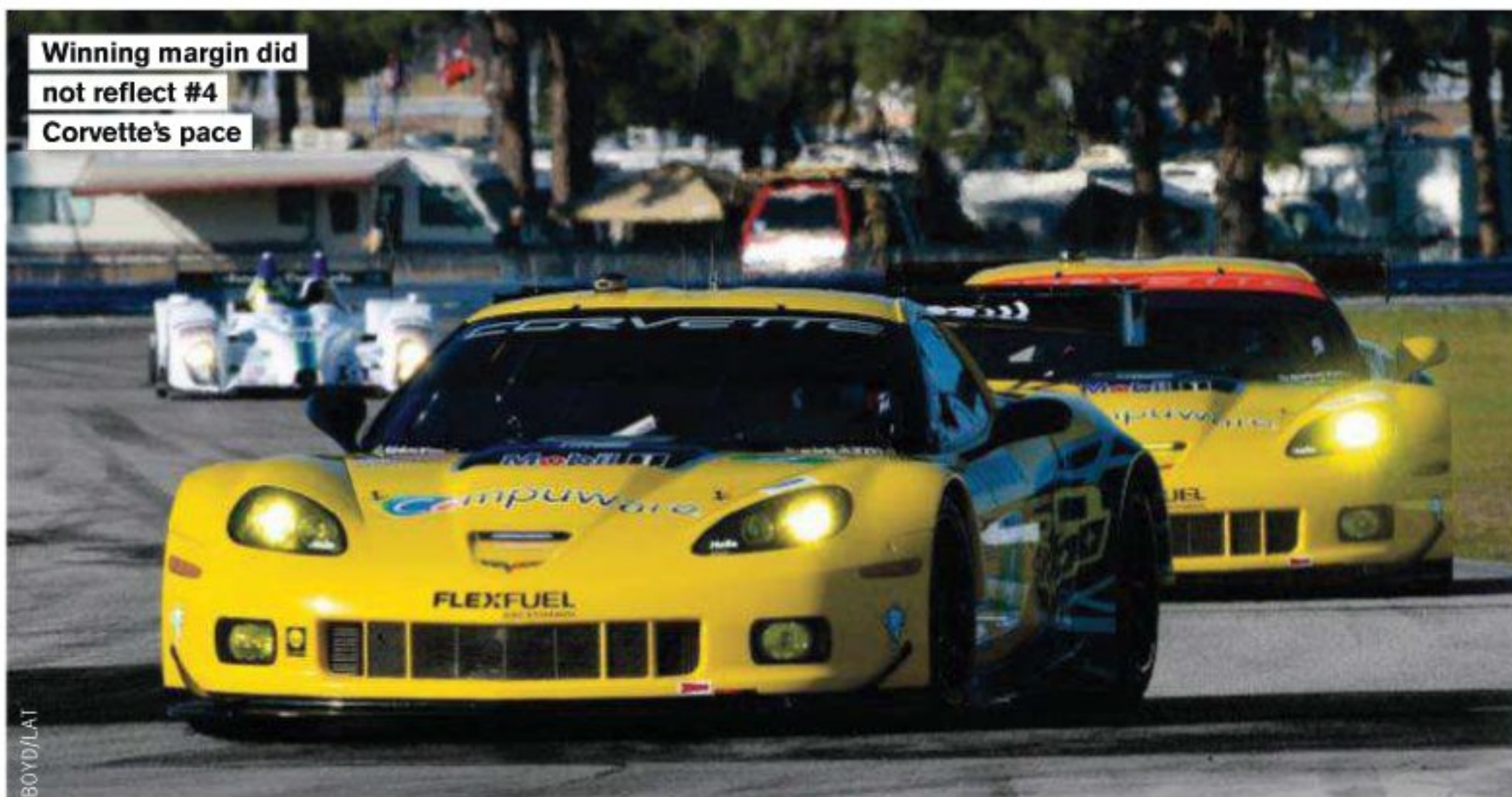
ROLL OF HONOUR

Oliver Jarvis became the 15th Briton to win the Sebring 12 Hours last weekend. The others are:



Stirling Moss (above) • Mike Hawthorn • Peter Collins • John Surtees • Mike Parkes • Ken Miles • Jackie Oliver • Vic Elford • Brian Redman (x2) • John Fitzpatrick • Andy Wallace (x2) • Johnny Herbert • Allan McNish (x4) • Anthony Davidson

Winning margin did not reflect #4 Corvette's pace



GT

Corvette's dramatic fightback

IT WAS NO SURPRISE THAT THE SEBRING 12 HOURS threw up an ultra-close GT battle with an even closer finish. But this one was special because the winning Chevrolet Corvette C6.R driven by Oliver Gavin, Tommy Milner and Richard Westbrook twice came back from a lap down to snatch an amazing victory with just minutes to go.

The #4 Corvette was definitely the quickest car in the class on Saturday, only it looked like being a frustrating day for last year's American Le Mans Series GT champion duo and endurance draft-in Westbrook. That pace, super-quick pitstops by the Corvette Racing squad and a never-say-die attitude allowed the yellow muscle car to take the win ahead of ALMS returnee Risi Competizione.

Gavin made a flying start in the #4 Corvette and the car remained in the lead until a dashboard short-circuit at the end of the third hour resulted in an unscheduled stop, a stop-go penalty for pitlane speeding when the dash went out, and another stop eight laps later to fix the tail lights.

The car fell the better part of two laps down on the GT frontrunners, but remarkably was back in the lead in the seventh hour, only for the car to be penalised again – this time to the tune of 60s – for a dubious avoidable-contact call when Westbrook was at the wheel.

The chances of a comeback by Corvette Racing, which had at this stage parked its second entry with gearbox problems, looked remote even when Gavin made it back to second at the end of the 10th hour. The Risi Ferrari 458 Italia shared by Gianmaria Bruni, Oliver Beretta and Matteo Malucelli looked too far ahead.

Milner could only nibble away at Bruni's advantage through the penultimate hour, but

the complexion of the battle changed dramatically at the final round of stops. Risi had to pull Bruni, the team's fastest driver, from the car when a loose seat caused him back problems, which in turn started to rob him of feeling in his right leg. His replacement Malucelli, a driver making his Sebring debut, haemorrhaged time early in his stint, appeared to get a grasp on the job in hand and then went off at the hairpin just as Milner drew ever closer, relinquishing the lead.

"It would have been pretty hard to take if we hadn't won, because we always felt we had the car under us to do it," said Gavin. "But you never expect to come back from nearly two laps down in this class."

The big question was whether Bruni would have been able to repel Milner's advances had he remained fit, and the answer is almost certainly yes. It also needs to be pointed out that the refuelling-system restrictor the Ferrari runs under ALMS rules robs it of 7s in comparison to the Chevrolet at every stop.

Chrysler's SRT Viper GTS-R finally emerged as a contender at the start of its first full ALMS season. The #91 car shared by Marc Goossens, Dominik Farnbacher and Ryan Dalziel led the race and looked good for a podium despite losing time at every pitstop, partly due to the same handicap as Ferrari and partly as a result of a seating issue with its wheels.

Even so, the Viper remained in with a shot of a podium until the ninth hour when the car failed to restart in the pits. The team managed to shock the starter into life, but the four laps lost restricted the car to fifth.

BMW came away with fourth place on the debut of its new V8-powered Z4 GTE. Fourth for Maxime Martin, Bill Auberlen and Jorg Muller was a decent result in itself, but even more impressive was the pace of the car. Or, more particularly, the pace of the sister car in which Joey Hand was joined by Dirk Muller and John Edwards, which was able to lead the race.

Power-steering problems for the Martin car and a broken strut for the quicker Z4 ultimately kept BMW off the podium.

The Falken Tires Porsche squad came away with a podium. The Walker Racing-run 911 GT3-RSR driven by Bryan Sellers, Wolf Henzler and Britain's Nick Tandy was just fast enough to stay in the mix throughout, though it was never going to win.

BMW and Viper both showed strong pace



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IN THE PADDOCK

Level 5 set to stay after P2 win

LEVEL 5 MOTORSPORTS' ONE-TWO FINISH in the Sebring 12 Hours with its pair of HPDs looks likely to secure the squad's participation in the remainder of the American Le Mans Series.

Last year's ALMS LMP2 champion team only committed to Sebring when it became clear that there was going to be some class opposition, including a further pair of HPD ARX-03bs fielded by Extreme Speed Motorsports. Now the team is hinting that it will defend its drivers' and teams'

titles with its brace of similar machines.

Level 5 ran on Michels, actually a customer-spec control tyre previously used by the LMPC-class cars, at Sebring. This appeared to be a tacit admission that it was planning to continue in the series beyond the series opener.

Dunlop development tyres were available for Sebring but will not be for the remainder of the season. Had the team opted for the British-made tyres, it would have precluded a deal with Michelin for the remaining races.

Level 5 team manager David Stone hinted after the race that a decision on the squad's plans for the remainder of season was imminent.

"We hope to sort something out this week," he said. "But there are still issues to be resolved on the minimum driving time."

Level 5 is lobbying for changes to the sporting rules to allow Scott Tucker to drive both his cars in the short ALMS races without compromising the strategy for either entry.

Tucker won at Sebring, sharing with former Porsche factory driver Ryan Briscoe and Marino Franchitti. They had the cleaner run of the two cars and lost time only when IndyCar ace Briscoe failed to click the steering wheel into place correctly.

ESM made a steady start to its LMP2 campaign after moving over from the GT class. Briscoe's slow lap, undertaken in first gear, meant the ESM car driven by Scott Sharp, Guy Cosmo and David Brabham was leading when an input-shaft failure stranded the Australian out on the circuit.



Franchitti presses on in class-winning Level 5 HPD

Tests needed to fix DeltaWing

AN EXTENSIVE TEST PROGRAMME IS planned for the radical DeltaWing racer between Sebring and its next scheduled race appearance at the Laguna Seca American Le Mans Series round in May.

The revised machine, now running a Mazda-based engine in place of the original Nissan, arrived at Sebring with only two days of testing under its belt. The car suffered a series of new-car glitches – including overheating – through practice and only completed 10 laps in the race.

Dave Price, team manager at the DeltaWing Racing Cars squad, said: "This race was always going to be a

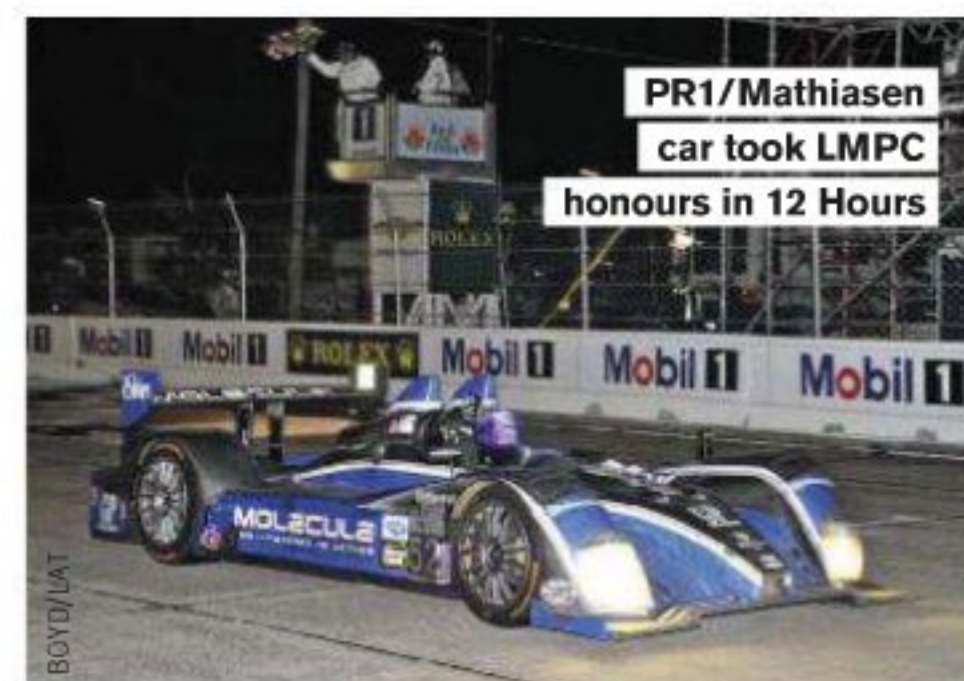
bit of a shittight given that it all came together so late, so what we've got to do now is go away and do a decent amount of testing."

The DeltaWing, started by Andy Meyrick and also driven by Olivier Pla during the weekend, stopped five laps into the race after lapsing onto five cylinders and only completed five more before the engine failed.

The problems for the car at Sebring mean that any idea of taking the DeltaWing to Long Beach for round two of the ALMS have been shelved. The need for testing also looks likely to delay the planned debut of the coupe version of the car until after Laguna.



DeltaWing needs a lot of work. Here is Pla in action



PR1/Mathiasen car took LMPC honours in 12 Hours

OSTELLA TAKES DEBUT CLASS WIN

Former Indy Lights racer David Ostella made a winning start to his sportscar career at Sebring. The Canadian played a key role in PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports' win in the one-make ORECA-Chevrolet LMPC class at the wheel of the car he shared with David Cheng and Mike Guasch.

JOHANSSON'S SEBRING RETURN

Stefan Johansson returned to Sebring, a race he won on his debut in 1984 and again in '97, in the LMPC class. The Swede, who still hopes to return to the World Endurance Championship with Gulf Racing Middle East, shared a BAR1 ORECA-Chevy with Kyle Marcelli and Chris Cumming and narrowly missed out on victory, the car finishing just 15s down on the PR1/Mathiasen entry.

AMR'S TOUGH RACE IN GT

Aston Martin Racing was ostensibly at Sebring to continue its test programme ahead of the start of the WEC, but there was still disappointment that neither of its Vantage GTEs figured near the front of the race. The two cars lost time early on with radiator damage and throttle problems but both made the finish.

WOES FOR DYSON AT SEBRING

Dyson Racing endured a disaster at Sebring, a race it is still trying to win after more than 20 years of trying. Its Lola-Mazda B12/60, driven by Guy Smith, Chris Dyson and Butch Leitzinger, suffered a throttle problem in the second hour and, after time behind the wall for repairs, retired with transmission failure in the fourth hour.

AUDI'S NEW FAD

One of the developments on the 2013-spec Audi R18 e-tron quattro is a forward-facing, roof-mounted camera feeding screens inside the car. The system is designed to remove blind spots caused by tyres and chassis A-pillars.

AJR WINS IN GTC... AGAIN

Alex Job Racing notched up its second straight Sebring GTC victory, and achieved its goal with the very same Porsche 911 GT3 Cup. The car that won in 2012, now rebuilt around a new shell, came out on top – despite dropping a lap down mid-race – courtesy of a three-hour final stint from Jeroen Bleekemolen, who shared driving duties with Dion von Moltke and Cooper MacNeil.



AJR squad won again



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Kahne (5) chased
by Kyle Busch
and Keselowski

NASCAR SPRINT CUP BRISTOL (USA), MARCH 17, RD 4/36

Kahne wins a thriller at Bristol's bullring

KASEY KAHNE MADE UP FOR THE disappointment of being denied victory at Las Vegas seven days earlier with a great drive to win on the half-mile oval at Bristol.

In an entertaining race, the Hendrick Motorsports driver saw off the challenge from champion Brad Keselowski, polesitter Kyle Busch and the charging Kurt Busch to claim a comfortable win.

Kahne ultimately took advantage of fresher tyres on his Chevrolet to work his way by Keselowski, who had moved to the front by not pitting during the penultimate caution period.

In the closing laps the Penske Ford driver had to fend off Kyle Busch, who once again recovered from a pitlane speeding penalty to finish in the top five, and Busch's older brother Kurt, who drove his best race to date for Furniture Row to recover from two laps down to take fourth.

Like Kurt Busch, Clint Bowyer also had the benefit of fresher tyres in the closing stages, which he used to move his Michael Waltrip Racing Toyota into fifth place.

Pre-race points leader Jimmie Johnson was a solid top-10 runner throughout, but in the closing stages a blown right-front tyre sent him into



The pitlane got
a bit tight for
Stenhouse (17) and
Almirola (43)

the wall. It was one of a number of blowouts, which accounted for most of the 11 caution periods – more than double the amount in last year's race.

Johnson's Hendrick team-mate Jeff Gordon had worked his way to the front with a two-tyre change when the rest of the leaders took four. Despite the old rubber he held onto the lead, but the gamble failed when the right-front tyre blew and sent him up the track and into the wall.

Matt Kenseth was catching Gordon for the lead at the time and was caught up in the incident, wrecking his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota as he slammed into the side of the crashing Chevy.

There was a kerfuffle in the pits at the end of the race between former team-mates Joey Logano and Denny Hamlin. Penske racer Logano was incensed after being tipped into the wall by the Gibbs Toyota of Hamlin

as the pair of them closed on erstwhile leader Gordon.

Afterwards, the pair had to be restrained from exchanging anything worse than insults, and Hamlin dismissed his rival's chances of taking revenge: "He said he was coming for me, but I usually don't see him so that's usually not a factor."

It was also a disastrous race for three-time Cup champion Tony Stewart, who was sent spinning into the wall at high speed following an early blowout of his own. He managed to get his damaged Stewart-Haas Chevrolet back to the pits for lengthy repairs and limped around at the tail end of the field to the finish.

● Connell Sanders Jr

RESULTS

1 Kasey Kahne (Chevrolet SS), 2 Kyle Busch (Toyota Camry), +1.700s 3 Brad Keselowski (Ford Fusion); 4 Kurt Busch (Chevy); 5 Clint Bowyer (Toyota); 6 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy); 7 Ryan Newman (Chevy); 8 Brian Vickers (Toyota); 9 Paul Menard (Chevy); 10 Jamie McMurray (Chevy). **Points** 1 Keselowski, 166; 2 Earnhardt, 157; 3 Jimmie Johnson, 151; 4 Bowyer, 128; 5 Greg Biffle, 126; 6 Denny Hamlin, 125; 7 Kahne, 124; 8 Carl Edwards, 124; 9 Menard, 118; 10 Kyle Busch, 115.

2013 EVENTS

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03	MARCH	ADIDAS HALF MARATHON
12-14	APRIL	FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP
25-26	MAY	F3/GT CHAMPIONSHIPS
01-02	JUNE	BLANCPAIN ENDURANCE SERIES
15-16	JUNE	MG LIVE!
28-30	JUNE	2013 FORMULA 1 BRITISH GRAND PRIX
12-14	JULY	INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN
26-28	JULY	SILVERSTONE CLASSIC
02-04	AUGUST	FIM SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
11	AUGUST	FORD FAIR
29-01	AUG/SEPT	2013 HERTZ BRITISH GRAND PRIX (MotoGP™)
08	SEPTEMBER	TRAX
14-15	SEPTEMBER	THE SILVERSTONE 24 HOUR CYCLING GRAND PRIX
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V8 SUPERCARS MELBOURNE (AUS), MARCH 15-17, NON-CHAMPIONSHIP

Kiwis reign on Aussie drivers' parade

DRIVERS FROM NEW ZEALAND STOLE the show in the non-championship V8 Supercar races that supported the Australian Grand Prix at Melbourne as Fabian Coulthard and Scott McLaughlin took their maiden wins in the category.

Coulthard, a veteran of five years in V8s, dominated Friday's opening race from pole position in his Brad Jones Racing Holden, and just kept on going, even if his third victory did only arrive after Shane van Gisbergen – another Kiwi – and eight other drivers were disqualified after irregularities were found with the ignition timing on their engines.

An emotional Coulthard dedicated his wins to Jason Richards, who drove for the same BJR team until he was diagnosed with cancer. Richards died in December 2011, aged 35.

"JR had massive success at BJR and massive success here," said Coulthard. "We all miss him. He is one of those blokes who will never be forgotten."

Jason Bright backed up team-mate Coulthard with second in two of the races, while Will Davison was the best of the Ford drivers – just – taking third overall in his Ford Performance Racing Falcon from the satellite-team Rod Nash Racing version of David Reynolds.



Coulthard (leading)
won three times

Fresh from a strong showing at Adelaide, 19-year-old series rookie McLaughlin, last year's Development Series champion, came from seventh to win the final race from Triple 8 Holden driver Craig Lowndes – another of those excluded from race three – and Coulthard. That was the good news for Garry Rogers Motorsport; the bad was Alexandre

Premat's race-one crash that put the Frenchman's Commodore out for the remainder of the weekend.

● Phil Branagan

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Fabian Coulthard (Holden Commodore VF), 12 laps in 25m14.867s; 2 Jason Bright (Holden), +1.747s; 3 Will Davison (Ford Falcon FG); 4 Jamie Whincup (Holden); 5 Craig

Lowndes (Holden); 6 Scott McLaughlin (Holden).

Race 2 1 Coulthard, 12 laps in 24m38.913s; 2 Lowndes; 3 Bright; 4 W Davison; 5 James Moffat (Nissan Altima L33); 6 McLaughlin. **Race 3 1 Coulthard**, 12 laps in 27m29.444s; 2 David Reynolds (Ford), +0.686s; 3 Bright; 4 James Courtney (Holden); 5 W Davison; 6 Rick Kelly (Nissan). **Race 4 1 McLaughlin**, 12 laps in 24m35.770s; 2 Lowndes, +1.685s; 3 Coulthard; 4 Reynolds; 5 Alex Davison (Ford); 6 Whincup.

BRAZILIAN V8 STOCK CARS CURITIBA (BR), MARCH 17, RD 2/12

Serra gives Red Bull a win

DANIEL SERRA LOOKED TO HAVE thrown away victory at Curitiba when he was beaten from pole into the first corner by both Ricardo Mauricio and Allam Khodair. But good fortune was enough to give the Red Bull/Mattheis Chevrolet driver victory and keep up the team's 100 per cent success record for the 2013 season.

After keeping his powder dry during the opening part of the race, Serra made his mandatory pitstop at the same time as Mauricio's RC Motorsports Chevy. A slightly slower stop than his rival actually benefited Serra, as it put him in a perfect

position to use his car's overboost facility to catch and pass the yellow machine as they rejoined the track before the first corner.

Khodair appeared certain of his first win of 2013, but his hopes disappeared thanks to a punctured left-rear tyre with 11 laps to go.

Mauricio tried to pass Serra, but any use of his boost was balanced by a similar action from his rival. Serra went on to take his fourth V8 Stock Car series win, which gives him a one-point series lead over team-mate Caca Bueno, who was fifth.

Thiago Camilo completed the

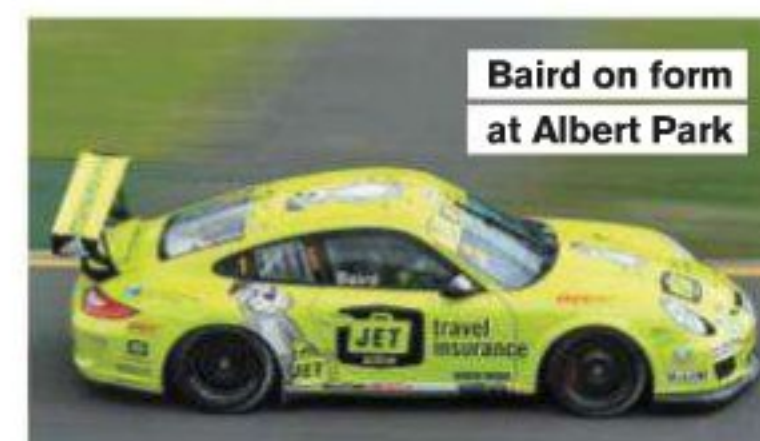
podium ahead of Valdeno Brito.

Rubens Barrichello made it into the top-10 'superpole' session for the first time, but was pushed off the track on the opening lap. He still managed to take his first series points in 19th.

● Lito Cavalcanti

RESULTS

1 Daniel Serra (Chevrolet Sonic), 31 laps in 42m15.571s; 2 Ricardo Mauricio (Chevy), +1.598s; 3 Thiago Camilo (Chevy); 4 Valdeno Brito (Peugeot 408); 5 Caca Bueno (Chevy); 6 Ricardo Zonta (Chevy). **Points** 1 Serra, 41; 2 Bueno, 40; 3 Mauricio, 38; 4 Brito, 37; 5 Max Wilson, 29; 6 Tuka Rocha, 25.



Baird on form
at Albert Park

AUSTRALIAN PORSCHES

Craig Baird won twice at Melbourne after Steven Richards had taken the opener. Warren Luff and Bathurst 1000 winner Nick Percat each took a pair of podiums.

US FORMULA 2000

Scott Hargrove won the Sebring season opener and added a second place to leave with the points lead. His Cape Motorsports/WTR team-mate Neil Alberico won the other race.

NASCAR NATIONWIDE

Kyle Busch won at Bristol, his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota rubbing doors with rookie Kyle Larson's Turner Scott Chevrolet as they crossed the line at the half-mile oval. Points leader Sam Hornish Jr was fourth, behind former champion Brian Vickers.



Serra passed
Mauricio for win



Busch (54)
beat Larson

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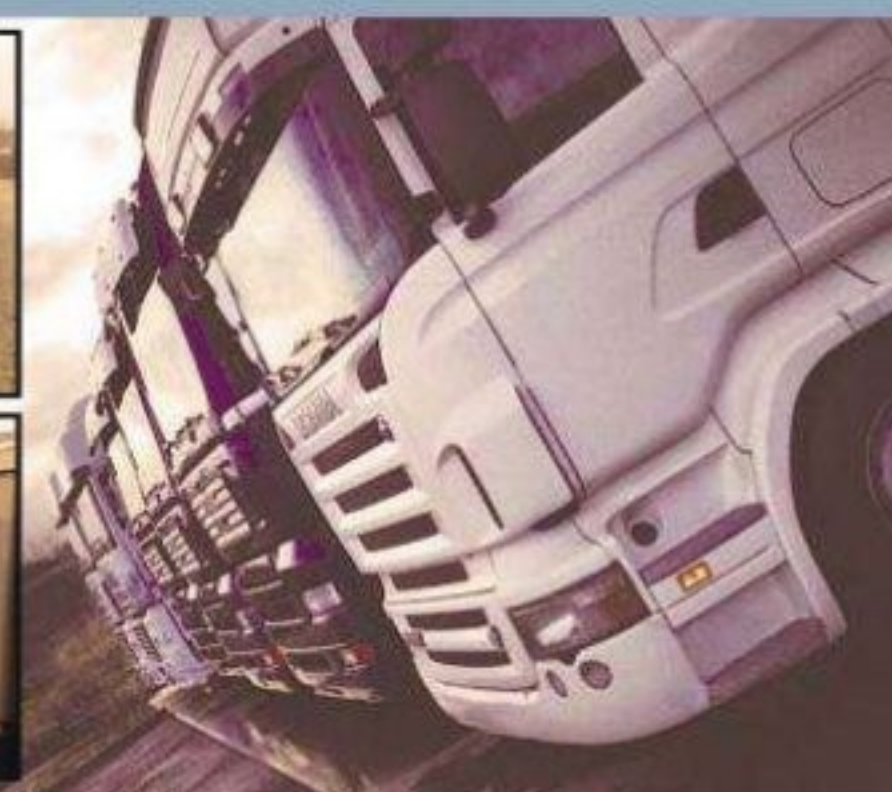
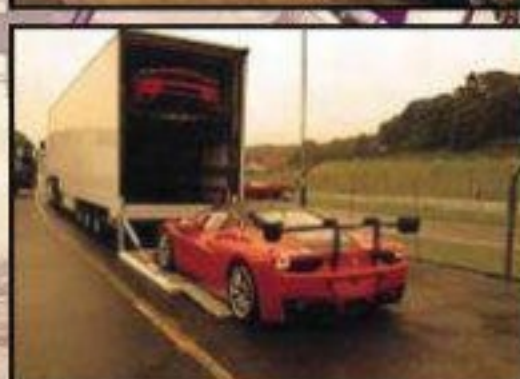
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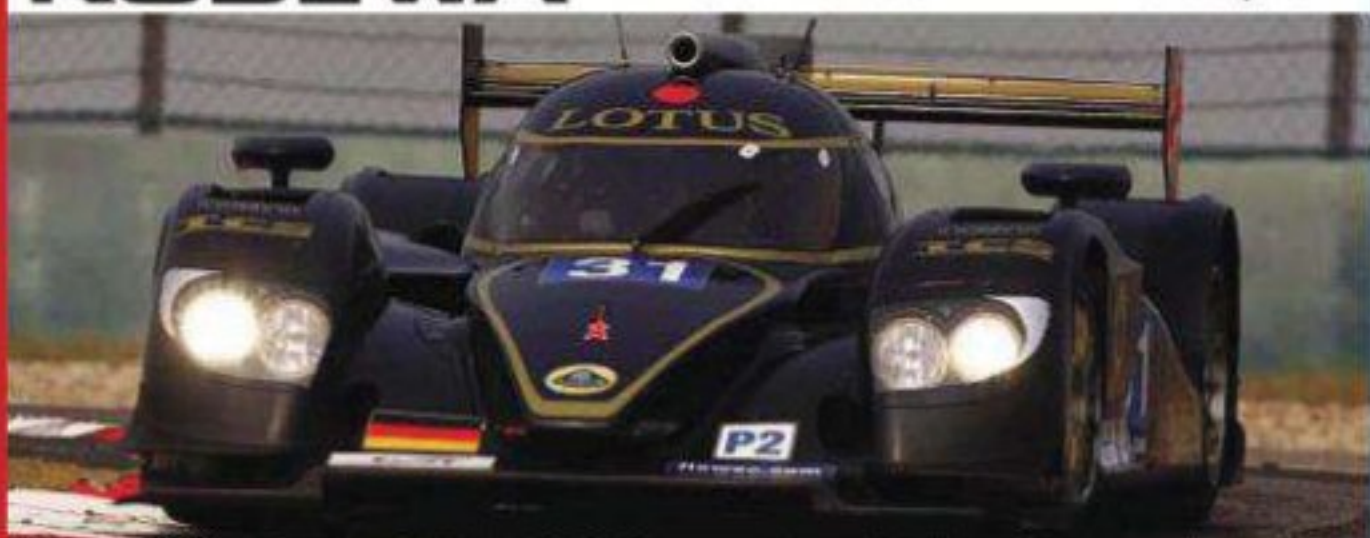
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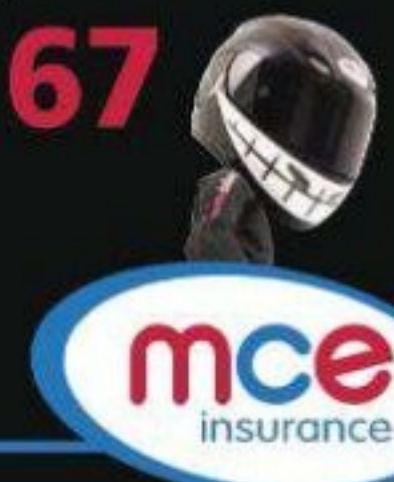
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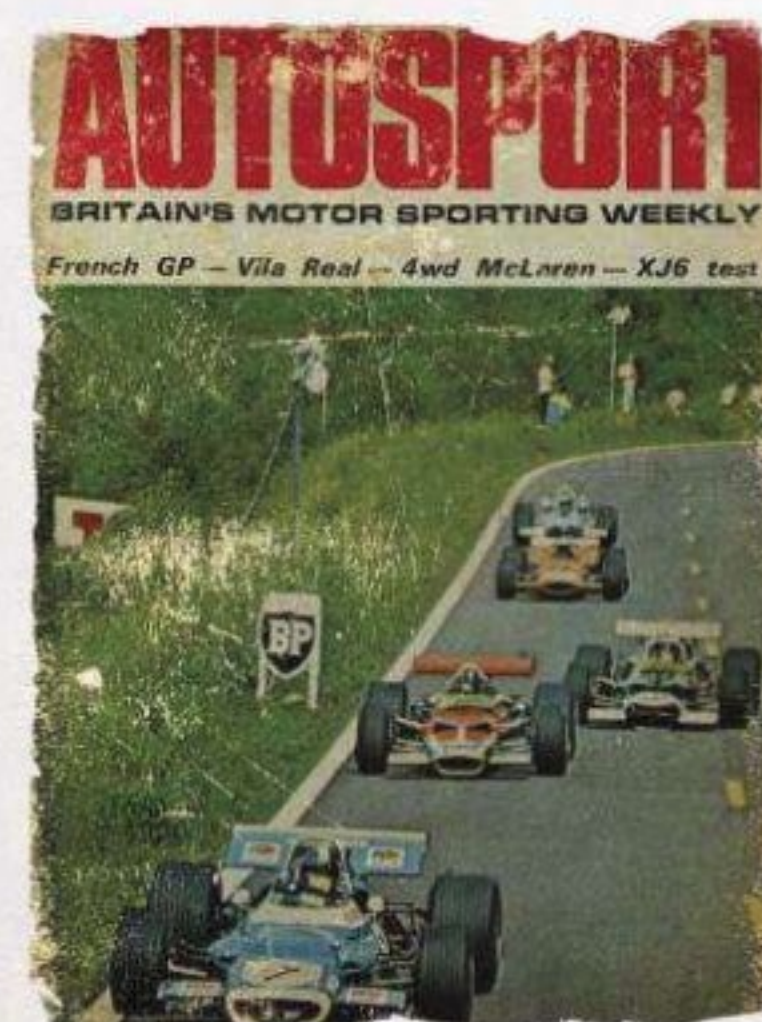
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Epsom, Surrey

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The Royal Automobile Club is the UK's oldest motoring club with a long history of promoting automobilism based in London's Pall Mall and with a country clubhouse at Woodcote Park, Epsom.

The Club is looking for an exceptional individual to take responsibility for internal and external communications, organising events, working with the Club's partners and developing the profile of the Club's major trophies and events.

The successful candidate will be a self-motivated individual with proven ability in copywriting and editing, plus an understanding of new media. They will have knowledge and experience of events, plus a commitment to excellence. Knowledge of the UK automotive industry and motorsports will be an advantage. Excellent personal administrative and interpersonal skills are required.

The Role:

- Reporting to the Motoring Secretary and based at the Woodcote Park clubhouse.
- Responsibility for communications with members and partners plus an external PR programme, using all appropriate media channels.
- Marketing the Club's motoring activities and building relationships with institutions and partners.
- Originating, developing and managing both member events and promoted events.
- Representing the Club's motoring interests at national and international level.
- Please send your CV with covering letter and salary expectations to Jemma Rapson at jemma.rapson@royalautomobileclub.co.uk.
- Closing date for applications is Thursday 28 March 2013.



750 Motor Club - Marketing & Communications Executive

One of the UK's leading providers of truly accessible motorsport, the club is based at Donington Park and manages a portfolio of 14 championships as well as organising car tours, sporting trials and the largest annual Austin Seven rally in the world.

The Marketing & Communications role is new and combines the responsibility for developing and implementing Marketing & Communications strategy across the club's complete activity set alongside the development and implementation of new services and events for our heritage and non-racing members.

Can you demonstrate a good track record in all aspects of marketing as well as a natural enthusiasm for motorsport and our automotive heritage? If so, check out the club web site to find out what else you need and how you can apply.

<http://www.750mc.co.uk>

Applications close on April 15th.

CATERHAM



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A position is available for an experienced Automotive or Mechanical Engineer with a relevant degree to join the enthusiastic and dynamic engineering team at Caterham Cars. This job will expose the successful applicant to a wide varied range of vehicle development, test and design aspects. The role will involve development of existing parts, designing of new parts and products through prototyping into production. The candidate should be highly motivated have current extensive experience of Solidworks, ability to create cost effective designs for varying manufacturing methods and flexible approach to working hours.

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Design Engineers

Individuals experienced in motorsport engineering required with skills in mechanical and/or composite design, ideally with a degree in engineering or several years in the industry. Experience of 3D solid modelling and skilled at advanced surfacing.

R&D Engineer

The R&D department require support with designing test rigs for component validation and testing and providing analysis of test results. Candidates will ideally have a Mechanical or Design based engineering Degree - 2:1 and above or equivalent.

How to apply

For more information about the above roles and how to apply please visit our website www.wirthresearch.com/careers

Motorsport jobs



Senior Mechanical Design Engineer

_Ref: LF1-AER5

We have an opportunity for an experienced Mechanical Design Engineer to join the Aerodynamics group, leading the mechanical design of the wind tunnel model and associated components.

This will be a significant role, with the successful candidate responsible for improving existing mechanical systems as well as developing new innovative designs to improve tunnel/model simulation. Major projects will require collaboration with R&D and Full Size Car mechanical groups.

The successful candidate will have a proven track record in a similarly fast moving environment, and be happy working under pressure and to tight deadlines. A positive attitude and ability to work with a minimum of supervision are essential.

The role requires excellent CAD skills, ideally using Catia V5. F1 experience would be an advantage but is not essential.

A minimum qualification of HND/degree level in a mechanical engineering discipline is expected.

CFD Engineer

_Ref: LF1-CFD6

We are seeking to recruit a motivated engineer to develop tools and methods within our CFD group.

The role will focus on helping to specify and automate the deployment of CFD for aerodynamics development. This will cover all aspects of wind-tunnel and track correlation and refining our CFD models to efficiently deliver accurate results, as well as geometry acquisition, meshing and post-processing.

The candidate must have a strong aeronautical or mechanical engineering degree with a sound understanding of the theory and implementation of modern CFD codes, including discretisation, transport modelling and turbulence modelling.

Tunnel Technician

_Ref: LF1-AER3

We have an opportunity for a skilled technician to join our team of Wind Tunnel Technicians.

The role is extremely challenging and varied as it involves all the tasks necessary to keep the Wind Tunnel installation operating smoothly and accurately. Further responsibilities will involve the development of the Wind Tunnel and the associated Model Control Systems.

The successful candidate must possess a wide range of technical and practical skills, ranging from working with heavy equipment to the calibration and development of sensitive electronics. A good knowledge of Matlab and MS Office is essential with familiarity of programming languages being beneficial (particularly C#). Candidates will have a strong sense of self-motivation whilst working in a demanding team environment. A flexible approach to work will be necessary due to the shift pattern and on-call rota.

Senior Aerodynamic Designer

_Ref: LF1-AER4

We have an exciting opportunity for an experienced and highly motivated individual to join the Aerodynamics department in a Senior Design role.

The successful candidate will have a proven track record generating design concepts and must be able to think 'outside the box'. They must also be able to prove out their own designs effectively and be performance focussed, with responsibility for leading significant areas of the group's development.

The role will require effective planning and management of projects involving multiple designers, as well as liaising closely with Aerodynamicists, CFD engineers, and the model shop. Good communication skills are therefore essential.

The role requires excellent CAD skills, preferably Catia V5. Significant experience within F1 or a similar motorsport environment is expected, as well as a minimum qualification of a HND/degree level in a mechanical engineering discipline.

CFD Aerodynamicist

_Ref: LF1-CFD6

We are looking to fill an Aerodynamicist position within the CFD department at Lotus F1 Team.

The CFD Aerodynamicist will be responsible for aerodynamic development of the car using CFD to pursue current directions and investigating new concepts.

The position allows a significant amount of freedom, both in terms of development in CFD but also specifying tunnel programmes, and hence the successful applicant will be required to demonstrate a high level of creativity and motivation.

A strong aeronautical or mechanical engineering degree with an excellent understanding of aerodynamic and CFD theories are prerequisites. F1 external aerodynamic development experience in CFD or experimental testing would be a clear advantage.

Machining Buyer

_Ref: LF1-CEN1

Lotus F1 Team is currently recruiting for the role of Machining Buyer. The position will have overall responsibility for negotiating and ordering machined components sub-contracted by the team.

The successful candidate will have detailed knowledge of machining processes and achievable tolerances, an understanding of how to machine complex parts and the ability to estimate the component costs. Previous Purchasing experience will also be a distinct advantage.

The role will involve both strategic supplier selection initiatives and more often hands-on order placing. A can-do attitude will be essential, particularly to deal with continuous challenging lead-times. A competitive package is on offer for the right candidate.



lotusf1team.com

Motorsport Jobs

Demo Team Track Support Technician

Ref: LF1-MRS1

Lotus F1 Team is looking for an experienced electronics/systems technician to work within their expanding Demo Team.

The Lotus F1 Demo Team takes the excitement of F1 to numerous events around the world to promote Lotus's on-track and off-track activities. This position will involve supporting the on-car and garage electronic systems and will involve extensive travel.

This position requires an understanding of embedded control systems, 3-phase power distribution, and experience of operating complex electronic instrumentation and well developed skills in fault diagnosis. The successful candidate will be a good team player, have excellent communication skills, be practical, organised, and thorough and have a positive 'can do' attitude. Previous experience in motor sport is highly desirable.

Candidates for all of the positions will need to be self-motivated, capable of working with minimal supervision to tight deadlines, and be confident in communicating in a team environment. In return for your hard work and dedication we offer a team with a commitment to return to the highest level of achievement, a unique and friendly working environment and competitive remuneration.

Please apply in writing with current CV, salary expectations, details of your notice period and quoting job reference number to:

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We currently have a number of opportunities for talented and committed candidates to join our team.

TEAM LEADER – AERODYNAMICS TECHNOLOGY

Reporting to the Head of Aerodynamics, you will be leading the Aerodynamics technology group, setting the strategy and delivering projects according to the priorities. The group's responsibilities include wind tunnel models and instrumentation, quality and efficiency of the experiment, rakes and tools for wind tunnel and track correlation etc. It is also an opportunity to be involved in an exciting new project.

The successful candidate will have extensive experience in experimental aerodynamics. An aerodynamics degree would be a distinct advantage.

SYSTEM/TRACKSIDE TECHNICIANS

We have a number of positions available and would be interested in seeing applications from highly motivated and forward thinking systems technicians with skills and experience in a variety of disciplines including IT, Radio & Communications, electrical and electronic assembly, test and fault finding.

For this role we offer a competitive package including private healthcare, access to an executive car scheme, company pension scheme and the chance to work in a truly unique environment.

For further information on the above roles and details of how to apply please visit www.mclaren-jobs.com



WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING TO RECRUIT THE FOLLOWING POSITION AT RED BULL TECHNOLOGY:

HR18031301 – COMPOSITE NDT INSPECTOR (SHIFTS)

We have an exciting opportunity for an Inspector to join our Quality department.

In this role you will be involved in the detailed inspection of complex and critical race car components and assemblies to the highest standards using ultrasonic and conventional methods, recording and reporting results in accordance with our procedures.

You will be required to have extensive proven experience in Ultrasonic Testing and be fully trained in this field. Experience of other NDT methods would be desirable. You will also be able to demonstrate skills in the use of measuring equipment and have the ability to deal with challenging situations and delivery pressures.

Applicants interested in applying will ideally be apprentice trained, hold an ONC/HNC qualification or equivalent and have proven experience and knowledge within a Composite Manufacturing/Inspection capacity. You will be a self-motivator with a proactive approach and it is essential that you have a flexible attitude to shift patterns. In addition you will also have excellent communication skills and the ability to work to very tight deadlines, often with minimum supervision.

This role is based at Red Bull Technology's headquarters in Milton Keynes, and you may be required to travel to some races and events.

To apply for positions at Red Bull Technology and Red Bull Racing, please visit the recruitment page on our website www.infiniti-redbullracing.com.

Closing Date for Applications – **4th April 2013**

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PRINCIPAL AERODYNAMICIST

job ref: 1a/2013

Reporting directly to the Head of Aerodynamics and overseeing the work of the aerodynamics teams, the successful candidate for this key role will lead the overall aerodynamic development of the car with a particular emphasis on the wind tunnel programme, ensuring that it maximises performance improvements. Applicants must have considerable experience of Formula One aerodynamic development and strong team leadership skills.

AERODYNAMICS TEAM LEADER

job ref: 2a/2013

Our Team Leaders supervise teams of aerodynamicists working on specific regions of the car, while also contributing their own hands-on development work to the programme. The successful candidate will provide mentoring and inspiration to other aerodynamicists while overseeing activities in both CFD and the wind tunnel and contributing to the aerodynamics development strategy. Successful applicants will be expected to carry out their own CAD modelling, show a thorough understanding of the Formula 1 technical regulations and must have held a senior aerodynamics role in Formula 1.

SENIOR AERODYNAMICIST

job ref: 3a/2013

Successful candidates will develop aerodynamic concepts, oversee their testing in CFD or wind tunnel as appropriate, then analyse and report the results so as to incorporate this knowledge into future designs. Candidates will also be expected to contribute to the aerodynamic development strategy, and to help mentor more junior team members. Senior Aerodynamicists must have several years of Formula 1 experience, be expected to carry out their own CAD modelling and take responsibility for the legality of their designs.

AERODYNAMICIST

job ref: 4a/2013

Reporting to an Aerodynamics Team Leader, successful candidates will make use of both CFD and wind tunnel to develop concepts from initial ideas to finished designs. Proven experience in Formula 1 aerodynamics is an essential requirement for this job.

MODEL MAKER

job ref: 5a/2013

Successful candidates must have Formula 1 model making experience and will be responsible for preparing the model in the factory and supporting testing at the offsite wind tunnel.

SENIOR DESIGN ENGINEER

job ref: 6a/2013

Working with, and guiding designers to develop concepts into assemblies and detail drawings, successful candidates will be highly competent Engineers with experience in motorsport or a similar industry and keen to work in a challenging environment. Candidates must also have a thorough understanding of design and manufacturing principles, the design of jigs and fixtures and the mechanical engineering issues associated with high precision designs.

COMPOSITE DESIGN ENGINEER

job ref: 7a/2013

Successful candidates will work within the Design team, designing composite components, assemblies and related tooling for the team's Formula 1 car. Candidates will need to demonstrate their understanding of composite materials and their manufacturing processes.

MECHANICAL DESIGN ENGINEER

job ref: 8a/2013

Successful candidates will work within the Design team, designing components and assemblies for the team's Formula 1 car. Candidates will need to demonstrate their understanding of fundamental manufacturing processes, have knowledge of jigs and fixtures and an understanding of mechanical engineering issues associated with high precision designs.



SENIOR R&D ENGINEER

job ref: 9a/2013

Taking ownership for a variety of R&D based projects, you will be responsible for concept, design, testing and analysis through to project completion. This role is suited to a candidate with a degree in Mechanical Engineering or similar, with a high level of experience in a wide range of engineering disciplines including Design, Vibration, Data Analysis, Calculation, and Test and Measurement.

FACTORY ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN

job ref: 10a/2013

Taking responsibility for the manufacture of electrical and electronic hardware, you will work closely with our Electronics Engineers; assisting with the support of both on and off car electronic systems using your thorough knowledge of MIL specification wiring, Motorsport/Aerospace connectors and heat shrink moulded parts. Knowledge of sensing technology and experience in the fault-finding of complex electronic systems would be highly advantageous. Candidates will also be required to have proven motorsport (preferably Formula 1), Aerospace or military experience in a similar role.

PROJECT ENGINEER

job ref: 11a/2013

Working with our Design and Production teams, you will project manage new assemblies, provide assistance to the project manager and work closely with Engineering and Operations to create and disseminate technical bulletins, internal procedures and other documentation as required. Proven problem solving experience is essential and knowledge of Visual Basic and VBA programming is advantageous.

PLM DEVELOPER

job ref: 12a/2013

We are seeking a PLM Project Manager/Systems Architect to program and manage the specification and implementation of Team Centre, working closely with the system provider, Siemens. Providing strategic vision on how best to use PLM, and working closely with design and production, the successful candidate will administer hardware and software, manage user expectations and coordinate support and mentoring. Previous experience in a similar role is essential.

MATERIALS PLANNER

job ref: 13a/2013

Working within the Production Team, you will accurately plan and order externally manufactured components of the car to meet business demands. The successful candidate will be highly process driven, and have experience of using ERP systems and MRP methodology. Proven experience in Formula 1, Automotive or Aerospace is essential. CAD literacy and knowledge of BoM structures is also advantageous.

TECHNICAL BUYER

job ref: 14a/2013

Working as part of a close knit team with excellent communication and negotiation skills, the technical buyer will liaise with all relevant areas of the business to ensure our components are sourced and procured on time and to exact specification. Proven experience within a similar environment, including reading and interpreting technical drawings is essential.

LASER-ETCHER – JUNIOR INSPECTOR

job ref: 15a/2013

Reporting to the Inspection Manager, the successful candidate will provide a first class inspection service by following drawings and specifications to inspect components. Candidates must have proven experience in a similar role within a motorsport or aerospace environment.

To apply, please email your CV and salary expectations to jobs@marussiaf1team.com quoting the job reference number above.



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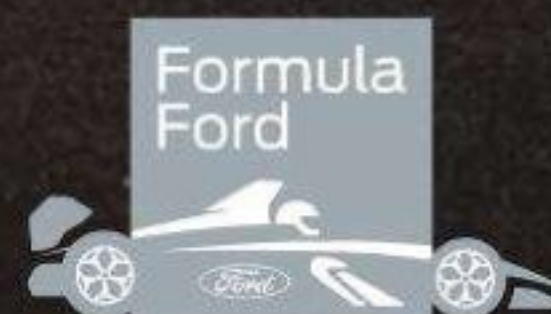


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French Formula 4
is a close fit for
the FIA's junior
single-seater plan



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GERHARD BERGER'S PLAN TO

simplify the single-seater ladder will be welcomed by fans, but 'FIA Formula 4' will face barriers in Britain.

For one, we have a sporting authority that bans 15-year-olds from racing single-seaters. The MSA also balks at taking an active role in limiting the number of championships, for fear of legal reprisal. So any potential FIA series would have to compete with British Formula Ford, BRDC F4, Formula Renault BARC and anything else that launches in the meantime. This doesn't happen in Germany...

FIA Formula 4 is not compulsory for individual nations, but there is one mooted British series that could take up the mantle here – there is a plan to launch Formula Renault 1.6 into the UK in 2014 (for 16-year-olds and up).

This provisional BARC series could easily morph into the UK version of FIA Formula 4, given that the Signatech car it plans to use is a close – if not perfect – match for the FIA's blueprint. I would be surprised if no one took the chance to run an FIA-backed entry-level category in this country.

Whether it's the FIA, or individual promoters such as Simon North (Formula Renault) and Jonathan Palmer (BRDC F4), everybody is talking about the need to rein in costs at the lower levels of single-seater racing and make the path to Formula 1 clearer.

Unfortunately, too much of the focus comes from the top down rather than the bottom up. Even the 'cheap' prices talked about by these series are beyond most of the lads and dads they target. But it's no surprise. Crazy costs at junior level are inevitable when F1 finances are so utterly out of control.



Germany is happy
to limit championships

FIA reveals Formula 4 blueprint

Gerhard Berger plans to overhaul national single-seater structures

THE FIA HAS DRAWN UP PLANS FOR a new global junior single-seater formula to start in 2014.

The international governing body wants to introduce a new national-level championship in all affiliated countries.

Draft regulations were agreed at a meeting of the World Motor Sport Council on March 6. FIA Formula 4 will start off as a single-make category before morphing into a multi-make slicks-and-wings formula based around a carbon chassis, according to FIA Single-Seater Commission president and ex-F1 driver Gerhard Berger.

It will use 1600cc engines capped at 150bhp. Each individual national championship will use a single make of engine, but different manufacturers may build engines for the formula in different countries. The engines will be equalised so that one country's version of Formula 4 is not faster than another.

"Our task is to close the hole on the staircase from karting to Formula 1," Berger told AUTOSPORT. "Formula 3

is the centre of everything. Now we have to see how 15-year-olds can move up in single-seaters.

"The first step is to close the gap between F3 and karting. It's important to see these kids at 15 are still in school. I would like to offer them this first step in their home nations so they don't need to travel too far. We want to bring the cost down too, to under €100,000 per year."

Berger plans to allow 15-year-olds to race in the formula, something British motorsport authority the MSA banned at the end of 2012. The FIA has studied various categories already racing and AUTOSPORT understands the initial formula is likely to be based on ones that best match the FIA's blueprint.

"We're going to have a single supplier of the engine per country, but we don't want a fixed chassis supplier," Berger added. "We need a transition period. During this time there are a couple of existing cars, like the Signatech Formula 4 in France or the ADAC Formel Masters in Germany, that are eligible to become FIA

F4 and technically easy to make so. We haven't found something that fits exactly, but there are some that could be modified. But it's not the ideal scenario for us because it's not possible to have these cars racing together."

Berger hopes to develop the formula in Europe starting in 2014, before rolling it out to other parts of the globe.

"We have strong requests from the ASNs because markets have changed a lot in the last years," he added. "The market for national Formula 3 is very thin because it's too expensive. In Italy, for example, there is no Formula 3 anymore. So what can you offer the kids? A lot of other countries are in a similar situation.

"Now the F4 regulations have been completed we are offering the package to the nations. I would like to start very strongly in Europe from 2014 with a limited number of nations, maybe four or five, as the first step. We need to prove it works and we need to be able to modify anything that doesn't before it goes to a larger scale."

Walker tested Fortec Mercedes last week and will now race the car at Oulton



British GT

More aces join British GT field

INTERNATIONAL GT RACERS

James Walker and Rob Bell will both contest the first round of British GT at Oulton Park on Easter weekend.

Le Mans Series racer Walker will drive one of Fortec's two Mercedes AMG SLS cars after conducting shakedown tests at Oulton Park and Rockingham last week. Walker's co-driver has yet to be announced.

"British GT looks like it is going to have one of its most competitive years in its history, so to be part of that is fantastic," said Walker, who raced for Fortec in Formula Renault 3.5 and F3 in his junior career.

"Richard Dutton had literally just collected the car and asked me to shake it down. Despite near freezing temperatures we were still able to

get some productive running.

"Richard has put together a great team, including Trevor Foster to run the car. It was an easy decision to make. It's obviously going to be a massive learning curve but we will be out to show what we can do."

Bell will deputise for 2004 British F3 champion Alvaro Parente, whose prior business commitments mean

he is unable to race alongside United Autosports co-owner Zak Brown in one of the team's two McLaren MP4-12Cs.

Bell first raced for UA team boss Richard Dean in 1999, finishing third behind Gary Paffett and Ryan Dalziel in Formula Vauxhall Junior. Bell's younger brother Matt will race UA's Audi R8 LMS ultra with Mark Patterson.

Clio Cup Series

Herbert lowers his sights after missing out on KX Clio dream

KX AKADEMY REFUGEE LUKE

Herbert plans to contest the BARC's new club Clio Cup Series this season, after failing to find the budget to race in the Clio Cup UK.

The reigning Ma5da MX5 Cup champion was set to race for Scuderia Vittoria in this year's Clio Cup with KX support, but lost the drive after failing to secure the remainder of the funding (see AUTOSPORT, February 28).

Herbert has bought the car campaigned by Mark Tilbury in last year's Clio Cup and will now enter the BARC's new four-round feeder series in the headline 'Expert' class.

Herbert said: "One week ago I wasn't going to be racing this year, but we managed to get the money to buy Mark Tilbury's car and get the chance to get involved with the Clio Cup Series. It's



definitely come at the right time, especially with the economy so tough.

"The idea is to raise the funds to do the last two rounds of Clio Cup UK and then make the step-up to the main championship next year. I worked so hard to get the money for Clio Cup UK, but we just couldn't achieve it."



Historics

Hepworth puts GT plans on hold

HEPWORTH INTERNATIONAL WILL focus on historic restoration this season after deciding not to return to British GT.

The team ran a G55 for Ian Stinton and Jake Rattenbury in a joint effort with Stark Racing in British GT3 last season. The car suffered reliability problems and the team has now put the project on ice after failing to attract funded drivers for 2013.

Hepworth will now focus on restoring

an ex-Pedro Rodriguez BRM P154. The car has lain dormant since team founder David Hepworth raced it in InterSerie.

Team boss Stephen Hepworth said: "We also hope to commence work on the later P167s driven in period by Howden Ganley/Brian Redman that also remain in our collection. It will be a fantastic tribute to my father who bought the entire project from BRM in the early '70s."

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Formula Ford

Malvern makes sideways step into Formula Ford with wings

EX-BRITISH FORMULA FORD

champion Scott Malvern will return to the category this season.

Malvern won British Formula Ford in 2011 and added the Formula Renault BARC title to his CV in 2012. Having failed to secure the funding to graduate to European F3, Malvern will rejoin Jamun Racing for an assault on the new winged Formula Ford EcoBoost 200 series.

Malvern will race the Mygale chassis campaigned by Ryan Cullen in British Formula Ford last year. Malvern hopes the TV exposure afforded to the category as part of the BTCC support package will help secure more backers for his career.

"I'm pleased to be racing again and the Ford EcoBoost 200 looks an exciting car to drive," Malvern said. "We've worked hard to put something together. It's a late deal, which means we haven't been able to test like most of our rivals. But we showed last season that we're capable of hitting the ground running and I have confidence in the team to put a good car under me."



Malvern is going back to FFord

"I'm not making any bold claims – the mileometer is reset to zero again. We will aim to put solid points on the board at the first race and build from there. Thirty races is a long season. Hopefully we'll secure the funding to stick around for the rest of it."

MALVERN IN BRITISH FORMULA FORD

WINS 20 PODIUMS 34 POINTS 1176
CARS Ray GR10, Mygale SJ11

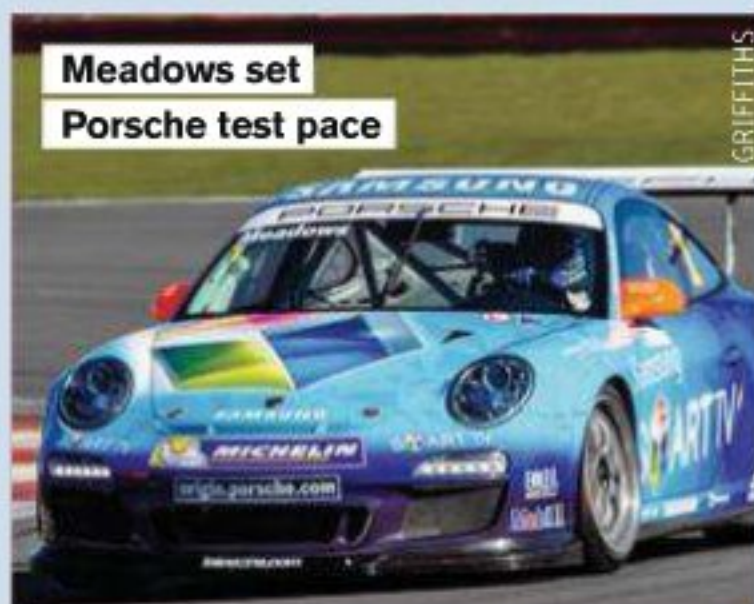
Porsche Carrera Cup

Meadows to defend Porsche title after signing for Samsung squad

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

champion Michael Meadows will defend his title this season.

Meadows will switch from champion squad Redline Racing to Paul Mace's revamped GT Marques outfit, which will run as Samsung Smart Motorsport.



Meadows set Porsche test pace

"It's a new challenge with a new team and I'm proud to be representing a major brand," said Meadows. "The aim is to win more comprehensively than last year."

Former single-seater racer Richard Kent will join Meadows on the driving strength. Kent has spent two seasons out of the sport after racing in America in 2009-10.

"I didn't expect to come back into something as full-on as this," said Kent. "But this fantastic opportunity came about and every time I get in the car I'm learning. I'm getting a lot of information and support from Michael."

Meadows topped the times in official testing on the Silverstone National Circuit last Thursday. His 55.978s best put him almost three tenths clear of Parr Motorsport's Ben Barker in second.

Clio Cup UK

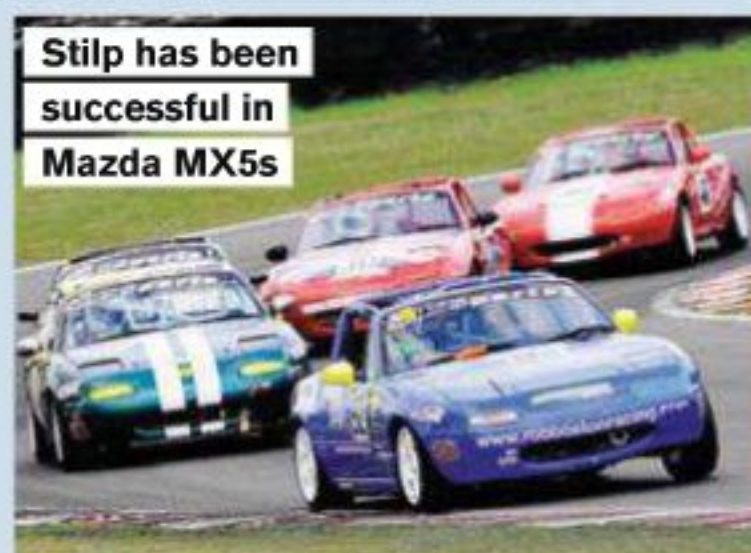
Mazda racer Stilp steps up to Clios with Westbourne outfit

MA5DA MX5 FRONTRUNNER

Jordan Stilp will switch to the Renault Clio Cup UK this season with race-winning squad Westbourne Motorsport.

Stilp won seven races and finished second to Luke Herbert in last year's Ma5da MX5 Cup. He will now form part of a four-car Westbourne Clio team, driving alongside multiple race winner James Colburn, impressive 2012 rookie Mike Bushell, and Maltese car-racing rookie Jacques Mizzi.

Team boss Richard Colburn said: "This is a really exciting year for the team. We have a great blend of proven podium



Stilp has been successful in Mazda MX5s

finishers, with James and Mike together, and two talented newcomers to the series in Jordan and Jacques, who have both really impressed me in testing."

Humble Pye

The voice of club racing

Strawford family has reiterated its commitment to racing at Combe



'Howard's Day' should become an annual tradition at Combe

Unlike the south-east corner of England, where heavy snow made even major roads impassable, the south west was spared last Tuesday, March 12, thus I headed 'up country' to Castle Combe village for a thanksgiving service for the extraordinary life of Howard "H" Strawford.

The late Welshman – who would have been so proud of his boys in Saturday's drubbing of England, that snatched the Six Nations rugby union title – is already immortalised in the pantheon of great British motorsport promoters.

With snowflakes fluttering on the biting breeze, yet bright sunshine projecting St Andrew's Church's vivid stained-glass windows onto its aged walls, racing people stood shoulder-to-shoulder to pay their homage and respects. Among them were MSA chief executive Colin Hilton, numerous club representatives, a deputation from Thruxton, Combe aces of yore (including John Chatham, the Healey legend who won on my first visit in 1967, and F5000 racer Terry Sanger), former champions and current racers.

I was delighted that my first National Editor at AUTOSPORT, Robin Bradford – now PR supremo for Sol Rally Barbados – who learned of Howard's death while he was at RaceRetro, extended his trip to attend. There too was racer-turned-Anglesey track boss Richard Peacock, who made the

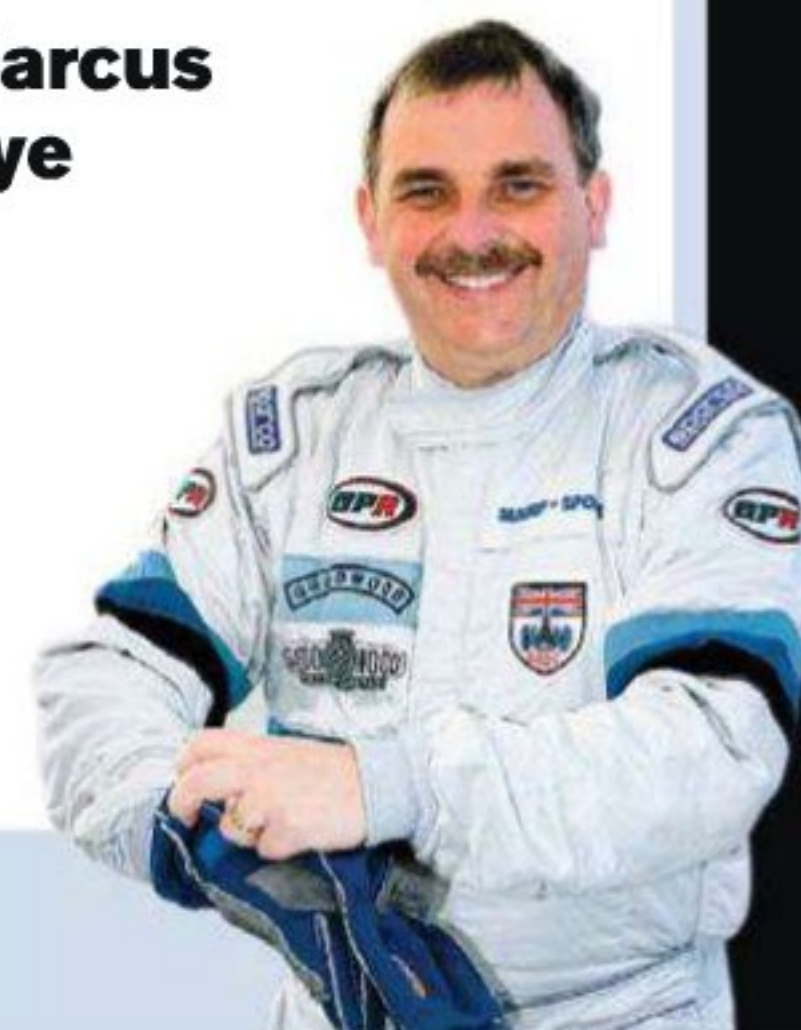
pilgrimage south, and Strawford's biographer Paul Lawrence, author of the definitive Castle Combe book.

During the service, Howard's son-in-law Graham Marshallsay, Ken Davies (who was inspired in his youth by the then Swansea MC chairman), former BARC supremo Dennis Carter, and Combe marketer Rodney Gooch gave insights. And Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams made an impromptu eulogy.

But, on a day tinged with sadness, laughter and memories, the welcome confirmation that Howard's devoted wife Pat and their daughters Karen and Emma – with the help of a loyal staff – will continue to run Castle Combe with his passion, allayed widespread fears. That lightened everybody's step as they repaired to the circuit's Strawford Centre to reminisce over an amazing chapter in racing history.

Easter Monday's traditional season-opener marks the start of a brave new era on April 1. The meeting is to be named 'Howard's Day' to enable Combe fans old and new to show their appreciation for his determination, tenacity and achievements against the odds. I vehemently hope it will become an annual tradition. The King is dead. Long live the Queen!

Marcus Pye



"Confirmation that Howard's family will continue to run Combe allayed widespread fears"

JULIAN GODFREY

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Harvey hopes SR3 Challenge will tick all the right boxes for him in 2013

Radical SR3 Challenge

Harvey closes on Radical SR3 Challenge drive

FORMER BRITISH TOURING CAR and double Carrera Cup champion Tim Harvey is closing in on a deal to race in the new Radical SR3 Challenge.

Harvey, 51, is set to share a car with former British GT champion Matt Allison in the single-make series, which is replacing the multi-class Radical UK Cup.

Harvey told AUTOSPORT: "It's value for money and competitive racing with some good drivers. The cars are fast and good

fun to drive, and there'll be no SR8s racing in Britain so you're racing for the win.

"For me, motor racing is not my career anymore, it's for fun. I'm a competitive person, but at 51 my motorsport has got to tick all the right boxes. I'm very busy with the BRDC Superstars and my media work, so I don't want a high-profile series."

Harvey contested the 2012 British GT championship with historic ace Jon Minshaw in a Trackspeed Porsche.

However, his business commitments have precluded a return this year.

"To do GTs properly you've got to commit 100 per cent and no team wants a driver who can't always be there for practice and qualifying," Harvey added.

"As much as I would have loved to do it again, British GT isn't a championship you can dip in and out of. It's for very wealthy amateurs and serious professionals, and I don't fit into either category!"



Gray (96) won every RGB race in 2012

750 Motor Club

'New' Spire heads big RGB entry

CHAMPION MANUFACTURER

Paul Nightingale has evolved a new aero package for his Spire GT3 design in which Tim Gray was unbeaten in last year's 750MC RGB championship.

Gray will not return to the series this season, concentrating instead on the Bike Sports series, but he tested team-mate John Cutmore's 2013 title contender at Mallory Park last week.

"We took it [John's previous car with the new body] to Mallory and it was phenomenal, so much more stable and easier to drive," said Gray. "I was under my lap record in sub-zero temperatures."

Former champion Al Boulton has gone rear-engined with the Spire that Gray raced in Bike Sports at Anglesey last year. David Wale has forsaken his BDN for a new GT3, Radical SR4 man Jonathan Thackray has a similar car, and Matt Higginson has updated from a Spire GTR to Gray's 2012 winner.

Other competitors among Saturday's 32-car field include Lee Baverstock (new AB Sabre), Scott Mittell (MC-52), multiple Kit Car champion Andy Hiley (Chronos), NW Sports/Saloons refugee Danny Keenan (MK Stealth), and Austen Greenway (new front-engined GM1).

F3 Cup

Craven to F3 with Lanan

FORMER CLUB F3 FRONTRUNNER

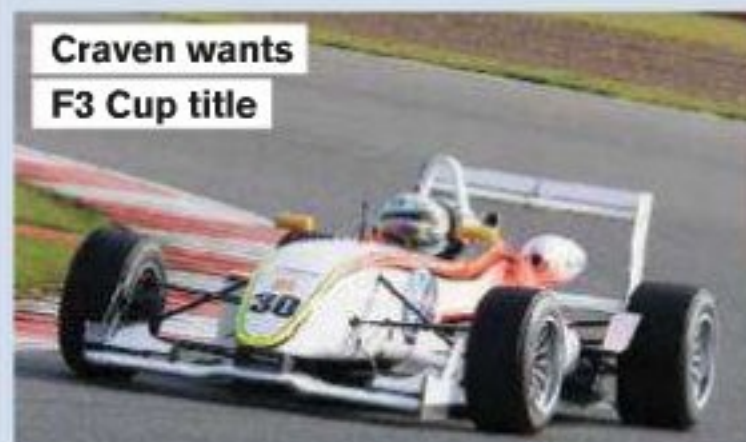
Alex Craven will return to the F3 Cup this season with leading team Lanan Racing.

The ex-Formula Renault racer will drive a Dallara-VW F307 for Graham Johnson's team, which won races with several different drivers last season.

Craven said: "I secured podiums every time I raced in F3 Cup [in 2011], so I hope to pick up where I left off. The grids have grown since MSV has taken on the series and I'm looking forward to fighting for a win at the season opener."

Craven will partner former ARP F3 champion Gino Ussi, who returns after narrowly missing out on the title last year. Ussi said: "I'm hungrier for success after last year. I need to string a full season together, but I'm in it to win it."

Craven wants F3 Cup title



Bailey back to Ginettas

Ginetta GT5 Challenge race winner Brad Bailey will return to the series this season. The ex-Ginetta Junior racer finished seventh in the G40 championship in 2012, after winning the final race of the season at Donington Park. Meanwhile, Scottish privateer Elliot Paterson will return to Ginetta Junior this year under the Border Reivers banner.

Revamp for MRL series

Motor Racing Legends' JD Classics series for 1966-85 touring cars has been renamed the Historic Touring Car Challenge for its third year. The move recognises its expansion to embrace the Group 5 cars of its earliest period. It kicks off at the Donington Historic Festival and Brands Hatch GP in May and also visits Spa and the Algarve.

Diesel Alfa for Team 48

Former footballer Luther Blissett's Team 48 will run a diesel car in this year's Alfa Romeo championship. Team 48, which tried unsuccessfully to join the BTCC grid in 2008, will run a 1.9-litre turbo diesel Alfa GT (tuned by marque specialist ProAlfa) for Darrelle Wilson. Blissett will race the team's traditional two-litre petrol-engined 156 saloon.



Short was 10th in GT86 in 2012 Silverstone 24

750MC Roadsports

Short to Roadsports with Toyota

MARTIN SHORT WILL RETURN TO his 750 Motor Club roots at Donington this Saturday, when he takes part in the first round of the revived Roadsports series.

Short's 1987 750MC Kit Car title in the Goodwood-built Martlet presaged a professional sportscar career that included

fourth place at Le Mans in 2007 in a Pescarolo-Judd run by his Rollcentre team.

Short has entered the Toyota GT86 in which he finished 10th in last year's Britcar 24 Hours at Silverstone. The 25-car, six-marque field includes two Mazda RX8s and Locost champ Mike Comber's MX5.



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HSCC DONINGTON PARK, MARCH 17

Morgan's dream debut



Morgan's Mini was ideal for the slippery conditions

WITH V8 AMERICANA IMPOTENT ON a greasy track, historic debutant Pete Morgan led a Mini one-two in a frenetic Historic Touring Car race, which topped the HSCC openers in Donington's 80th anniversary season.

The ex-club Ford Fiesta champion and 750MC Stock Hatch ace went from 14th to second behind Roger Godfrey's Cooper S inside three laps, only to explore the chicane escape road while trying to outbrake the 2010-11 winner. Briefly behind Devonian Peter Crewes, whose Mini was also flying, Morgan hit the front as Godfrey slid off and was elated to take the chequer. "I'd not driven it before today, but that was spot-on," he reflected. Having fought his viciously twitchy Ford Mustang valiantly until a drier line enabled him to shake off a swarm of Minis and Imps, Fortec team boss Richard Dutton just staved off Godfrey to prevent a front-wheel-drive rout.

Sleet and snow throughout Guards Trophy qualifying set a topsy-turvy grid and the Chevron-rich mini-enduro was a thriller. It was resolved at the final corner when, having popped a plug lead, Luke Stevens (in Ross Maxwell's B8) was mugged by Charles Allison. Allison had passed the poleman at the stops, and made ground under a safety car deployed after Paul Tooms' 26R Elan shed its roof and continued as a convertible. Fired-up, former Caterham champion Stevens clawed his way back ahead before the misfire set in.

B8 debutant Neil Burroughs survived the Redgate gravel at the start and battled back to third in the company of Philip Nelson, bustling past GT leader Nick Fleming (Elan),



Allison's victorious Chevron B8 heads into glorious sunset

who lost out to Mike Whitaker (TVR Griffith) as a consequence.

Frazer Gibney avoided an incident that did for the similar Lotus Elans of Larry Kennedy and Peter Shaw at the chicane to score an opportunist victory in Historic Road Sports.

Morgan +8 man Tim Pearce retook the lead audaciously from sometime Formula Ford racer Roger Waite (in the ex-Tooms 2011-12 series-winning Elan) at the Craner Curves before Pearce's right rear tyre was

slashed in a brush with Tony Davis's Sprite at Starkey's Bridge, which sent the Moggie spinning like a top. Gibney jumped a delayed Waite as the commotion unfolded and Davis speared off.

Julian Barter (TVR 3000M) outdragged poleman Richard Plant (Morgan +8) in 70s Road Sports and slithered away to win. Avoiding a rash of spins, reserve Luke Clark-Bagnall drove his Triumph GT6 heroically from the back, overcoming David

Tomlin's Ferrari 308GTB for third.

Double FF1600 champion Nelson Rowe took until Coppice on lap two to pass 2011 champ Benn Simms. Rowe then sped clear. David Wild and class returnee Bill Coombs were lonely in third and fourth, ahead of Rob Wainwright and recovering spinner Josh West.

Top qualifier Stuart Roach took command of the front-engined Formula Junior pack into McLeans on lap one. Mark Woodhouse's challenge evaporated with a "rallycross style" traverse of the Old Hairpin. On Derek Walker's retirement, Woodhouse regained second from 'Crispo' Besley.

Sam Wilson blitzed the rear-engined set. Andrew Hibberd's carbs iced, but he cut fastest lap after an off and beat Pete Morton to third by 0.02s.

Even without the spur of Ian Gray, who backed his Brabham into the chicane exit wall during a hideously slippery qualifying session, Classic Racing Cars champion Ian Jones won by the day's widest margin, lapping all bar Tony Keele.

● Marcus Pye

HISTORIC TOURING CARS (12 LAPS) 1 Pete Morgan (Austin Cooper S); 2 Peter Crewes (Austin Cooper S) +1.824s; 3 Richard Dutton (Ford Mustang); 4 Roger Godfrey (Austin Cooper S); 5 Tim Harber (Austin Cooper S); 6 David Heale (Hillman Imp). **Class winners** Crewes; Dutton; Heale; Neil Brown (Ford Lotus Cortina); John Pugsley (Ford Anglia); Jonathan Gomm (BMW 1800Ti); Mark Watts (Ford Mustang). **Fastest Lap** Crewes 1m40.282s (70.26mph). **GUARDS TROPHY (29 LAPS)** 1 Charles Allison (Chevron-BMW B8); 2 Luke Stevens (Chevron-BMW B8) +1.671s; 3 Neil Burroughs (Chevron-BMW B8); 4 Philip Nelson (Chevron-BMW B8); 5 Mike Whitaker (TVR Griffith); 6 Nick Fleming (Lotus Elan 26R). **CW** Whitaker; Fleming; Jamie Boot (Jaguar E-type); Michael & Andrew Hibberd (Lotus-t/c 23B); Gary Wright (Elva-BMW Mk8). **FL** Stevens 1m15.914s (92.81mph). **HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS (14 LAPS)** 1 Frazer Gibney

(Lotus Elan S1); 2 Roger Waite (Lotus Elan S1) +0.864s; 3 Chris Keen (Marcos 1800GT); 4 Jan Boyes (MGB); 5 Alan Harper (Lotus Elan S1); 6 Roddie Fielden (Morgan +8). **CW** Keen; Boyes; Fielden. **FL** Waite 1m25.484s (82.42mph). **70s ROAD SPORTS (12 LAPS)** 1 Julian Barter (TVR 3000M); 2 Richard Plant (Morgan +8) +20.757s; 3 Luke Clark-Bagnall (Triumph GT6); 4 David Tomlin (Ferrari 308GTB); 5 David Beresford (MGB); 6 Philip Goddard (Morgan +8). **CW** Plant; Clark-Bagnall; Beresford; Mark Oldfield (Lancia Beta Monte Carlo); Alan Harper (Lotus Elan S4); 5 Nick Strong (Ford Capri). **FL** Barter 1m38.806s (71.31mph). **HISTORIC FF1600 (13 LAPS)** 1 Nelson Rowe (Crossle 20F); 2 Benn Simms (Jomo JMR7) +18.746s; 3 David Wild (Lola T200); 4 Bill Coombs (Alexis Mk14); 5 Robert Wainwright (Elden Mk8); 6 Josh West (Merlyn Mk20A). **CW** Gary McVeigh (Merlyn Mk11A). **FL** Rowe 1m33.283s (75.53mph).

FORMULA JUNIOR FRONT-ENGINED (13 LAPS) 1 Stuart Roach (Alexis Mk2); 2 Mark Woodhouse (Elva 100) +54.486s; 3 Crispian Besley (Elva 100); 4 Stephen Barlow (BMC Mk1); 5 Richard Ellingworth (Gemini Mk2); 6 David Brand (BMC Mk1). **CW** Jan Biekens (Stanguellini). **FL** Roach 1m34.914s (74.23mph). **REAR-ENGINED (15 LAPS)** 1 Sam Wilson (Cooper T59); 2 Jonathon Hughes (Brabham BT6) +11.866s; 3 Andrew Hibberd (Lotus 22); 4 Pete Morton (Lightning Envoyette); 5 Mark Pangborn (Lotus 20B); 6 Jack Woodhouse (Lotus 20/22). **CW** Crispian Besley (Cooper T56). **FL** Hibberd 1m18.983s (89.21mph). **CLASSIC RACING CARS (15 LAPS)** 1 Ian Jones (Lotus-t/c 59); 2 Tony Keele (Palliser-t/c WDB3) +59.447s; 3 Andy Jarvis (Palliser-t/c WDB2); 4 Josh West (Merlyn Mk20A); 5 Leif Bosson (Brabham-MAE BT28); 6 Steve Seaman (Brabham-MAE BT21). **CW** West; Bosson. **FL** Jones 1m17.602s (90.80mph).

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From race track to road.

BRITISH RALLYCROSS LYDDEN, MARCH 16-17

Back-to-front Procter grabs Lydden glory

KEVIN PROCTER BATTLED THROUGH the mud and rain to earn victory in the first round of the 2013 British Rallycross Championship at Lydden.

But the Ford Focus man had to work for the win after starting from the back row of the grid. It was young Norwegian debutant Andreas Bakkerud (fastest in the second and third qualifiers) who claimed pole.

Sharing the front row with Bakkerud was Dutch visitor Jos Kuipers and reigning British Champion Julian Godfrey.

As the cars left the line, Bakkerud's Citroen DS3 bogged down, bunching up the pack. Godfrey opted to take his joker lap as Kuipers led the race from Koen Pauwels, Procter and B final victor Pat Doran. Procter joked on the second lap, coming out behind Godfrey, only to then pass the Ford Fiesta driver on lap three.

Meanwhile, the leading trio of

Kuipers, Bakkerud and Doran battled for position, slowing themselves down. Bakkerud was removed from the equation with engine failure at the end of lap three, and as Kuipers took his joker on the final tour, Procter took the lead. "This is a great start to the year," said Procter, "I'm registered for the championship and I'm going to do as many rounds as I can."

Godfrey passed Kuipers in the closing stages to grab second, while Pauwels finished inches behind in fourth. Doran finished fifth.

● Hal Ridge

RESULT OF A FINAL (4 LAPS) 1 Kevin Procter (Ford Focus); 2 Julian Godfrey (Ford Fiesta) +3.3s; 3 Jos Kuipers (Ford Focus); 4 Koen Pauwels (Ford Focus); 5 Pat Doran (Citroen DS3); 6 Jos Jansen (Ford Focus). **POINTS** 1 Procter, 21; 2 Godfrey, 18; 3 Doran, 15; 4 Andy Grant (Ford Focus), 13; 5 Jon B.Hrolfsson (Subaru Impreza), 12; 6 Mark Watson (Citroen Xsara), 11.



Procter fought his way through to win round one

NIPPON CHALLENGE, MR2s, COUPE CUP SNETTERTON, MARCH 16-17



Jesse's Coupe GT4 leads Precious in Nippon battle

Wild Jesse beats Precious Impreza

A PACKED GRID OF NIPPON CHALLENGE, MR2 and Hyundai Cup runners kicked off Snetterton's 2013 season with a lively double-header.

Amid biting winds and steady rain, Nippon front-runner Jason Jesse (Toyota Coupe) proved too keen to convert pole to victory in the opening race, sliding wide at Montreal and allowing Danny Precious's Impreza past. Undeterred, Jesse fought back ahead at the same corner on the following lap, and this time edged away to win.

Jesse made it a clean-sweep of poles, wins and fastest laps with a dominant performance in race two, having dived past the fast-starting Precious on lap one.

Precious held off Adam Lockwood's Nissan for second, with Steve

Lawley's Mitsubishi surviving a mid-race moment at Murray's to take fourth.

● Oliver Timson

RESULTS

RACE 1 (6 LAPS) 1 Jason Jesse (Toyota Coupe GT4); 2 Danny Precious (Subaru Impreza) +4.735s; 3 Ross Stoner (Toyota Celica); 4 Steve Lawley (Mitsubishi GTO); 5 Adam Lockwood (Nissan 200SX); 6 Lee Bennett-Neil (Honda Integra). **Class winners** Precious; Stoner; Bennett-Neil; Ben Roberts (Mazda MX5); Paul Corbridge (Toyota MR2); Richard Avery (Hyundai Coupe). **Fastest lap** Jesse 2m33.604s (69.58mph). **RACE 2 (6 LAPS)** 1 Jesse; 2 Precious +27.026s; 3 Lockwood; 4 Lawley; 5 Stoner; 6 Nerijus Zabotka (Subaru Impreza). **CW** Precious; Stoner; Bennett-Neil; Corbridge; John Mawdsley (Hyundai Coupe); Tony Collier (Toyota Celica). **FL** Jesse 2m29.865s (71.31mph).

TEAM AND TRACKDAY TROPHIES SNETTERTON, MARCH 16-17

Honda Prelude is Trackday winner

JOHN DICKSON'S AND RINDY FROST'S Honda Prelude won an engrossing Trackday Trophy race.

Lee McCormack (Impreza) led early on, before dropping to third when Frost swept ahead into Riches and Adam Rogers' E36 made a daring pass round the outside of Coram. Rogers tried the same trick on Frost two laps later, only to spear off into the tyres.

A three-way fight developed for the lead as a resurgent McCormack closed back onto Frost's tail and a charging George Wright (Porsche 944) reeled in both of them. But once the dust settled after the pitstops it was Frost's team-mate Dickson who emerged with a decisive lead, as McCormack edged out Wright for second.

The Team Trophy enduro proved

a race of two parts, with James Cameron snatching the early initiative by pushing his 911 to its limits regardless of the damp conditions.

Despite dropping to third after a flat-out spin at Murrays, Cameron re-passed the SEATs of William Lynch and Darren Goes to lead as the race approached the mandatory stops.

Fortunes changed in the second half, as BTCC driver Dan Welch took over from Lynch and secured a comfortable win. Soloist Goes stole second from Cameron's team-mate George Wright on the last lap.

● Oliver Timson

RESULTS

TRACKDAY TROPHY (17 LAPS) 1 John Dickson/Rindy Frost (Honda Prelude); 2 Lee McCormack (Subaru Impreza) +8.043s; 3 Simon Hogg/George Wright (Porsche 944S2); 4 Andrew Stacey (Mini Cooper S); 5 Wendy Mortimer/Martin Mortimer (Mini Cooper S); 6 Andy Wilkins (Renault Clio Cup). **CW** Hogg/Wright; James Barton/Robert Mogford (Honda Integra); Ben Roberts (Mazda MX5); Adam Read (Citroen Saxo). **FL** Dickson/Frost 2m32.268s (70.19mph). **TEAM TROPHY (25 LAPS)** 1 Dan Welch/William Lynch (SEAT Cupra); 2 Darren Goes (SEAT Supercopa) +40.700s; 3 James Cameron/George Wright (Porsche 911); 4 Clint Compaan/Mike Marais (SEAT Leon Cupra R); 5 Andy Ball/Rich Hughes (Porsche 968); 6 Ray Honeybone (Renault Clio). **CW** Cameron/Wright; Rickie Coomber/Tom Gannon (Honda Integra); Adam McKeever/Matthew Weymouth (BMW 328i Coupe); Jonathan Nicholls/Rupert Hinde (Ford Fiesta). **FL** Welch 2m18.724s (77.04mph).



Honda heads Subaru



911 leads Team Trophy

45 not out

Bob Simpson has spent more than four decades racing in the 750 Formula and is about to embark on his 45th season of competition. ALEKSANDRA JURCZAK pays a visit



STEVE JONES

Bob Simpson must be the most consistent racing driver in British motorsport. He has only ever competed in one discipline, the 750 Formula, and this year he will embark on his 45th consecutive campaign. If nothing else, that represents remarkable staying power.

Roughly a month away from his first race of 2013, Simpson invites AUTOSPORT inside his West Drayton home. He mentions that he's just got back from work. At the garage, working on the car?

"Oh, no. I'm a plumber!"

Wife Tina points out the cabinet overflowing with trophies. There are twice as many in Bob's study upstairs, close to his little black books – notebooks with analysis of his every race over the past 44 years.

LIFELONG HOBBY

So how does Simpson feel entering his 45th year of competition? "Old,"



he replies, "when I'm working. Racing is fine. Probably working in the garage is more of a problem."

Lurking in said garage is his little SS racer. It's been winning races since 1991, with hardly any development work done on it at all.

"They're quite reliable cars and there's not a great deal of contact in

"I'm very consistent in what I do, whether it's racing or other things. Or maybe stubborn!"

the races," he says. "You don't very often get major damage."

Over his 44 years of racing, Simpson has built and raced just four cars, and he's won 750 Formula titles in three of them.

His passion runs in his genes. His grandfather was a mechanic at Brooklands and instilled the love of cars in his son. It was Bob's dad Bill, a British Airways Concorde engineer, with whom he started building and racing on an alternating basis.

"We were doing loads of races, I don't know, 25 a year," says Simpson. "We shared the car for 10 years. But then he decided that he would give

up the driving and I've done it ever since. He'd still come to every race until he died in 1990. We'd won the championship the year before then. That was nice."

The 750 Formula is considered one of the lowest-cost motorsport disciplines in Britain, with budgets topping out at £4000. Yet with no prize money on the cards and some wealthier competitors on the grid, Simpson has noticed the championship gradually changing.

"The regulations are still very similar to when we started," he explains. "We've had various engine changes and tyre changes but basic regulations are the same. But people now take it much more seriously than they did. They have a lot more money to spend than when we started."

"Everybody who was on that grid worked on their own cars and their own engines and everything themselves. Now they get this and that made. You wouldn't think that



In demand after
success at Castle
Combe in 1985



750 FORMULA

Established as an Austin 7 fan club in 1939 (750 refers to Austin's 750cc engine), the 750 Motor Club quickly turned to racing. The 750 Formula was its first-born championship.

The 2013 series starts on April 1 at Mallory Park, and will consist of 14 events on eight British circuits.

750 Formula is for sports-prototypes of free design (within specified limits), weighing a minimum of 375kg. The category originally used Austin engines, which were replaced by Reliants and then with Fiat's 1108cc FIRE, which produces 95-100bhp. The package gives average lap speeds of 85-95mph.

The formula uses the same Yokohama slick tyres as those raced in Sports 2000.



Simpson's first self-built SS, which he raced from 1970-76

SIMPSON STATS

4

**CHAMPIONSHIP
TITLES**

1978, 1980

1989, 2003

SS

All cars named
SS after his
family name

STARTS

Within 45
years only
missed about
five starts

people would go to those lengths just for club racing."

So why has he stuck to 750F so passionately? "That's a good question, isn't it?" he ponders. "Just for the sole reason that I enjoy it. I enjoy being in the car, I enjoy racing."

"It's always close competition and it's something that anybody can do really. Even if you spend a modest amount of money on it you can still be quite successful. If you enjoy the racing and the mechanical side of the car it's ideal really."

"I've never done any other motorsports, I don't know if there's anything better or worse out there. I'm afraid I'm just very consistent in what I do, whether it's motor racing or other things... Although maybe stubborn is a better word."

UNBEATABLE FUN

Even if he's never grown tired of 750F, there have been some difficult times.

"The first 10 years we struggled

mainly with learning the engine build and keeping it reliable," he reflects.

"Not the Fiat engines we're using now, but the old Reliant engine. They were very fragile and it took a lot of maintenance to keep them reliable. We were getting ready to pack up during those first 10 years, but then we had a lucky win and it changed everything."

"The worst time of all was probably three or four years ago and that's because of a disagreement with one competitor. The rest of it has been fine. We've always had ups and downs with various people,

This won two titles:
1980 and '89



but you tend to get over it. People come and go in the formula... they don't stay as long as me."

Shifting through some photo albums, he proudly points out the number 1 on his cars.

"The 1980s were the best times for us racing-wise because we had big grids, doing two heats and a final," he says. "We were ultra-competitive. There weren't many races where we weren't finishing in the first three. We haven't finished out of the top six for 35 years at least. It was always either winning the championship or coming second."

On the question of whether he has thoughts of retiring, the 66-year-old looks unsure, although Mrs S hopes this season will be his last.

"I wanted him to pack up about three seasons ago, but we had a real good talk and he said he wouldn't give in to certain things," she reveals. "But I've got to say I've had enough. All our married life has been about motor racing! I've never known anything else."

"Obviously we didn't have children when we first started and then the children came and we did have good fun. We met a lot of lovely friends and I think those days were better. But I don't enjoy racing anymore I'm sad to say, and I really hope that this is his last season."

"I did say that I wouldn't race if I wasn't competitive," says Bob. "If I couldn't finish in the top three then I wouldn't see a point in carrying on. But saying that, we didn't have a very good year last year — we only finished fourth in he championship — and I'm still going to do it this year. I'm just going to see what the season brings." ❧

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THIS WEEK

LETTERS • BEST PICS • LATEST GEAR • ON TRACK & SCREEN • ONLINE

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



Put safety first in the pitlane

As there is a new ruling/definition on the use or role of personnel in the pits, why not increase safety, particularly after hearing Anthony Davidson and Johnny Herbert state that they would be terrified to be the front jack man during a pitstop (as in fact most of us would be).

I cannot believe that any driver is comfortable driving into a human garage at speed.

I would like the NASCAR approach

to be considered – limit the number of personnel working on the car (maybe not to just six, but definitely fewer than the 16 or so that seems normal) and only allow them 'over the wall' after the car has stopped.

This last point would also add to the driver skill in that he/she would have to gauge the precise stopping point, rather than have a gloved hand to show the spot.

Ian Dunbobbin, Billericay

I know the season's only one race old, but I can't help but be amused by the different fortunes of the Mercedes and McLaren teams in Australia. Maybe Lewis Hamilton made the right decision after all...

Enjoyable race, too. More of the same, please.

Frances Stewart
London SE12

won by conserving his tyres and not actually passing any of the three other contenders for the lead!

With this year's tyres we were promised more strategy options and that's what we got, plus an enormous quantity of rubber 'marbles' from early on. It might make for an unpredictable result, but it's not racing.

John Napper

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

For a while there was some good racing between the Ferraris and Sebastian Vettel in the Australian Grand Prix, resolved in Fernando Alonso's favour – and Kimi Raikkonen

Regarding Lewis Hamilton turning away from McLaren, surely the team's biggest loss was Mika

Hakkinen: such a talent, burned out. I'm sure there's a lesson there for the handling of LH. Of course, we'll never know what really happened...

But to invest so many millions, then see Lewis walk, mired in evident frustration, is a loss for the team, the driver and the sport.

Michael P Beausang
Coventry

Apologies to anyone who failed to receive their diary stickers in last week's magazine. Drop us a line to mail@autosport.com and we'll post them to you – ed

In pictures

Our lensmen pounding the beat, from Melbourne to Florida via Tennessee

HANGING IT ALL OUT

Felipe Massa wasn't about to let Mark Webber get in his way in Melbourne's wet Q1 session at the exit of the final corner, and would outqualify team-mate Fernando Alonso the following morning

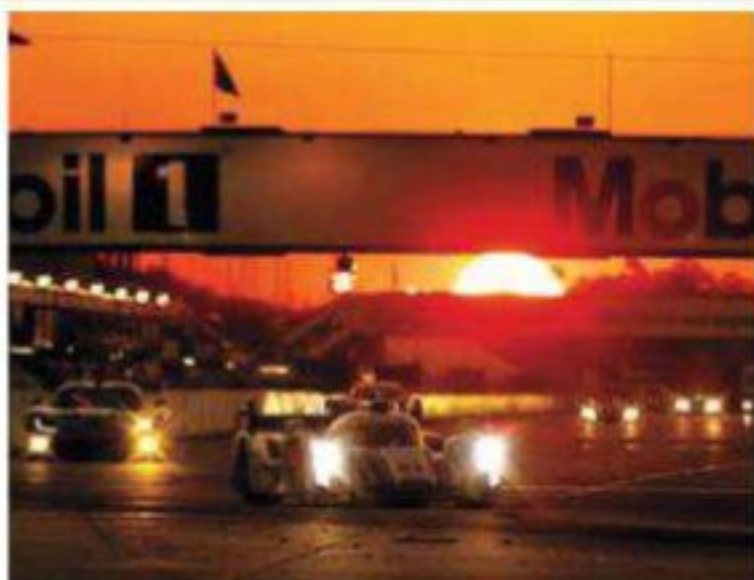


TK SPINS IT AWAY

Former champion Tony Kanaan warmed up for this weekend's IndyCar Series opener at St Pete with a huge spin in testing at Barber last week

THE SUN GOES DOWN ON AUDI AT SEBRING

Saturday's race marked Audi's last Sebring 12 Hours for the foreseeable future, so it went out in style with a fabulous one-two result for the R18



UNLUCKY GUYS

Jeff Gordon's Chevy SS blew a tyre in Sunday's NASCAR Sprint Cup race at Bristol, taking out the Toyota Camry of fellow frontrunner Matt Kenseth in the process



In the shops

Desirable new releases

McLAREN 2013 MERCHANDISE

From £25.49 – autosport.com/shop



McLaren fans can drown their sorrows following a poor start to the season from the Woking boys in the knowledge that the full range of official 2013 merchandise is now available. Choose from caps (top, £25.49), to T-shirts (right, £33.99) and softshell jackets (£101.99). Check the website for the complete range of branded clobber.



MOSS FERRARI 250 SWB 1:18

£119.99 – autosport.com/shop

Mattel's exquisite 1:18 replica of the Rob Walker Racing Ferrari 250 GT SWB used by Stirling Moss to win the 1961 Tourist Trophy at Goodwood features opening doors, bonnet and boot, as well as working steering. Even the roundel on the front and on each door is the correct shade of light blue. A limited-edition version of this legendary Italian GT car, exclusively signed by Sir Stirling Moss, is available at £164.99.



PLATO'S KX QUESTION TIME

£Free to BTCC ticket holders in 2013

At every BTCC round this season, two-time champion Jason Plato will be on hand in the KX Question Time sessions, in association with AUTOSPORT and Motorsport News. The first one is at Brands Hatch on March 30 in The Kentagon from 6.30pm. Come along and ask a question – the best win prizes.



What's on

Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world – plus TV and online

On track in the UK

OULTON PARK

Masters/MSVR

March 23

Admission £17

Tel: 01829 760301

The Masters Historic Racing Club has joined forces with the racing arm of circuit operator MSV to host an eclectic single-day meeting in Cheshire this Saturday. World Sportscar Masters, 70s Celebration, and the Pre-66 GT and Pre-66 Touring Trophy provide the historic element of the action. There are also two races each for the VAG Trophy and Mk2 Golf GTI Championship, and a special Ronnie Peterson Trophy race for Formula Fords. Racing starts just before noon.

World Sportscar
Masters in leafy
Cheshire: bliss!



STEVE JONES

DONINGTON PARK

750MC

March 23

Admission £15

Tel: 01332 810048

The 750 Motor Club is now housed at Donington Park and kicks off its 2013 season with a single-day 'home' race meeting on the Grand Prix loop on Saturday. BMW Compact Cup, Formula Vee, Toyota MR2s, RGB and Sports Specials will all race twice. SR & GT plus the club's revived Roadsports series also feature on the 12-race programme.

On track around the world

MALAYSIAN GRAND PRIX

Formula 1 World Championship

Rd 2/19

Sepang, Malaysia

March 24

formula1.com

GP2 SERIES

Rd 1/11

Sepang, Malaysia

March 23-24

gp2series.com

INDYCAR SERIES

Rd 1/16

St Petersburg, Florida, USA, March 24

indycar.com

INDY LIGHTS

Rd 1/12

St Petersburg, Florida, USA, March 23

indycar.com/indylights

WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 1/12

Monza, Italy

March 24

fiaawtcc.com



Streets of St Pete
host 2013 IndyCar
opener on Sunday

AUTO GP

Rd 1/8

Monza, Italy

March 23-24

autogp.org

FORMULA 3 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 1/10

Monza, Italy

March 23-24

fiaf3europe.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 5/36

Fontana, California, USA

March 24

nascar.com

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 3/13

Canaries Rally, Spain

March 22-23

fiaerc.com

On television

THURSDAY MARCH 21

0700-0740 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

F1: Drivers' Press Conference

1500-1530 **ESPN**

NASCAR Now

1615-1655, 1900-1940 **Sky Sports F1**

F1: Drivers' Press Conference

FRIDAY MARCH 22

0145-0350 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

F1 Malaysian GP: Free Practice 1

0545-0750 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

F1 Malaysian GP: Free Practice 2

0730-0800 **Eurosport**

WTCC: 2013 Season Preview

0750-0835 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

GP2: Malaysia Qualifying

0900-0940 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

F1 Malaysian GP: Team

Principals' Press Conference

2300-2330 **Eurosport**

ERC: Rally Canaries Day 1 Highlights

SATURDAY MARCH 23

0310-0435 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

GP2: Malaysia Feature Race

0355-0420 **Channel 5**

Motorsport Mundial

0445-0610 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

F1 Malaysian GP: Free Practice 3

0700-0945 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

F1 Malaysian GP: Qualifying

0850-0955 **Motors TV LIVE**

FIA European F3: Monza Race 1

1300-1415 **BBC1**

Malaysian GP: Qualifying Highlights

1300-1545, 2000-2245 **Sky Sports F1**

Malaysian GP: Qualifying Replay

2030-2340 **Motors TV LIVE**

NASCAR Nationwide: Fontana

2300-2330 **Eurosport**

ERC: Rally Canaries Review

SUNDAY MARCH 24

0030-0100 **Eurosport**

WTCC: Monza Qualifying

0410-0515 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

GP2: Malaysia Sprint Race

0630-1100 **Sky Sports F1 LIVE**

F1: Malaysian GP

0830-0900 **Eurosport 2 LIVE**

WTCC: Monza Warm-Up

0910-1015 **Motors TV LIVE**

FIA European F3: Monza Race 2

1330-1500, 2030-2200 **Sky Sports F1**

F1 Malaysian GP: Highlights

1345-1445 **Eurosport 2 LIVE**

WTCC: Monza Race 1

1430-1630 **BBC1**

F1 Malaysian GP: Highlights

1455-1600 **Motors TV LIVE**

FIA European F3: Monza Race 3

1600-1700 **Eurosport LIVE**

WTCC: Monza Race 2

1615-1900 **ESPN LIVE**

IndyCar: St Petersburg

1855-2030 **Motors TV**

FIA European F3: Monza Highlights

1900-2230 **Premier Sports LIVE**

NASCAR Sprint Cup: Fontana

2245-2315 **Eurosport**

ERC: Rally Canaries Review

2315-0015 **Eurosport**

WTCC: Monza Review

MONDAY MARCH 25

0500-0600, 0930-1030 **ESPN**

NASCAR Sprint Cup: Fontana

2030-2100 **BBC4**

Motor Racing at the BBC

Online

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: DRIVERS' RACE PREPARATION



SEARCH FOR: The Start (5:42)

Beautifully edited to haunting music by Finn Antti Kahlola, this compilation film watches F1 drivers from different eras preparing for the start of a grand prix – from suiting up in a hotel room to chatting on the grid to an engineer. If it doesn't stir you, nothing will...

AUTOSPORT+

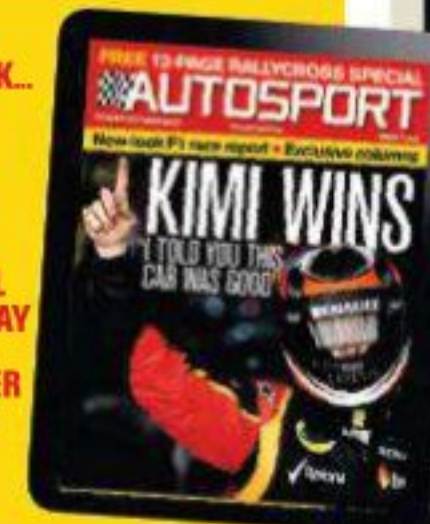
Exclusive content coming up in our premium website this week

Mark Hughes's form guide: Malaysian GP

Our F1 expert will be watching trackside, analysing the lap times and asking the crucial questions that matter to drivers, team bosses and engineers to devise his Friday form guide ahead of the second round of the world championship at Sepang. Don't miss it.

GET AUTOSPORT ON THE MOVE

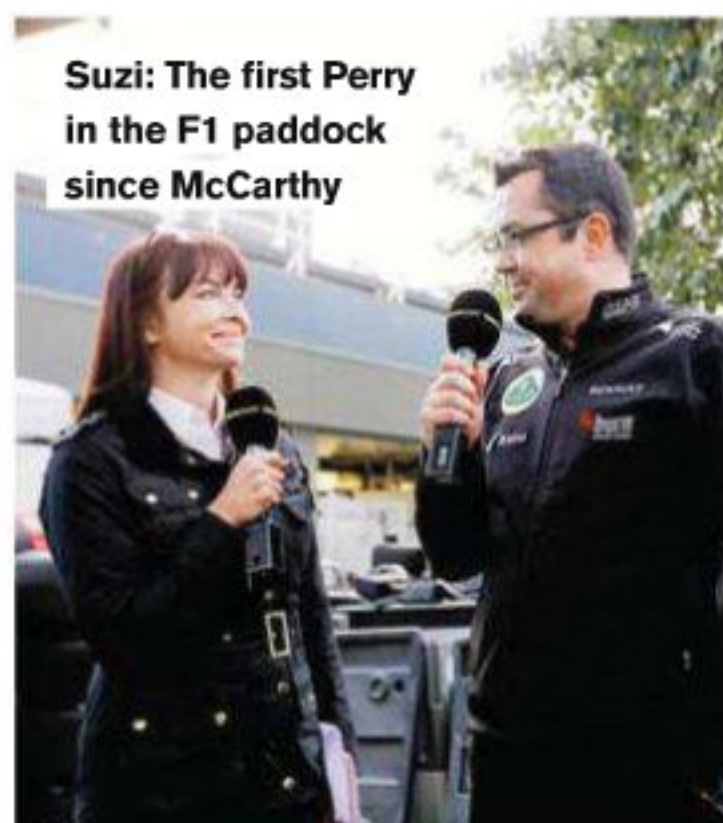
- IN THE iPad ISSUE THIS WEEK...
- WATCH THE THRILLING END TO THE NASCAR SPRINT CUP RACE AT BRISTOL MOTOR SPEEDWAY
- ON SALE ALL OVER THE WORLD FOR ONLY £2.99



Download it now from autosport.com

AUTOSPORT

Revved up over what's on the box



Suzi: The first Perry in the F1 paddock since McCarthy

THE BEEB MIGHT HAVE BEEN TOO skint to fork out for live coverage of all 19 Formula 1 races so that it could provide the nation with the spinny-chair karaoke show we desperately needed, but it's clearly found a couple of quid down the backs of our sofas.

They've spent this on a flashy new title sequence that looks as if Michael Bay has been let loose on the Sky version. Wheels spin, gears grind, cars go flying into the air and things catch fire. Optimus Prime emerges from a McLaren truck and smashes up the Red Bull energy station. This may not have actually happened, but only because the full hospi units aren't on site yet.

Of course there's more new stuff than just high-octane opening credits – there's new presenter Suzi Perry. "I'm a bit nervous about this season," she says in the fast-cut set-piece intro. "Don't worry, you'll be better than the other guy," quips co-host DC.

But there's something missing... "No more flowery shirts – don't worry he'll be back," is the only explanation of EJ's no-show.

There's 16 minutes of pre-race show, which is ample to cover off all the main stories in the superficial, casual-viewer friendly way that the BBC aspires to. There's no chat with Lewis Hamilton though, which felt lacking.

With minimal ado the race starts. Gary

Anderson adds an analytical element that's almost out of keeping with the rest of the coverage, but he's spot-on when he predicts that the medium tyre is the one to start on and that it'll last 22 laps compared to eight for the super-soft (medium-shod leader Sutil pits at the end of lap 22, Vettel changes his super-soft on lap eight...).

Perry comes slightly undone in the post-race segment, stuttering her way through an interview with Eric Boullier. But the increasingly assured DC rescues the situation. It's too early to judge how the chemistry will develop, but God help her when EJ is back!

Revved Up

Kenneth Hansen

■ European Rallycross ■ Loheac, France ■ May 20, 2001 ■ Citroen Xsara ■ Tyre gamble pays off



Hansen's tyre switch came good for Citroen in its backyard

PICTURE THE SCENE: A massive crowd of 48,000 fans – a record for the European Rallycross Championship – all screaming, chanting, booing, cheering.

About 8000 of them were from Citroen, all in red and there to support me, as I was the main Citroen driver. It was a bit like the Tifosi at Monza. Just crazy.

But it was at Loheac in north-west France, just 22km from the Citroen factory in Rennes.

There was a problem though. I wasn't performing, and I had an idea why that was. Despite having been with Citroen for a number of years and winning a lot of championships in Europe, I'd always managed to avoid the need to run Michelin tyres and stayed loyal to the Cooper-Avons on which I'd scored a lot of wins.

But for 2001 I was finally forced to switch to Michelins, as they and Citroen had such a strong link in all aspects of motorsport and did a lot of research and development work together.

The season started well with testing and then with a rallycross event in Sweden that I won, so I had no reason to think that anything was wrong, but in my first heat at Loheac I finished sixth. I had never finished sixth in a heat, you understand. Never. Not unless there had been a big problem.

The car just wasn't doing what

I wanted it to, and after a lot of thinking and analysis, I decided it was the rubber, and to my surprise, I managed to get the agreement of Michelin and the race director to let me change the tyres back to the Cooper-Avons. The one thing they asked of me was that I didn't have the Avon logo on the tyres, so the tyres were just blank instead.

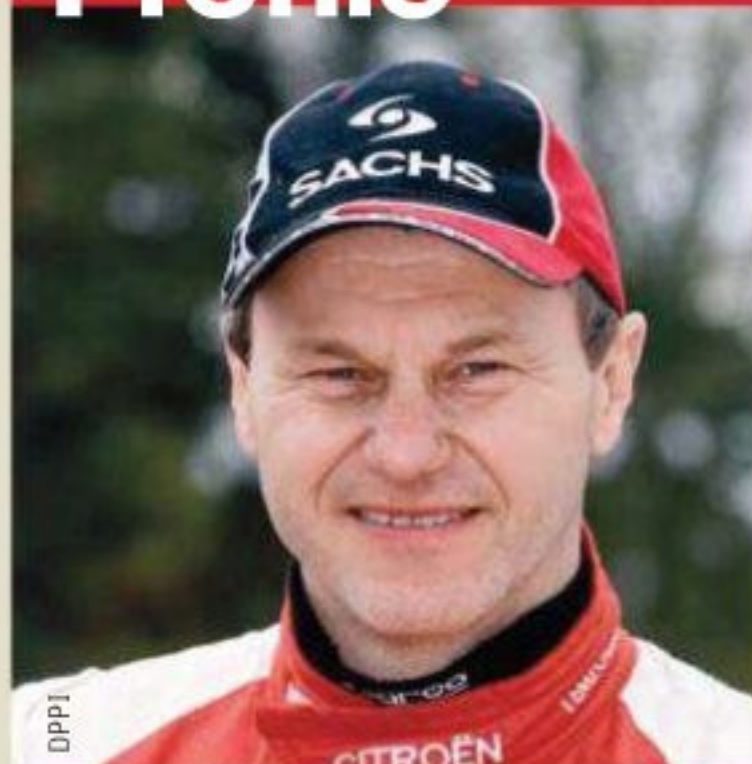
Then, of course, the nerves hit me. Sitting on the start line for the second heat, I thought: 'Shit, what if it isn't the tyres? What if it's me?' I'd only been there once before and I hadn't won. I could have talked myself out of making a good start very easily, and just at a time when I needed to do the opposite.

I got a second place in that heat and then won the third, so I was pretty satisfied that I'd been right. Then I won the final too, so I took the overall event win as well.

Getting that win made me the King in Rennes the next day. On Sunday morning I definitely couldn't see that happening. I even considered spending the whole day in Michel Hommel's wonderful museum across the road from the circuit instead!

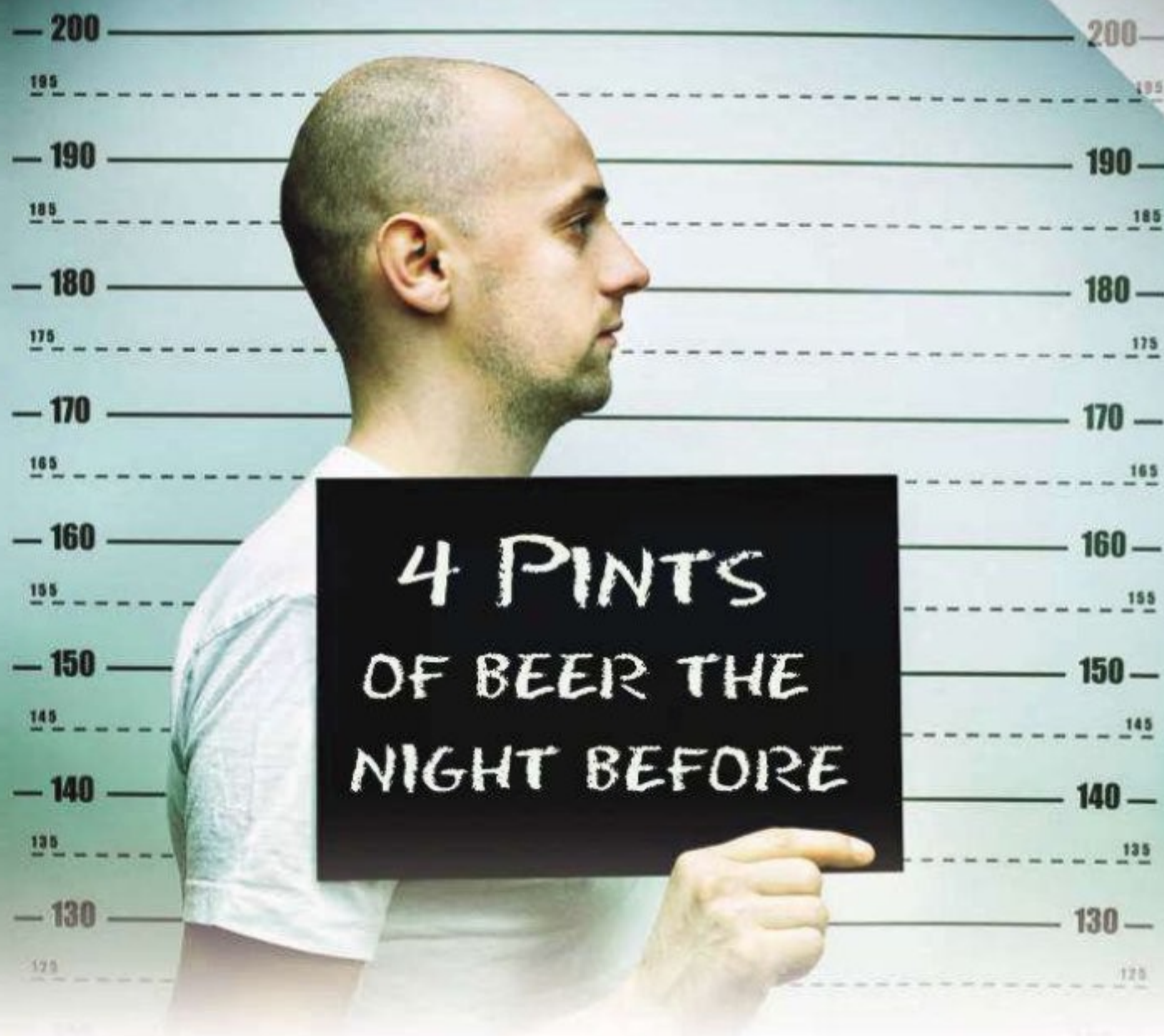
That win set up a fantastic year, because with Citroen we finished third in the Swedish championship, second in the French and won the European title. Pretty perfect! ✖ Kenneth Hansen was talking to Jamie O'Leary

Profile



KENNETH HANSEN IS THE most successful driver in rallycross history with 14 European crowns won in Ford and Citroen machinery from 1989-2008 – many against great rival Martin Schanche. He also won 10 national titles in his native Sweden from 1986-2002. His Hansen Motorsport squad took Timur Timerzyanov to the 2012 ERC title and will again field the Russian alongside Kenneth's former single-seater racer son Timmy this year.

NEXT WEEK MALAYSIAN GRAND PRIX REPORT
All the Sepang drama **DON'T MISS IT!**



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If you drank 4 pints between 9pm and midnight, you could still be over the limit until 11am the following day*. That's why almost 1 in 5 drink drive accidents happen the "morning after"**.

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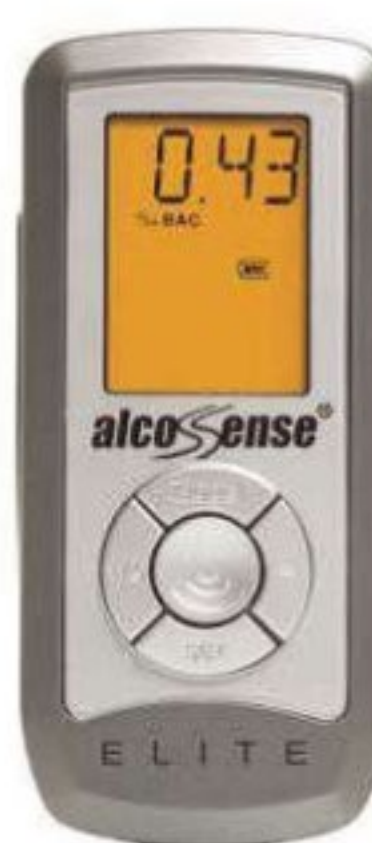
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** 17.1% of drink drive accidents are between hours of 5am and 1pm (Source: Dept. for Transport, Road Accidents and Safety Annual Report 2010)

* 4 Pints of Abbot Reserve contain 14.8 units of alcohol (Source: Greene King) and each unit takes 1 hour to leave the body (Source: NHS). Therefore 14.8 hours after 9pm the alcohol will have passed from the body.



THE NEW SEAT LEON

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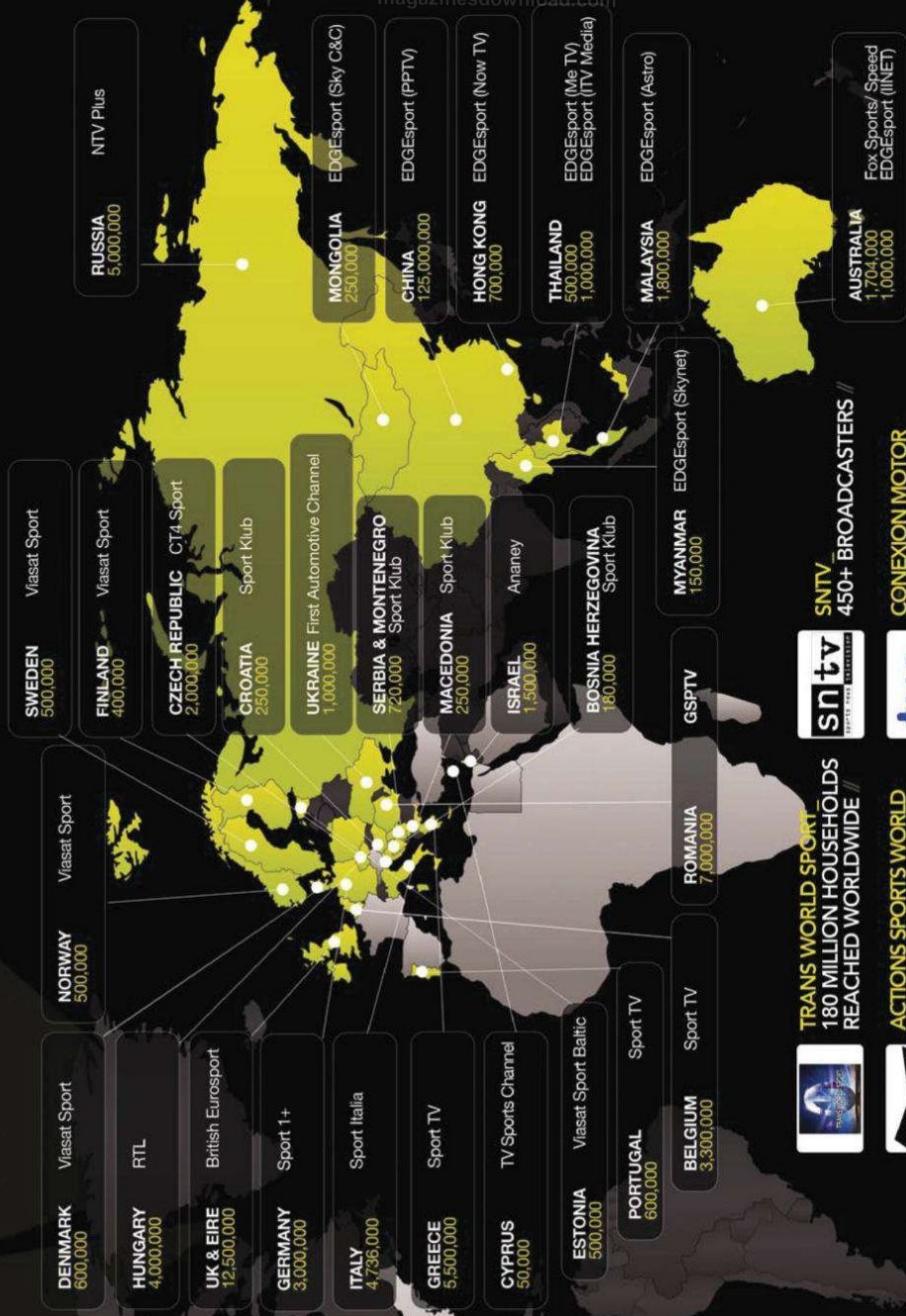
Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Leon in mpg (litres per 100km): urban 39.2 (7.2) – 61.4 (4.6); extra-urban 53.3 (5.3) – 85.6 (3.3); combined 47.1 (6) – 74.3 (3.8). CO₂ emissions 139 – 99g/km. Model shown is a SEAT Leon 5dr SE 2.0 TDI 150PS in Nevada white metallic with optional tech pack, 17" alloy wheels, front and rear parking sensors and sunroof.



FIA EUROPEAN RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP //

SEASON GUIDE 2013

ACCESS TO RALLYCROSSRX JUST GOT EASIER 405 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS // 120 GLOBAL TERRITORIES //



TRANS WORLD SPORT
180 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS
REACHED WORLDWIDE //



SNTV
450+ BROADCASTERS //



ACTIONS SPORTS WORLD
48 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS
REACHED //



CONEXION MOTOR
(TVE) 15 MILLION //

The ed gets a taste of
RX power, courtesy of
rising Swedish rallycross
star Anton Marklund



PIC: JAKOB EBREY

3

WELCOME

Is rallycross the best-kept secret in motorsport? The cars are spectacular – I had a ride in Anton Marklund's Volkswagen Polo R at Lydden Hill a few weeks back, and the torque and stopping power were mind-blowing – the format of short, fast races seems made for TV and the paddock offers the sort of access much lamented in F1.

The decision of former WRC star Petter Solberg to enter the full European series will surely raise its profile, but the deal for IMG to become its promoter could be the shot in the arm that was needed.

Bringing together the successful but disparate events into a formal, coherent championship and investing in producing top-notch TV coverage should bring much-deserved exposure.

It will take a while for it to break into the mainstream, but the seeds have been planted that will surely allow rallycross to grow.

ANDREW VAN DE BURGT EDITOR
andrew.vandeburgt@haymarket.com

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THE NEW VISION **P4**

Promoter IMG plans to return the sport to its heyday when it rubbed shoulders with horse racing and football on Saturday afternoon TV.

RALLYCROSSRX v WRC **P6**

Fourteen-times rallycross champion Kenneth Hansen runs us through the differences between RX and World Rally Championship machinery.

DRIVER BY DRIVER **P8**

A core of 15 top drivers will join battle with local stars at all nine rounds, with each one of them gunning to be the 2013 champion.

EVOLUTION OF RALLYCROSS **P10**

Four decades of spectacular action.

CALENDAR & ESSENTIAL INFO **P12**

Editor Andrew van de Burgt **Written by** Jamie O'Leary **Art editor** Aubrey Smith **Senior designer** Michael Cavalli **Designer** Graham Greig **Sub-editor** John Leach **Picture editor** Peter Mills **Photography** Jakob Ebrey, Tim Whittington, LAT Archive

Rallycross's close-fought contests make for spectacular TV



4

(RALLY)CROSSING THE

With media giant IMG confirmed as its promoter, **ANDREW VAN DE BURGT** asks can the rebranded

For motorsport fans of a certain age, the mention of rallycross conjures up memories of a Saturday afternoon, where on *World of Sport* or *Grandstand* this strange hybrid of rallying and traditional circuit racing rubbed shoulders with horse racing, wrestling and the football scores.

Thanks to the plethora of Group B cars that flooded onto the market after they were deemed too fast for the stages, rallycross was blessed with a series of spectacular-looking, fire-breathing monsters that made stars of the likes of Martin Schanche, Will Gollop and Matti Alamaki.

Yet, despite its appeal, the European series remained a loose gathering of individual events that all ran to the same rules, much as they had since its formation in 1973. But as the television landscape changed following the rise of cable and

satellite, rallycross slipped from the schedule and the average viewer's consciousness, even if many of the events continued to thrive.

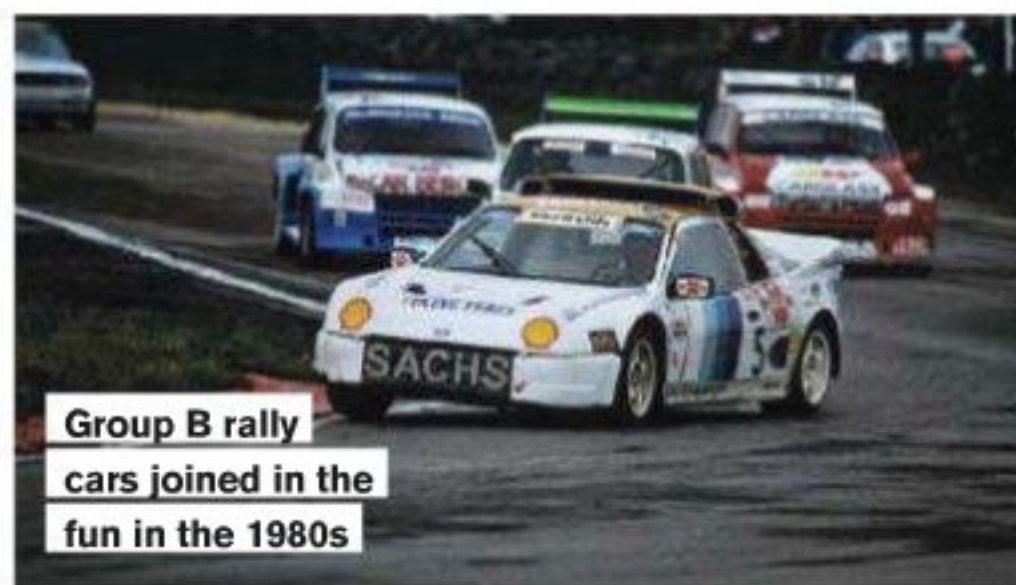
AUTOSPORT's rallycross correspondent, Tim Whittington was a frustrated onlooker. The cars were still spectacular, the action still thrilling and the quick-fire nature of the races ideal for TV. So he started to petition rallycross's governing body, the FIA, to remedy the situation. While people

there were sympathetic to his calls, they pointed out his lack of experience as a promoter.

At around the same time, media giant IMG was looking at taking over the rights to promote the World Rally Championship. Having done its homework, IMG concluded that the format of rallycross had more latent potential as global TV product, and struck a deal to enter into partnership with the FIA to become the sole promoter of the European Rallycross Championship from 2013, and it has big plans to raise the profile and stature of the series it has rebranded 'RallycrossRX'.

"All the constituent parts are there, but I don't think it's been put together in the right way," says Martin Anayi, new managing director of the series.

"We have very clear plans and strategies about how to get all those constituent parts and put them together," he continues. "We are making more formal what was a loose collaboration of events. First and foremost is making sure the



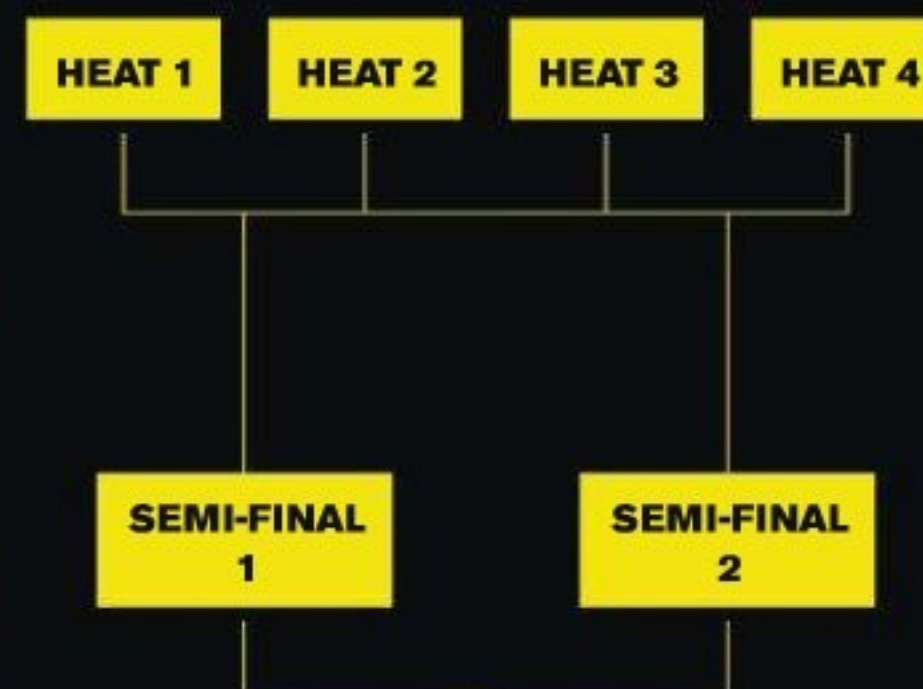
Group B rally cars joined in the fun in the 1980s



RX FORMAT HOW THE RACES ARE RUN

TIMED HEATS

Five cars per heat. All start in a single row. Top 16 score points (16,15,14, etc).



SEMI-FINALS

Top 12 drivers from heats. Six cars per semi-final. Start in two rows of three. Top three progress. Points (6, 5, 4, etc).

FINAL

THE FINAL

Top three drivers from each semi. Six cars start in two rows of three. Points (6, 5, 4, etc).

't's AND DOTTING THE 'i's

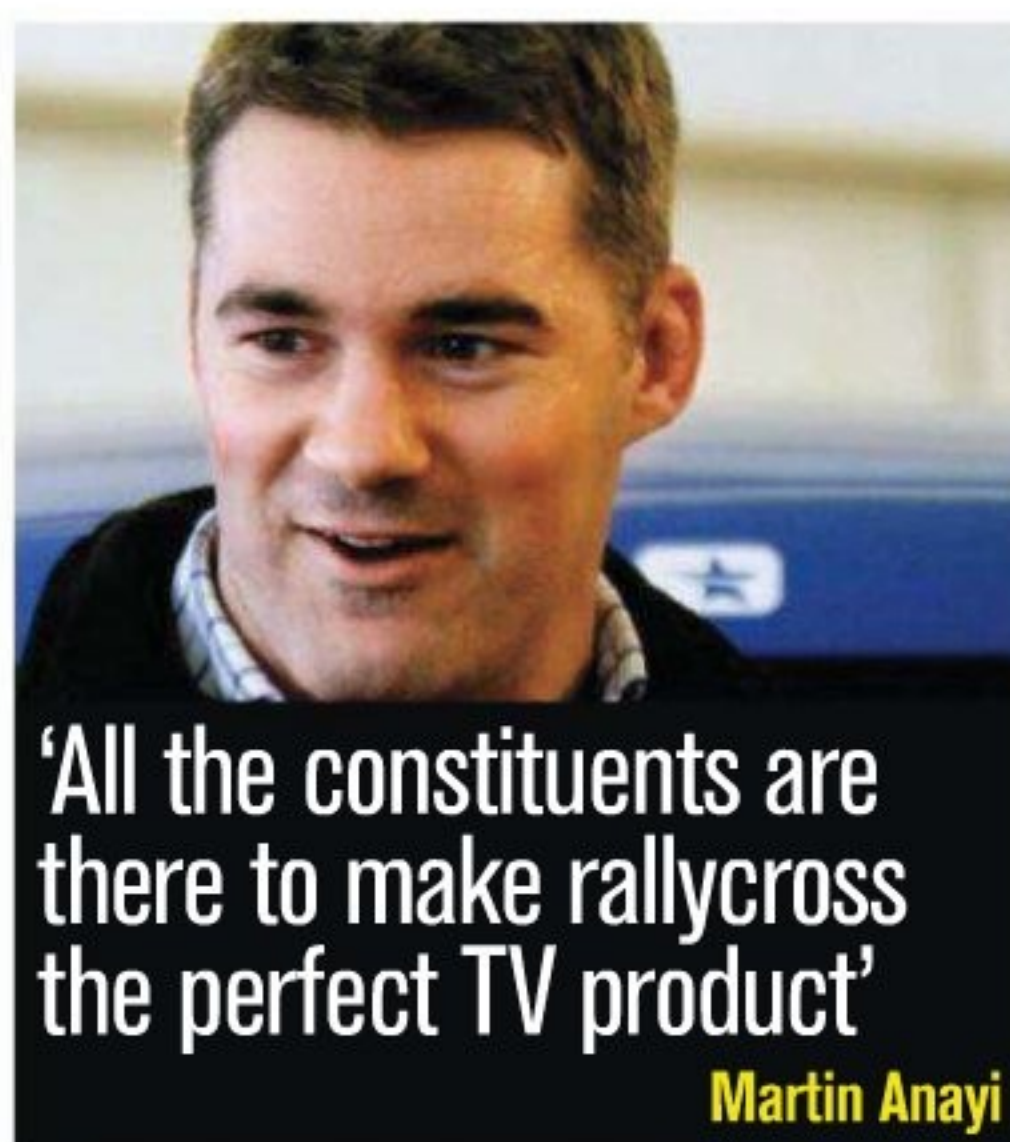
RallycrossRX championship revisit the heights of popularity it reached during its golden age?

events are standardised – with the big exception that we will allow each to have its own personality.”

IMG's first step towards this homogenisation was to create 15 'permanent' entry slots for the series, so there will be a core of familiar faces in the driver line-up for all nine rounds, rather than each event largely consisting of local stars.

One of those 15 permanent entrants is 2003 WRC champion Petter Solberg. Getting the Norwegian to commit to the full series is a massive coup, guaranteeing crossover interest into the rallying world. However, Anayi and IMG know it's on TV where the big gains will be made, and this is where most of the effort – and budget – is focused. There will be cameras at every corner of each event and the production of high-quality highlights and news clips will be distributed globally, massively increasing the sport's reach.

Five of the events, starting in Finland in June, will be broadcast live. Programmes will consist of



'All the constituents are there to make rallycross the perfect TV product'

Martin Anayi

a summary of the early weekend action, followed by the live semi-finals and final.

“Rallycross can be the perfect TV product,” says Anayi. “But until we deliver that, we're on trial for a year. What we need to do is make sure everybody involved realises that when we go live in Finland, they have an obligation and a duty to the sport.”

Weighing heavily in IMG's favour is that the whole sport has bought into its vision. Kenneth Hansen, a multiple European Rallycross Champion and now one of the leading team owners, says, “We have the [right] sport to be a big success, but we've never had the package; someone to put it together. We've been wishing for this [a good promoter] for a long time. Now it's happened. It won't turn the sport around overnight, but it'll make a big difference – and in a good way.”

You can see how the new era of rallycross looks and feels at Lydden Hill, Kent, over the Easter weekend of March 31 to April 1.

RX **V** WRC TECHNICAL SPECS

How does this RX series supercar differ from the Citroen DS3 WRC it so closely resembles? **AUTOSPORT** asks uber-successful former rallycross driver turned team boss Kenneth Hansen to break down the details

CHASSIS

The reinforced standard

Citroen Racing shells we prepare with MTechnologies are pretty different from when I was competing. Then we could use materials such as titanium and tube chassis to strengthen the shell. The current regulations took that away and make today's cars less rigid than the old ones. However, we have more experience now, so we can use other methods to increase stiffness.



WRC: The production bodyshell is reinforced with a rollcage made by Citroen Racing.

RADIATORS

We mount our radiators at the rear for two reasons: it gives the car a better weight distribution, and it reduces the risk of dirt coming into the car, clogging up the radiator and causing the engine to overheat. You're also less likely to get the radiator damaged by positioning it there.

WRC: The radiator is mounted at the front of the car.

SUSPENSION

We now have MacPherson struts fitted all round, with fully adjustable damping on each corner.

We used to use a double-wishbone system when we were competing with the Citroen C4, but I was convinced that struts would give better turn-in and give us the possibility of improved damping. There's a degree of freedom in terms of what system you run.

WRC: The DS3 is fitted with MacPherson struts all round, with Citroen Racing-built four-way adjustable dampers.



WEIGHT

We have a minimum weight of 1300kg, including the driver. That's about 250kg more than in the mid-1990s when I was having a lot of my success behind the wheel. Like everyone, we build the car underweight and then ballast it up to 1300kg, which allows us to play around a little bit – but not much – with where the extra kilos go.

WRC: The minimum weight of a WRC car is 1350kg, including the driver and co-driver.



GEARBOX

We have a six-speed, transverse-mounted Sadev 'box, but without a central diff linking to the four-wheel drive. It's less advanced and heavier than the WRC unit. We have a flat-shift, sequential system. It used to be linked to the ECU to run a kind of traction control [now banned]. There's a carbonfibre clutch from Sachs, CDX joints and Uddeholm HPS [high-performance steel] material.

WRC: A six-speed sequential Sadev longitudinal unit is connected to front and rear diffs. Car is four-wheel drive.



ENGINE

We have to use a standard block from the maker of the car we run, so we could have any Citroen or Peugeot block that falls within the regulations. Ours is an ORECA-prepared 2050cc turbocharged unit producing around 550bhp and 800nm/s of torque. We have more freedom to alter the mounting position than the WRC teams, but we still have to make the driveshafts connect to the transverse gearbox. The 0-60mph time is about 2.4 seconds, with a top speed of 125mph at 8000rpm. But with the 45mm air restrictor we run, there's quite a lot of lag from 7000-8000rpm.



WRC: Engine is a 1598cc turbocharged direct-injection unit. A 34mm air restrictor produces 300bhp and torque of around 600nm/s. The 0-60mph time is 3.0 seconds; top speed 133mph.



WHEELS/TYRES

Rallycross cars have an eight-tyre limit for each weekend, and each tyre must be a maximum of 600mm in diameter and 250mm in width. There are strict regulations about the kind of tread pattern you can run – you couldn't turn up with a slick, for example. You can use whichever rubber supplier you like, but we've run Cooper Tires for a long time, and about 90 per cent of the field do, too. Typically, there's a choice between two compounds, but you have to run the same four tyres all round at any one time. The wheels measure anything from 15-18 inches, depending on differing requirements at each circuit.

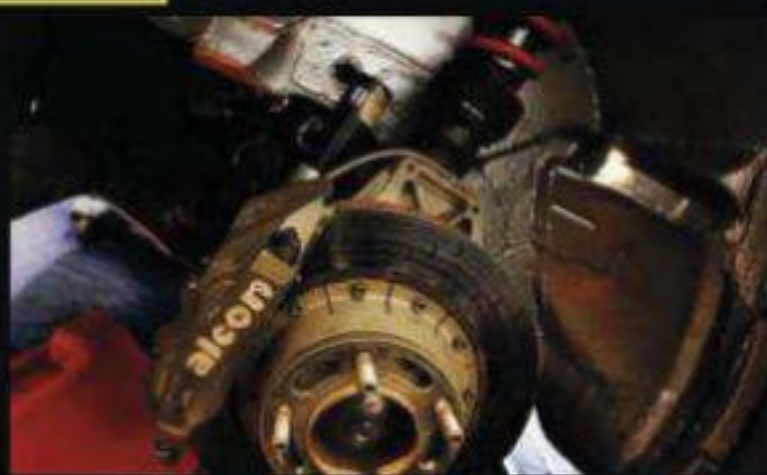
WRC: The DS3 runs 18-inch wheels (in asphalt specification) and Michelin rally tyres, with event-dependent specs and sizes.



BRAKES

The discs on a rallycross car are a little bigger than the ones that the WRC cars use on gravel events, because the forces involved are a bit stronger on the asphalt sections of our circuits. Ours measure 310mm, and work in synchrony with Alcon calipers.

WRC: In gravel trim, the DS3 has 300mm discs all round (355mm front discs for asphalt). Four-piston calipers are water cooled on asphalt.



HANSEN – A HISTORIC LEGACY

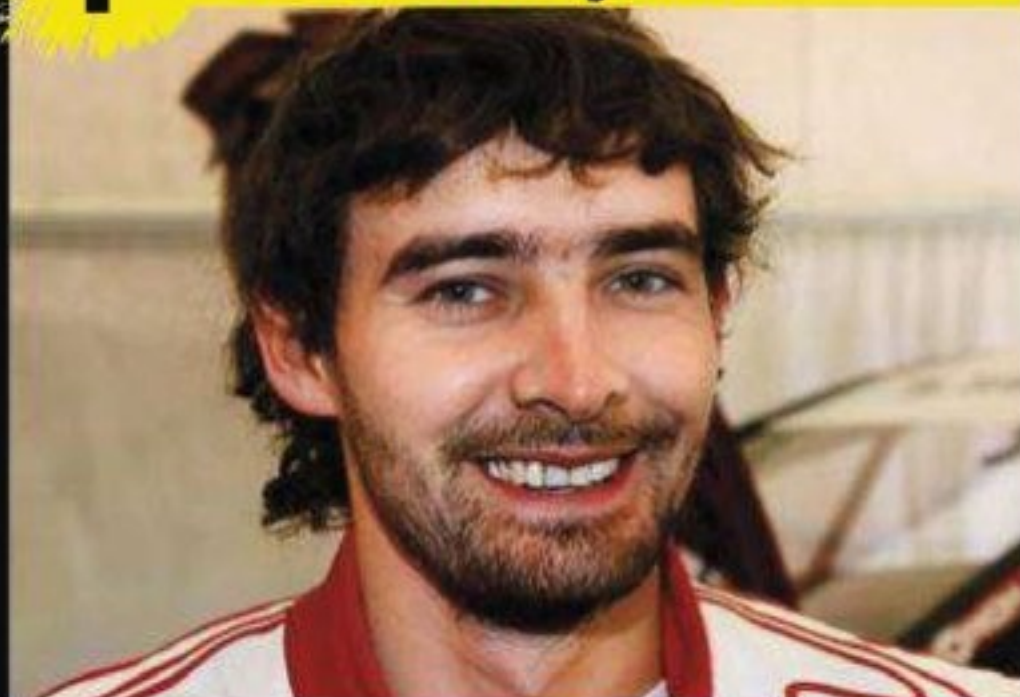
The Swedish star has dominated the European circuits since the late 1980s

Kenneth Hansen is the most successful driver in the history of European rallycross, winning the title a staggering 14 times between 1989 and 2008. Since the Swedish

cracer turned team boss, Hansen Motorsport has been a consistent European championship-winning team for more than a decade, winning last year's title with Timur Timerzyanov. This year Timerzyanov will run alongside Alexander Hvaal and Kenneth's son Timmy. The team will also field Erik Faren in a Citroen C2 in the Super 1600 category and Kevin Hansen – Timmy's younger brother – in the JRX junior division.



1 Timur Timerzyanov



Age: 26 **Nationality:** Russian
Team: Hansen Motorsport
Car: Citroen DS3

Russia's first ERC champion remains in a Hansen Motorsport Citroen to defend his title this year. He only made his rallycross debut in 2007, and won the S1600 ERC series in 2010.

4 Ronny Scheveneels



Age: 46 **Nationality:** Belgian
Team: RSB Racing
Car: Peugeot 207

The 2001 ERC production division champ, the Belgian returns with his own team, with technical support from Pailler Competition, run by 11-times French champion Jean-Luc Pailler.

5 Stig-Olov Walfridson



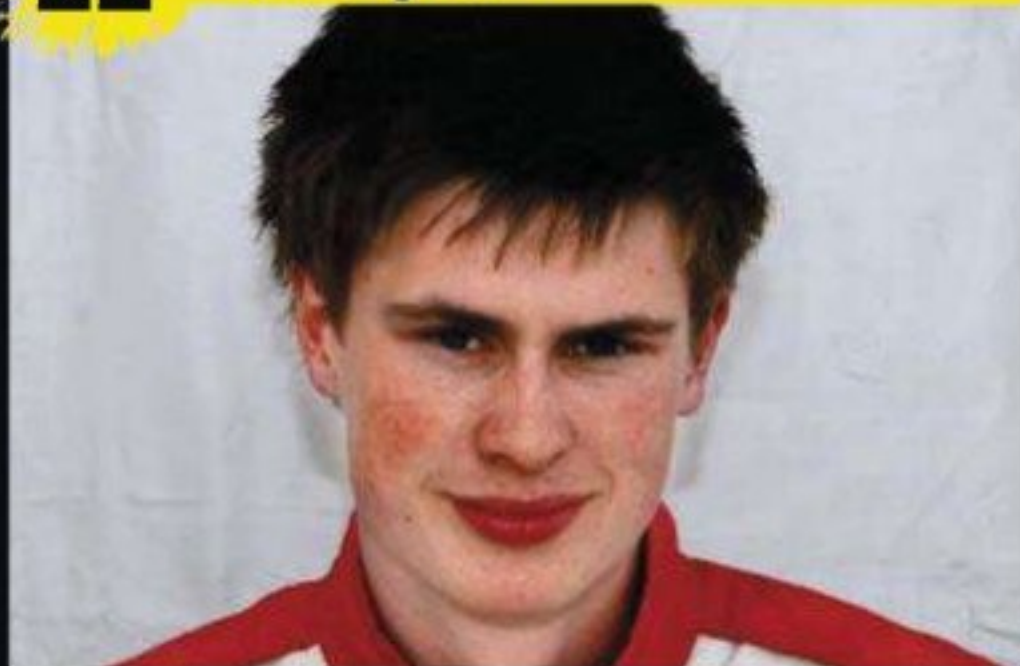
Age: 50 **Nationality:** Swedish
Team: Helmia Motorsport
Car: Renault Clio

Walfridson has twice won Group N on his home WRC event and taken five domestic rally titles in the class. He's been an RX regular since 2010. His brother, Per-Inge, won the ERC title in 1980.

DRIVER BY DRIVER

For the 2013 European season, 15 centrally contracted drivers will do battle to decide the destiny of the flagship Supercar title, with a host of young hotshoes and experienced hands desperate to knock champion Timur Timerzyanov off his perch

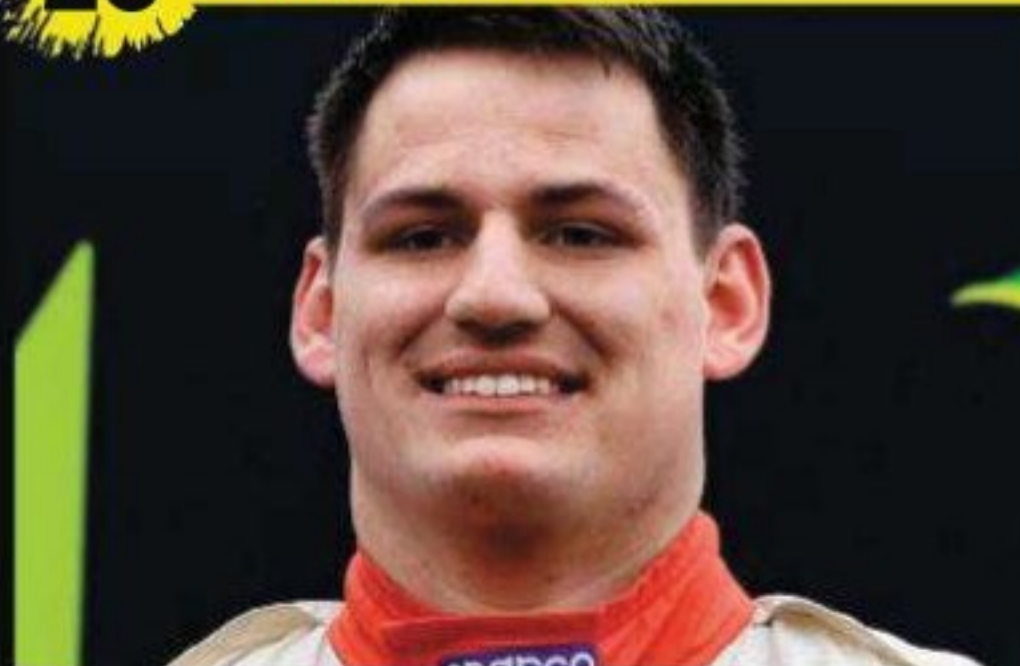
22 Mats Lysen



Age: 21 **Nationality:** Norwegian
Team: Mats Lysen Motorsport/
Helmia Motorsport
Car: Renault Clio

A dark horse for the title, Lysen became the ERC's youngest champion in 2009, winning the S1600 division. He has raced Supercars ever since.

25 Alexander Hvaal



Age: 20 **Nationality:** Norwegian
Team: Hansen Motorsport
Car: Citroen DS3

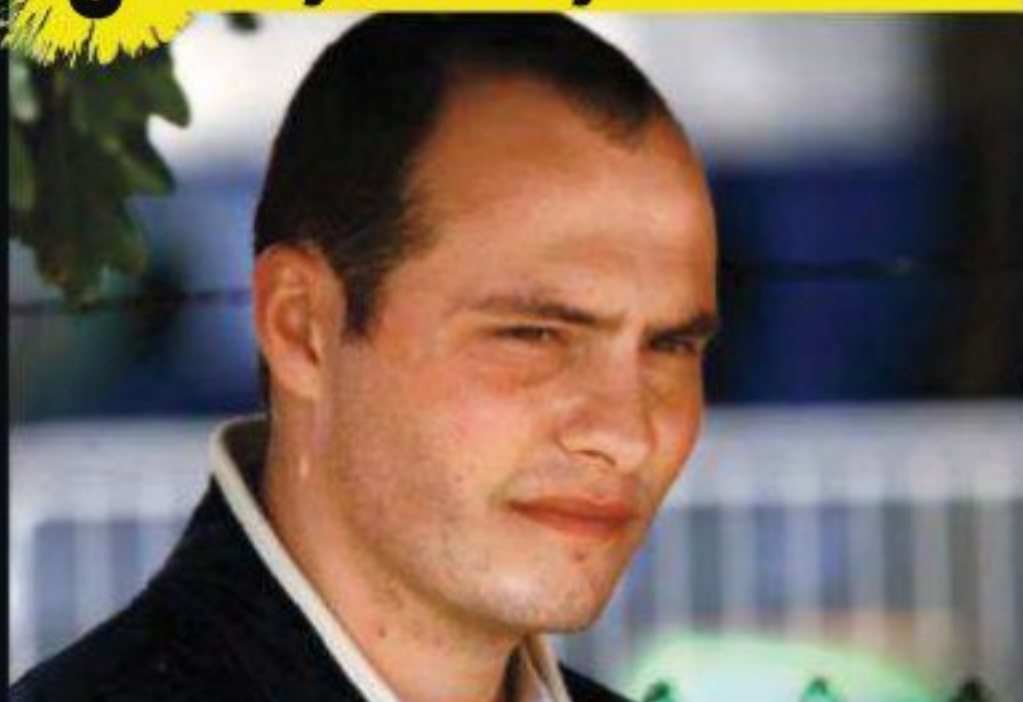
Hvaal made a major step up in competitiveness last year with the Hansen squad. He had previously impressed with plucky displays in outdated machinery in S1600 and Supercars.

26 Andy Scott



Age: 56 **Nationality:** British
Team: Albatec Racing
Car: Peugeot 208

Only started rallycrossing in 2007, but has already been a winner in British RX and Global Rallycross. His new squad will receive technical back-up from MTechnologies.

6 Davy Jeanney

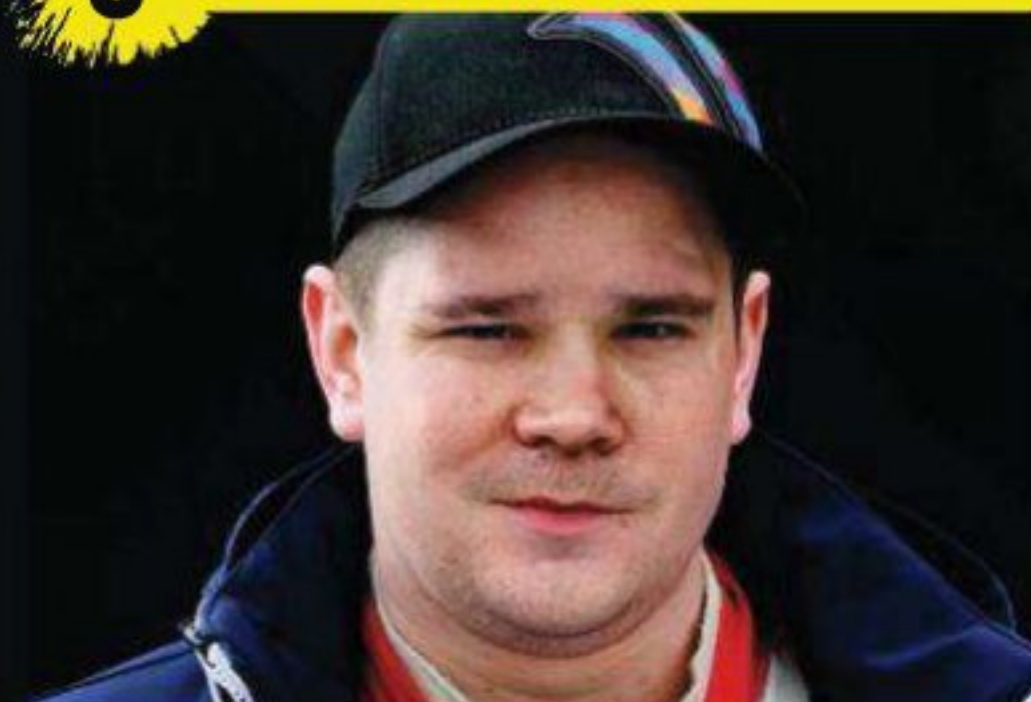
Age: 26 Nationality: French
Team: JSA Competition
Car: Citroen C4

Jeanney as a virtual unknown when he stepped up to ERC in 2011, despite having won the French title the previous year. Now one of the best in Europe, he was fourth in the 2012 series.

7 Knut Ove Borseth

Age: 36 Nationality: Norwegian
Team: Hedstroms Motorsport
Car: Skoda Fabia

Returns after a two-year break from the sport to establish the Kfor Livet foundation that helps socially-challenged teenagers. Won the touring car division of the 2009 ERC.

8 Peter Hedstrom

Age: 29 Nationality: Sweden
Team: Hedstroms Motorsport
Car: Skoda Fabia

The Swedish junior champion as long ago as 2001, Hedstrom returned to competition last year and won his national title with his own team, as well as finishing eighth in the ERC standings.

9 Michael de Keersmaecker

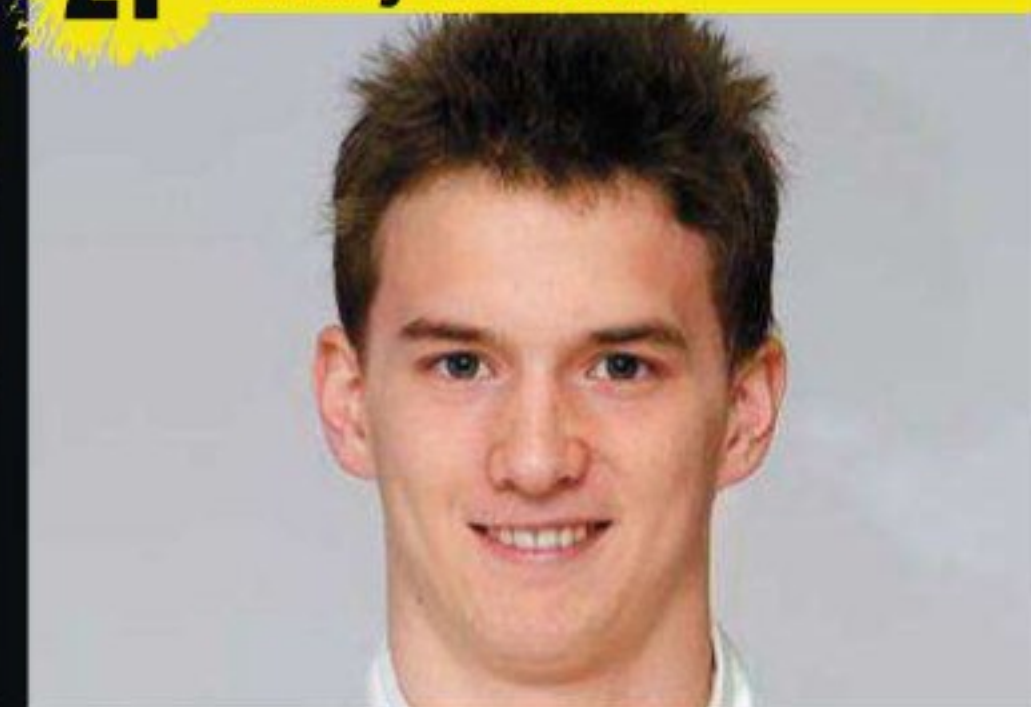
Age: 32 Nationality: Belgian
Team: JDK Racing
Car: Ford Focus

Began competing in 1999, and has combined rallycrossing with circuit racing ever since. A former ERC S1600 and touring car champ, he's also raced in the Citroen 2CV 24 Hours.

11 Petter Solberg

Age: 38 Nationality: Norwegian
Team: Petter Solberg Engineering
Car: Citroen DS3

The best-known driver in the series, courtesy of his 2003 WRC title, Solberg returns to his rallycross roots in a DS3 run by his own team. If anyone can attract the crowds, it's 'Hollywood'.

21 Timmy Hansen

Age: 20 Nationality: Swedish
Team: Hansen Motorsport
Car: Citroen DS3

His dad and team boss Kenneth is a rallycross legend. Hansen finished fifth on his ERC debut last year after a single-seater career that included wins in Formula BMW and FRenault.

33 Liam Doran

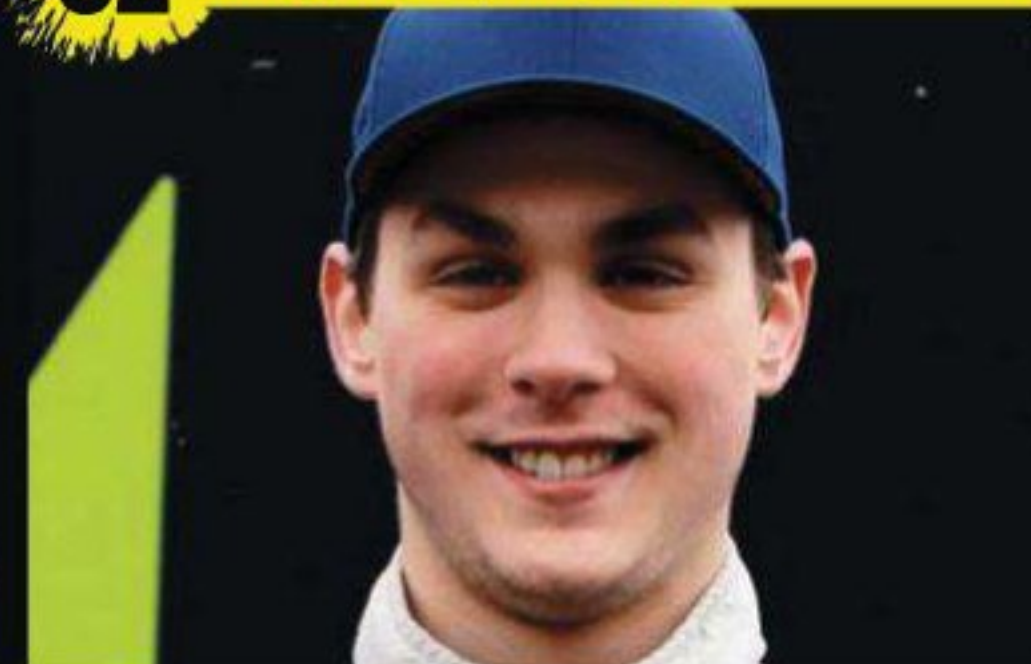
Age: 25 Nationality: British
Team: LD Motorsports
Car: Citroen DS3

The son of four-time British RX champion Pat Doran has won a British GP and a gold medal at the X-Games in 2011. Last year's ERC runner-up, his team expands to a two-car line-up for 2013.

66 Andreas Bakkerud

Age: 21 Nationality: Norwegian
Team: LD Motorsports
Car: Citroen DS3

Bakkerud moves up to the pukka Supercar class in 2013, having taken the S1600 division of the ERC last year. He will have a great benchmark in owner/team-mate Liam Doran.

92 Anton Marklund

Age: 20 Nationality: Swedish
Team: Marklund Motorsport
Car: Volkswagen Polo

Has competed in his homeland since he was 15. Stepped up to the ERC last year and won the touring car division, never finishing lower than second. He now graduates to Supercars.

2013 RALLYCROSSRX SEASON GUIDE

THE CARS THAT STARRED

It's four decades since the European Rallycross Championship's inaugural season. During that time, the cars, drivers and rules may have changed, but the thrill of the raw power remains the same

1970s



1973

1980s



1982



1984



1985

1990s

1991 Martin Schanche, Ford RS200

The RS200 missed the boat in rallying, but enjoyed huge success in rallycross, with Schanche's 700bhp monster being the ultimate version.

1992 Will Gollop, MG Metro 6R4 BiTurbo

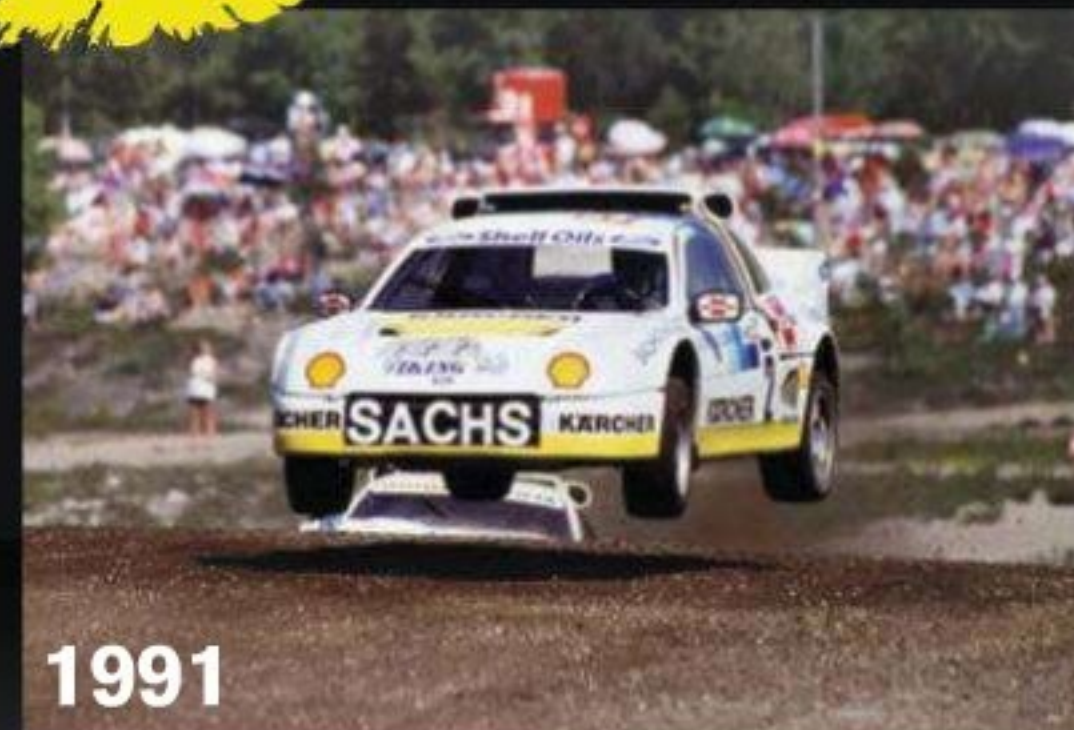
Like the RS200, Austin Rover's 6R4 achieved little in world rallying, but racked up rallycross wins thanks to its sub-2-second 0-60mph acceleration.

1994 Kenneth Hansen, Citroen ZX 16V Turbo 4x4

New rules in '93 led to the replacement of Group B cars with Group A-based machinery. ERC record-breaker Hansen took his first outright title.

1999 Per Eklund, Saab 9-3 T16 4x4

Works Saab legend Eklund finally claimed the title in a 2.0-litre, four-wheel-drive, 500bhp 9-3. It was dubbed 'Saabaru' due to its Impreza gearbox.



1991

2005 Kenneth Hansen, Citroen Xsara T16 4x4

The Hansen/Citroen axis dominated rallycross in the mid-2000s, just as Sebastien Loeb and Citroen were doing in the WRC with a similar Xsara.

2007 Lars Larsson, Skoda Fabia T16 4x4

Larsson won back-to-back titles with the nimble Fabia in 2006/07.

2008 Kenneth Hansen, Citroen C4 T16 4x4

Hansen took the last of his amazing 14 rallycross crowns in the Citroen C4.

2009 Sverre Isachsen, Ford Focus ST T16 4x4

Norwegian Isachsen bagged the first of a hat-trick of titles in his Focus ST. Weighing in at 1200kg, it pumped out around 560bhp.

2000s



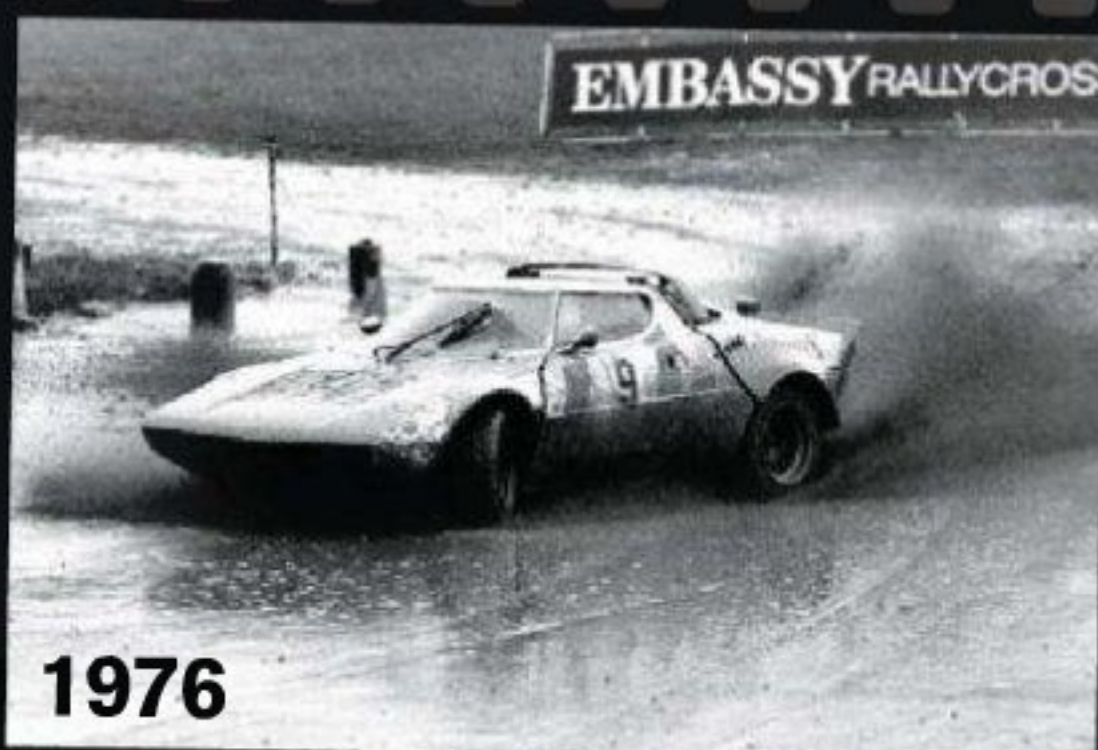
2005



2007



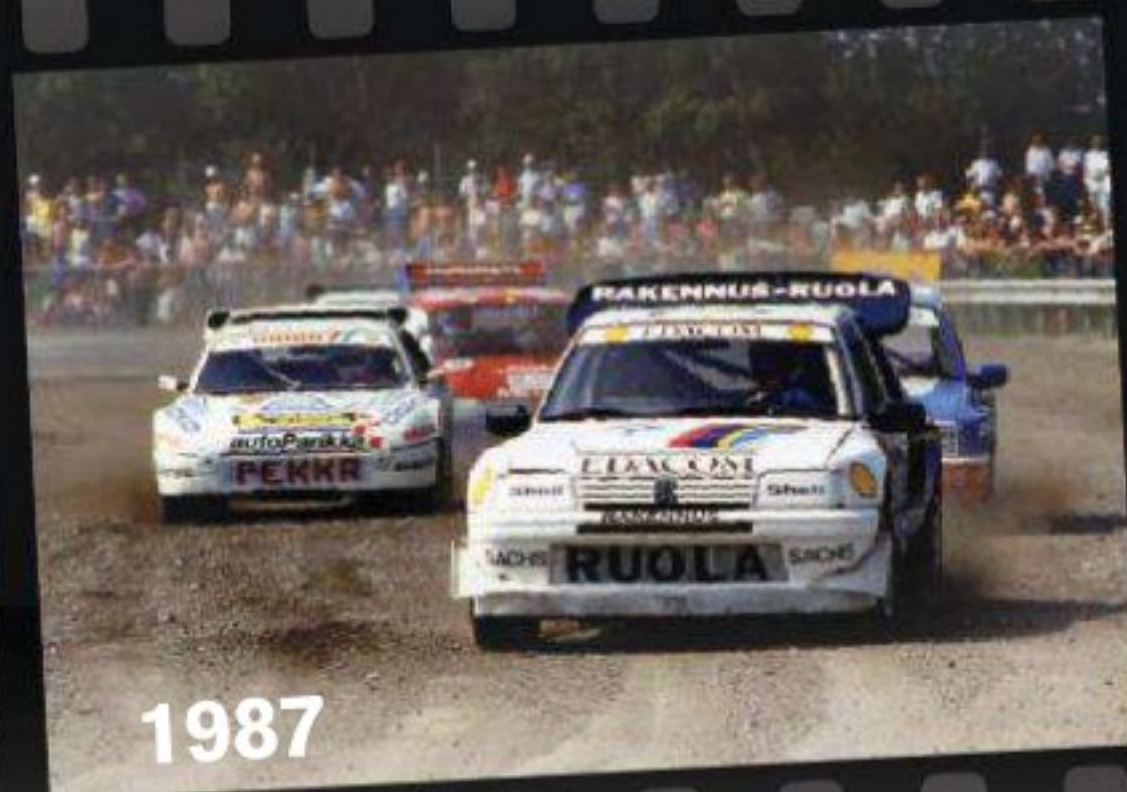
1974



1976



1977



1987

1982 Franz Wurz, Audi quattro

After a three-year break, Wurz returned to the ERC with an Audi quattro and ushered in the Group B era.

1984 Martin Schanche, Ford Escort XR3i T16 4x4

Employing more than 500bhp of Zakspeed turbo power, Schanche blasted to the 1984 title in his fire-spitting Gartrac-built Ford.

1985 Matti Alamaki, Porsche 911 BiTurbo 4x4

Alamaki's 750bhp, huge-winged Group 5 935 was one of the most spectacular ERC cars ever seen.

1987 Seppo Niittymaki, Peugeot 205 T16

Group B rallying was dead, but the cars lived on in rallycross. Niittymaki's ex-works 205 won the '87 title.

1973 John Taylor, Ford Escort RS 1600 BDA

With just 169bhp, Taylor won the first-ever ERC event – and inaugural title – in his Ford Escort.

1974 Franz Wurz, Volkswagen 1302 S 2.4

Using a 2.4-litre engine from a VW 411 (and Porsche 914 gearbox), former F1 driver Alex's dad took his first title in an unlikely looking Beetle.

1976 Franz Wurz, Lancia Stratos HF 2.4 12V/24V

The first FIA-sanctioned ERC title fell to Wurz and his 12-valve 2.4-litre Lancia.

1977 Herbert Grunsteidl, Renault-Alpine A310 16V/A310 V6

Grunsteidl claimed the last single-class ERC title in his mid-engined, dramatic Group 4 Alpine.



1992



1994



1999

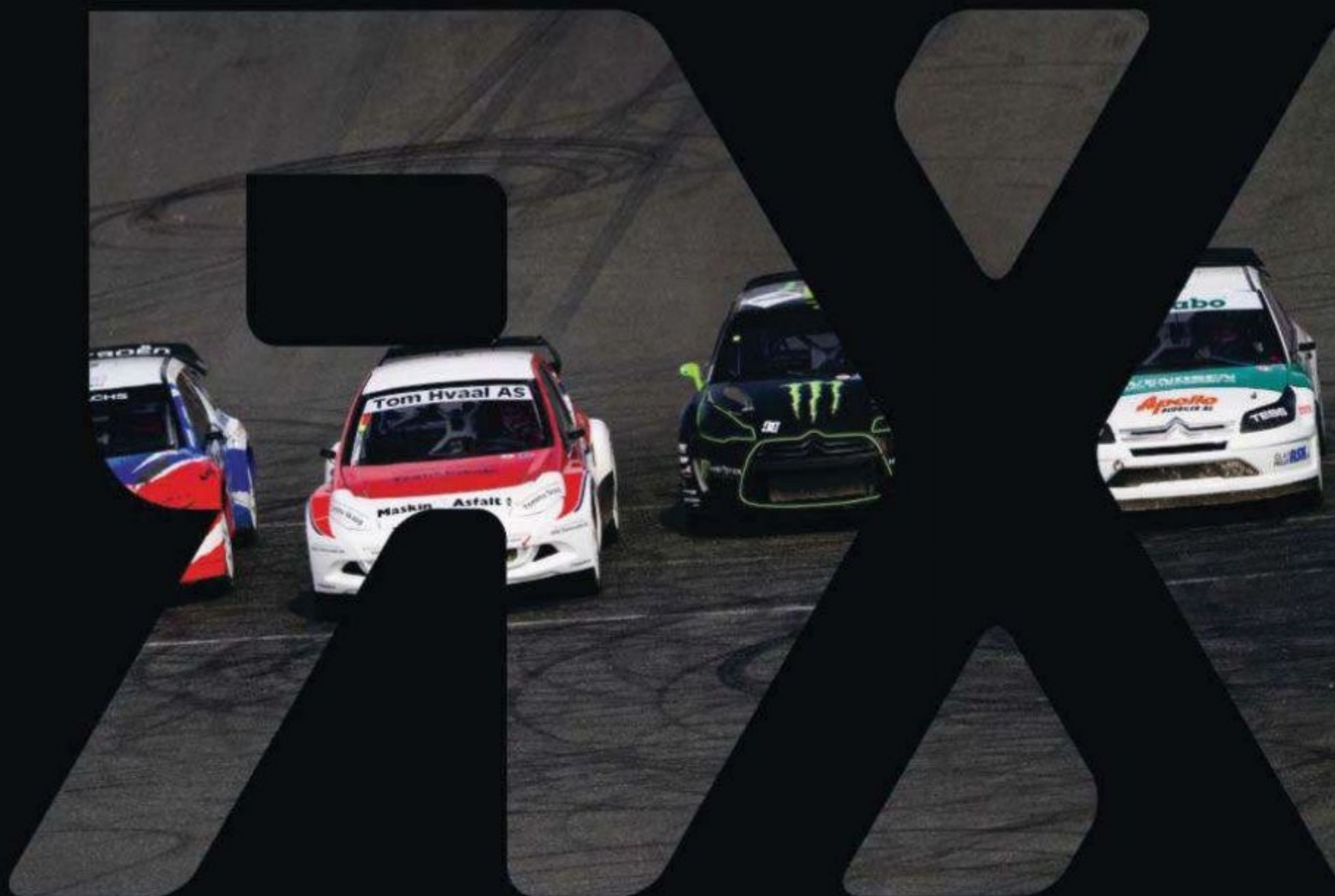


2008



2009

Watch the first RX 2013 round LIVE at Lydden Hill on Sunday March 31 & Monday April 1. Ticket hotline: 0871 230 5589 Click on lyddenhill.co.uk for more details and prices.



2013 CALENDAR

ROUND 1 MARCH 31-APRIL 1

GREAT BRITAIN - LYDDEN HILL



ROUND 2 APRIL 27-28

PORTUGAL - MONTALEGRE



ROUND 3 MAY 25-26

HUNGARY - NYIRAD



ROUND 4 JUNE 8-9

FINLAND - KOUVOLA



ROUND 5 JUNE 15-16

NORWAY - HELL



ROUND 6 JULY 6-7

SWEDEN - HOLJES



ROUND 7 AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 1

FRANCE - LOHEAC



ROUND 8 SEPTEMBER 14-15

AUSTRIA - GREINBACH



ROUND 9 SEPTEMBER 21-22

GERMANY - ESTERING



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