

AUTOSPORT

NOVEMBER 20 2014

**ABU DHABI
PREVIEW**



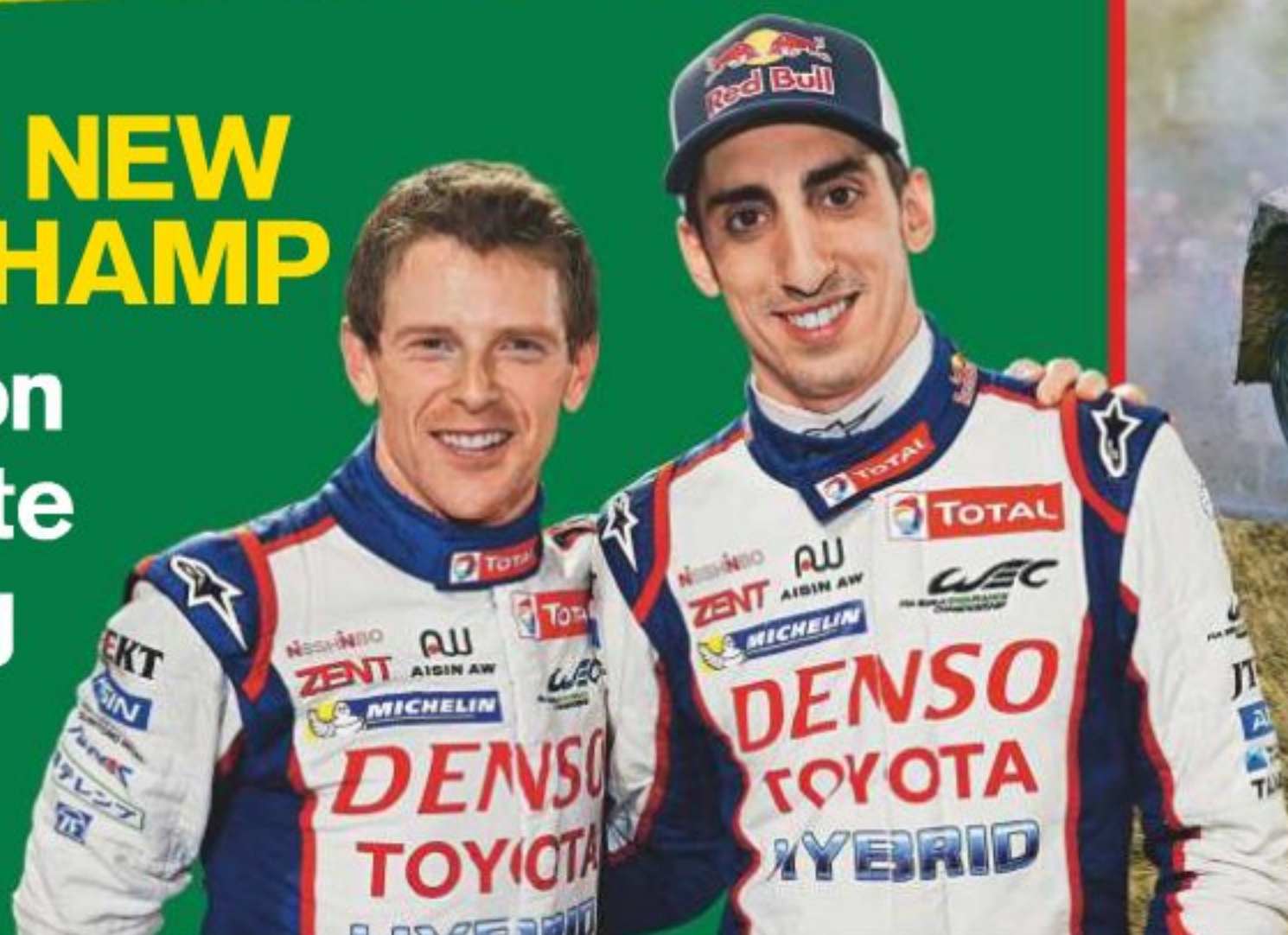
WHO WILL LAND THE KNOCK-OUT BLOW?

FIGHT NIGHT!

Lewis can afford to finish second – but will he play it safe?

**BRITAIN'S NEW
WORLD CHAMP**

Ant Davidson
joins the elite
after sealing
WEC crown
with Buemi



OGIER FLIES HIGHEST

In-depth Rally GB report



Innovation
that excites



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POLE POSITION

Formula 1's showdown promises to be a classic

SO THIS IS IT. TWO DRIVERS GUNNING FOR THE F1 WORLD Championship in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. If Lewis Hamilton finishes first or second, regardless of what Nico Rosberg does, he becomes a two-time world champ. There's a litany of other permutations, which we outline on page 18, but life would be a lot easier for Lewis without that dratted double-points gimmick.

We've already crowned one British world champion this week, as Anthony Davidson sealed a deserved WEC title with Toyota in Bahrain on Saturday. Think back to his back-breaking flip at Le Mans in 2012, and you'll realise that tenacity is just one element that makes this little fella a true sportscar giant. Along with co-driver Sebastien Buemi, they have outpaced the opposition time and again this year – our congratulations to them both.

● This is my last issue as editor of AUTOSPORT, and I'd just like to thank everyone I've worked with since my very first article was published in my favourite magazine 25 years ago (an Oulton Park MGCC clubbie – I was studying for my GCSEs at the time!). I'd like to wish incoming editor Edd Straw all the best, and trust the magazine goes from strength to strength in its 65th year.



Charles Bradley

CHARLES BRADLEY EDITOR

charles.bradley@haymarket.com

@Autosport_Ed

COVER STORY



"I'm here to win. I know how to win"

Lewis Hamilton on Abu Dhabi, p13

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Mercedes duo unseat Macau ace Edoardo Mortara

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Harvick charges through to win race – and title

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THE BIG PICTURE

Sebastien Ogier was on flying form as the World Rally Championship concluded in Wales. His eighth win of the season confirmed his dominance at rallying's highest level

This week in F1

Formula 1 2015 starts here...

McLAREN-HONDA TEST CAR BREAKS COVER

The McLaren-Honda development car ran for the first time during a filming day at Silverstone last Friday.

The car, dubbed the MP4-29H, was shaken down by

test driver Oliver Turvey ahead of it possibly running in the post-Abu Dhabi Grand Prix test. It is the first time the Japanese manufacturer's 1.6-litre turbocharged hybrid power unit package has run in an F1 car.

McLaren plans to use the car, which is its 2014 machine modified to house the Honda, to test the new engine while the team itself focuses on aerodynamic development of next year's MP4-30. Honda has set lofty targets for its

first F1 engine since 2008.

"Our target is very clear," said Honda F1 boss Yasuhisa Arai recently. "This season, Mercedes is top so next season we shall achieve that same competition or power."



6



Horner suggests V8 return

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner has suggested F1 should consider abandoning the current 1.6-litre V6 turbo engine to save money. "Desperate

means require desperate measures... How sustainable is it for all the teams and indeed all the manufacturers?" he asked of the current power units.

2006



REMEMBER WHEN

Toro Rosso ran old engines

When F1 switched from 3000cc to 2400cc engines in 2006, Toro Rosso ran a rev-restricted 3-litre Cosworth



SAINZ TO TEST FOR RED BULL

Formula Renault 3.5 champion Carlos Sainz Jr will drive on the first day of the post-Abu Dhabi GP test next Tuesday. The Spaniard, who previously drove for the team at Silverstone last year, will hand the car over to Daniel Ricciardo for day two.

For all the breaking news, visit **AUTOSPORT.COM**



DOWNWARD SPIRAL OVER

McLaren's improved form in recent races is proof its downward spiral of technical struggle is over, according to racing director Eric Boullier. "It's not enough, but at least the momentum is back," he said.

Paffett leaves McLaren role

Mercedes-contracted Gary Paffett will leave his long-time role as a McLaren test driver at the end of this season thanks to the team's new alliance with Honda. "I've loved working for McLaren and hope my input over the years has been beneficial," said Paffett.



BIG NUMBER
22,745kms

Ground covered by Gary Paffett in official McLaren tests



F1 considers Super GP2 plan

Formula 1's small teams claim that Bernie Ecclestone has suggested a plan to bolster the current grand prix grid with upgraded GP2 machinery.

The idea to create a two-tier F1 was floated during discussions over the Brazilian Grand Prix weekend as one way to ensure the grid is big enough if smaller teams cannot compete.

"The clear direction we are getting is that there is a desire to have five constructor teams and five customer teams, which will be the best way that they [the sport's owners] feel to go," said Force India deputy team principal Bob Fernley.

Amid fears that F1 will go down this route following the failure to secure a financial boost for the small teams, Fernley

DID YOU KNOW?

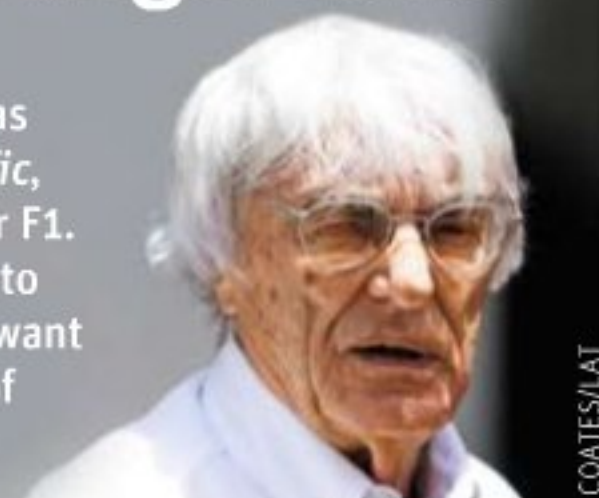
The average gap between pole position in F1 and GP2 this year, when conditions are comparable, is...

6.016 seconds

has written to Ecclestone demanding a meeting during the Abu Dhabi GP weekend. This would also include Sauber and Lotus, with a view to securing more equitable distribution of F1's income.

F1 'doesn't need younger fans'

Bernie Ecclestone claims that F1 should not be attempting to draw in the younger generation as fans. In an interview with *Campaign Asia-Pacific*, Ecclestone insisted the young have no value for F1. He said: "I don't know why people want to get to the so-called 'young generation'. Why do they want to do that? Is it to sell them something? Most of these kids haven't got any money."



Alonso: small teams are vital

Fernando Alonso believes that small F1 teams are vital for the health of Formula 1. "I started with a small team, Minardi," he said. "All the drivers [need] the same possibility to start with small teams."

MINARDI'S FAMOUS FOUR

A quartet of future race-winning drivers made their F1 debuts for the Italian minnows



Giancarlo Fisichella
(1996)

Eight outings in 1996 caught the eye of Jordan, who signed 'Fisi' for the following season.



Jarno Trulli
(1997)

Strong performances in the first half of the season earned him a Prost call-up.



Fernando Alonso
(2001)

Didn't score a point in his rookie season but caught the eye with regular giant-killing performances.



Mark Webber
(2002)

A sensational fifth on debut on home soil marked Webber out as a driver with winning potential.

Caterham to race in Abu Dhabi

Caterham plans to be on the grid for this weekend's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix even though it missed its £2.35 million crowdfunding target.



As AUTOSPORT closed for press, the second driver had not been named, although it had been confirmed that Kamui Kobayashi would return. Andre Lotterer turned down the possibility of returning, while Roberto Merhi, who has made three Friday appearances for the team, was keen to drive.

Ericsson severs old team ties

Marcus Ericsson has formally ended all ties with Caterham. He has already had a seat fitting with Sauber, and is set to participate in the post-Abu Dhabi test.

DAN WHELDON

KARTING TROPHY



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Jonathan Noble

F1's newshound

The Macau Grand Prix could not provide a starker contrast to Formula 1, highlighting how the pinnacle of the sport has lost its way

As Formula 1 heads to a Tiltedrome on the artificial Yas Island, for a title showdown threatened by the gimmick of double points, some of us will at least arrive there refreshed by the reality check that comes from a dose of the Macau Grand Prix.

For while the F1 world appears to get ever more wearisome of paddock politics – be it fights over costs, income distribution, engine freezes or snipes at young fans – a few days in Macau is always a fantastic reminder of what this sport is supposed to be all about: the racing.

Last weekend was no different. Not once as F3's finest battled it out for glory around the famous streets on which Ayrton Senna, Michael Schumacher and David Coulthard have triumphed, was there any discussion about the latest political developments, panic about where the sport was heading or fears about conspiracies to drive the weakest out.

Instead, all that mattered for the drivers, team bosses, media and the enthusiastic sell-out crowd, which cheered every overtaking move, spin and clash with the barriers, was what was going on out on track. What happened on that 6.2km strip of asphalt was everything.

It's no wonder that everyone who ever goes to Macau is drawn back. What's not to love about the event?

I bumped into Mika Hakkinen, a big grin on his face as he kept a close eye on events. F1 race director



While he may not give a damn about social media, the internet, or those that cannot boost his coffers, to tell millions of youngsters – as well as anyone under 70 who can't afford a Rolex – that F1 is not something that cares much for them was shocking.

What benefit comes from alienating the masses? How is F1 going to build up the fan base of the future and lure them in for when they are the cash-rich consumers in decades to come if they are not brought on board now? Get someone hooked early enough

“Speak to any F1 driver who has raced at Macau and their eyes light up and they rave about it”

Charlie Whiting flew in and caught up with old friends in the pitlane, and former grand prix driver Stefan Johansson clearly loved that his man Felix Rosenqvist came out on top.

The joys of pure motorsport, an intense and unpredictable fight for victory, plus a dramatic finale that threw up plenty of surprises and a big shunt, were in stark contrast to the way that F1 appears to be bouncing from one off-track political mess to another.

In fact these are strange days for F1, where on track we at least have had a thrilling title head-to-head, but the sport seems to only be able to generate negative headlines off it.

Having rumbled on through new-regulations chaos, criticisms of the noise, falling television audiences, cash crises and then collapsing teams, the latest broadside came from the very top as Bernie Ecclestone spouted some astonishing words last week about why the sport's marketers shouldn't be chasing younger fans.

and you have them for life.

It's the same for Macau. Speak to any F1 driver who has ever raced there and their eyes light up and they rave about it. They are unanimous that it remains the best street track in the world.

Check out what Daniel Ricciardo said on the eve of this weekend's event. “If Formula 1 never races there, then I'm going to try to get as many F1 drivers as we can to enter one year and just do it,” he said. “Because I have to race on that circuit again. I have to. I have to drive that circuit again. Once is not enough.”

I mentioned Ricciardo's comment to future Toro Rosso man Max Verstappen on Sunday night, and a smile spread across his face as he too suggested one outing was not enough. “Well, maybe we should do it together then,” he said.

A big impression made early, then hooked for life. That's something F1 should be thinking long and hard about right now. ❧

This week in motorsport

Peugeot shows Dakar colours

Peugeot has unveiled the livery for the three Dakar 2008 DKRs it will use on its return to the marathon event in January. The Red Bull-backed machines will be driven by Carlos Sainz, Cyril Despres and Stephane Peterhansel.



Cadillac reveals 2015 GT3 racer

American manufacturer Cadillac is planning to broaden its horizons outside of the domestic market, having built its new ATSV.R racecar to FIA GT3 specification.

The new machine, built by Pratt & Miller primarily for next year's US Pirelli World Challenge series, is powered by a 3.6-litre, twin-turbo V6 engine and is eligible for all GT3 series.

"This new race car, developed in GT3-specification, enables us to pursue racing on a more global scale," said Cadillac chief Johan de Nysschen.

Customer versions of the car are likely to be on sale for 2016.



Toyota eyes battery switch

Toyota has not ruled out a switch from a super-capacitor to batteries to store retrieved power on its 2015 World Endurance Championship contender.

Toyota Motorsport GmbH technical director Pascal Vasselon has stated that the concept of the revised car will remain the same without specifying the choice of storage system. "We are constantly comparing the two technologies to decide when is the right moment to introduce the battery," he said.

For all the breaking news, visit **AUTOSPORT.COM**

Daytona sign coming down

Daytona's frontstretch Tower, site of the Florida oval's symbolic 'Daytona' logo, will be dismantled after next year's 500-mile race as part of a \$400 million revamp of the facility.

The track's owners plan to turn the 1.5-mile oval venue into a stadium-style venue, with 40,000 new seats to complement 60,000 old ones – all on the track's frontstretch.

A temporary race control will be housed on the back straight for next July's 400-mile night race.



Gordon advocates Chase tweaks

Four-time NASCAR Sprint Cup champion Jeff Gordon has backed the revisions to NASCAR's Chase for the Championship play-off system, which crowned Kevin Harvick in Sunday's winner-takes-all finale at Homestead.

Gordon failed to make it through to the final-round decider, having been eliminated by Ryan Newman at the final corner of the previous week's race in Phoenix, but has backed the new system.

"I like it," he said. "It certainly created a lot of attention, it has made it more dramatic and intense, and I think that was the goal."

Had last year's system been employed in 2014, Penske's Joey Logano would have claimed the title by outscoring Harvick by seven points. Had a non-Chase system been used, over the season Gordon would have been champion by 37 points over Logano and Brad Keselowski.

GOW: NEW TIN-TOP REGS ON TARGET

FIA Touring Car Commission boss Alan Gow has confirmed that plans to draw up regulations that could be used for national championships remain on schedule.

Gow had announced the plans for a pyramid system for touring cars alongside FIA boss Jean Todt at the Marrakech WTCC round in April.

"Our intention is to do levels of national regulations, one lower level, one upper level," said Gow. "We will present two sets of regulations to the World Council on December 5."

"Just say if Kazakhstan, for example, wanted to start a touring car championship, there is currently no set of rules published. We have TC1 but that is just for WTCC. Now we hope there will be two sets of national regulations that the FIA recommends for national championships."



Dennis makes Prema move

Jake Dennis has been confirmed with Prema Powerteam for his second assault on the Formula 3 European Championship.

Prema has run Esteban Ocon, Raffaele Marciello, Daniel Juncadella and Roberto Merhi to the past four Euro F3 titles.

"It's where I want to be, for sure," said Dennis (below), who retains his Racing Steps Foundation backing. "I learned an awful lot in my rookie season and am extremely grateful to all those who helped me along the way."

Fellow Racing Steps driver Oliver Rowland has been re-confirmed at Fortec Motorsports for a title bid in next year's Formula Renault 3.5 series.



Pic stays with Campos in GP2

GP2 racewinner Arthur Pic has re-signed for Campos Racing for next season.

The 23-year-old Frenchman scored a maiden win in the Hungaroring sprint race this year, and is seventh in the championship ahead of the Abu Dhabi finale this weekend.

"We have taken tremendous strides together in 2014, which is particularly encouraging given that I am a GP2 rookie and they are returning to the championship," said Pic, the younger brother of ex-F1 racer Charles.

In brief

BRABHAM HITS GOAL

Project Brabham has broken through its initial crowdfunding target, and had raised £278,057 with 2911 funders from 64 countries as of Saturday. Project chief David Brabham hailed the achievement as a "great success", and the next £500,000 target will be reached through a combined strategy of corporate packages and partnerships.

ACO WON'T PEG P2

The possibility of pegging back the performance of the new breed of LMP2 coupes, led by the Ligier JSP2, under the Balance of Performance regulations has all but been ruled out by WEC co-organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest. ACO sporting manager Vincent Beaumesnil said the performance differential between the Ligier and older-generation cars such as the ORECA 03R remained acceptable.

KUBICA: "IT'S 50-50"

Grand prix winner-turned-rally driver Robert Kubica stated that his plans for 2015 were "50-50 staying in the WRC or going back to the circuits" after completing Rally GB for the first time on Sunday.

FUOCO FOR GP3

Ferrari's protege Antonio Fuoco is lining up a possible move to GP3 in 2015 after racing in Euro F3 this year, and will test for three teams in the upcoming Abu Dhabi test: ART Grand Prix, Carlin and Koiranen GP.

BIG NUMBER

87

Number of V8 Supercar race wins scored by six-time champion Jamie Whincup from his 340 starts



May the best M



12

POINTS

334

Hamilton goes in
to final round with
a 17-point margin

erc win

After 18 arduous and sometimes controversial rounds, it all comes down to this weekend's double-points season finale in Abu Dhabi. **EDD STRAW** is your guide

Seventeen points. Lewis Hamilton knows from experience that this is a dangerous margin. While the points system has changed since 2007, when a seemingly imperious 17-point lead was overturned by Kimi Raikkonen to deny Hamilton a sensational rookie world championship, the number is a reminder of how seemingly impregnable positions can be lost in the blink of an eye. While that year, the margin vanished over two races (China and Brazil) and this time only the final showdown in Abu Dhabi remains, double points effectively mean this is two grands prix rolled into one.

Mercedes has 11 one-two finishes in 18 races and Hamilton only needs victory or second place to guarantee the title. If Hamilton doesn't finish, Rosberg only needs to be in the top five to be crowned. Those are the two most likely scenarios. In all probability, if he has a clean weekend with no big mistakes, reliability problems or getting caught up in someone else's incident, Hamilton will become a double world champion under the floodlights on Sunday.

But it's rarely that simple. Hamilton has gone to the final race of the season in the hunt for the title four times but won only once, although in 2010 he was very much an outside bet. Even when he did win, in 2008, in a situation where he merely needed fifth place to beat Felipe Massa to the crown, he only secured that position by passing dry-tyred Timo Glock's struggling Toyota 20 seconds from the chequered flag. That year, he learned the dangers of being too conservative. That's why he plans to go all-out to win in Abu Dhabi to control his own destiny.

"In 2008, I was at a certain maturity level and didn't have a huge amount of experience of F1," says Hamilton. "If I knew then what I know now, it would have been a lot different. But that's the



POINTS

317



► same as all things in life. I'm here to win, I know how to win, I know how to bring the car home safely so nothing really changes for me.

"I don't particularly think I've been taking risks, even when overtaking Nico [in Austin] I don't feel like it was a risk. It was quite straightforward, textbook. I will drive with the same approach and if there's a point where I need to take a really serious risk then that experience will come into play and I can decide whether to take it."

Rosberg's situation is simpler. While he can clinch the title with second, third, fourth or even fifth, depending on what happens to Hamilton, he has to go all-out to win. The odds are against him, for only in 28 per cent of races this year has Hamilton not either finished first or second, that at least gives him the freedom to go for it.

"A disadvantage? No," he says. "I'm full attack as I was in Brazil, as I was in Austin. It's going well and I need to try and win. I'll do that and we'll see what happens. And just hope."

Everything favours Hamilton. But having the advantage heading into the final race doesn't necessarily mean things will be easy. Fernando Alonso has lost out in three of the four championship showdowns he has been involved in, and warns Hamilton that the biggest worry for him is reliability.

"The pressure will be high for both of them," explains Alonso. "It will be a weekend that is not normal, because you try to take care of every detail, especially on the mechanical side since you have to cross that line if you want to win the championship. They will enjoy it in a way, but they will stress a little bit more."

"I won once in the last race [2006] and I lost three, once by one point [2007], once by three points [2012] and once by four points [2010], so for eight more points in my career I could be a five-times champion. But sometimes you have strategy problems, sometimes you have luck problems and sometimes you are just not quick enough."

"For them, the mechanical side is the most risky. If there are not mechanical problems, they will finish first and second or second and first without a big problem. Where they will obsess is just to make the car cross the line."

The Mercedes team will also be fearful of a mechanical problem intervening in the title decider. Both Hamilton and Rosberg have suffered failures this season, so even though the Mercedes has proved bullet-proof through the previous four races, getting both cars to the chequered flag is not a foregone conclusion.

Three times, Hamilton has retired from races, with mechanical problems in Australia and Canada and after a Rosberg-inflicted wound in Belgium, as well as suffering from costly car problems in qualifying in Germany and Hungary that left him starting well down the order. With the quickest car, it's perfectly possible to make prodigious progress from the back even if there is a qualifying problem, but



In 2008 Hamilton made vital pass only in final stretch

as Hamilton discovered at Hockenheim, it's very easy to make contact with other cars while you are passing them. As for Rosberg, he was hit with mechanical failures while leading at Silverstone and on the grid in Singapore.

As Williams performance chief Rob Smedley, a veteran of several title shootouts at Ferrari (notably as race engineer for Felipe Massa at Interlagos when Hamilton won his first title) reveals, it's important for those in the team not to change well-established and proven practices just because the stakes are higher than ever. This applies both to the approach to preparing for the race, and the way you tackle the grand prix itself.

"You just have to approach it normally," says Smedley. "If you start approaching it differently to other races, that's where you come a cropper. You can get yourself in a tangle psychologically

if you say 'this is the be-all and end-all'; and approaching a race differently to any of the other races in the championship means that you change your philosophy and methodology."

"If it has worked before, then why would you change it? By doing that, you are asking for trouble because you are concentrating on stuff that you are not used to concentrating on. I've seen that before; people lose championships because they concentrated on the wrong things instead of what they normally do and just on getting the best result possible."

Everything Smedley says makes perfect sense, but human nature being what it is, surely it's not as easy as that?

"No, it's not; it's incredibly difficult," he says. "And it's incredibly difficult to get the 50-odd people in the team to do it as well! I remember being in [championship showdown] situations before and just taking all the guys out in the team to get everybody calmed down and keep repeating the mantra that it's going to be just another race. It's the right thing to do but it's not always the easiest thing to do."

RESPONDING TO PRESSURE

The pressure on the drivers will be intense, and both Hamilton and Rosberg have had moments in 2014 when they have responded well to such intensity, and others where they have fared not so well. The German certainly looked weaker under pressure in several late-season races, but in the Brazilian GP, in a must-win situation,

'As Hamilton discovered at Hockenheim, it's easy to hit other cars while passing them'



The two Mercedes
have tangled on track
more than once



Rosberg got a
much-needed boost
with Interlagos win



Vettel came back from a spin
in the 2012 title decider

kept a faster Hamilton at bay comfortably in the closing stages.

As for Hamilton, he has looked solid for most of the time since Spa, but did spin at Interlagos and made several costly qualifying errors in the first half of the campaign. But in Abu Dhabi, the pressure will be more intense than ever before.

"The closer you get to the decisive moment, you can feel that tension," says Sebastian Vettel, who has a 100 per cent record in his two last-race title deciders to date. "It's about remaining relaxed, trying to focus on what is important and not get distracted by you lot [the media] and everything that happens outside the car."

Vettel is a case in point of how fine the margins between success and failure are. In the 2012 title showdown against Alonso, he turned in on Bruno Senna's Williams on the first lap at Interlagos and spun before being clouted hard by the Brazilian. His immediate reaction was to assume the damage would be too significant to continue, but he continued in hope and, to his surprise, quickly realised that the Red Bull had stood up to the impact.

But what does pressure actually mean? It's a much-used term, one that everybody understands but is difficult to pin down precisely. Hamilton offers an insight into what it's like to be an elite athlete in such situations. ▶

WHO HAS GOT THE MENTAL EDGE?

Our resident mind coach Don Macpherson gives his view on the duel

Boxing brought us 'The Rumble in the Jungle' and 'The Thriller in Manila', now Formula 1 brings you 'The Duel in the Desert'. Muhammad Ali, the master of outpsyching his opponents, knew that title showdowns were won in the mind as much as in the combat zone.

HAMILTON - UNDER PRESSURE

Lewis has two things going for him that Nico does not. He's already won a world championship, and he is leading going into the finale. He is a fantastic racer when all is tickety-boo in his world, but I don't think he is anywhere as good mentally as he seems to think. And that could be a problem.

In my opinion, Lewis is well capable of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. He's quoted as saying: "Every race feels different and I don't know what to expect. So, I just don't think about it." What? To borrow from John McEnroe: you cannot be serious, Lewis. You should know exactly what to expect by now, so you can cover every eventuality.

"Pressure comes in different forms". Not really - pressure is pressure. It will certainly affect you differently, though, if you don't have the mental flexibility to deal with each episode. Pressure is always mental; never physical nor technical.

Andy Murray is just as talented (technically) as Lewis. And he has blown at least two Grand Slam chances because he is not the real deal mentally. Even Ali didn't just turn up for a fight, flick a metaphorical switch in his head and enter 'the zone' at will. Learn from the master, Lewis...

ROSBERG - NOTHING TO LOSE

Nico has shown more signs of mental frailty as we get nearer to the business end of the championship. But, in some ways, he is under less pressure than Lewis now. For starters, the fear of failure isn't there - he can't really fail, he can only succeed if he pulls it out of the bag.

If they were level on points I would take Rosberg to win at Abu Dhabi, simply because I reckon he is mentally better equipped to deal with a showdown against Lewis. Also his confidence will be on a high after winning last time out at Interlagos.

His mind really can be clear and precise, and his mind management is comparatively easier than Hamilton's. But he has to find a way of unsettling Lewis, of winding his team-mate's mind up so that he can score at least 17 more points. That's a tall order.

However, unlike boxers staring out their opponents in the ring, an F1 duel requires a bit more etiquette and finesse. The late, great Sir Jack Brabham had it right when he told me: "When the flag drops, the bullshit stops!"



Pressure? It's just a
stroll on the beach...

COATES/LAT

The relationship
has been occasionally
tense during 2014



ETHERINGTON/LAT

16

► “Pressure comes in different forms,” says Hamilton. “There’s different feelings. I find it very strange. Sometimes you wake up and you feel great, but the day doesn’t go well, sometimes you don’t feel good then the race goes amazingly and you don’t understand. Every race feels different and I don’t know what to expect. So I just don’t think about it. Just arriving with the sole purpose of winning is all that I can do. Dealing with pressure is a natural ability, and something that grows over time.”

That’s why Hamilton is speaking honestly when he insists that he’s just focusing on winning, for that is the most effective way to deal with the pressure and to ensure that conservatism does not put in him harm’s way.

THE WILD CARDS

The Abu Dhabi GP will not be a two-horse race, for there will be 18 other thoroughbreds on the grid, all with the potential to get in the way. While Hamilton and Rosberg should be up front, there have been times during the season when their private battle has been invaded. In Abu Dhabi, that’s most likely to be by either Williams pairing Valtteri Bottas and Massa, or the Red Bulls of Daniel Ricciardo and Vettel.

If either of the Mercedes drivers gets mixed up with one of the chasing pack, it can make life very difficult. After all, by comparison they will have nothing to lose. And they also know that the title contender that they are attacking does. The temptation will always be there to take liberties

Williams could get
involved in the battle
between the Mercedes



HONE/LAT

and to try and capitalise on the fact that the favourites cannot afford to be eliminated in a scrape with another car.

“When you go to the last race, you have no pressure,” says Massa of the position he will be in. “You still need to do the best you can, but when you are behind a car and the driver is fighting for the championship with someone else, he is the one that needs to think twice, not you. It’s not the case that because the guy is fighting for the world championship, you don’t want to overtake him. So the pressure is all on his side.”

While Hamilton wants to see the status quo of the rest of the season maintained, with the pack held at a respectful distance, Rosberg would be delighted to see the Williams team make a nuisance of itself. While arguably Red Bull should be more of a threat given the preponderance of slow corners at Yas Marina, it’s Williams with

its prodigious straightline speed that has the potential to be more of a sustained nuisance if the car has the necessary pace over a lap.

“It would be awesome if they find some magical form and somehow get by,” says Rosberg. “It’s very difficult to pass the Williams because they are so quick on the straights. At the same time, our car is so quick that it’s not very likely.”

As Kimi Raikkonen points out, while Rosberg has benefitted from the dominance of Mercedes this year, in the finale it could play against him because the chances of the Mercedes being split in a normal race are small.

“It’s difficult for catching up because they are most often one-two,” says the Finn. “In the past few years, it would be possible to have quite a few guys in the front, so you could gain those points.”

The scenario of the 2008 finale, when Hamilton held the fifth place he needed to win the title ahead of Massa after his final stop, only to be passed by Vettel’s Toro Rosso, is the kind of situation less likely in Abu Dhabi this weekend.

But as Vettel himself found out at Interlagos in 2012, other cars can still get in the way. His clash with Bruno Senna on the first lap came close to costing him the world championship. Both Rosberg and Hamilton will hope to be clear of any such danger.

ABU DHABI FORM

Both Hamilton and Rosberg have participated in all five of the grands prix so far held at Yas Marina. Hamilton has comfortably the best

‘While Rosberg has benefitted from Mercedes’ dominance, it could now play against him’

WORLD TITLE SHOOTOUTS

The F1 world title has been won in the final race 27 times

1950	Giuseppe Farina (Alfa Romeo)	Italian GP
1951	Juan Manuel Fangio (Alfa Romeo)	Spanish GP
1956	Juan Manuel Fangio (Ferrari)	Italian GP
1958	Mike Hawthorn (Ferrari)	Moroccan GP
1959	Jack Brabham (Cooper)	United States GP
1962	Graham Hill (BRM)	South African GP
1964	John Surtees (Ferrari)	Mexican GP
1967	Denny Hulme (Brabham)	Mexican GP
1968	Graham Hill (BRM)	Mexican GP



1974	Emerson Fittipaldi (Lotus)	United States GP
1976	James Hunt (McLaren)	Japanese GP
1981	Nelson Piquet (Brabham)	Las Vegas GP
1982	Keke Rosberg (Williams)	Las Vegas GP
1983	Nelson Piquet (Brabham)	South African GP
1984	Niki Lauda (McLaren)	Portuguese GP
1986	Alain Prost (McLaren)	Australian GP



1994	Michael Schumacher (Benetton)	Australian GP
1996	Damon Hill (Williams)	Japanese GP
1997	Jacques Villeneuve (Williams)	European GP
1998	Mika Hakkinen (McLaren)	Japanese GP
1999	Mika Hakkinen (McLaren)	Japanese GP
2003	Michael Schumacher (Ferrari)	Japanese GP
2006	Fernando Alonso (Renault)	Brazilian GP



2007	Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari)	Brazilian GP
2008	Lewis Hamilton (McLaren)	Brazilian GP
2010	Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull)	Abu Dhabi GP
2012	Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull)	Brazilian GP



Rosberg has shown he can contain Hamilton's pace



Hamilton has won at Abu Dhabi in the past

record, with a couple of pole positions and a win in 2011. He was also on course for victories in both 2009 and 2012 when his McLaren suffered problems. Rosberg, by contrast, has just one podium appearance, for third last year.

HAMILTON	Q	R
2009	1	DNF
2010	2	2
2011	2	1
2012	1	DNF
2013	4	7

ROSBERG	Q	R
2009	9	9
2010	9	4
2011	7	6
2012	7	DNF
2013	3	3



Clearly, Hamilton has been in more competitive machinery than Rosberg in most of his Abu Dhabi appearances. But last season, they were in the same car. Rosberg outqualified his team-mate by 82 thousandths of a second and finished well ahead of him. But to that must be added the caveat that Hamilton looked quicker before a wishbone fracture on his final qualifying lap and then had a tricky race blighted by traffic.

On paper, it's a Hamilton track, but Rosberg has gone well on slower circuits this season so can't be underestimated.

"This year, it doesn't really matter to me which track I go to," says Rosberg. "With the car that I have, I feel comfortable everywhere and I feel that I have the opportunity to win on every track. Abu Dhabi suits me well."

QUALIFYING PACE

Rosberg has had the better of the Saturday battle between the pair this year, outqualifying Hamilton 11 times to seven and taking 10 poles to his team-mate's seven. He has also taken three of the last four pole positions, meaning that even on a track such as Abu Dhabi where Hamilton excels, you could argue Rosberg is the favourite to set the Saturday pace.

Hamilton can afford to start and finish second, but he will be keen to put himself a little more out of harm's way with pole position. The lead Mercedes driver at any given stage in the race will always have the first call on pitstops, which means that whoever is second will end up with a later stop than the ideal. That can leave you exposed to getting caught up with other cars. The best way for Hamilton to keep his involvement with the pack to a minimum is to take pole and lead. But can he?

"There have been several times this year where I have not done perfect laps and maximised the potential of the car," he says. "But then there have been several times on Sunday when I have done that. Maybe over the years you fully understand that there is lots that can happen on Sunday. Many times I've been disappointed in qualifying but it's Sunday that you get the points."

But Rosberg knows that having the better Saturday record counts for little. It's the world championship that matters, not winning the new F1 pole position trophy.

"It's a nice thing but it doesn't really have any weight at the moment for me in this situation," ▶

► says Rosberg. "In 10 years, I'll look back and say 'OK, amongst other things I got the pole trophy' but at the moment there's such a focus on points and the championship."

RACE PACE

Just as the qualifying record subverts the anticipated form, so does the trend in races. Hamilton has very often been the faster driver on Sundays, by around a quarter of a second per lap last time out in Brazil.

This is underlined by the fact that in the 13 races where both have finished, Hamilton has been ahead nine times and Rosberg only four. Not that this matters for Hamilton, who can afford to be beaten a fifth time provided he finishes second to Rosberg. Again, he stresses the need to try to use that race pace to reach the top of the podium.

"There is zero comfort going into the next race because it's 50 points to gain and that's never happened in F1 before," he says. "In the last race, you never know what's going to happen, so I'm going into the last race to win."

For Rosberg, that Brazilian GP victory is a crucial boost after a series of races in which he not only struggled for pace relative to Hamilton, but in which he made crucial mistakes. At Monza, he twice went off under braking and in the Russian GP, he was ideally placed to take the lead at Turn 2 before locking up spectacularly.

"Psychologically, it was very important for him to dominate every single session," says Mercedes motorsport supremo Toto Wolff. "To win that race with Lewis Hamilton on your back pushing hard, to withstand that and keep it all together shows that he hasn't only been a great qualifier this season."

"We saw in the last couple of races that there seems to be a pattern. Nico seems to pull away a little bit in the beginning, and in the middle of the race Lewis comes back. There isn't a massive difference in setups so I guess it comes down to driving and pushing hard, maybe managing things less or more."

POINTS RECKONER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Other
Hamilton	384	370	364	358	354	350	346	342	338	336	334
Rosberg	367	353	347	341	337	333	329	325	321	319	317



LONG-TIME RIVALRY

Hamilton and Rosberg have been in high-stakes situations like this before. They were karting contemporaries who fought for many victories. For example, in the 1999/2000 Formula A World Cup in Japan, Hamilton and Rosberg fought it out for most of the race, with Hamilton eventually prevailing with a late pass.

"It's amusing because there are a lot of similarities," says Rosberg of the fight today compared with the one of their time in karting. "Every other day there are moments or things that pop up where I smirk and think 'Jeez, that's exactly the same as it was 15 years ago!'"

"Both of us have changed, much of it for the better in terms of professionalism especially. Now, it is definitely more focused, but many of the strengths and weaknesses are still the same."

They also crossed swords in Formula 3. In the Macau Grand Prix, the pair started on the front row together after Hamilton led home Rosberg in the qualifying race. The German took the lead at the start, but at the infamous Lisboa on the second lap, both lost their chances of victory.

"I braked late and went straight into the tyres," recalls Rosberg. "Lewis also braked too late and



went into the back of me, so it was quite strange. I was massively disappointed. I spent two hours on a fishing boat with some random Chinese guy afterwards trying to get rid of the anger!"

That's why this is not just an F1 title battle, but the latest and most high-profile chapter in a battle that has been going on since the last century. Hamilton is the clear favourite, with most bookies rating him at around 1/5 to win compared to Rosberg at around 3/1. But history shows that there is plenty that can go wrong to upset those odds. ❧

FERRARI'S BLUNDER: A LESSON FROM ABU DHABI'S HISTORY



This will be the second time that Abu Dhabi has hosted a world championship decider. The first, in 2010, was the scene of one of the most catastrophic strategic errors in F1 history.

Four drivers went to Abu Dhabi still in the hunt. Fernando Alonso led the standings by eight points, with Sebastian Vettel 15 points off the lead and Hamilton very much the outsider, 24 down. It was a fight between Alonso and Webber, with the other two only a serious threat if things went wrong.

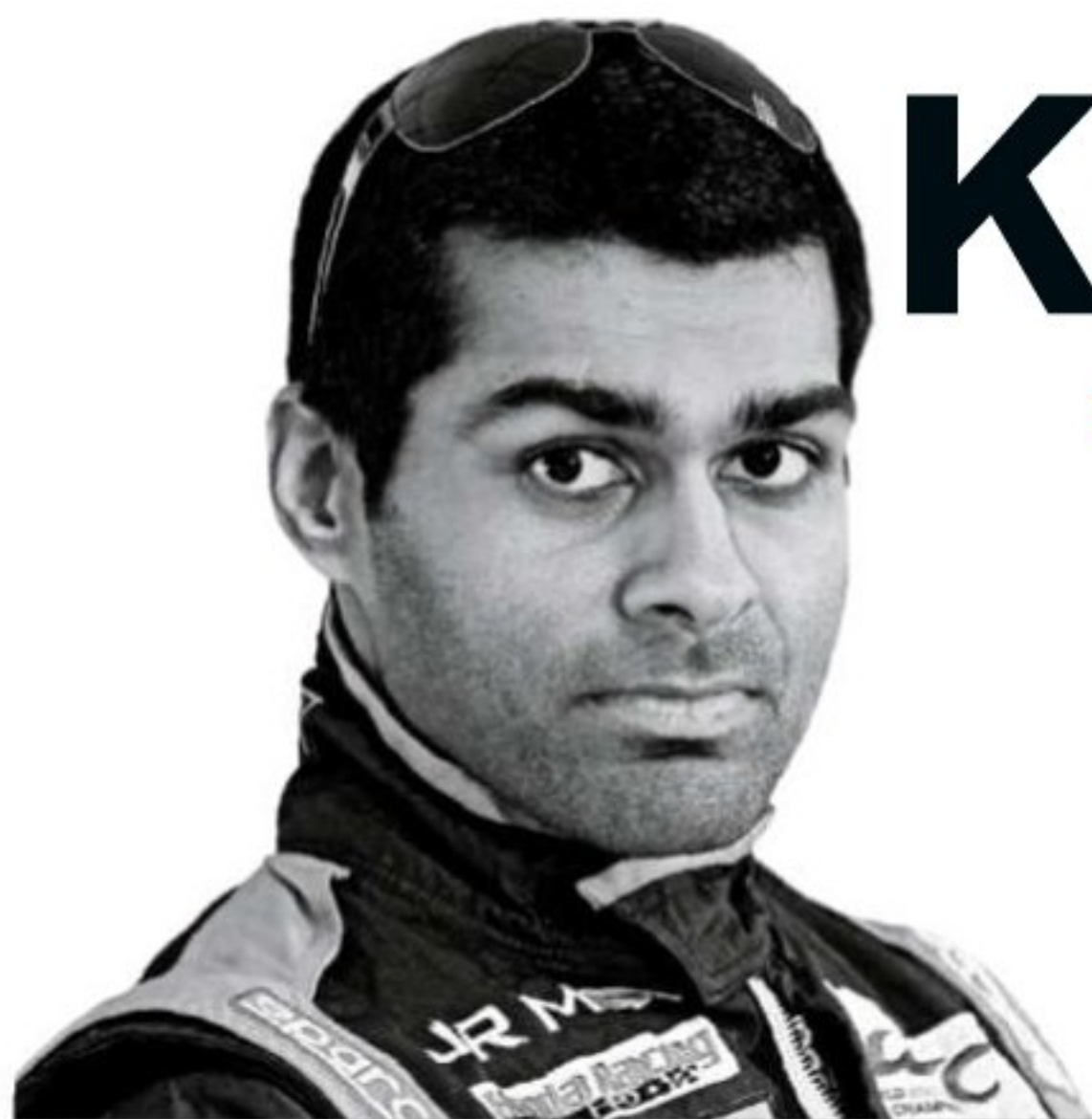
Webber, never a fan of the modern Tiltedromes, had a difficult weekend. In the early stages, Vettel led from Hamilton, but Alonso held a firm fourth place with Webber behind. The Australian glanced the wall, and

amid his struggles Red Bull decided to pit him early in an attempt to get him back into contention. It was a roll of the dice.

But it wrong-footed Ferrari. A few laps later, they called Alonso in to retain track position over Webber, even though the team could afford to finish behind him. A combination of factors led to this mistake, mainly that the strategies focused on the Alonso-versus-Webber battle. Those strategies did not take Vettel into account, or that the tyres went through a graining phase (which led Ferrari to believe that their performance was dropping away for good, when in fact after a few laps they recovered) or that the first-lap safety car would prompt several drivers to pit and run to the end. Nico Rosberg and Vitaly Petrov were among those.

With Webber covered and doomed to finish behind Alonso, the Spaniard needed to finish only fourth even if Vettel won. But Alonso got stuck behind Petrov's Renault (pictured above), while Robert Kubica took advantage of Alonso being held up to stop late and finish ahead with Rosberg also up the road. Alonso was consigned to seventh and another title was lost.

"We concentrated solely on Mark, but we shouldn't have done," explains Rob Smedley, then at Ferrari as Felipe Massa's race engineer. "We should have concentrated on getting Fernando to the best possible finishing position. But Ferrari is not the only team to have done that, there have been a lot of examples of that over the years."



Karun Chandhok

The racer's eye

The former HRT and Lotus F1 racer looks at the complex but vital elements of success in a world championship showdown

So this is it. All the talk from the off season about engines and the new rules, all the miles of testing (or lack off if you were Red Bull Racing); all those pole positions, strategic calls, overtaking moves and race victories; and it boils down to one race for the biggest prize in our sport between two team-mates. Lewis Hamilton has been here before on more than one occasion, but 2008 must feel like a very long time ago. For Nico Rosberg, one race stands between him and a chance to emulate his father Keke by winning the world championship.

At the start of the season, most people would have bet on one particular Mercedes driver being the man with the most pole positions, for he is widely regarded as the fastest driver in the world over one lap. Many people, yours truly included, would have bet on the other Mercedes driver being the man to have the upper hand in the races, using his patience and intelligence to guide the new super-gizmo cars to come up trumps at the end despite being behind at the start. Very, very few people would have bet on Nico to be the pole position king and for Lewis to be the vulture in the races, but that is how things have gone this year.

Nico has delivered one stunning pole lap after another and his most recent ones in Japan, America and Brazil have been tremendous. His ability to feel the front-end grip and commit to the corner without making an error have been



Both Mercedes drivers will set out to win the race

intelligent one, his natural way of driving is to attack and move forward. Being defensive and driving below his potential doesn't come naturally to him, and when you're in a race car you always perform best when you're being your natural self. Look back to Sebastian Vettel at Interlagos in 2012, where being unnaturally cautious on the opening lap resulted in him getting into a clumsy incident.

The other interesting thing will be to see how the team handles it. Being focused on reliability and pitstops is

“For the other drivers on the grid, double points create opportunities so they will be attacking”

what we got used to seeing from Vettel race after race in recent years. As the season has progressed, however, Hamilton has got better and better at managing his race and using the tyres, ERS energy and his own inherent speed at key moments to snatch victories away from Nico.

People often pigeonhole the two drivers, saying Nico is the one with the brains and Lewis the one with the heart. I think that does a disservice to both of them. True, Nico showed great intelligence in Canada to manage the car and bring home 18 points, but his inability to conceal his pain every time he's been beaten or made a mistake is a clear indicator of a passionate racing driver who is often mistaken for being 'robotic' because in other regards he's the perfect Mercedes corporate man. Lewis, on the other hand, has shown patience and intelligence in races like Barcelona, Suzuka and Austin where he planned his strategy, picked his moments and then capitalised on it.

Going in to Abu Dhabi, Nico has the easier job. He just has to win. No mathematics or calculations are necessary; much like Vettel in 2010, he just needs to stay focused on the victory. Lewis being Lewis, I would say he has to do the same. For someone like Lewis, who is a racer, and an

something a good top team like Mercedes will do anyway. However, you can't underestimate the nerves that each of the guys touching the cars or working on the electronics will have to make sure every nut, bolt and function is done correctly. And on the strategy front, Pete Bonnington and Jock Clear on Lewis's side of the garage have to be careful not to be too cautious and somehow end up behind another frontrunner, such as a Williams, which could be a disaster as Fernando Alonso found out in 2010.

For the other drivers on the grid, double points create opportunities so they will be attacking all the way through. If because of strategy they end up ahead of the Mercedes, they're going to be racing hard — because they know the Merc drivers can't afford to take too many risks.

Tension will be running high on Sunday evening. The key to success will be calm heads, no mistakes, and delivering a high quality performance — as you would've done in Melbourne eight months ago. If all goes normally, Lewis should end up as world champion, and a deserving one having won twice as many races as Nico and with one extra non-finish in his campaign. As many others have found, though, world championship deciders rarely go to plan. ❧



ABU DHABI GP PREVIEW

F1 prepares for unfreeze

After Sunday's season-closing Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, engine manufacturers will be permitted to make improvements to the 'frozen' engines ahead of 2015. CRAIG SCARBOROUGH explains how

Following Sunday's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the window of opportunity opens for engine manufacturers to develop their power units. The engine freeze applies only during the season, so the freedom to change things kicks in. All three manufacturers – Mercedes, Renault and Ferrari – will want to make their engines more reliable, powerful and as light as is permitted.

Reliability will be even more critical in 2015 and not just because failures in races cost points. Each driver will have only four of each power unit element,

rather than five as now, during 2015. But performance is equally important. Making gains will require major updates to the various assemblies within the power unit. Development will focus not only on the detail design of these systems, but also the power unit's basic layout.

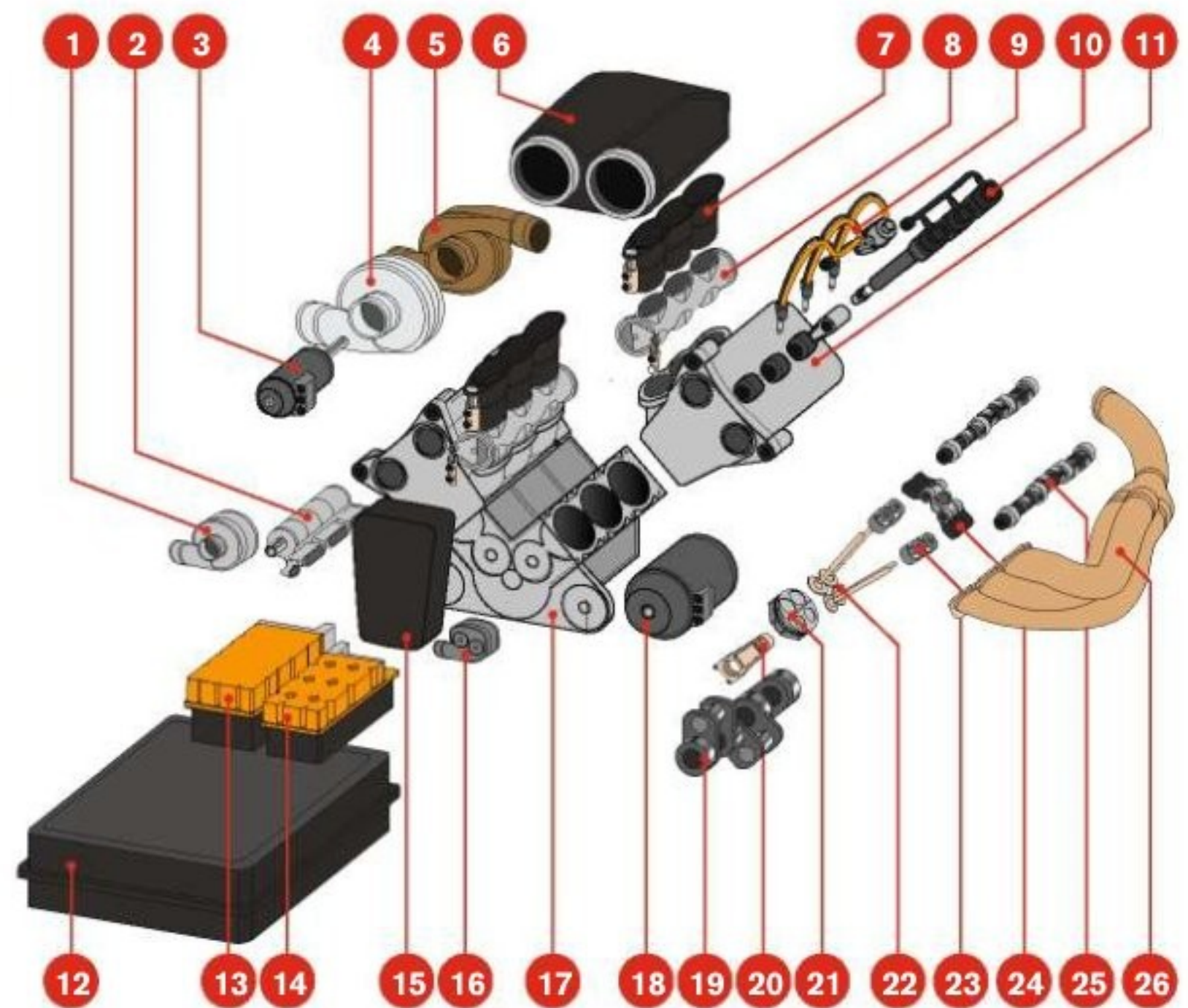
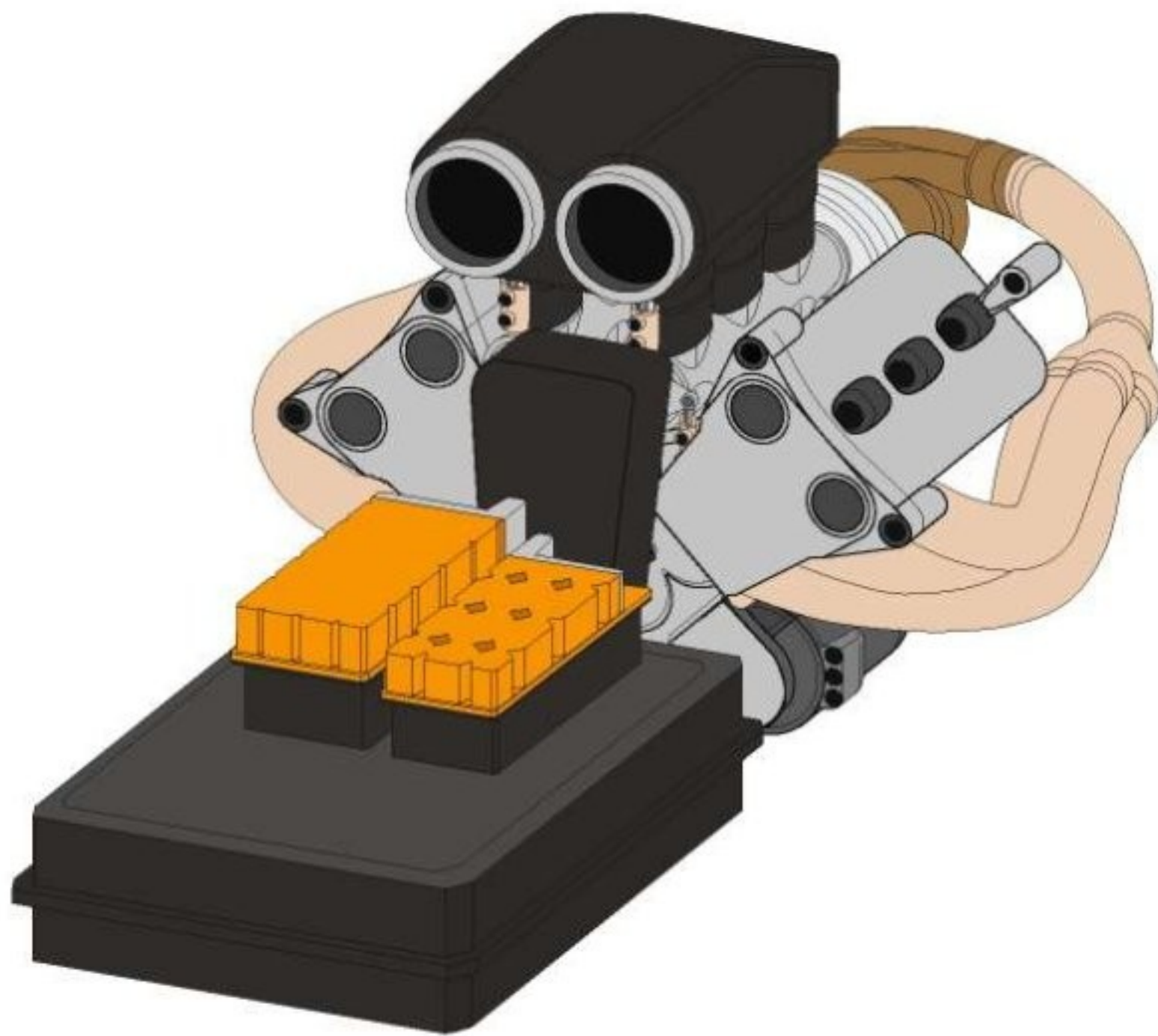
Lightness is a smaller issue. It is known that not all of the 2014 power units reached the minimum weight of 145kg and the centre of gravity minimum height of 200mm. Getting down to these minimums is crucial as it frees up the chassis designers to put

the strength or ballast into the car where it's needed. It will also ease the pressure of the driver's body weight.

What can be changed is controlled by an FIA appendix. The list covers every assembly within the power unit. Each year teams are able to develop a decreasing percentage of these parts. Some 42 parts are covered and each of these specifications is awarded a weighted value, totalling 66 points. For 2015 teams are allowed to modify 48 per cent of the power unit, or 32 points worth. For example, changing the inlet-system trumpets costs just a

point, useful for 2015 as movable inlet trumpets are allowed once more for better driveability. But changing the crankcase dimensions costs three points and may not have an obvious performance benefit.

The manufacturers will have been working on their plans for their 2015 power unit since the start of 2014; they have until February 28, 2015 to submit their specification to the FIA. This broadly coincides with the end of winter testing, so there will no doubt be a race to debug any issues in time for specification submission.



POWER UNIT KEY

Item	Description	Points
1	Water pump	1
2	Oil scavenge system	1
3	MGU-H Complete	2
3	MGU-H Position	2
4	Turbo compressor	2
5	Turbo turbine	2
6	Inlet system plenum	1
7	Inlet trumpets	1
8	Inlet throttles	1
9	Injection system	2
10	Ignition system	1

11	Cylinder head	2
12	ERS wiring loom	1
12	Battery ES cells	2
12	Battery Management System	2
12	ERS – Cooling/lubrication	1
13	MGU-H Power electronics	1
14	MGU-K Power electronics	1
15	Oil tank	1
16	Oil pressure pump	1
16	All parts in which oil circulates under pressure	1
17	Crankcase: Cylinder bore spacing, deck height, bank stagger	2

17	Crankcase: All other dimensions	3
18	MGU-K	2
18	MGU-K Position, Transmission	2
19	Crankshaft: Crank throw, main bearing journal diameter, rod bearing journal diameter	2
19	Crankshaft	2
20	Con rods	2
21	All parts of parts defining combustion, Inc: ports, piston crown, Combustion chamber	3
21	Pistons	2
22	Valves	2

22	Valve drive	2
23	Pneumatic Valve Return System	1
25	Valve drive – Camshafts From camshaft lobe to gear train	1
25	Valve drive gear train	2
26	Exhaust system	1
26	Wastegate/Pop-off valve	1
	Electrical system	1
	Covers	1
	Ancillaries drive	3
	Friction coatings	1
	Sliding or rotating seals	1
TOTAL		66

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Hamilton v Rosberg

If Mercedes finishes first and second, as it has done 11 times already in 2014, it will be job done for Lewis Hamilton. So, realistically, Rosberg needs to win with things going wrong for his team-mate to snatch the title. Twice, Hamilton has



suffered failures while leading this race, so he'll be hoping for no repeat.

The battle for fourth

As well as the title battle, there is a tightly-contested fight for fourth in the drivers' championship between Sebastian Vettel, Fernando Alonso and Valtteri Bottas to watch out for. Just three points covers the trio, so whoever is the best-placed of them come the chequered flag is likely to prevail.



Points means prizes

While the top two in the constructors' championship are locked, with double points on offer the other positions in the top 10 could all change. With these positions influencing payouts next year, there is a lot at stake. Sauber, for example, could jump from 10th to eighth simply with a P8/P9 finish.

ABU DHABI

Yas Marina



KEY INFO

2013 winner
Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull)

2013 pole
Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m39.957s

UK Start times
FP1: 0900
FP2: 1300
FP3: 1000
Qualifying: 1300
Race: 1300

Live TV
BBC/Sky Sports F1

Tyre allocation



CLASSIC RACE 2012

Lewis Hamilton looked set for a runaway victory after taking pole position and leading the opening 19 laps of the race before a fuel-system problem forced him to retire.

This cleared the way for Lotus driver Kimi Raikkonen, who had jumped from fourth on the grid to second, to take his first victory since his return to F1.

After taking the lead, he had to weather a safety-car period (during which he uttered the infamous "leave

me alone, I know what I'm doing" line after being warned about his tyre pressures being too low), and pressure from Ferrari's Fernando Alonso to secure his first victory since the 2009 Belgian Grand Prix.

Sebastian Vettel finished third, although the star of an incident-packed race was fifth-placed Pastor Maldonado. The Williams driver had qualified third, and hung on to a good position despite losing KERS power during the race.



The spectre of double points

The controversial rule-change introduced this year has cast a shadow over the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, says **BEN ANDERSON** ahead of the F1 season finale



Formula 1 heads to Abu Dhabi for its 2014 denouement this weekend with Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg engaged in an all-Mercedes showdown to become world champion. Ordinarily this would be cause for great excitement among Formula 1 fans, but there is one reason this race will divide opinion like no other: double points.

The move to award double scores for every top-10 finisher in this year's season finale received almost universal condemnation among fans when announced last winter. The motivation was to prevent a repeat of Sebastian Vettel's cakewalk to a fourth title in the second half of 2013. The irony is that retrospectively applying double points to last season would have made no difference to the outcome of that championship run-in...

But this year it could. Hamilton is poised to clinch his second world title, having won 10 races



Hamilton has won 10 races in 2014 to Rosberg's five

to Rosberg's five and holding a 17-point lead in the standings with one round remaining. But the fact that 50 points are available to the winner of Sunday's Yas Marina finale means the Brit is not yet over the line. Given the dominance of the Mercedes W05, any repeat of the unreliability that scuppered Hamilton in Australia and Canada would likely allow his team-mate to nick the crown at the death.

There is little doubt this potential scenario will draw extra viewers for the race. But the risk is that such an artificial move could also create an unworthy champion in the eyes of many in the watching world.

But this depends on your point of view, of course. For fans of points leader Hamilton, there is nothing to do but will him to drive as well as he has recently, and hope the winds of fate don't turn on him at the last.

"Whatever the result at the end is the way it is. I'll know I did everything I could and won't look back and say, 'If only I'd done this, if I only I'd done that'"

Lewis Hamilton takes a philosophical view

"I don't have any fears because I really feel that where I am today has not been lucky, it has not been by mistake," Hamilton argues. "There are reasons for being in this team at this time, there are reasons why we have the best car today, reasons why we have had these results this year, and that is all the hard work that has gone in."

"I feel I've done everything I can and that is all you can do. Whatever



Alonso: double points one of many variables that could swing result



Ecclestone says double points could be dropped for 2015

that count in the end," he argues. "Of course then you can debate who deserved it more or less. That's always going to be the case."

Drivers outside the title fight are more equivocal, comparing double points to other external factors that could swing the pendulum of any F1 season.

Fernando Alonso says: "We knew from the start of the year about double points. If you win thanks to that it's OK, and if you lose it will be a shame. But also when you win or lose due to a mechanical failure, or penalties — there are always different things that can make a difference. It's not like they changed the rules last week to make Abu Dhabi more interesting."

Vettel, who will be deposed as champion this weekend after a four-year reign, reckons Rosberg would still be a worthy winner, even relying on double points.

"I think in general the one who collected the most points deserves to win because he has been the most consistent,"

HOW NEW POINTS GIMMICK HAS CHANGED THE SEASON FINALE

The 17-point gap between Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg means that even under the old system, the world championship battle would have gone to the season finale in Abu Dhabi.

What double points has done, however, is make it harder for Hamilton and easier for Rosberg to seal the crown. Here is how the title can be won, and how it would have been before.



ROSBERG WINS TITLE IF...

- ☐ He wins the race and Hamilton is third or lower
- ☐ Finishes second and Hamilton is sixth or lower
- ☐ Finishes third and Hamilton is seventh or lower
- ☐ Finishes fourth and Hamilton is ninth or lower
- ☐ Finishes fifth and Hamilton is 10th or lower

HAMILTON WINS TITLE IF...

- ☐ He finishes ahead of Rosberg
- ☐ Finishes second or better
- ☐ Rosberg does not finish in the top five
- ☐ Finishes fifth or better if Rosberg does not win
- ☐ Finishes sixth or better if Rosberg is not in the top two
- ☐ Finishes eighth or better if Rosberg is not in the top three
- ☐ Finishes ninth or better if Rosberg is fifth

UNDER THE OLD SYSTEM

ROSBERG WINS TITLE IF...

- ☐ He wins the race and Hamilton is seventh or lower
- ☐ Finishes second and Hamilton does not score

HAMILTON WINS TITLE IF...

- ☐ He finishes ahead of Rosberg
- ☐ Rosberg does not finish in the top two
- ☐ Finishes sixth or better
- ☐ Finishes 10th if Rosberg finishes second

the result at the end is the way it is. I will go into my winter knowing I did everything I could and not look back and say, 'If only I had done this, or if I only I had done that.'"

For the Rosberg camp, double points represent a better hope for the German to become F1 world champion for the first time. Having previously spoken out against it, Rosberg's view has softened in the face of opportunity.

"Everybody can have their own opinion. In sport it is the points

Vettel says. "I don't remember a championship where that hasn't been the case. Even if you take a year like [Keke] Rosberg in '82 — he won only one race, but he deserved to be champion."

"A couple of years later nobody cares how many wins you had; what's more important is to win the championship."

Some argue double points helps build the final race of the season into a special event, but there is nevertheless a groundswell of

feeling within and without the sport that it is a step too far — even in a world where some view DRS and energy recovery boosts as artificial aids to spice up the show.

F1 commercial boss Bernie Ecclestone suggested during September's Singapore GP that double points could be dropped at the end of the year, but they remain in the 2015 sporting regulations presently.

AUTOSPORT understands it will be on the agenda when F1's Strategy Group (comprising Mercedes, Red Bull, Ferrari, McLaren, Lotus and Williams) meets after the Abu Dhabi GP, and in all likelihood will be dropped next year.

"The worst thing we can do now is mess around with it too much and make it more races," says Red Bull boss Christian Horner. "We either go back, or leave it and fix it as the way it should be for years to come. Personally, I'd like to see it go back."

He is not the only one. ❧

"In sport it is the points that count. You can then debate who deserved it more or less. That's always going to be the case"

Nico Rosberg softens double-points stance



Vettel says Rosberg would still be a worthy champ

F1 drivers' association poised for new safety push

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New GPDA chairman Alex Wurz tells JONATHAN NOBLE of his plans to react after Jules Bianchi's terrible Suzuka accident

Jules Bianchi's accident at the Japanese Grand Prix thrust the never-ending quest to improve safety in Formula 1 back to the top of the agenda for the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA).

But when the drivers' body meets in Abu Dhabi this weekend, it is set to embark on a new era as it seeks a wider role in making F1 better. Under new chairman Alex Wurz, there are ambitious plans to give drivers a bigger voice in helping engage the sport more with fans – and work out how collectively they can help F1's chiefs.

"We are in the process of defining these points in detail," he tells AUTOSPORT. "Not one of us wanted or considered that such a big accident could happen, so I have to say that we have had to put our attention to the issues at stake after Suzuka. That is a priority shift."

"But we will meet in Abu Dhabi and discuss exactly some of the ideas and proposals I have for the GPDA to go and engage with the key stakeholders, and with the fans."



The GPDA gathered new impetus after the tragedies of Imola 1994

We want to be a bit more public, but without being political."

THE ROLE OF THE GPDA

The GPDA has long focused on helping ensure that drivers' voices are heard when it comes to safety.

During its inaugural years in the 1960s and 1970s – especially when fatalities and injuries were a regular occurrence – its stance often put it

in conflict with the sport's governing body and race promoters. Nowadays, it works more hand-in-hand with the FIA and conducts its business firmly away from the spotlight.

"With everything that is going on, the driver is the one who sits in there, who is at the centre of attention of the whole industry," explains Wurz. "And sometimes from the inside looking out, it is a

"We will discuss some of the proposals I have. We want to be more public, without being political"

GPDA chairman Alex Wurz

very different perspective than looking towards the driver. And that we are doing quietly, not in public.

"We have lots of influences: increasing crash tests for example. We regularly sit down after accidents discussing the drivers' views. We also have small things that we discuss, like bumps, kerbs, guard rails, and impact-protection points at circuits where we feel exposed and where the homologation model thinks that a car cannot go off there."

"But we don't want to play power games, and the GPDA was never about that. I think it works quite well."

The sport feels more united since Jules Bianchi's accident



COATES/LAT

Wurz is confident he has the support of all the F1 drivers

"We all want the sport to be successful and safe, but it means we have to integrate ourselves in the system"

Alex Wurz

BIANCHI ACCIDENT A GAMECHANGER

Any complacency that may have crept in to F1 in recent years regarding safety was wiped away by the events of Suzuka last month.

Bianchi's horrific accident delivered a harsh reminder that no matter how safe F1 has become, there is always more that can be done. But as well as the obvious improvements that have come as the result of the lessons learned – such as the plan for a virtual safety car – Wurz believes that Bianchi's crash has also delivered a fresh impetus to drivers about the value of the GPDA.

"Unfortunately human beings need big events to remind us of the real values in life that we have to protect," he says. "In that sense, Jules' accident might be a key milestone in the GPDA because it is not easy to keep more than one generation of drivers united. Everyone has forgotten that there is still an underlying danger.

"We are living in a very fast world. Society as such is actually

separating. While we are more connected virtually through social media, in the real world we are drifting apart.

"So to keep the interests in check of every driver and be united, it is very tricky. So that is a large part of my role – to make sure that drivers want to be members and don't think they are only obliged to be.

"But in a way I think everyone is obliged, because when you are young you are admiring F1, and there is a kind of band of honour between drivers. We are a very special club so we should be somehow united. The feeling is evaporating a little bit.

"Sebastian Vettel feels the same as me – if we drivers do not manage to be united, what message are we giving to young people, the fans out there?"

A TIME FOR CHANGE

That is why when Wurz was voted in as the GPDA's new chairman during the Japanese GP weekend, just days before Bianchi's accident, the former F1 racer outlined a fresh

vision for the organisation.

Rather than just being about safety, he wants the GPDA to help drivers reach out more to fans, help make racing more exciting, and support safety on road and track.

"I think the GPDA needs to change slightly," he says. "I think we are ready and we should also have an influence in a positive way for the sport to be a bit more open, to engage with the fans, to co-ordinate with the strategy groups, research groups, the rule makers and the key stakeholders.

"But again we want to do it in co-operation. We are all together: we all sit down and we all want the sport to be successful, safe and spectacular. We can do that, we want to do that, but it means we have to integrate ourselves in the system. So that means I will have a lot of work!"

For a sport that has been pushing to make its drivers heroes again, the men in the cockpit themselves will this weekend begin a push to do their own bit to help, too. ☼



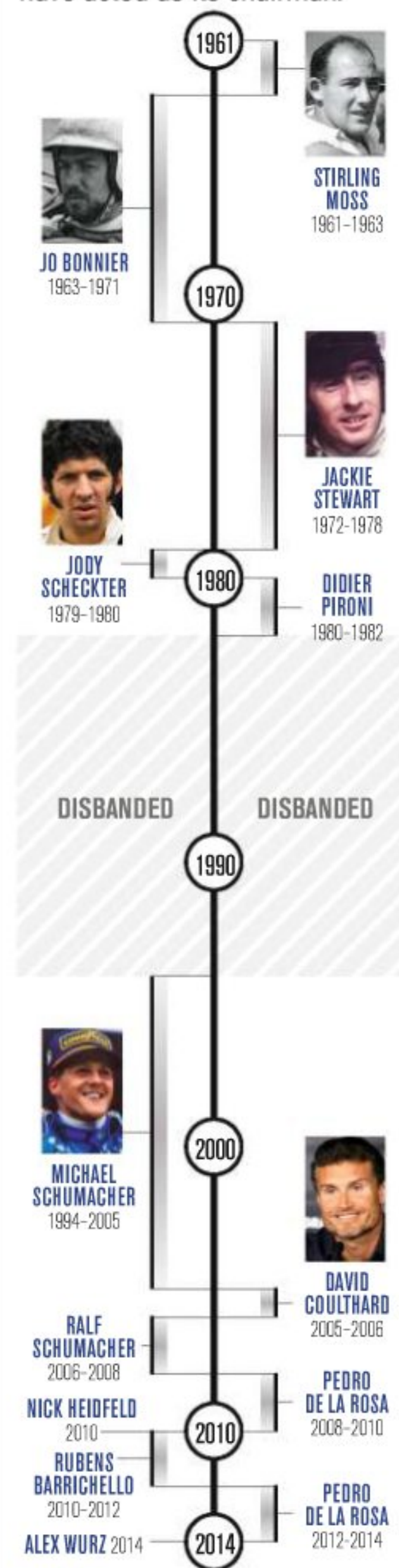
LAT

GPDA: A VERY SPECIAL CLUB

The GPDA's routes can be traced back to 1961, when drivers were eager to have more of a say in the safety of the sport.

Although its impetus fell away in the early 1980s, the high-profile deaths of Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger at Imola in 1994 proved the catalyst for its resurrection.

Over the years, the importance of the body is clear from the impressive names that have acted as its chairman.



SMITH/GETTY



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Why NASCAR's new-look finale really worked

It would be ridiculed in Formula 1, but America's biggest race series engaged a radical change to its Chase system this year, which **MARK GLENDENNING** reports was a roaring success

Jimmie Johnson didn't win this year's Sprint Cup title. Neither did Ryan Newman. And based on those two facts alone, NASCAR will consider the roll-out of its dramatically revised Chase format a success.

The new elimination-style Chase is something that only NASCAR could have attempted. True, that's partly because no other professional championship has the type of schedule that allows it to put a box around 10 races and recognise them as distinct from the other 26.

But it's also because NASCAR is in the enviable position of being able to honour its heritage without necessarily being held hostage to it. Its fans are tolerant to changes — sometimes quite major ones — to a degree that many fans of Formula 1 might not be.

Using an elimination-based system to determine a champion

is very common in sport: the professional team sports in the US all use play-offs, and elsewhere you'll find it in arenas ranging from Wimbledon to the World Cup. It was always going to be interesting to see how it would work when applied in a motorsport context.

And not only did NASCAR decide to try it, but it did so using a format that placed a massive emphasis on wins rather than consistency. (Newman almost derailed that part of it, but we'll get to that later.)

When the new Chase system was announced in January, NASCAR chairman and CEO Bill France laid out three clear objectives.

"First, we've talked about putting greater emphasis on winning races," he declared, "something our fans overwhelmingly want; second, make competing and running for a championship much simpler and much simpler to understand; third,

expand opportunities for more drivers to compete for the championship while ultimately rewarding the most worthy, battle-tested champion.

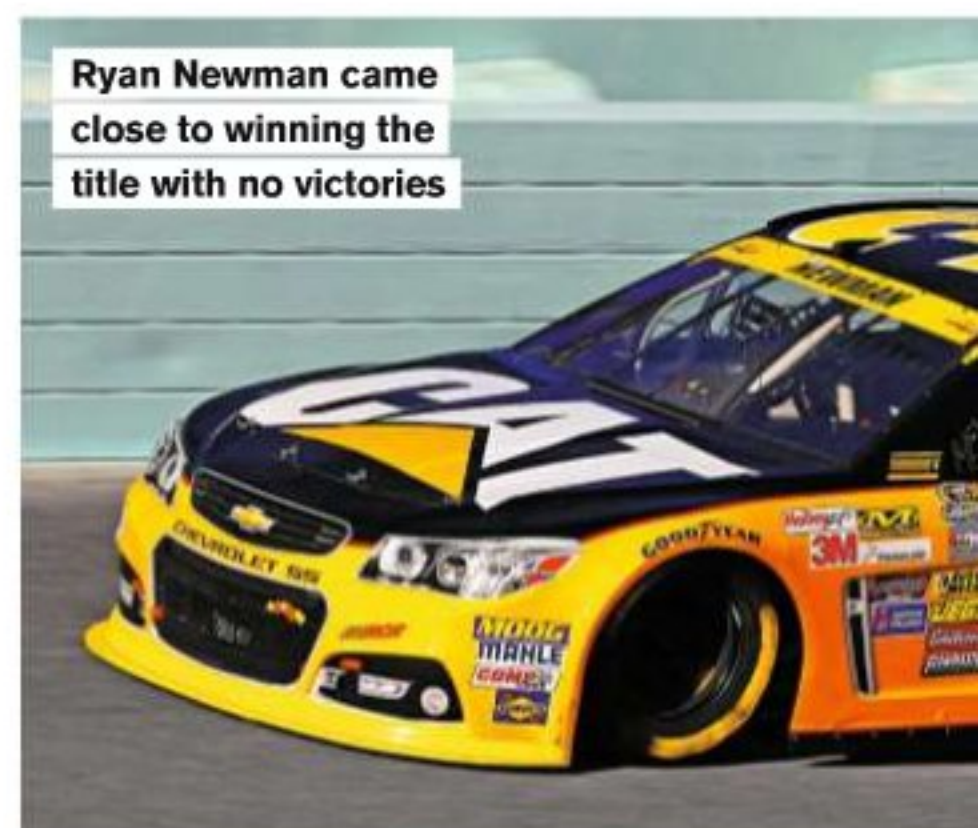
"We now have arrived at a format that makes every race matter more. It will promote compelling competition for wins all season long. Ultimately, it will reward a very worthy champion at the end of each season, with the best of the best winner-take-all showdown."

So using NASCAR's own yardsticks, was the 2014-spec Chase a success? It's interesting to start by surveying the tone of the mainstream coverage of the championship battle here in the US.

Less than 24 hours after Kevin Harvick was crowned at the end of a thriller at Homestead, the media and fan reaction is overwhelmingly positive. Harvick's a guy who was long considered overdue for a title,

and he has been strong all year; a five-time race winner in 2014, with three of those victories coming during the Chase. If NASCAR ran a computer simulation of their ideal Chase scenario back when they were first mapping it all out, Harvick's season would have come close to matching it.

Ryan Newman came close to winning the title with no victories





The Homestead finale unfolded with Harvick (I) and Newman to the fore



...and the first-time champ celebrated hard



But it's interesting to consider how fragile Harvick's victory at Homestead really was. He certainly earned it, with a perfect call to stop for four tyres late on, and some blinding restarts in the final 15 laps to haul himself into the lead from 12th.

At the same time, the race could easily have fallen in any number of

other directions. The guy harassing him over the final three laps was Newman, who up until that point had become the poster boy for everything that was bad about the Chase because he'd worked his way into the final four without finishing any higher than third all year. Denny Hamlin looked strong late on, but paid the price for only changing two tyres when Harvick and Newman were able to mop him up with fresher rubber. Joey Logano looked to be in the running until his car fell off its jack in the pits.

Public opinion about almost anything tends to be biased in favour of recent events. NASCAR's finale was genuinely exciting, without contrivances (which seemed to surprise even the commentators; when the series threw a late yellow for debris, one of them remarked that "there really is something on the track"). And the buzzy afterglow of such a thriller might have caused a

"The format will reward a very worthy champion, with the best of the best winner-take-all showdown"

NASCAR chairman and CEO Bill France

few people to forget that 48 hours earlier they were writing the new format off as a dud on the basis that 'no-win Newman' was in the title hunt, and the likes of Jeff Gordon and Brad Keselowski were not.

It's interesting to ponder how a Newman victory on Sunday would have been received, because if he'd managed to find a way past Harvick in those last three laps – and he very nearly did – then you'd have had a hard time arguing that he didn't deserve to be picking confetti

out of his underwear later.

In a weird way, Newman was one of the best things about the Chase: the system was so heavily skewed against the Richard Childress driver, and despite not being a guy who is going to win four races each year, he found a way to make it work.

Is there room for improvement? Sure. Gordon told AUTOSPORT last week that he'd like the system to be tweaked to create a greater differential between Chase and non-Chase competitors in the final races, a change that would help provide some insurance against having your title bid destroyed because you got stuck behind David Gilliland. He probably has a point.

But in the meantime, the new Chase was a fascinating experiment that somehow managed to deliver something new for racing while still retaining the spirit of the sport. And that has to be a good thing. ☞



LABOUNTY/LAT

Ogier finds warm welcome in Wales

A pulsating lead battle on the opening day disintegrated when Jari-Matti Latvala went off early on day two, but there was plenty more interest in Britain's round of the WRC, as **DAVID EVANS** reports

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AT A GLANCE



"In the afternoon on day one I couldn't believe just how slippery those stages were. It was incredible"
SEBASTIEN OGIER

RALLY GB
Deeside, Wales

ROUND 13/13

STAGES
23

WINNER
Sebastien Ogier
3h03m08.2s

MOST STAGE WINS
Jari-Matti Latvala (9)

POWERSTAGE WINNER
Jari-Matti Latvala

RALLY RATING
★★★★★ Some stunning action in Wales; shame about the lead fight

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1 Sebastien Ogier	267pts
2 Jari-Matti Latvala	218pts
3 Andreas Mikkelsen	152pts

Rally Great Britain

World Rally Championship
Deeside (GB), November 13-16

Round 13/13

RESULTS

23 STAGES, 189.924 MILES

1 SEBASTIEN OGIER (F)/JULIEN INGRASSIA (F)

VW Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC #1 **3h03m08.2s**

2 MIKKO HIRVONEN (FIN)/JARMO LEHTINEN (FIN)

M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC #5 **+37.6s**

3 MADS OSTBERG (N)/JONAS ANDERSSON (S)

Citroen Total Abu Dhabi Citroen DS3 WRC #4 **+1m03.6s**

4 THIERRY NEUVILLE (B)/NICOLAS GILSOUL (B)

Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC #7 **+1m14.9s**

5 ELFYN EVANS (GB)/DANIEL BARRITT (GB)

M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC #6 **+1m24.3s**

6 KRIS MEEKE (GB)/PAUL NAGLE (IRL)

Citroen Total Abu Dhabi Citroen DS3 WRC #3 **+2m03.0s**

7 OTT TANAK (EST)/RAIGO MOLDER (EST)

M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC #22 **+2m29.7s**

8 JARI-MATTI LATVALA (FIN)/MIikka ANTILA (FIN)

VW Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC #2 **+2m47.5s**

9 MARTIN PROKOP (CZ)/JAN TOMANEK (CZ)

Jipocar Czech National Team Ford Fiesta RS WRC #21 **+3m43.3s**

10 HAYDEN PADDON (NZ)/JOHN KENNARD (NZ)

Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC #20 **+3m48.5s**

OTHERS

11 ROBERT KUBICA (PL)/MACIEJ SZCZEPANIAK (PL)

RK M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC #10 **+4m19.4s**

14 MATTHEW WILSON (GB)/SCOTT MARTIN (GB)

Yazeed Racing (M-Sport WRT) Ford Fiesta RRC #31 **+12m17.1s**

R ANDREAS MIKKELSEN (N)/OLA FLOENE (N)

VW Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC #9 **SS19 – off road**

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 OGIER	267	6 NEUVILLE	105
2 LATVALA	218	7 MEEKE	92
3 MIKKELSEN	150	8 EVANS	81
4 HIRVONEN	126	9 PROKOP	44
5 OSTBERG	108	10 SORDO	40

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 VW MOTORSPORT	447	4 HYUNDAI WRT	187
2 CITROEN TOTAL	210	5 VW MOTORSPORT 2	133
3 M-SPORT	208	6 JIPOCAR CZECH NATIONAL	49

STAGE TIMES

SS1 GARTHEINIOG 1 (9.06 miles)

Fastest: Ogier 8m34.3s

Leader: Ogier

SS2 DYFI 1 (13.60 miles)

Fastest: Ogier 12m25.9s

Leader: Ogier

SS3 HAFREN SWEET LAMB 1 (14.63 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 13m39.1s

Leader: Ogier

SS4 MAESNANT 1 (7.99 miles)

Fastest: Ogier 7m52.6s

Leader: Ogier

SS5 GARTHEINIOG 2 (9.06 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 8m48.6s

Leader: Ogier

SS6 DYFI 2 (13.60 miles)

Fastest: Ogier 12m51.7s

Leader: Ogier

SS7 HAFREN SWEET LAMB 2 (14.63 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 14m00.7s

Leader: Ogier

SS8 MAESNANT 2 (7.99 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 8m07.5s

Leader: Ogier

SS9 CLOCAENOG EAST 1 (5.12 miles)

Fastest: Mikkelsen 4m36.9s

Leader: Ogier

SS10 CLOCAENOG MAIN 1 (8.53 miles)

Fastest: Mikkelsen 8m07.8s

Leader: Ogier

SS11 ABERHIRNANT 1 (8.61 miles)

Fastest: Mikkelsen 7m29.8s

Leader: Ogier

SS12 DYFNANT 1 (12.41 miles)

Fastest: Mikkelsen 11m32.9s

Leader: Ogier

SS13 CHIRK CASTLE (1.28 miles)

Fastest: Solberg 1m32.5s

Leader: Ogier

SS14 CLOCAENOG EAST 2 (5.12 miles)

Fastest: Meeke 4m44.8s

Leader: Ogier

SS15 CLOCAENOG MAIN 2 (8.53 miles)

Fastest: Hirvonen 8m11.2s

Leader: Ogier

SS16 ABERHIRNANT 2 (8.61 miles)

Fastest: Mikkelsen 7m48.2s

Leader: Ogier

SS17 DYFNANT 2 (12.41 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 11m50.6s

Leader: Ogier

SS18 BRENIG 1 (6.71 miles)

Fastest: Ostberg 7m07.6s

Leader: Ogier

SS19 ALWEN 1 (6.23 miles)

Fastest: Ostberg 5m43.1s

Leader: Ogier

SS20 KINMEL PARK 1 (1.37 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 1m41.9s

Leader: Ogier

SS21 KINMEL PARK 2 (1.37 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 1m40.5s

Leader: Ogier

SS22 ALWEN 2 (6.23 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 5m44.7s

Leader: Ogier

SS23 BRENIG 2 (6.71 miles)

Fastest: Latvala 7m04.7s

Leader: Ogier



Rally route Based for the second year out of Deeside, the Thursday-night stages were dropped for this season, but the basic format remained similar to last year's season closer. Myherin was dropped but Brenig came in and ran as the Powerstage this time around.

A FRENCH WORLD CHAMPION WON; A FINN CRASHED trying to beat a Frenchman, the sun shone for two days and there were two Brits in the top six. Last week's Wales Rally GB was all about the predictable, the unpredictable and the downright unbelievable. Right up until the final morning, Kris Meeke had battled hard for the right to be the first finisher not called Sebastien. In the end he missed the podium, but in many ways it didn't matter. He'd helped electrify Britain's round of the World Rally Championship. Good became great again as far as Rally GB was concerned last week.

LEG ONE (90.58 miles)

Sunny – ambient temperature range on stages 11-16C

Gloves off. Game on. With both titles sorted, Wales Rally GB might have missed the clout a race to the crown brings, but it also meant total clarity: winner takes all. Ahead of the event, Ogier tipped Latvala; Latvala tipped Ogier, both tipped Andreas Mikkelsen and Mikkelsen tipped himself.

And the Norwegian warmed up perfectly with fastest time at shakedown.

Gartheiniog just before eight on a misty Friday morning and it was the world champion who was quickest out of the blocks. Heavy rain just before the event would generally translate into an advantage for the man at the front of the field through the stages just south of Dolgellau. After a year of sweeping the stages clean for those behind him on hot, gravel rallies, Ogier had earned his opportunity in Wales. He didn't waste it.

He doubled his 4.5-second lead in SS2. Initially, that advantage had been over Mikkelsen, but coming out of Dyfi, it was Latvala in second. Mikkelsen had gone. Tipped had become tripped as he dropped his Polo braking for a tricky

left-hander in the latter part of the test.

"The corner came 40 metres after a crest," he said. "I left my braking a little bit late. The rear of the car dropped into a ditch and that pulled the front in and broke a steering arm. That was that."

He made it to the end of the stage, but drove straight to remote service in Newtown instead of going further south to Hafren Sweet Lamb.

"In the first stage I was pushing hard, but I dropped time to Seb," he said. "I had to push harder on the next one. I really didn't want to give anything to him."

The early departure of one Volkswagen did, however, ramp up the battle to be first of the non-Polo players. The bottom step of the podium had been cleared for somebody whose payslip didn't come with a Hannover postmark.

And that battle for third was warming up nicely with just over 30 seconds separating third to 12th after SS2.

Up front Ogier was content with the times, but not 100 per cent convinced with himself.

"I'm not completely happy with the driving," he said, "but it's OK. It's quite tricky first on the road, but on the whole I'm happy with the morning."

By the time he reached Newtown and remote service, his lead had shrunk in Hafren Sweet Lamb courtesy of Latvala's first scratch time, but then increased to 9.5s when the world champion hit back in the morning's Maesnant finale.

Latvala was, however, just glad to be sitting down to lunch with his Polo in one piece.

Between mouthfuls, he explained: "We ran wide and hit a hole in Dyfi. We bounced back, but we were lucky not to roll."

Riding his luck, he tore through Hafren Sweet Lamb quickest, but then dropped three seconds

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FORIX

World champion Ogier
lit up the forests on his
way to 2014 win #8



with an overshoot in stage four.

"I need to get rid of these mistakes," he said, remonstrating with himself as much as informing the assembled media.

Citroen's Mads Ostberg led the charge for third. His team-mate Kris Meeke had been lumbered with a 10-second penalty for a jump start on the opening stage, but remained firmly in touch. Ostberg's only gripes were that his DS3 was going sideways almost as much as it was going forwards. The Norwegian relinquished third to a demob-happy Mikko Hirvonen in SS6. M-Sport's team leader had talked of his hopes of carrying his Rally Catalunya pace, where he was third, into his final factory outing at rallying's highest level — having announced his retirement between Spain and Wales.

He wasn't happy with the Fiesta early on, but worked on the rear suspension to loosen up the back of the Ford.

"Too much grip on Rally GB," he said, "bloody hell... I never thought I'd say that!"

Hirvonen was revelling in what had become something of a retirement party. "Between the stages, I'm thinking about what I'm going to do to the workshop at home," he smiled. Relaying this news to co-driver Jarmo Lehtinen, the taller of the two Finns said: "He better not be. I'll kick his ass if he is! We've got one more job to do."

At the other end of his career, Meeke was reacquainting himself with Wales from the inside of a World Rally Car. And it was taking some doing.

"It's all about confidence," he said. "I was like an old woman in the first couple this morning, no confidence. But it's coming. I'm not so worried about the jump start, I didn't think I did start early, but I'd be disappointed if I lost a position by less

than 10 seconds on Sunday."

There was a collective wince from the listening media, with the hope that statement wouldn't become a prophecy.

Into the afternoon and the re-run of the four stages between Dolgellau and Machynlleth were shockingly free of adhesion.

"I am happy to end this afternoon," said Ogier. "The grip was terrible. I just couldn't get the car turned in, I was trying everything: the handbrake, everything..."

Latvala took time out of the leader on all but one of the afternoon stages to end the day 6.6s off the lead. The Volkswagen pair appeared to be in their own event, moving more than a minute clear after 90 miles of competition.

Hirvonen was happy with his early third. Asked to describe his afternoon, he reckoned he only needed two words: "Fucking slippery!"

Meeke was content with fourth after a strong day of discovery. Seven tenths off the #3 Citroen was a frustrated Ostberg. "I worked hard to earn some seconds this morning and then wasted them this afternoon," he said.

Thierry Neuville was sixth. The Belgian had driven his i20 WRC at the limit through the morning to run one place higher, but he admitted he'd taken risks in his efforts to match the pace of those around him. "We have to decide on the strategy for this afternoon," he said at lunchtime, "we have to decide what we want from this event..." Turning the wick down ever so slightly indicated a Hyundai at the finish rather than in the boonies was the decision.

Local hero Elfyn Evans held seventh and Ott Tänak eighth. Both Fiesta men were happy to see the end of what had been a tough opening day.

POSITIONS AFTER DAY ONE

1 Ogier/Ingrassia	1h26m28.9s
2 Latvala/Anttila	+6.6s
3 Hirvonen/Lehtinen	+1m07.2s
4 Meeke/Nagle	+1m21.5s
5 Ostberg/Andersson	+1m22.2s
6 Neuville/Gilsoul	+1m33.9s

LEG TWO (70.67 miles)

Sunny/cloudy – ambient temperature range on stages 10-15C

Taking time out of Ogier is never the easiest of tasks, but the nature of the Clocaenog stages made the task even more tricky. Long straights punctuated by square corners and junctions don't offer the same kind of opportunity for the knife-edge bravery that can deliver in medium speed bends elsewhere on the route. So, when Latvala went 1.7s up in under three miles, the sense of anticipation was palpable.

It was long after that the radio scanners broke their silence.

"We are off the road."

The frequency was Volkswagen's, the voice Finnish not French. Anttila. Miikka. Co-driver to Latvala. The game was up.

Pushing harder and harder, Latvala had locked the Polo up on the brakes, stalled and couldn't get it started again. It slid backwards into a ditch and stayed there. More than three minutes later spectators lifted the car out and he was on his way again. The fact that he'd lost his rear wing totally changed the car's behaviour — as a further spin in SS10 would testify.

"I had to try," he said at the end of the morning's opening stage. "I wanted to beat him."

At that point, he was still full of adrenalin at getting the car out. Two stages later at the end of Aberhirnant, where a broken front-right damper was also hindering progress, his miserable Saturday morning had really set in. He had little to offer beyond: "It's almost impossible to drive the car without the wing..."

He turned away, faced forwards, pulled first gear and wanted to be elsewhere.

Ogier was genuinely magnanimous, saying: "It's tough, it was a good fight, a nice fight, but these things can happen when you race and rally."

With the pressure off, Ogier's intentions were clear — he was going to enjoy the last two days of his world-title winning season.

"The roads here are beautiful," he said, "I love these stages."

The difference in approach between the driver in first and second places couldn't have been more marked. With a second VW out of the running, the intensity of what had been a third-place battle rose as it became the race to be runner-up.

Meeke made the best of Clocaenog, slashing Hirvonen's advantage in half, but when he fluffed the super-quick run to the finish of Aberhirnant, the advantage went the way of Ostberg. The Citroens swapped places. Ostberg emerged from ▶



Hirvonen drove off to retirement with second

► the stage just 3.9s behind Hirvonen with Meeke half a second down.

"I got a wee bit mixed up in the notes in the last section," admitted Meeke. "That cost me a couple of seconds."

That was all it took.

Coming out of the typically wet and muddy Clocaenog stages, the drivers universally felt there had been more grip available in the test next to Lake Bala – and every one of the drivers in the titanic three-way scrap for second admitted there was more time to come out of those particular 8.61 miles.

Almost unnoticed in the midst of this intense scrap was Ostberg landing a 10-second penalty for arriving at SS12 a minute late.

Ostberg said: "I don't agree with the penalty – for me, we were there in the right time."

A 1.4s advantage over Meeke after Dyfnant had become an 8.6s deficit. The Citroens were tied in Chirk with Meeke now just seven tenths off Hirvonen. "They are coming closer now," said the Ford Fiesta man with a wry smile, "we have to find something."

Asked if he could go harder in the afternoon, Hirvonen said with a grin: "You can always go harder. This is a nice, nice fight."

As had been the case on day one, the afternoon-run through the stages was a very different proposition. Meeke shook his head and smiled at the end of his second shot at Cloc East.

"It's just like ice," he said. "You commit to a corner, grip, grip, grip, then it's gone. Nothing. It's incredible."

His first fastest time of the rally was enough to move him into second place – and by the comfortable margin of 1.1s from Hirvonen. The Finn had to hand it to his rival. "Bloody hell," he said, "look at Meeke's time, he's done very well!"

Hirvonen took the place back in the next one, with Ostberg continuing to drift out of contention – a puncture on SS16 was enough to drop him half a minute off the fight in front and into a fight for fourth – with Neuville and Evans respectively 3.3s and 7.9s down on him at the end of the day.

For Hirvonen and Meeke, the frantic pace was unrelenting. Their dark run through Dyfnant triggered fireworks and flashbulbs aplenty. The atmosphere was truly electric.

"That's as good as it gets in there," grinned Meeke. "That was just mega."

Hirvonen's smile was just as wide and not all of that was to do with his 3.4s overnight advantage.

"It's fantastic," he beamed. "Tomorrow is my last day, so you can tell Kris I have nothing to lose. It's going to be emotional!"

POSITIONS AFTER DAY TWO

1 Ogier/Ingrassia	2h33m19.3s
2 Hirvonen/Lehtinen	+58.1s
3 Meeke/Nagle	+1m01.5s
4 Ostberg/Andersson	+1m41.2s
5 Neuville/Gilsoul	+1m44.5s
6 Evans/Barritt	+1m52.4s

LEG THREE (28.65 miles)

Foggy – ambient temperature range on stages 9-14C

It's not often that the pre-dawn darkness of a Sunday morning on Deeside Business Park is broken by rapturous applause. Last Sunday it was. Hirvonen's arrival in service was greeted in the warmest possible fashion by his team. And it wasn't just the team principal who was shedding tears early. The emotion had started – just not for the main men.

"I'm excited!" smiled Hirvonen, "big fight today. Everything else can wait."

Across the way, Meeke's grin had a slightly more

Only cruel luck with
punctures denied
Meeke a home podium



nervous edge to it. "We have to think about manufacturer points..." ventured the DS3 driver, almost trying the sentence out for himself, just to see how it fitted.

It fitted fine. For now. Question was: how would it fit in the first run through Brenig?

Hmm, not so well. Meeke cut the gap by three tenths. But drama. Pushing like mad, both had moments. Meeke put the Citroen on its doorhandles, then put the doorhandles in a ditch. He ran wide in a Brenig left-hander, punctured one tyre and damaged another. With only one spare, his continued participation was now very much in question. In a very quick section, he'd had to knock the car down to first to get going again. His own estimation of losing a couple of seconds might have been conservative.

Hirvonen was just as committed and wiped out the finish gantry with a massive slide through the final right-hander to prove it.

"I was never going off there," Hirvonen grinned. "That was all under control!"

Citroen immediately went into a huddle and battled against the kind of communication difficulties a foggy Sunday morning in the Welsh hills can provide. Meeke's engineer Didier Clermont came out and smiled.

"I think it will be OK," he said.

The damaged tyre was on the rim. Just.

It must have been. Meeke went a second faster than Hirvonen in the next one, cutting the gap to 2.1s. Hirvonen admitted he couldn't find any rhythm from the more angular Alwen test.

A breather. Two runs around Kinnel Park before it was back to the woods. Concern for Meeke's cover lessened when he took another half a second out of the Finn on the first run through the mixed-surface stage. Unbeknown to him, an incident at the start involving Hirvonen had effectively decided the outcome of this one. Hirvonen's co-driver was handed his time card back with just seconds to spare before the lights went green. Mikko was livid. And he took that anger out on the second run, where he lifted three seconds from his rival to go back to Alwen, 4.6s up.

And it was in the penultimate stage that the battle ended. The right-rear tyre let go, Meeke lost 51 seconds and a potential second became sixth. Meeke made the best of what rubber he had left to get through the final stage. Fortunately for Citroen, Ostberg was elevated to third, so second in the manufacturers' race was secure.

Meeke's problems let Hirvonen enjoy the final stage of his professional career – it was perhaps fitting that he finished it just behind a Frenchman...

Ostberg took to the podium's bottom step with Neuville moving up to fourth and Evans fifth after another great day for the Welshman.

And that was it. In the blink of an eye another Rally GB had come, gone and delivered in spades. Ogier had won, but the battles behind him had kept the world's eyes firmly fixed on Wales. 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿

IN THE SERVICE PARK

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR
@daviddevansrally



Turns out, Jari-Matti Latvala was a winner on last week's Wales Rally GB. He won the Powerstage and he won a Christmas tree, which was mounted on the bonnet of the Volkswagen Polo R WRC as it crossed the finish line in Brenig.

After two days of sunshine, there was a groan from the organisers when televisions were fired up to drizzle over the final stage. Actually, it mattered not a jot. The action was awesome: cars were sideways, more than sideways; Latvala was on the road, off the road... And there was that mud. The mud you don't just see, but smell as it bakes on hot exhausts. RAC mud is the best mud in the world.

The message was sent and received: Wales Rally GB is back in fashion. Last year's move from Cardiff worked, but the watching world from outside these shores held its breath. Flash in the pan? Or back to its best? The latter was about right. Rally winner and world champion Sebastien Ogier was certainly a convert.

Coming out of the Aberhirnant stage on Saturday morning, he smiled: "These roads, this place... they really are beautiful."

Ben Taylor, Andrew Kellitt and the rest of the crew have worked themselves to a standstill to deliver on the potential this event has always had. Last week, they got it right. The only downside was the Chirk toilets. In the words of my wife: "They'd had too many men in them..."

Otherwise, perfect.



Christmas didn't quite
come early for Latvala

The place was just mental. It's moments like that that we live for.



Kris Meeke
on Gartheiniog
in the dark



Citroën's leap of faith
in Meeke has paid off

Meeke confirmed for 2015 Citroën lead-driver role

KRIS MEEKE WILL RETURN TO THE Citroën World Rally Team next season as the French firm's lead driver.

The Northern Irishman's deal was confirmed earlier this week, following a star Wales Rally GB drive, in which he finished sixth but challenged for second for much of the Deeside-based event.

Meeke told AUTOSPORT: "It's great to have this confirmed. It's so important to get that second year. You chase your dream drive for so long and it came for me this time last year. But almost immediately,

three rounds in, you start to think: 'Bloody hell, I need a second year...' For the whole year you try to make it stick so you get another chance, and now I have that.

"Hopefully next year we can continue to build on particularly the second half of this season. If we can make a proper stab at this next year, then we can build a career off that. This is a great place to be. With Sebastien Loeb, this team won 17 world titles in 10 years; you don't do that without knowing how to make great rally cars."

Citroën's Yves Matton said it was Meeke's

ability to drive consistently that had won him a second term with the team.

"We always knew that Kris had the speed," said Matton, "that was never in doubt. But we asked him to show the mental strength to be able to drive consistently and to bring the car to the finish. He has done that."

The identity of Meeke's team-mate will be revealed next week, but the shortlist includes current driver Mads Ostberg and Ford Fiesta man Robert Kubica, who drove with the team last season.

LEHTINEN MAY RETURN

Although Mikko Hirvonen is retiring, his long-time co-driver Jarmo Lehtinen has admitted he might be tempted back into a rally car on a full-time basis. "It would have to be the right deal," he said, "not some young driver – I'm too bloody old for all of that! I'm going to relax until Christmas and make some decisions after that."

WILSON LAUDS EVANS

M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson praised Elfyn Evans' fifth place, saying: "This has definitely been one of his strongest performances on gravel this year – it bodes very, very well for next season. He drove really sensibly and showed real speed at times." Evans himself added: "I would definitely have taken this result at the start – some of the stages have been unbelievably slippery."

KUBICA: I'M HAPPY

Robert Kubica admitted he was pleased with a hard-earned 11th place on last week's Rally GB. After crashing a factory Citroën out of the event twice last season, the Pole was determined to make the finish. "I think we drove well with no mistakes and no big moments," he said. "I was determined to finish because this event is so unique and you don't get many chances to gain experience from these kind of conditions." It remains to be seen what Kubica does with that experience next season...

WILSON ON PODIUM

Matthew Wilson returned to the World Rally Championship with a fine WRC2 podium in his Michelin Pilot-liveried car. The Cumbrian admitted it took time to bed himself in after not competing in the WRC since Sweden last year, but blew away the cobwebs and set fastest times in WRC2 as he climbed the leaderboard to a class podium.

KETOMAA'S RALLY...

After finishing second five times in seven starts this season, Finn Jari Ketomaa finally won a WRC2 round in Wales. Ketomaa and co-driver Kaj Lindström dominated the category in a Drive DMACK team Fiesta R5.

... BUT NASSER'S TITLE

Ketomaa's win wasn't enough to deny Nasser Al-Attiyah the WRC2 title. Courtesy of four wins this season, the Qatari driver arrived on Deeside needing only to finish in the top seven to take the title. He did just that and celebrated his second world title having taken the Production Cup award in 2006.

FISHER IS TOP JUNIOR

Northern Irishman Alastair Fisher won the final Junior WRC round of the season in Wales, thereby guaranteeing himself second place in the season standings.

Tanak tipped for Hirvonen's seat

THE M-SPORT WORLD RALLY TEAM is expected to announce Ott Tanak as Mikko Hirvonen's replacement this week.

The final seats in WRC 2015 will be confirmed quickly, with Hayden Paddon and Mads Ostberg both expecting to know which direction they will take next year. Paddon said he would be at the wheel of a factory car next season, but potentially only on nine rallies. Speculation in Wales linked him to a Citroën seat, with Ostberg in discussion with Malcolm Wilson for a return to his own Fiesta-based team. Citroën's Yves Matton confirmed negotiations with Robert Kubica. "We will communicate the decision this week," Matton admitted.



Estonian Ott Tanak
is set for promotion



Ogier "fell in love" with
Rally GB last week

Drivers praise 'perfect' Rally GB

THE LEADING WRC DRIVERS

have praised the efforts of Rally GB organisers after what was described as the perfect event last week.

World champion Sebastien Ogier led the tributes to the Deeside-based event, which ran without fault and, for the most part, in glorious sunshine.

"I fell in love with this rally," he said. "The stages are beautiful, but it still

provides a big, big challenge to everybody – it's a real tough event and that's good!"

Citroën's Kris Meeke admitted competing in a DS3 WRC at home had lived up to his dreams – apart from the final morning when he dropped from a potential second to sixth.

"It's been an amazing rally," he said. "The organisers have worked so hard and you can see that work has paid off."

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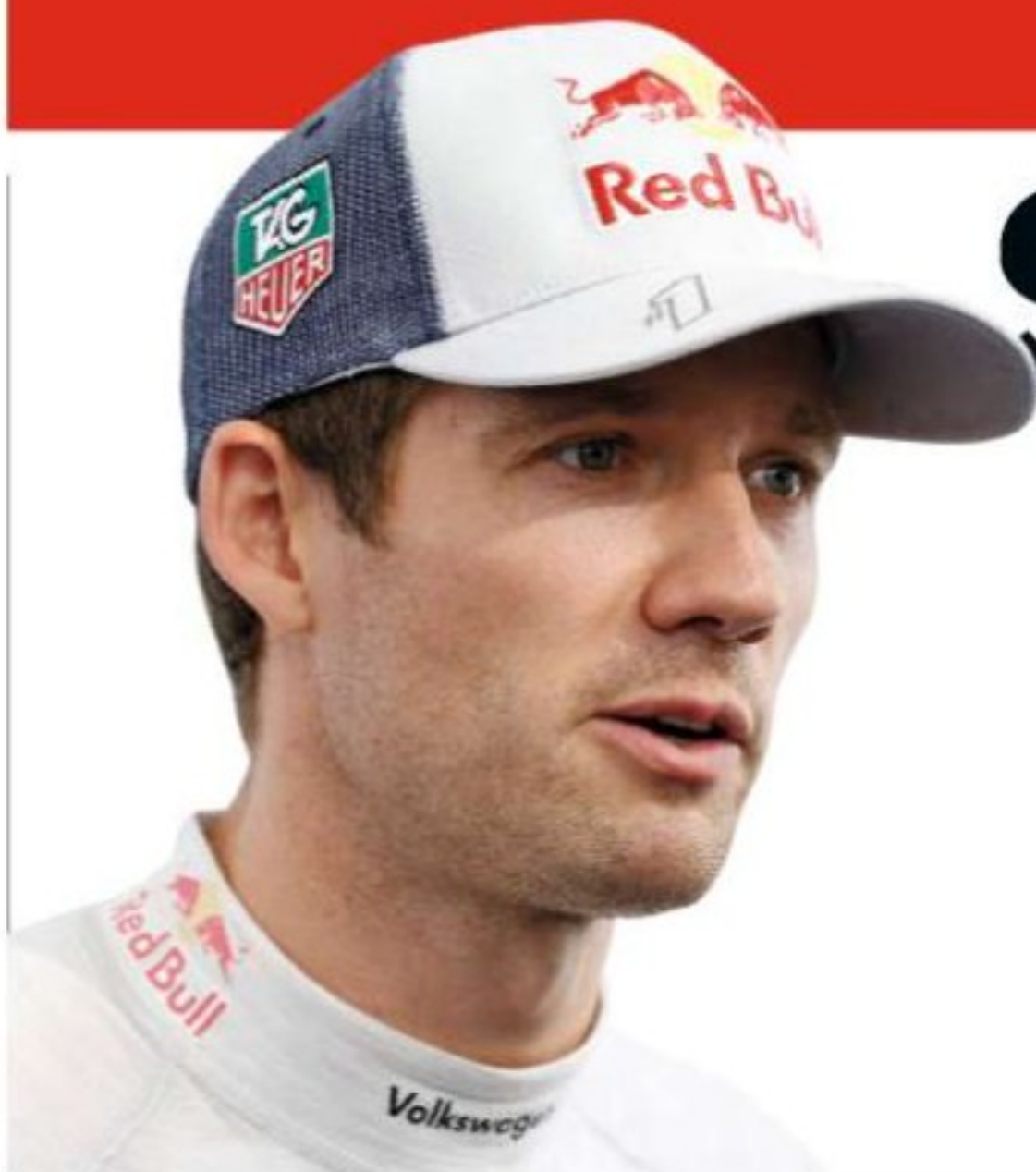


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Sebastien Ogier

The Inside Line

With his second world championship already in the bag, the VW star could concentrate on enjoying himself on Rally GB's famous stages

Clinching my second World Rally Championship title in Spain last month meant that Julien [Ingrassia, co-driver] and I could come to Wales without any stress – a chance for us to enjoy these famous Rally GB stages.

When we arrived for the recce, the rain was coming and it was looking like it would be the usual Welsh weather for the week. But then we got to the start and the rain stopped.

It was really nice to see so many people on Thursday night. We went to the autograph session before the [start] ramp and I can tell this was quite a popular event from how much my hand was aching from signing my name so many times!

Friday morning started well for me, we were fastest through the first stage in our Polo R WRC. These stages are so nice, they have a real flow to them and when you find a good rhythm it's like you are dancing in the car. It's beautiful.

And, for once on a gravel rally this year, I was not sweeping the surface clear of the loose stones. The rain had held the road together really well and I think we might have had a good advantage.

I knew the fight was going to be big with a lot of the drivers on this final round. Without the championship for us to think about, I was sure that Jari-Matti [Latvala, team-mate] would be very fast in Wales. Jari has won this rally twice before and has good experience. Andreas

Andreas damaged his suspension in Dyfi, which left Jari and me starting to pull away from the rest a little bit.

The sun came out on Friday afternoon and it showed how beautiful this place really is. It was a pleasure to drive through some fantastic scenery, but when we were in the forest we had to concentrate completely all the time. Honestly, in the afternoon on day one I couldn't believe just how slippery those stages were. It was incredible.

I don't know how this happened, but it was the same for everybody: the road was like ice in places and we had some big, big understeer coming into some of the corners. I grabbed the handbrake and was doing everything I could just to get the car turned in. I was really pleased to see the service park at the end of the day on Friday!

We started Saturday with a lead of six seconds from Jari and the battle was going to be big. It was a real shame for Jari and Miikka [Anttila, Latvala's co-driver] when they went off in the first one. In conditions like the ones we were driving in, this can happen so easily – especially when you're pushing like we both were. We both wanted to win this rally.

Once they were gone, it was like we started a new rally. We had a lead of one minute and it was about defending that advantage until Sunday afternoon. It's not always easy to drive like that – the full

“The stages really flow. When you find a good rhythm it's like dancing in the car. It's beautiful”

[Mikkelsen, team-mate] also knows Wales quite well and he's been making a good challenge to us on many rallies this year. Outside of the Volkswagen team, Kris [Meeke] was somebody we would be watching and, after his speed in Spain on the last rally, Mikko Hirvonen as well.

We took nothing for granted in Wales. You can never do that. This place has bitten me in the past and I know we have to treat it with care.

But, like I said, I like the roads and I have good memories: the first time I came here in 2008 I was able to lead the rally after the first few stages. But at the same time, that rally taught me a lot about respecting these roads; the weather was terrible that year, more like Monte Carlo with a lot of ice and snow. In the end, we crashed.

After we were fastest in the first two stages on Friday, Jari was quickest on the third. He wasn't going to let us get away with anything. Unfortunately,

commitment of a really, really big fight always gives you total concentration. But we were able to manage the gap and help Volkswagen set a new record for the highest number of wins in a season with 12.

It was also really interesting to watch the fight going on behind. It was good for Mikko that he made the podium, and I guess he felt some strong emotions in the car on his final event before he retires.

Mikko's one of the good guys. I came to the championship when he was maybe halfway through his career and really at the top. I remember watching in 2009 when he came so close to the title, I was looking at the speed they were driving and thinking I was a little bit slow! I wish him well in the future.

The immediate future for me involves some celebrations after an incredible season with the Volkswagen team, a Monte Carlo test and then hopefully a holiday. And maybe another trip to the AUTOSPORT Awards... ❧

LADA'S RUSSIAN DESIGN REVOLUTION

The new Vesta World Touring Car Championship Concept has got the series minnow buzzing for 2015. **PETER MILLS** investigates



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There was auspicious symmetry for Lada Sport's World Touring Car Championship team this October. As Rob Huff drew incredulous reaction from Argentinean onlookers by claiming Lada's breakthrough podium in the series at Termas, the company's British chief designer Steve Mattin was putting the finishing

touches to his Vesta WTCC Concept, the Russian manufacturer's radical departure into striking modern design that would similarly dazzle observers on its unveiling at the Moscow Motorshow.

The Vesta WTCC Concept is the first product born from Lada's increased commitment to the WTCC, and is a teaser of 2015's race car which is expected to carry Lada's hopes for three years.

Former champion Huff surpassed his South American drive by achieving Lada's maiden victory at the next round at Goldenport circuit in Beijing. However, the inherent limitations of the Granta remained glaring. Heroic efforts from team boss Viktor Shapovalov's crew to redesign the front suspension and subframe and implement effective weight-saving measures during a summer development push bore dividends in China. But the Granta's key

handicaps, owing to its small size and aerodynamic inefficiencies, could only be addressed by an all-new model.

"We were really pleased with the team's work to transform the car from the first half of the season to the second half," says Lada's other British driver James Thompson. "It's never easy with the demands of the calendar, particularly with the long-haul leg, so fair play to them as Rob was able to fight with anyone, anywhere."

Thompson joined Huff and Mattin on stage at the Moscow Motorshow for the Vesta WTCC

Concept's debut, and reserves peak enthusiasm for his thoughts on 2015.

"Next year will be what we've been working for since 2009, bringing in a whole new platform of car," he says. "The way we're going to go about it is totally different – it's fantastic. Steve Mattin is a real touring car fan and Lada president Bo Andersson is keen to have some racing pedigree."

"They are both genuinely passionate. Every video they ran at the motorshow showed new car, then new racing car. It was 50-50, which was



Huff and Thompson flank Brit designer Mattin on show stand



really good. That's what we've been waiting for."

With its longer wheelbase and larger boot, the Vesta should be better suited to touring car racing than the Granta, as well as being more suitable for the championship's stipulated wide wheelarches.

"Everyone is thinking, from that perspective, the Vesta should be a lot better than before," says Mattin. "Talking to the drivers – and we gave them a sneak preview before we started this whole process – they're over the moon about the opportunity and can't wait to get behind the wheel. They're just as excited as we are and can't wait to get involved. Bo has been backing it 100 per cent, which is obviously great."

Through working on the Vesta WTCC Concept, Mattin has forged strong links with Lada Sport. In part, this is because the new racing model will take to the track around six months before the production car's introduction and will therefore take on an increased marketing role. The road-going Vesta is targeted principally at a tough Russian domestic market.

"I've been working more and more with Lada Sport," explains Mattin, "as they are getting more involved in projects and doing variants. It was important that we got a stronger strategy with them for making decisions, rather than them doing it by themselves."

"We go racing with the Vesta next April, so that's going to be before the launch of the



Huff took maiden win for Lada in Beijing, belying car's limitations

"Next year will be what we've been working for since 2009. The way we're going about it is fantastic" JAMES THOMPSON

production car. Therefore it's very important from a promotional standpoint that the race car has a very strong visual connection to promote the [new design] themes.

"We worked on the graphics of the WTCC Concept but also got involved in the design. We said if we're going to show the Vesta production concept, why not show basically a design intention of what the race car could look like at the same time and help promote Vesta."

Mattin insists the final Vesta WTCC race car

is unlikely to differ greatly from the images on these pages. "We had a number of meetings with Lada Sport. One big one was to understand the aerodynamics that we had to take into consideration, and the other was the rules and regulations. Of course, we didn't stick to the rules 100 per cent because it is a concept."

"We took a little bit of liberty in some areas, as you do on concept cars, just to enhance the look. For example, on the rear spoiler we took the profile that will probably be used on the race car, but instead of leaving it straight we gave it

a bit of a curvature.

"But it [complies with] a good 95 per cent of the basic regulations, because we wanted to do something realistic as well. There is no point doing something that uses so much freedom and liberty that when the race car comes out it has nothing to do with the concept."

The growing influence of the Renault-Nissan alliance at Lada was, in part, responsible for former Volvo and Mercedes designer Mattin's appointment in the autumn of 2011. ►



► Beyond the increased emphasis on design and commitment to the race team, managerial processes have been changed at Lada's huge Togliatti plant.

"It was through knowing people at Renault, such as the head of design, that to a large degree I'm sitting where I am today," reveals Mattin. "Success for Lada is very important for Renault-Nissan and us. One thing that people don't realise is that in our plant in Togliatti, we are the only factory in the world where four brands

taking a big step forward was required on design. Design has gained strength over the three years I've been here, gained a lot more respect and responsibility in the company. We have had a big turnaround in the management; I would say I am one of the few upper-end management that are still in their positions."

Mattin set up a satellite design studio in Moscow, and splits his week between working four days at 'Lada-City' in Togliatti and at least one day in Moscow. The initial phase of work

as developed as the one where I have come from.

"You have all the cost and technical restrictions because you're talking about making very cheap cars. Vesta, when it hits the streets, they're talking about a starting price of 400,000 roubles, which is less than £8000.

"It is a really cheap car compared to what we're used to, but we're trying to achieve a dramatic step forward. A lot of companies when they're designing their cars are planning evolutionary steps. It's a real design revolution



Vesta WTCC Concept is a show car, but still follows '95 per cent' of series' regulations. Mandatory wide wheel-arches suit new model

will be rolling off from the same site: it will be Lada, Renault, Nissan and Datsun.

"The stronger involvement that Renault and Nissan have in the company, the more there is the expectation of a need to deliver. They're investing money – it's very important for them that the products are right and the people in the decision-making process are right.

"That's one of the reasons why they brought me into the company as well. They knew that

on the Vesta WTCC was carried out in Moscow before transferring to Togliatti. Part of the thinking behind the Moscow studio was to cope with the workload of creating a host of radically new models.

"I think it's a fantastic opportunity and step up that we've made. It's a tough challenge because you're coming into a new environment, you're working with a new culture and a company that perhaps wasn't as advanced and

in the Lada world – everything we're doing today has nothing to do with the past. The Vesta is on a completely new platform that has been designed for this vehicle. So it's a huge step forward in that respect, very modern and very sleek."

The clean-sheet approach has been, to an extent, enforced on Mattin owing to Lada's relatively weak design heritage.

"I thought, what can we do to redefine the



Lada brand? How can we create a new face? That for me is always the starting point, and we looked at the 'automotive alphabet'. We saw which brands had a very clear symbolic look and which ones didn't.

"Working from that, we came up with the idea of this 'X-graphic' on the front-end. We said nobody has this X-graphic, combining the volumes and the graphics of the lamps, the grille and lower air-intakes from that area, and emphasising that with the chrome 'X-blades' which are on either side. When we came up with this idea it gave us a lot of flexibility to work on various car lines, but which fits perfectly onto the race car, because it gives us a very distinctive bold graphic on the front of the car.

"You have this black graphic and the sponsor colour being yellow; it allows us to have a very distinctive and very aggressive-looking front-end to start with, which was very important."

So the car looks the part, but what are the performance expectations for 2015? Evaluating a car that hasn't been built is perhaps foolish, and the task is made more difficult when the effect of rival manufacturers Honda and Citroen's planned development upgrades are unknown, but Thompson is confident there won't be a repeat of the struggles to ready a car in time, which occurred this season preparing the TC1-spec Granta.

"This year we did a great job just to get on the grid, but we managed it," says Thompson. "Citroen has come in and done an amazing job; its preparation, scheduling of logistics and testing around the calendar – everything. They have done what you would expect and dominated. It is getting a little bit tougher now. There's clearly a gap between Citroen and everyone else.

"I think at Lada, they know that for us to progress we have to do it in the correct way. That is to start the racing car with the road car and go hand-in-hand. There is a huge change in the way we're going about it – really everything. It is totally different, chalk and cheese. We know what we're doing now. We start testing in January."

Race engineer David Scott adds: "I'm not sure anyone has said officially they think Lada will be challenging Citroen next year, but with the new car I'd imagine they'd want to target Chevrolet and Honda."

Former champion Huff was bold enough to express his desire for a second WTCC title after signing for Lada at the start of 2014. His racer's motives for the move were, at the time, questioned in some quarters, but the decision may prove astute. Reports from Macau indicate that technical partner ORECA is making promising development steps on a reworked engine.

"ORECA is not building a completely new engine, but let's say the modifications are deep," says Shapovalov. "The aero of the finished car will of course have to be different from what you saw at the Moscow Motorshow, as that was a show car. It will be close, though, and a big difference to where we are now. Compared to the Granta it will be a big step."

Shapovalov echoed Thompson's thoughts on 2015, but was equally reticent to predict a competitive order. "It would be vague guess, but we are excited for next year. The Vesta will be a big step compared to the Granta – we will only know after some races.

"The biggest problem now is time: we will not have so much time for testing, but during the year we will make good progress. The starting point will be totally different from where we were this season."



**Vanthoor: Endurance
and overall champion**



ENDURANCE SERIES POSITIONS

1	L VANTHOOR (B) Team WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra	107
2	A MEYRICK (GB)/G SMITH (GB)/S KANE (GB) M-Sport Bentley Continental GT3	71
3	E SANDSTROM (S)/S ORTELLI (MC)/G GUILVERT (F) Sainteloc Racing Audi R8 LMS ultra	67
4	M BUHK (D) HTP Motorsport Mercedes SLS AMG GT3	64
=	C RAMOS (BR) Team WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra	64
5	S AFANASIEV (RUS)/S DUSSELDORP (D) HTP Motorsport Mercedes SLS AMG GT3	53
6	H PRIMAT (CH)/N VERDONCK (B) HTP Motorsport Mercedes SLS AMG GT3	52
7	G DEMOUSTIER (F)/A PARENTE (P) ART Grand Prix McLaren MP4-12C	49
8	A SOUCEK (E)/K KORJUS (EST)/K ESTRE (F) ART Grand Prix McLaren MP4-12C	48
9	J NASH (GB)/F STIPLER (D) Team WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra	47
10	M WINKELHOCK (D)/R RAST (D) Team WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra	43

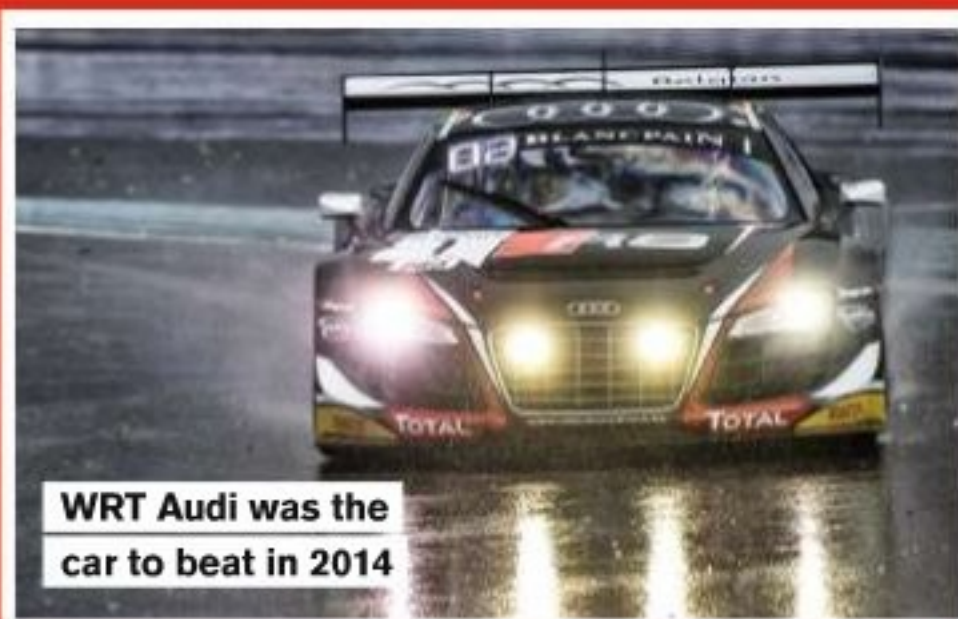
**Maxi Gotz came out
on top in Sprint series**



SPRINT SERIES POSITIONS

1	M GOTZ (D) HTP Motorsport Mercedes SLS AMG GT3	142
2	BUHK Mercedes	126
3	H PROCZYK (A)/J BLEEKEMOLEN (NL) GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Gallardo GT3 FL2	115
4	RAMOS/VANTHOOR Audi	100
5	E IDE (B)/RAST Team WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra	71
6	S JIMENEZ (BR)/C BUENO (BR) BMW Team Brasil BMW Z4	55
7	ORTELLI Audi	54
8	D BAUMANN (A)/T JAGER (D) BMW Team Schubert BMW Z4	45
9	SOUCEK/J ADAM (GB) Beechdean AMR Aston Martin Vantage GT3	36
10	AFANASIEV/DUSSELDORP Mercedes	35

**WRT Audi was the
car to beat in 2014**



OVERALL POSITIONS

1	VANTHOOR Audi	200
2	BUHK Mercedes	190
3	GOTZ Mercedes	160
4	RAMOS Audi	157
5	ORTELLI Audi	120
6	RAST Audi	114
7	PROCYK/BLEEKEMOLEN Lamborghini	113
8	GUILVERT Audi	88
9	AFANASIEV/DUSSELDORP Mercedes	84
10	SOUCEK McLaren/Aston Martin	81

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FORIX

2014 BLANCPAIN REVIEW



Endurance ace Vanthoor

Belgian Audi star Laurens Vanthoor secured two Blancpain titles. **GARY**

A new era dawned for the Stephane Ratel Organisation and its line-up of international championships in 2014. The FIA GT Series – which, remember, started life as the GT1 World – became the Blancpain Sprint Series and its relationship with Blancpain Endurance Series cemented with an overall title to be awarded on points scored across both their events. So that was three titles awarded on the basis of 12 rounds of racing.

Two of them ended up going to Audi factory driver Laurens Vanthoor, who followed up on his victory in last year's FIA GT Series by taking the five-round BES and overall Blancpain GT Series crowns with the Belgian WRT team. Maximilian Gotz, meanwhile, took his HTP Motorsport Mercedes to victory in the seven-event BSS.

The idea of two series each with the Blancpain name – and both doing what they say on the tin – was meant to avoid confusion. Whether that was actually the case is a matter of argument, but the changes in the driver line-ups at WRT and HTP through the season meant just one driver won each of the titles and most definitely did add to the confusion.

HOW THEY WERE WON

Vanthoor ultimately prevailed in the both the endurance and the overall series on the back of

victories aboard his WRT Audi R8 LMS ultra in the two big Blancpain enduros that come with extra points. His triumph in the double-points Spa 24 Hours BES round together with fellow factory drivers Rene Rast and Markus Winkelhock thrust him into contention in both title races after a slow start to the season.

Another victory at the 'Ring, this time together with full-season partners Cesar Ramos and fellow Audi factory driver Christopher Mies, made him the lone winner of the BES crown and gave him a fighting chance of the taking the GT title. A double victory in the BSS finale in Baku with Ramos and a non-score for his only rival gave him a second crown.

Vanthoor arguably deserved the sprint title, too. He was the quickest driver in the series, witness his three poles, but the failure of Vanthoor and Ramos to convert their qualifying pace into victories in the full-points main races ultimately left them short. Much of that inconsistency was down to Ramos, who admittedly raised his game in the final races and suggested he might be worthy of his place in the lead car of the best team in the series.

Changes to the Balance of Performance for the Audi ahead of Spa were key to Vanthoor and Audi's title successes. The R8 was not on the ultimate pace under SRO's rules at the first three BES rounds, which were so-called category A or B tracks according to its three-tier BoP. (The Audi was, however, on the money on the category C tracks that made up the bulk of the BSS).

There was another, slightly unsavoury factor, in his overall title success: a missed race in the BSS for his closest rival.

Reigning BES champion Maximilian Buhk started the season planning a sprint programme alongside namesake Gotz in the lead HTP Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG and selected appearances in the enduros. The 21-year-old and Gotz were the most consistent pairing across the seven rounds of the BSS, even if they were not always the fastest.

The lead HTP Merc won three times – always in the main race – and notched up a further five

**Big, front-engined
Mercedes SLS was
a surprise package**



TALKING POINT

Stephane Ratel's idea to link his sprint and endurance series was a sound one. If you remember, he had aspirations for some kind of world status, something that didn't – and almost certainly never will – prove possible. Yet we were all talking about the Blancpain GT Series as a de facto world championship for GT cars last winter.

The reality didn't quite turn out like that. The quantity and, more importantly, the quality of the BES grid was down and the BSS entry was more or less at the same level, at least until the final races, as FIA GTs had been in 2013. What's more, the crossover between the two series wasn't what Ratel had been hoping for. That made it impossible to argue that the BGTS title had more kudos than the mouthful of a title that is the World Endurance Championship Cup for GT drivers.

Ratel is not an impatient man and knows that it takes time to build any series. For next year, he's taking the right steps to ensure that sprint series grows, the quality of driver line-ups improves and more top teams take a



shot at the overall crown by taking part in both series.

Prize money is being introduced for the BES for the first time, at the same €100,000-a-round level as for the BSS this year. More importantly, to qualify for the full amount teams will have to sign up for both series; participants in just one of the championships will only get 50 per cent.

The cash on offer could change the landscape of Blancpain GT racing. And maybe we will talk about Laurens Vanthoor's successor as the equal to whoever wins the WEC GTE crown next season.

doubles up

WATKINS picks out the highlights

podiums. That was enough to give Gotz the title without even scoring at the Baku finale. His only rivals for the title, Grasser Lamborghini pairing Jeroen Bleekemolen and Hari Proczyk, also failed to get a point on the board in Azerbaijan.

The travesty is that Buhk did not share the title with his fellow countryman. He was forced to miss the Slovakia Ring round in August when his licence was suspended by the German motorsport authority courtesy of a misdemeanour while competing in the ADAC GT Masters. The DMSB subsequently dropped its action and returned his licence. There was no explanation or apology for effectively robbing a talented and impecunious driver of two titles. It is a fact that the points scored by the lead HTP car in Slovakia when Nico Verdonck joined Gotz would have been enough to give him the overall title as well as a share of the sprint crown.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

A first victory by a factory Bentley on home ground since the 1930s – it's safe to say that, although the exact race is disputed – should be remembered by anyone who turned up at Silverstone in May. The pity was the lack of spectators present to witness the historic day and a phenomenal drive from Steven Kane who gave the Continental GT3 he shared with Guy Smith and Andy Meyrick a last-gasp victory.

SOMETHING TO FORGET

The events of the opening hours at Spa were at best disappointing and at worst chilling. A succession of quick-fire safety cars, at least two of them caused by inexperienced drivers going too fast too soon on cold tyres, made for frightening viewing.

The mayhem was followed by a serious accident that left British amateur Marcus Mahy with life-threatening injuries from which he has made an astonishing recovery. What happened in the incident on the exit of Stavelot still isn't exactly clear, but together with the multiple safety cars, it called into question the credentials of some of the participating drivers. ❧

TOP 10 DRIVERS



1 LAURENS VANTHOOR

Already one of the world's top GT drivers, the Belgian took another step forward in 2014. He outqualified the previous incumbent of the top spot, Rene Rast, 6-1 in the sprint series and was phenomenal at the Spa 24 Hours.



2 MAXIMILIAN BUHK

Buhk is an all-rounder with the necessary pace over one lap and throughout a race stint to land him a factory drive. An argument with a marshal in ADAC GT Masters aside, he has the temperament too.



3 RENE RAST

The German only won a single sprint race with Enzo Ide and wasn't a regular in the endurance races. But his calm pursuit of the Marc VDS BMW in the closing stages at Spa, however, reminded everyone of his credentials as a racer.



4 JEROEN BLEEKEMOLEN

Some wondered what someone of Bleekemolen's talents was doing racing with a driver who was essentially an amateur. The gamble paid off for this 'raceaholic' and he showed his pace and race craft at almost every turn.



5 STEVEN KANE

The fastest of the Bentley drivers whose pursuit of the leading ART McLaren at Silverstone was mind-blowing and grabbed the headlines, though his rearguard action against another MP4-12C at Ricard was equally good.



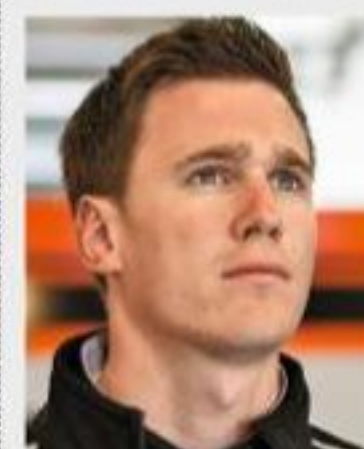
6 MAXIMILIAN GOTZ

The other 'Maxi' somehow lacks the star quality of his younger namesake and team-mate, but there were times when he looked like the team leader, most notably the first stint in the main race at Algarve and the last at Zolder.



7 STEPHANE ORTELLI

Old-stager Ortell proved he's still got it in him over one lap and a race stint. Set a sensational pole at Baku and was quickest Audi driver on the averages at Spa. Had a strong endurance season with Sainteloc.



8 NICKY CATSBURG

Some stunning performances, most notably his wet-weather drive at the 'Ring on the way to fourth overall, as part of a Pro-Am line-up, once again proved Catsburg's potential. Probably not the real deal quite yet.



9 ALVARO PARENTE

The McLaren factory driver was sublime on his day. His first stint on the way to victory at the Monza opener was a joy to watch, and he was almost as good at Ricard. The pity was ART couldn't maintain its early-season form.



10 BERND SCHNEIDER

There's an argument that the DTM legend should be higher up this list despite only doing three races. The 50-year-old raced at Silverstone, Spa and the 'Ring, and was the fastest Mercedes driver on two occasions. Enough said.

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2014 ELMS REVIEW

Alpine peaks again

Consistency, plus bold switch to Dunlop rubber, crucial to Signatech's title



PICS: ROURKE/ADRENALMEDIA.COM

SIGNATECH CLAIMED A SECOND consecutive European Le Mans Series title with its Alpine-branded ORECA in much the same way as it had its first. Consistency was the key for Nelson Panciatici, Oliver Webb and Paul-Loup Chatin in an ultra-competitive season over which each of the five races produced a different winner in the overall LMP2 class.

There was a difference, and it wasn't that the races were now four rather than three hours. Like last year, the Signatech ORECA-Nissan 03R – dubbed the Alpine A450b – was on the podium three times and never out of the top five. Yet to achieve that, Philippe Sinault's squad had to make a big decision.

HOW IT WAS WON

Signatech opted to ditch its deal with Michelin after the opening round at Silverstone in April. Panciatici, back for a second season with the team, and P2 newcomers Webb and Chatin had finished an

uncompetitive fifth. The writing was on the wall. It pointed to a lack of testing with the latest tyre and cold temperatures, but the real reason for the lack of performance was a change in the rules.

The regulations now demanded that each supplier make its tyres available to any rivals, and Michelin wasn't prepared to share the secrets that make its LMP1 tyre the only viable option in the WEC. That meant it turned up with what it calls 'customer' tyres rather than 'confidential' rubber.

The move to Dunlop had financial implications for a team whose support from Renault-owned sportscar marque Alpine is not as all encompassing as its *Bleu de France* livery might suggest. It was a brave decision, but one that ultimately paid dividends. It was a close-run thing, however – two penalties at the series finale at Estoril limited Panciatici and co to fifth, just enough to get them over the line.

Jota drivers Harry Tincknell,

Simon Dolan and Filipe Albuquerque ended up second in their Zytek-Nissan Z11SN. They looked good for the title until a braking issue intervened after Dolan clashed with a GTE car and restricted them to third in Portugal.

Second position was still a worthy result for the British team, considering a non-score at Silverstone – Jota was on course for victory when Dolan crashed heavily after being edged onto the grass by a GTE-class Ferrari. The team, which bounced back with victory in round two at Imola and class honours at the Le Mans 24 Hours, would be left ruing the lost points.

STAND-OUT PERFORMERS

Tincknell made an immediate impact on his arrival in sportscars. He was on pole three times, and by more than a second at Silverstone, and had a consistency in the races to go with the one-lap pace.

Chatin's speed, as the mandatory 'amateur' or silver-rated driver in the Signatech line-up, played a central role in the team's success and in particular its Red Bull Ring victory. The Frenchman, a silver worth his weight in gold, wasn't far shy of Panciatici's pace in his first year in P2.

Tristan Gommendy reminded us of his talents in his first full season of racing since 2010. A year with TDS Racing yielded victory first time out at Silverstone in a stop-gap Morgan, but unreliability for its new Ligier JSP2 coupe meant his speed wasn't suitably rewarded.

THE GT CLASSES

Matt Griffin, Michele Rugolo and Duncan Cameron looked a shoo-in for the GTE title going into the Estoril finale. They'd already won three times in their AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia and held a 22-point advantage over their nearest pursuer.

They only needed to finish in eighth, but it all went wrong when Cameron suffered broken suspension when he was hit by a GTC-class McLaren. It allowed the SMP Racing Ferrari trio of Andrea Bertolini, Viktor Shaitar and Sergey Zlobin to snatch the title with their second win.

The SMP car would have won at Silverstone had Bertolini not been taken out by a GTC-class Ferrari in the closing stages. It was then hamstrung by technical issues – an electrical problem and a sticking throttle – at the Red Bull Ring and Paul Ricard respectively after Bertolini had claimed pole both times.

SMP reprised its GTE success in the GTC class for GT3 machinery. ● Gary Watkins

POINTS

1 Nelson Panciatici/Oliver Webb/Paul-Loup Chatin (Signatech ORECA-Nissan 03R), 78; **2** Harry Tincknell/Filipe Albuquerque/Simon Dolan (Jota Zytek-Nissan Z11SN), 74; **3** Christian Klien/Gary Hirsch (Morand Morgan-Judd/BMW LMP2), 68; **4** Vincent Capillaire (Sebastien Loeb Racing ORECA-Nissan 03R), 57; **5** Franck Mailleux/Michel Frey (Race Performance ORECA-Judd/BMW 03R), 57; **6** Pierre Ragues (Morand Morgan), 53. **Class winners** GTE Andrea Bertolini/Viktor Shaitar/Sergey Zlobin (SMP Ferrari 458 Italia); GTC Olivier Beretta/Anton Ladygin/David Markozov (SMP Ferrari 458 Italia).



SMP snatched GTE crown thanks to rivals' misfortunes



2015 Phil Keen
2014 Bradley Smith
2013 Ivan Bellarosa
2012 Felipe Nasr
2011 Ross Kaiser
2010 Derek Johnston



2015 Oskar Krüger
2014 Lewis Plato
2013 Lawrence Davey
2012 Aaron Steele

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Both Phil Keen and Oskar Krüger have been pushing themselves to win the 2015 Sunoco Challenges all season, but how will they handle the final prize drives out in Daytona in January?

The Rolex 24 At Daytona is the first big international race of the season and therefore you can expect to get up close to drivers such as Christian Fittipaldi, Sebastien Bourdais, Max Angelelli, Scott Dixon, Tony Kanaan, Brendon Hartley, Alex Brundle and Andy Priaulx and many more on the grid walk.



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- During the weekend you will see top speeds close to 200mph!
- It is a 24hr sprint race to the chequered flag - the winning margin in 2014 was just 1.46 secs after 695 laps!
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Title-winning Corvette DP (#5) leads away from the start at Watkins Glen

2014 USC REVIEW

Action Express can't be derailed

ACTION EXPRESS DRIVERS JOAO

Barbosa and Christian Fittipaldi claimed the inaugural United SportsCar Championship honours with an amazing record: they completed every lap of every round aboard their Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP. Finishing on the lead lap race-in-race-out was always going to make them hard to beat.

The Prototype championship still went down to the wire, but second place together with Sebastien Bourdais behind their nearest pursuers, Taylor brothers Jordan and Ricky aboard father Wayne's Dallara-Chevrolet, at Road Atlanta's Petit Le Mans enduro was more than enough to seal a first major sportscar crown for each of the veteran drivers.

HOW IT WAS WON

That amazing consistency was the key. Barbosa and Fittipaldi didn't just finish every race on the lead lap, they came home in podium positions in all but three of the 11 races. There was a certain amount of luck involved in this battle between two Daytona Prototype squads, more in the form of misfortune for the Taylors than good fortune for the Action Express duo.

The factory-contracted Taylors, brought together for a first full

season together by their father, had the momentum – and the championship lead – after a mid-season run that included back-to-back seconds at Long Beach and Laguna Seca and then a victory in Detroit.

Their title assault was derailed when they lost a shot at winning at Road America in August courtesy of a freak steering failure. They still weren't out of it, but the odds on them shortened dramatically after Ricky was bumped up the rear by Gustavo Yacamán's OAK Ligier in the penultimate round at Austin, the lap lost to a left-rear puncture leaving the brothers seventh at the finish.

Richard Westbrook and Michael Valiante ended up third in the points in the Spirit of Daytona Coyote-Chevrolet. They had a slow start before hitting a mid-season purple patch that included a win at Watkins Glen. They might have won at Road America but for a wrong call when the safety car came out with an hour to go, after which their challenge petered out.

Chip Ganassi Racing, winner of titles in 10 years in the Grand-Am era, wasn't the same force it had been in previous seasons. Now with Roush Yates Ford power, its lead Riley EcoBoost DP won three



Kuno Wittmer's Viper (#93) beat Chevy and Porsche to GT LM honours

times, more than even the top two, but the team didn't stitch a coherent championship challenge together with Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas.

The Daytona Prototypes, now with more power and more downforce, were in the ascendency for the majority of the season. USC sanctioning body IMSA's efforts to performance balance the uprated DPs with LMP2 machinery that arrived in the merged series from the American Le Mans Series were always going to be both difficult and contentious. P2 cars won on just two occasions, but the odds were always stacked in the favour of the DPs, both numerically and on the quality of their driver line-ups.

Racing Falken Tires squad.

The Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R and the Porsche 911 RSR were in the ascendency over the second half of the campaign after performance breaks given to the cars mid-season. That vaulted them ahead of the Chevrolet Corvette C7.R, which had a run of four consecutive victories in the hands of Antonio Garcia and Jan Magnussen from round three at Long Beach through to Mosport in July. Thereafter the Balance of Performance changes – there were seven of them over the 11 races – hamstrung the 'Vettes, neither of which made it onto the podium over the final five races.

● Gary Watkins

MAGIC MOMENT

The finish of the Sebring 12 Hours was just as exciting as anything the Florida enduro threw up in the ALMS era. Marino Franchitti found himself in the lead after a final yellow and had enough to hang onto the lead from fellow Scotsman Ryan Dalziel's Extreme Speed Motorsports HPD ARX-03b to claim a victory that had looked unlikely for much of the race.



GT LE MANS

Dodge came out on top in a battle for GT Le Mans honours that boiled down to a straight fight between its Riley-run SRT Motorsports squad and the factory CORE Autosport Porsche squad. Viper driver Kuno Wittmer prevailed in the race for the drivers' title after being separated from season-long team-mate Jonathan Bomarito in a hedge-betting exercise for the Petit Le Mans finale, while Porsche claimed the manufacturers' prize thanks to the points scored by the works-blessed Walker

POINTS

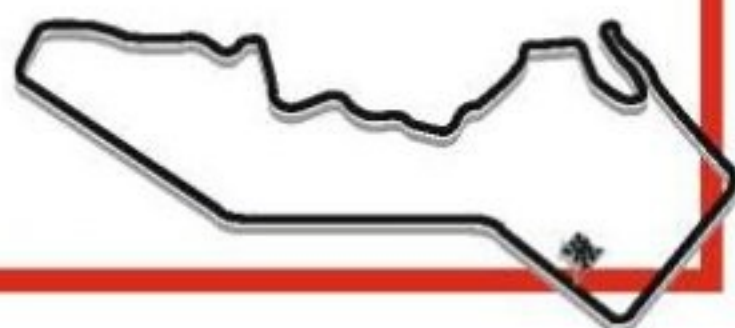
1 Christian Fittipaldi/Joao Barbosa (Action Express Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP), 349; **2** Ricky Taylor/Jordan Taylor (Wayne Taylor Racing Dallara-Chevrolet Corvette DP), 330; **3** Richard Westbrook/Michael Valiante (Spirit of Daytona Coyote-Chevrolet), 318; **4** Scott Pruett (Chip Ganassi Racing Riley-Ford EcoBoost DP), 317; **5** Gustavo Yacamán (OAK Racing Morgan-Nissan LMP2/Ligier-HPD JSP2), 287; **6** Memo Rojas (Ganassi Riley-Ford), 285.

Class winners GT LM Kuno Wittmer (SRT Motorsports Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R); **Prototype Challenge** Colin Braun/Jon Bennett (CORE Autosport ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09); **GTD** Dane Cameron (Turner Motorsports BMW Z4 GTE).

F3

Macau (PRC)

November 16



RESULTS

MAIN RACE: 15 LAPS, 57.045 MILES

1	FELIX ROSENQVIST (S)	1h08m46.691s
	Mucke Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F312; Grid: 1st	
2	LUCAS AUER (A)	+4.372s
	Mucke Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F312; Grid: 2nd	
3	NICK CASSIDY (NZ)	+8.999s
	T-Sport Dallara-NBE F314; Grid: 5th	
4	ROBERTO MERHI (E)	+9.799s
	Double R Racing Dallara-Mercedes F313; Grid: 6th	
5	NICHOLAS LATIFI (CDN)	+10.413s
	Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes F314; Grid: 7th	
6	STEFANO COLETTI (MC)	+24.000s
	EuroInternational Dallara-Mercedes F313; Grid: 10th	
7	MAX VERSTAPPEN (NL)	+24.455s
	Van Amersfoort Racing Dallara-Volkswagen F314; Grid: 24th	
8	SANTINO FERRUCCI (USA)	+31.081s
	Fortec Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F312; Grid: 12th	
9	KENTA YAMASHITA (J)	+34.334s
	TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F314; Grid: 14th	
10	GUSTAVO MENEZES (USA)	+35.246s
	Van Amersfoort Racing Dallara-Volkswagen F312; Grid: 15th	
11	MARKUS POMMER (D)	+36.576s
	Motopark Dallara-Volkswagen F314; Grid: 19th	
12	ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI (I)	+37.319s
	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F314; Grid: 27th	
13	TATIANA CALDERON (CO)	+41.930s
	Mucke Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F312; Grid: 16th	
14	WILL BULLER (GB)	+43.986s
	Signature Dallara-Volkswagen F314; Grid: 23rd	
15	SEAN GELAE (RI)	+44.972s
	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F312; Grid: 25th	
16	ALEX PALOU (E)	+48.063s
	Fortec Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F312; Grid: 28th	
17	DAN WELLS (GB)	+52.724s
	Toda Racing Dallara-Toda F312; Grid: 22nd	
18	MITSUNORI TAKABOSHI (J)	+57.034s
	B-Max Racing Team Dallara-Toyota F312; Grid: 20th	
19	ANDY CHANG (PRC)	+1m08.334s
	Team West-Tec Dallara-Mercedes F312; Grid: 21st	
20	SAM MACLEOD (GB)	+1m49.990s
	TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F312; Grid: 26th	
21	FELIX SERRALLES (USA)	+2m14.441s
	Team West-Tec Dallara-Mercedes F314; Grid: 9th	
R	ANTONIO FUOCO (I)	11 laps - brakes
	Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes F312; Grid: 11th	
R	JORDAN KING (GB)	3 laps - puncture
	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F312; Grid: 8th	
R	TOM BLOMQUIST (GB)	0 laps - accident
	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F312; Grid: 3rd	
R	ESTEBAN OCON (F)	0 laps - accident
	Prema Powerteam Dallara-Mercedes F312; Grid: 4th	
R	MARTIN CAO (PRC)	0 laps - accident
	Fortec Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F313; Grid: 17th	
R	YU KANAMARU (J)	0 laps - accident
	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F312; Grid: 13th	
R	SPIKE GODDARD (AUS)	0 laps - accident
	T-Sport Dallara-NBE F312; Grid: 18th	

Winner's average speed: 49.76mph. Fastest lap: Verstappen, 2m11.748s, 103.911mph

QUALIFICATION RACE: 10 LAPS, 38.030 MILES

1 Rosenqvist, 27m11.512s (Qualified 1st-2m11.506s); 2 Auer, +0.935s (Q2-2m11.838s); 3 Blomqvist (Q3-2m11.922s); 4 Ocon (Q4*-2m11.742s); 5 Cassidy (Q7-2m11.979s); 6 Merhi (Q10-2m12.129s); 7 Latifi (Q9-2m12.067s); 8 King (Q6-2m11.953s); 9 Serralles (Q16-2m12.952s); 10 Coletti (Q12-2m12.429s); 11 Fuoco (Q17-2m13.066s); 12 Ferrucci (Q18-2m13.581s); 13 Kanamaru (Q19-2m13.731s); 14 Yamashita (Q23-2m14.471s); 15 Menezes (Q24-2m14.555s); 16 Calderon (Q21-2m14.112s); 17 Cao (Q20-2m14.112s); 18 Goddard (Q22-2m14.122s); 19 Pommer (Q11-2m12.259s); 20 Takaboshi (Q25-2m15.974s); 21 Chang (Q26-2m16.135s); 22 Wells (Q28**-2m15.373s); R Buller (Q15-2m12.871s); R Verstappen (Q5*-2m11.747s); R Gelael (Q13-2m12.524s); R MacLeod (Q27-2m16.859s); R Giovinazzi (Q8-2m12.037s); R Palou (Q14-2m12.631s). **FASTEST LAP:** Rosenqvist, 2m12.944s, 102.976mph. * - two-place grid penalty; ** - back of grid for engine change.

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FORIX

Felix's Macau win is as good as it looks

Five drivers were in with a shot at victory, but Felix Rosenqvist made it his. By **MARCUS SIMMONS**



It's taken five attempts for Rosenqvist to crack Macau

RICKARD RYDELL GOT UP EARLY AT HIS SWEDISH home to watch the Macau Grand Prix. The 1992 race winner and subsequent touring car star is a great supporter of his nation's young talent, most prominent of which is Felix Rosenqvist. A delayed hour and a bit later, Rydell would have been able to sit down, enjoy his breakfast, stick on his *Abba Gold* CD and send Rosenqvist congratulatory messages, for we now have a second Swedish winner of the race.

Everyone regards Rosenqvist as a Formula 3 veteran. After all, this was his fifth crack at the Macau GP, but at least he's outdone Rydell – who took six attempts to win the race – in that respect.

But, as the years went by, so the odds shortened on Rosenqvist finally cracking it. To win Macau you have to be fast – naturally – but in the finest tradition of one-off events you also need the cards to fall your way. In 2012 he was runner-up, in 2013 he was eliminated from a potential race-winning position by a collision just after the start, but this time around it was finally his Mücke Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes that had been favoured by destiny. Rosenqvist is one of five drivers who can realistically say they could have won, but it all went wrong for the other four.

That's not to say he lucked in to the win. Indeed, Rosenqvist set the quickest lap all weekend in taking pole position, by which time he had already made his one big mistake of the event. He had been quickest in Friday morning's free practice session, having bolted on two new Yokohamas at the midpoint in order to get a pre-qualifying read on how the car would react. On his first flying lap he went fastest; on the second he crashed at a left-hander on the mountain section when he was caught out by a lack of grip.

Every incident over Macau week has a ripple effect on the final outcome, and Rosenqvist knew that with two tyres effectively removed from his weekend allocation of 14 slicks he had slightly diminished his chances. Indeed, he was the only one of the top eight on the grid for the GP to start with as few as two fresh Yokohamas. But it wasn't as big a setback as those experienced by the other quartet who could have won: Lucas Auer, Esteban Ocon, Tom Blomqvist and Max Verstappen.

European champion Ocon and his season nemesis Verstappen were the first to stumble, being hit with two-place grid penalties in the opening free practice session. Both missed the red light telling them to stop at the weighbridge in the pitlane, although in Ocon's case there were mitigating circumstances: he was rather preoccupied with crabbing back with deranged suspension after hitting the crashed car of Mitsunori Takaboshi.



The penalties would relegate Ocon and Verstappen to fourth and fifth respectively on the grid for the qualification race. Ocon had hit a further little snag on his way to the second-fastest time: while many of the other leading runners had started final qualifying on four new tyres, before pitting mid-session for another four, Theodore Racing-backed Prema Powerteam had gone for a different strategy, with Ocon starting on old rubber, pitting for four a short way into the session, and then taking two more for a late burst. But a crash for Alex Palou, which finally resulted in a red flag with just two minutes left on the clock (and therefore no restart) put paid to that.

Verstappen had looked good to be the top Macau GP rookie on the grid, but the Formula 1-bound Dutchman said that thanks to the Van Amersfoort Racing team's inexperience of the event (it missed 2013 and had a crash-infested 2012) he was suffering tyre overheating that made it difficult to attack for the fastest time.

Auer and Blomqvist lucked in thanks to the penalties, moving to second and third respectively on the grid, but second qualifying is where the weekend began to unravel slightly for Blomqvist's Carlin team. The Anglo-Swede and fellow Jagonya Ayam protege Antonio Giovinazzi had gone first and second respectively in Thursday's qualifying, but with the forecast for dry weather everyone knew that the further rubbering-in of the track would mean improvements en masse on Friday. That proved to be the case for the whole field – except Blomqvist and Giovinazzi, plus Will Buller, who'd been up all night with food poisoning. Blomqvist and Giovinazzi both struggled to find a good balance on new tyres, although conversely

fellow Carlin runner Jordan King improved to sixth, and was on a lap that would have been good for the front row before he was baulked in the final sector.

Blomqvist and Ocon just didn't have an answer to the pace of Mücke duo Rosenqvist and Auer or Verstappen in the qualification race. Here, Rosenqvist was a sitting duck for Auer and Verstappen – with a searing start from fifth – to slipstream past him on the long run to Lisboa.

All was looking good for Auer until a mid-race safety car, caused by Sam MacLeod crashing on the mountain, which happened moments after Verstappen removed himself from contention in a brush with the barriers at the Solitude Esses. "You always brake there just after a bump in the tight right-hander, and that's what I did this time," said Verstappen. "But I locked the rears suddenly and I missed the apex by about 3cm. It was all so silly – I didn't hit the wall that hard, I just touched it with the rear tyre, then it went off the rim, and that pulled me in and it just took the front off."

At the restart, Rosenqvist did exactly what Verstappen could have done, swooping on Auer down to Lisboa and taking a lead he would hold throughout the three-lap dash to the flag. It was easy to sympathise with Auer, but he was quite happy, saying second was perfect for his GP grid position as it's almost impossible for the polesitter to lead into Lisboa.

Blomqvist and Ocon didn't quite have the pace to challenge the leading duo, but stayed very much in contention for victory on Sunday. They had a brief battle for third after the restart, which was joined by Nick Cassidy, who was continuing a super-impressive weekend, only his fifth in F3 competition, with the NBE-engined Dallara of T-Sport.

Ocon's Prema team has a habit of peaking at just the right time on a race weekend. OK, the Italian squad left it a bit late this time, but when Ocon did his recce laps to the grid before the Grand Prix he knew he had a great chance. "With the changes we made, the car felt brilliant – the best it has all year," he said. "It was really quick on the straight and the balance was really good."

But this was when Rosenqvist's number really came up. He didn't get a good start, Auer was past him by the opening kink, and Blomqvist and Ocon made it three abreast on the run to Lisboa. Auer just managed to wriggle in front on the brakes, but he was slightly too ambitious and overshot the corner, flirting with the escape road before rejoining fourth.

To his right, Blomqvist went to turn in but hadn't bargained on Ocon having his nose inside him. The two collided, but still ran side by side to the next corner, San Francisco Bend. Ocon, with





Alex Palou (11) erred in the qualifying race

► damaged left suspension, couldn't steer; Blomqvist, who knew you can't run side-by-side on the outside with someone here, was backing out, but was powerless to prevent Ocon taking him on a trip into the barriers. While Rosenqvist, Auer and Cassidy emerged in front, there was chaos behind featuring a display of Carlin stunt driving, with the team's new recruit Yu Kanamaru launching himself off King – via the relieved-to-be-alive Briton's engine cover and rollhoop – over Blomqvist and onto the wall on the outside of the corner. With just nine cars squirming through and the track blocked, the race was red-flagged and restarted behind the safety car.

Now Auer had his chance, but it seemed that a great restart by Rosenqvist would be enough to retain the lead, with his advantage being 0.626 seconds across the line. But the slipstream effect is strong at Macau, and again Auer was able to move in front. Before he overshot Lisboa again...

"On the first try I nearly destroyed my brakes, and I had really some strange feelings from the brake pedal," he explained. "Probably it [his braking] was too late again but I wanted to try everything to get into the lead and finish P1!"

This time he even lost P2, since Cassidy was able to take advantage to move ahead. For a while the underfunded New Zealander looked strong in the position, but from time to time he began to look quite ragged, and indeed hit the wall three times. The final one allowed Auer to move into position to attack – yet again he overshot Lisboa, allowing Cassidy to move back ahead, only for Auer to make the position his later around the lap. To his speed Cassidy was adding intelligence, for he could see Roberto Merhi and Nicholas Latifi zoning in behind, and knew that if he continued to throw everything into holding off Auer he could well end up losing three places instead of just one.



Verstappen was rapid but wild



Swede harmony: Rosenqvist was a worthy winner

Merhi was a bit frustrated to finish fourth (although he was happily still larging it with Rosenqvist at 3am at the post-race party) on a great weekend for Double R Racing. The amiable Valencian felt he was lacking speed on the straight, so pushed very hard in the final corner with a couple of laps to go in a bid to at least have a chance of slipstreaming Cassidy – so hard that he made a mistake that meant he instead turned his attentions to defending from Latifi. Also, a puncture on carbonfibre shrapnel from the initial Ocon/Blomqvist clash meant he had to run an old tyre on the all-important left-rear, plus he suffered a long brake pedal.

Latifi completed a very solid week to claim fifth in his Prema car, a long way clear of Stefano Coletti, who holed his nose on the back of the repaired car of King, which had sustained a puncture, at the Melco hairpin. That slowed the EuroInternational machine on the straights, although King was hardly sympathetic with Coletti's plight: he claimed that the puncture was caused in the first place by contact from the Monegasque.

Right behind Coletti at the flag was Verstappen, who stormed up the order despite a damaged floor, and set the fastest lap. So finished his incredible rookie season with another remarkable stat: on its fourth visit to Macau, the Van Amersfoort team was given its maiden finishes in the race by Verstappen and 10th-placed Gustavo Menezes!

Last time it was here, Van Amersfoort ran Auer and he kept shunting. This time, Auer completed a Mucke one-two, a terrific achievement for the Berlin team, which used to resolutely avoid this race – so much so that its former drivers, such as Sebastian Vettel and Robert Kubica, had to find alternative drives for Macau. "We had incredible pace," acknowledged Rosenqvist and Auer. To the pace, crucially, you could add destiny. 🏆

IN THE PADDOCK

MARCUS SIMMONS
DEPUTY EDITOR

@marcussimmons54



LIKE MANY PEOPLE IN BRITISH MOTORSPORT I've got a soft spot for T-Sport and Double R Racing – the second-biggest and first-friendliest racing teams in Brackley and Woking respectively – so it was great to see them earn third and fourth positions in the Macau Grand Prix.

It was good for Formula 3 too. As Max Verstappen's team boss Frits van Amersfoort is fond of pointing out, an F3 squad is as good as its drivers, and Nick Cassidy and Roberto Merhi proved that T-Sport and Double R can run at the front after tough European championship seasons.

It also proved that there is very much a third competitive engine to be had in the European championship, with T-Sport's powerplant, built by British independent Neil Brown Engineering, every bit as good as the Mercedes and Volkswagens that proliferate.

While T-Sport ran Cassidy in the final two Euro F3 rounds, Merhi had never driven Double R's Dallara with a current-spec Mercedes engine until he arrived in Macau. "We couldn't arrange a test," said team boss Anthony 'Boyo' Hieatt. "On day one we tried a few things that didn't work, and if we'd been able to do a test maybe we wouldn't have wasted that day. But I'm proud of the boys – he's a bloody good driver and a team needs to be driven by its drivers. It was a great job by T-Sport too – and there's nothing wrong with the Neil Brown engine."



Merhi: first Double R outing with current Merc

BIG NUMBER

146

Number of starts in Felix Rosenqvist's five-year F3 career, including 88 in the European championship, 27 more in the old Euro Series, 18 in the German championship, 10 in Macau and three in the Masters at Zandvoort.

**Rosenqvist's career
has been held back
by a lack of big-money
personal sponsors**



Rosenqvist eyes Super Formula move for 2015

MACAU GRAND PRIX WINNER

Felix Rosenqvist's future could rest in Japan, with a move to the ultra-competitive Super Formula championship.

After finishing runner-up in the 2013 Formula 3 European Championship, the 23-year-old Swede's career stalled with another season in the series this year, in which he finished eighth.

Because of lack of personal budget he has been unable to move up to higher categories, and he also relies on support from Mercedes, for which he has been a

works-backed driver in F3 since 2011. Now Rosenqvist is looking to the east, with guidance from former Swedish racing great Stefan Johansson, who also spent part of his career in Japan.

"That's the most likely thing at the moment, but also I want to continue my relationship with Mercedes," said Rosenqvist, "and if I drove in Japan or Formula Renault 3.5 that shouldn't be a problem for them. There will be a Super Formula test in the winter and maybe I will join that."

Rosenqvist also spoke of his relief at winning the Macau GP, which means he has now won on all three street circuits on the top-level F3 calendar: Macau, the Pau Grand Prix and the Norisring.

"This year has been my hardest season since I started motor racing," he said. "But everything ended well – I had luck with me, the car was quick, I did really well I think. Just finally everything came together – this year I have been hampered by bad luck. It's been really tough, but this couldn't be any better. Unbelievable."

CASINO IS A NO-NO

EuroInternational boss Antonio Ferrari was furious when he was told his team would have to remove Stefano Coletti's sponsor's logo from his car. Coletti is backed by Casino de Monte Carlo, and it is understood that TV restrictions in Macau neighbour Hong Kong meant the word 'Casino' had to be removed. Ferrari said that the loss of the sponsorship cost his team €40,000.

PALOU, KANAMARU IN

Euroformula Open drivers Alex Palou and Yu Kanamaru are both hoping to step into European F3 next season after making their top-level category debuts in Macau. Spaniard Palou impressed by qualifying 14th with Fortec Motorsport after just half a day of testing in the wet at Silverstone. Japanese Kanamaru filled Jake Dennis's seat at Carlin and qualified 19th, having never driven an FIA-spec F3 car before arriving in Macau.

CARLIN CALAMITY

Former winner Carlin had a disastrous Macau GP race, with Antonio Giovinazzi and Sean Gelael its only two finishers in 12th and 15th places respectively. This duo had started from the back of the grid after colliding in the qualification race.

YOUNGEST DRIVER

Fortec Motorsport's Santino Ferrucci became the youngest driver ever to compete in the Macau Grand Prix, and took eighth place in the final after an incident-free weekend. Ferrucci, aged 16 years and five months, aims to contest a full Euro F3 season in 2015, and has been linked with Mücke Motorsport.

JAPANESE F3 WOE

The Japanese F3 teams proved off the pace at Macau, though Kenta Yamashita managed to steer a course through the accidents to finish ninth in his TOM'S car. Britons Dan Wells (Toda Racing) and Sam MacLeod (TOM'S) finished 17th and 20th after trying weekends.

CALDERON TO STAY

Colombian Tatiana Calderon, who finished 13th in Macau, says she hopes to remain with Mücke Motorsport for next year's Euro F3 campaign. Calderon, one of the most-improved drivers of 2014, has been run by Mücke despite being entered by Jo Zeller Racing for admin reasons.

Motopark in with four cars

GERMAN TEAM MOTOPARK

plans to run four cars in next year's Formula 3 European Championship, after Markus Pommer finished 11th on the squad's return to top-level F3 after an absence of three years in the Macau Grand Prix.

German F3 champion Pommer could have been a contender for a top-six place, only to stall at the start of the quali race from 11th on the grid.

Team boss Timo Rumpfkeil said that two drivers have been signed already for Euro F3 next season, and that the team is hoping to add Pommer to the driving strength. Briton Sam MacLeod has also tested with the team.



Thumbs up for qualifying change

FORMULA 3 TEAMS ARE POSITIVE about changes to the Macau Grand Prix qualifying procedure that were implemented for this year.

In recent years red flags have marred the 30-minute qualifying sessions. With cars leaving the pits all together at the start and restart of sessions, this has had a particularly negative effect on teams at the bottom end of the pitlane, whose cars have been able to complete far fewer flying laps than those at the top end.

For this year, free practice was cut from two 45-minute sessions to two

40-minute sessions, with both qualifying periods lengthened from 30 minutes to 40. In addition, it was decided to not restart any session that was red-flagged with fewer than four minutes remaining, as only teams at the top of the pitlane would complete a flying lap in that time.

Not only did the decision prove popular, but teams said it had the knock-on effect of calming drivers down, knowing they had a total of 80 minutes to qualify instead of 60. As a result, there was only one red flag throughout qualifying.

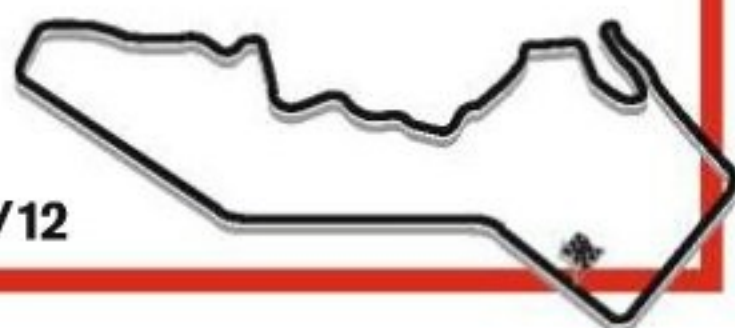


WTCC

Macau (PRC)

November 16

Round 12/12



RESULTS

RACE 1: 10 LAPS, 38.028 MILES

1	JOSE MARIA LOPEZ (RA)	24m50.183s
	Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC; Grid: 1st-2m24.294s	
2	NORBERT MICHELISZ (H)	+2.741s
	Zengo Motorsport Honda Civic WTCC; Grid: 4th-2m25.327s	
3	GABRIELE TARQUINI (I)	+3.661s
	Castrol Honda Team (JAS) Honda Civic WTCC; Grid: 6th-2m25.769s	
4	TIAGO MONTEIRO (P)	+4.055s
	Castrol Honda Team (JAS) Honda Civic WTCC; Grid: 7th-2m25.825s	
5	YVAN MULLER (F)	+4.589s
	Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC; Grid: 3rd-2m24.779s	
6	SEBASTIEN LOEB (F)	+5.186s
	Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC; Grid: 2nd-2m24.522s	
7	TOM CORONEL (NL)	+9.338s
	ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1; Grid: 5th-no time	
8	MA QING HUA (PRC)	+10.008s
	Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC; Grid: 11th-2m26.535s	
9	ROB HUFF (GB)	+15.548s
	Lada Sport Lukoil Lada Granta WTCC; Grid: 8th-2m25.866s	
10	GIANNI MORBIDELLI (I)	+19.201s
	Munnich Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1; Grid: 12th-2m26.911s	

Winner's average speed: 91.868mph. Fastest lap: Lopez 2m27.338s, 92.915mph.

RACE 2: 11 LAPS, 41.830 MILES

1	HUFF	28m21.086s
	Lada; Grid: 3rd	
2	MULLER	+0.344s
	Citroen; Grid: 8th	
3	HUGO VALENTE (F)	+3.352s
	Campos Racing Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1; Grid: 1st	
4	MICHELISZ	+3.990s
	Honda; Grid: 7th	
5	LOPEZ	+4.285s
	Citroen; Grid: 10th	
6	LOEB	+4.825s
	Citroen; Grid: 9th	
7	TOM CHILTON (GB)	+5.562s
	ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1; Grid: 2nd-2m26.187s	
8	CORONEL	+6.615s
	Chevrolet; Grid: 6th	
9	JAMES THOMPSON (GB)	+8.252s
	Lada Sport Lukoil Lada Granta WTCC; Grid: 14th-2m27.667s	
10	FRANZ ENGSTLER (D)	+41.038s
	BMW 320 TC; Grid: 16th-2m34.015s	

Winner's average speed: 88.526mph. Fastest lap: Huff, 2m27.009s, 93.124mph.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	LOPEZ	462	6	TARQUINI	182
2	MULLER	336	7	CORONEL	159
3	LOEB	295	8	CHILTON	150
4	MICHELISZ	201	9	MORBIDELLI	109
5	MONTEIRO	186	10	HUFF	93

YOKOHAMA TROPHY

1	ENGSTLER	249
2	FILIPPI	159
3	DI SABATINO	98

POINTS SYSTEM EXPLAINED

In each race: 25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1 to top 10 finishers. 5-4-3-2-1 to top 5 qualifiers.



Monteiro (centre) led race two but suffered late drama...

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JML's record street haul

HAVING WON THE WORLD TOURING CAR

drivers' championship last time out at Suzuka, Jose Maria Lopez only had the series' record for most wins and points in a season to shoot for in Macau. The amazing Argentinean achieved both feats, receiving bonus plaudits as it was his maiden visit to the toughest circuit on the calendar.

While Lopez could do no wrong, Honda racer Tiago Monteiro's opportunity to break his 2014 win duck groaned and died along with his power steering on the penultimate racing lap of the year.

Pouring Castrol into Monteiro's wounds was the knowledge that without the late-race intervention of a safety car, and therefore extension of the race distance by one lap, victory could possibly have been within his grasp.

The misfortune assisted Rob Huff to his seventh, and perhaps least likely, Macau WTCC victory. The Cambridge man wrung insane performance out of the unloved Granta, and his race-long joust with former title rival Yvan Muller is likely to have filled the cockpits of both cars with a tingle of nostalgia.

The Chinese lifecycle is, according to ancient tradition, 60 years. It was perhaps fitting, then, that stellar new WTCC arrival Lopez, in the first season of the TC1 cars, should win on Macau's 61st Grand Prix weekend. After intense preparation on the Citroen simulator, and honing up on practice data from his Citroen team-mates, a mighty Lopez grabbed pole from a fired-up Sebastien Loeb and understeer-hampered third-qualifier Muller.

Zengo Motorsport's Norbert Michelisz again outpaced the factory Hondas in fourth. Honda Motorsport Europe boss William de Brackeleer philosophically noted that while the Civics could not match rivals in qualifying trim, "we know our

race pace is better and expect strong starts".

The prophecy was correct. Michelisz shot ahead of Loeb into second behind the flawless Lopez. The number one C-Elysee of outgoing champion Muller bogged down lamentably and dropped to fifth. 'Norbi's' pursuit of Lopez lasted for a quarter of lap, until a wayward wiggle at Maternity.

Loeb sensed vulnerability. However, an attempt to pull alongside Michelisz into Lisboa on lap three resulted in a costly error in which he ran wide. In two corners, the WRC star lost out to the factory JAS Civics of Tarquini and Monteiro and the pursuing Muller. The 15 minute gap between Macau's two WTCC races offered limited repair time, so reducing the incentive to risk overtaking attempts. Sadly there was no change of order in the top six thereafter. Lopez pulled clear to win by 2.7s, with 1.5s covering second to sixth.

Veteran Tarquini gained kudos for his resolve in finishing third with a body temperature of 38C, but the Italian was too exhausted to take the start of the final race of the year.

Away from the lights in race two, the surviving factory Honda of Monteiro cut between the front-row pair of Chevy men Pepe Oriola and Tom Chilton into the lead. Third-place starter Rob Huff also demoted Hugo Valente for second and, perhaps unsettled, Parisian Valente missed the apex at Lisboa by some margin, causing the Campos Cruze to drop behind Muller and Michelisz into fifth.

Monteiro gradually extended a cushion over Huff, who repeatedly arrived at Lisboa almost standing the Granta on its front splitter under spectacular late braking to fend off old rival Muller.

When the fourth Citroen of Ma Qing Hua crashed out of San Francisco, the ensuing safety-car period offered the chance of a shake-up. The Alfa 4C was only out for a lap, but Monteiro kissed goodbye to a two-second lead. At the restart, Huff was unable to pick up a tow on Macau's former sea-front sweeps to challenge Monteiro.

Then at Melco on the 10 of 11 laps, Monteiro's power-steering problem struck and Huff was away.

"He just went straight on, couldn't turn and hit the barrier," said Huff, who would reveal just how hard he had been pushing. "I didn't know what was going on and hit the barrier myself. I also hit the barrier coming out of the last corner, I hit it on the exit of Turn 1... I hit it in several places!"



... that handed Huff his seventh Macau victory

IN THE PADDOCK

PETER MILLS
WTCC CONTRIBUTOR

@Peter_Autosport



THE END OF ANY SEASON IS A TIME when drivers potentially move on. But after seven years in the championship, many were sad to see 53-year-old Franz Engstler finally call time on his WTCC career.

Engstler confirmed that he would field a team in next season's TC3 championship running Volkswagen Golfs, and also spend time involved with his son's karting. The move has in part been forced on Engstler, as his long-term backer Liqui Moly insisted on sponsoring a German car and no suitable TC1 machine existed.

"I think the TC3 series will grow very fast, but let's see what happens," said Engstler.

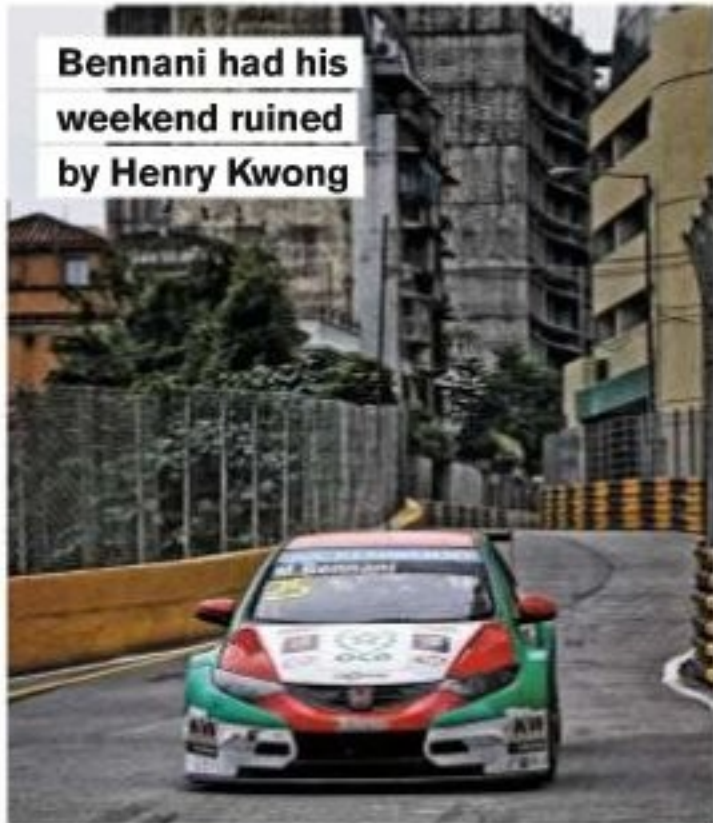
"The WTCC has been a really wonderful seven years, and it was like a big family. Our Golf project started three weeks ago and we will test around three weeks before the first race. I chose Volkswagen because they made you feel really welcome. The other difference is BMW has DTM, Audi has DTM, whereas VW doesn't have another programme in touring cars and I think this is helpful. They want to prepare the car as best they can and you don't have to call all the time saying what's going on. I think TC3 is the right platform for privateers."

Who knows if an Engstler Golf will compete at Macau next season in TC3? Eurosport Events WTCC consultant Eric Neve told AUTOSPORT post-Macau that "discussions have opened up with our friends at Macau for the future". Intriguingly, former WTCC boss Marcello Lotti, who is linked to the new series, was reportedly flying into Macau on Monday night.



Engstler will focus on new TC3 team in 2015

Bennani had his weekend ruined by Henry Kwong



Bennani slams backmarkers

MEHDI BENNANI WAS PLEASED to see the end of combined grids of TC2 and TC1 cars in the WTCC. The Moroccan was taken out of the opening race at Macau by Asia Trophy driver Henry Kwong. The Shanghai reversed-grid race winner was running in ninth place when Kwong's Campos SEAT Leon moved into his path on the pit straight. Bennani was unable to start race two because of accident damage, while Kwong was excluded from the result.

"I was in fifth gear and full throttle, so it was around 200km/h," said Bennani. "When you crash because a TC2 car didn't see you or see the blue flags, or when he sees you he has the reflex to put you out rather than move to the side, that shouldn't happen in a world championship."

"The driver had crashed around two laps before, I cannot understand it. He came to tell me he was very sorry. That's good, but because of him my weekend was totally zero."



ORIOLA OUT EARLY

Series returnee Pepe Oriola's WTCC Macau weekend was cut-short after two crashes on Friday forced his damaged Cruze (above) to be withdrawn. After a season on the sidelines Oriola replaced the injured Dusan Borkovic at Macau. The Spaniard is targeting TC3 next season.

Privateer Citroens confirmed for Loeb's squad

CITROEN HAS CONFIRMED THAT Sebastien Loeb Racing will run two private C-Elysees in the 2015 World Touring Car Championship.

Citroen Racing's regular 2014 line-up of Jose Maria Lopez, Sebastien Loeb and Yvan Muller will remain unchanged, while the team's occasional fourth driver, Ma Qing Hua, is a leading candidate for one of the SLR seats. Citroen Racing boss Yves Matton has stated his preference for a driver who has raced in the series this year for the second car.

This year, Sebastien Loeb Racing was runner-up in the FFSA French GT championship, made its debut at the Le Mans 24 Hours and competed in the French Porsche Carrera Cup.

"Since it was created, SLR has amassed real know-how at international circuits, in both GT and sports prototype racing," said Loeb, who co-founded the team with Dominique Heintz. "I didn't have to think for very long when the opportunity presented itself for the 2015 season. Since the new TC1s were introduced, the championship has been attracting more and more interest, and it's great to be involved."

Matton added: "Entrusting the two private Citroen C-Elysee WTCCs to SLR was an

obvious choice. The two cars will be good-as-new reconditioned 2014 chassis, complete with all the developments we introduce next season."

"It's now up to the team to finalise its agreements as far as its drivers are concerned, but we are all working together to make it possible for Ma Qing Hua to continue his career with Citroen. His performances have shown that he deserves a full season in 2015."



SLR will field two C-Elysees in 2015

'RING TEAM IN MACAU

Representatives of the Nurburgring 24 Hours were at Macau ahead of the WTCC's 2015 visit to the Nordschleife. Clerk of the Course Walter Hornung said: "As well as the WTCC test on April 27th, we have made the VLN race on April 11-12th open to WTCC competitors."

JAS ENTERS TC3 ARENA

Honda Motorsport Europe boss William de Braekeleer has given assurances that factory Honda car builder JAS Motorsport's decision to construct cars for TC3 has no bearing on its WTCC programme. "It is a separate business decision between JAS and Mugen," said de Braekeleer. "JAS has eight designers so it doesn't affect us."

NO PROS FOR MUNNICH

Munnich Motorsport boss Rene Munnich has stated it is unlikely he will field a professional driver in his second Chevrolet in 2015, as the car cannot challenge for consistent podiums. The team's Hungaroring race winner, Gianni Morbidelli, believes it is unlikely he can raise a budget to stay on next season.

MACAU GT MACAU (PRC), NOVEMBER 16

Merces bring misery to maestro Mortara

'MR MACAU' HAS LOST HIS CROWN.

Edoardo Mortara's extraordinary run of six successive Guia circuit wins – two in the Grand Prix, three in the GT Cup and one in the Audi R8 LMS Cup – finally came to an end last weekend thanks to a rather contentious start.

Instead, it was Mercedes duo Maro Engel and Renger van der Zande who thundered their SLS AMG GT3s to a one-two, with Mortara and his Audi R8 LMS ultra unable to find any chink in the armoury of the Stuttgart machines.

Both Mercedes and Audi took this race very seriously, with plenty of DTM staff on hand to oversee the racers, and the world king of GT3 – Laurens Vanthoor – joining Mortara in the Ingolstadt line-up.

The nimble Audis proved the things to have in qualifying, with Mortara setting pole in the initial session on Friday, but Vanthoor – on

his first Macau outing since his F3 days – falling just 0.024 seconds short with his run in Saturday's session, during which Mortara brushed the wall at Lisboa.

Porsche winning machine Earl Bamber's locally run 911 GT3-R also comfortably outran Engel, while van der Zande would start sixth on the grid.

At the rolling start, Bamber got pincer between the Audis as the Merces galloped past before the field had even reached the first kink, and this proved the major talking point.

"I was in the perfect rev range, and I also obviously fed the gas at exactly the right moment," said Engel. "I could see the Audis were struggling to get away, and the only way past was on the outside, and I managed it."

But Mortara said: "I focused on the lights when they went out, and that's when I went on the gas. I guess I'll have to see the images but I have my doubts about the start, but anyway we lost first position there and from then on we couldn't really match the pace. At first we were faster than them, but then for some reason we had a lot of tyre degradation."

Mortara and Vanthoor swarmed all over van der Zande around the mountain section in the early laps, but the torque of the Merces allowed them to blast away out of the Melco



Engel (r) led home team-mate van der Zande

hairpin and it was a vain chase. Up front, Engel held van der Zande at bay in a formation run. "It's everything I dreamt of last year; to get a puncture two laps from the end in 2013 was heartbraking," said the German victor.

Bamber kept Vanthoor on his toes in the early laps, with DTM star Augusto Farfus in turn making it a leading sextet with the best of the BMWs. With four laps remaining Bamber and Farfus lost five seconds after failing to clear two tardy backmarkers before the permanent yellow-flag zone at the Melco hairpin. Besides, Bamber's tyres were fading fast and Farfus cleared him with two laps to go to claim fifth.

Bamber was then attacked by the Merc of Takeshi Tsuchiya, the duo

locking together side by side into Lisboa and performing a very neat piece of synchronised parallel parking.

That promoted Rui Aguas to sixth in the best of the Ferraris, with 2014 DTM champion Marco Wittmann catching him up in the late stages in the second of the BMW Z4s.

● Marcus Simmons

RESULTS

1 Maro Engel (Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), 12 laps in 28m22.871s; **2 Renger van der Zande (Mercedes),** +1.223s; **3 Edoardo Mortara (Audi R8 LMS ultra);** **4 Laurens Vanthoor (Audi);** **5 Augusto Farfus (BMW Z4 GT3);** **6 Rui Aguas (Ferrari 458 Italia GT3);** **7 Marco Wittmann (BMW);** **8 Earl Bamber (Porsche 911 GT3-R);** **9 Darryl O'Young (Aston Martin Vantage GT3);** **10 Jean-Karl Vernay (Bentley Continental GT3).**

Vanthoor missed pole by tiny margin on his Macau return



Merc duo Engel and van der Zande had the edge on the Audis



Harvick knew staying at the front was the best way to win title

NASCAR SPRINT CUP HOMESTEAD (USA), NOVEMBER 16 RD 36/36

Charging Harvick's title glory

A SPECTACULAR LATE CHARGE FROM Kevin Harvick delivered both the win and the championship in a dramatic Sprint Cup finale at Homestead on Sunday.

Harvick managed to haul himself from 12th into the lead during a restart-laced final 15 laps to take victory by half a second over fellow Chase contender Ryan Newman.

"If you want to win the championship, you're going to have to figure out how to win races," said Harvick, who moved to Stewart-Haas this season after 13 years with Richard Childress Racing. "In the end, that's what it came down to, winning the race to win the championship. It all worked out."

Joining Harvick and Newman in Chase contention in Miami were

Denny Hamlin and Joey Logano, and all were forced to make late strategy calls that ultimately dictated their fortunes. Hamlin chose not to pit during one of the late cautions, putting himself into second place behind polesitter and long-time race leader Jeff Gordon.

RCR gave Newman two fresh tyres, and Stewart-Haas rolled the dice by opting for a four-tyre stop for Harvick. Team Penske intended to do the same thing with Logano, but their hopes were dashed when the car fell off its jack in the pits, dropping him down to 29th and out of contention.

Harvick capitalised on a short spell of green-flag running to climb to seventh before the next caution, and he gained another place when

Gordon was forced to stop for tyres a short time later.

In the meantime, Hamlin was leading, but his decision to stay out on old tyres left him badly exposed at the next restart when Harvick came scything through the pack again to pop up behind him.

"I loved our chances, but they weren't there at the end," Hamlin said. "Strategy is part of winning, and the strategy for us didn't work out with the cautions."

Harvick accordingly made short work of Hamlin, and a few moments later Newman – who'd come into the weekend as the least-fancied of the Chase contenders – did the same thing. The pair battled through a final restart with three laps remaining, but despite Newman's best efforts, Harvick was able to keep him in check and add his name to the roll of Cup champions.

"That came down to a pit call, and I thought, 'Oh man, we're in big trouble here,' said Harvick. "I was going to hold the pedal down and hope for the best. This is really special for everybody. This new [Chase] format has been stressful, the racing phenomenal... I'm going to sleep for a week."

Newman, who moved into Harvick's old seat at RCR this year, had mixed feelings after finishing



New champ gets the Sprint Cup

a season-high second.

"It's been an amazing year," he said. "They say you have to lose one before you can win one... I'm ready to win one now. We won a lot of battles; we sure came close to winning the war."

Hamlin was forced to settle for seventh behind Brad Keselowski, Paul Menard, Jamie McMurray and Matt Kenseth. Logano finished 16th. ● Mark Glendenning

RESULTS

1 Kevin Harvick (Chevrolet SS), 267 laps in 3h16m31s; 2 Ryan Newman (Chevy), +0.5s; 3 Brad Keselowski (Ford Fusion); 4 Paul Menard (Chevy); 5 Jamie McMurray (Chevy); 6 Matt Kenseth (Toyota Camry); 7 Denny Hamlin (Toyota); 8 Clint Bowyer (Toyota); 9 Jimmie Johnson (Chevy); 10 Jeff Gordon (Chevy).
Championship 1 Harvick, 5043; 2 Newman, 5042; 3 Hamlin, 5037; 4 Logano, 5028; 5 Keselowski, 2361; 6 Gordon, 2348.



Pitstop disaster thwarted Logano

WEC**Bahrain (BRN)****November 15****Round 7/8****RESULTS**

195 LAPS, 655.788 MILES

1	A WURZ (A)/S SARRAZIN (F)/M CONWAY (GB)	6h00m18.056s
LMP1	Toyota Racing Toyota TS040 HYBRID (Q4)	
2	R DUMAS (F)/N JANI (CH)/M LIEB (D)	+50.460s
LMP1	Porsche Team Porsche 919 Hybrid (Q1)	
3	T BERNHARD (D)/M WEBBER (AUS)/B HARTLEY (NZ)	+57.268s
LMP1	Porsche Team Porsche 919 Hybrid (Q3)	
4	M FASSLER (CH)/A LOTTERER (D)/B TRELUYER (F)	-1 lap
LMP1	Audi Sport Team Joest Audi R18 e-tron quattro (Q5)	
5	L DI GRASSI (BR)/L DUVAL (F)/T KRISTENSEN (DK)	-2 laps
LMP1	Audi Sport Team Joest Audi R18 e-tron quattro (no time)	
6	D KRAHAMER (A)/A BELICCHI (I)/F LEIMER (CH)	-7 laps
LMP1	Rebellion Racing Rebellion-Toyota R-One (Q7)	
7	N PROST (F)/N HEIDFELD (D)/M BECHE (CH)	-13 laps
LMP1	Rebellion Racing Rebellion-Toyota R-One (Q6)	
8	M HOWSON (GB)/R BRADLEY (GB)/A IMPERATORI (CH)	-14 laps
LMP2	KCMG Oreca-Nissan 03R (Q12)	
9	K LADYGIN (RUS)/V SHAITAR (RUS)/A LADYGIN (RUS)	-17 laps
LMP2	SMP Racing (AF Corse) ORECA-Nissan 03R (Q10)	
10	M PATTERSON (US)/K IHARA (J)/D CHENG (PRC)	-17 laps
LMP2	OAK Racing Morgan-Judd/BMW LMP2 (Q13)	
11	A DAVIDSON (GB)/S BUEMI (CH)	-18 laps
LMP1	Toyota Racing Toyota TS040 HYBRID (Q2)	
12	R RUSINOV (RUS)/O PLA (F)/J CANAL (F)	-18 laps
LMP2	G-Drive Racing (OAK) Ligier-Nissan JSP2 (Q8)	
13	G BRUNI (I)/T VILANDER (FIN)	-22 laps
GTE Pro	AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia (Q15)	
14	D TURNER (GB)/S MUCKE (D)	-22 laps
GTE Pro	Aston Martin Racing Aston Martin Vantage V8 (Q14)	
15	D RIGON (I)/J CALADO (GB)	-22 laps
GTE Pro	AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia (Q16)	
16	R LIETZ (A)/J BERGMEISTER (D)	-22 laps
GTE Pro	Porsche Team Manthey Porsche 911 RSR (Q18)	
17	F MAKOWIECKI (F)/P PILET (F)	-23 laps
GTE Pro	Porsche Team Manthey Porsche 911 RSR (Q21)	
18	K POULSEN (DK)/D HANSSON (DK)/N THIIM (DK)	-23 laps
GTE Am	Aston Martin Racing Aston Martin Vantage V8 (Q19)	
19	S WYATT (AUS)/M RUGOLO (I)/A BERTOLINI (I)	-24 laps
GTE Am	AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia (Q26)	
20	P DALLA LANA (CDN)/P LAMY (P)/C NYGAARD (DK)	-24 laps
GTE Am	Aston Martin Racing Aston Martin Vantage V8 (Q20)	

In each car, first-named driver started race. Winners' average speed: 109.207mph. Fastest lap: Buemi, 1m45.989s, 114.227mph; LMP2: Beche, 1m49.164s, 110.905mph; GTE Pro: Bruni, 2m00.003s, 100.887mph; GTE Am: Thiim, 2m00.382s, 100.569mph. Starters: 27.

LMP DRIVERS

1	DAVIDSON/BUEMI	148	4	DI GRASSI/KRISTENSEN	102
2	LOTTERER/TRELUYER/FASSLER	117	5	LAPIERRE	96
3	WURZ/SARRAZIN	104	6	LIEB/JANI/DUMAS	92

GTE DRIVERS

1	BRUNI/VILANDER	156	4	BERGMEISTER	91
2	MAKOWIECKI	116.5	5	PILET	90.5
3	LIETZ	103	6	RIGON/CALADO	79

LMP1 MANUFACTURERS

1	TOYOTA	259	3	PORSCHE	167
2	AUDI	219			

GTE MANUFACTURERS

1	FERRARI	261	3	ASTON MARTIN	196
2	PORSCHE	236			

LMP2 DRIVERS

1	CANAL/PLA/RUSINOV	136	3	A LADYGIN	110
2	ZLOBIN	128	4	HOWSON/BRADLEY	105

GTE AM DRIVERS

1	POULSEN/HANSSON	180	3	THIIM	126
2	LAMY/NYGAARD/D LANA	138	4	RIED/AL QUBAIS	109

POINTS SYSTEM EXPLAINED

Drivers' championships: 25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1 to top 10 finishers, 0.5 for all other finishers, 1 for pole. In GTE manufacturers, top two cars from each make score points.

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Toyota wins ahead of battling Porsches

Alex Wurz, Stephane Sarrazin and Mike Conway picked up the baton after their team-mates were delayed, but the real battle was a minute down the road. By GARY WATKINS



IT WASN'T THE WAY THAT TOYOTA WANTED TO seal its first circuit racing world championship title, yet the Japanese manufacturer was dominant once again in Bahrain. Anthony Davidson and Sebastien Buemi wrapped up the title because their only rivals for the crown couldn't finish high enough to keep things open until the Interlagos finale, but the TS040 HYBRID claimed a sixth victory of the season in the hands of Alex Wurz, Stephane Sarrazin and Mike Conway.

Davidson and Buemi might have added to their four victories of 2014 but for an alternator failure late in the second hour that lost them a total of 18 laps and left them 11th at the finish. They actually took home a point, because one of the prototypes ahead of them wasn't eligible to score, but that had no bearing on the outcome of the championship. Audi drivers Andre Lotterer, Benoit Treluyer and Marcel Fassler needed to finish second to keep the championship alive, the kind of result they haven't threatened to achieve since the heavens opened in Austin back in September.

"It wasn't the way we wanted to win the title, but I'm not complaining," said Davidson. "I've won big single events before, the Formula Ford Festival, the Pau Formula 3 Grand Prix and the Sebring 12 Hours, but never a championship since I started racing cars. It is amazing: I can retire happy now."

The second Toyota inherited the lead when the #8 car, which was 18s up the road at the time, was called into the pits immediately after the alternator alarm went off. The leading Toyota looked safe in

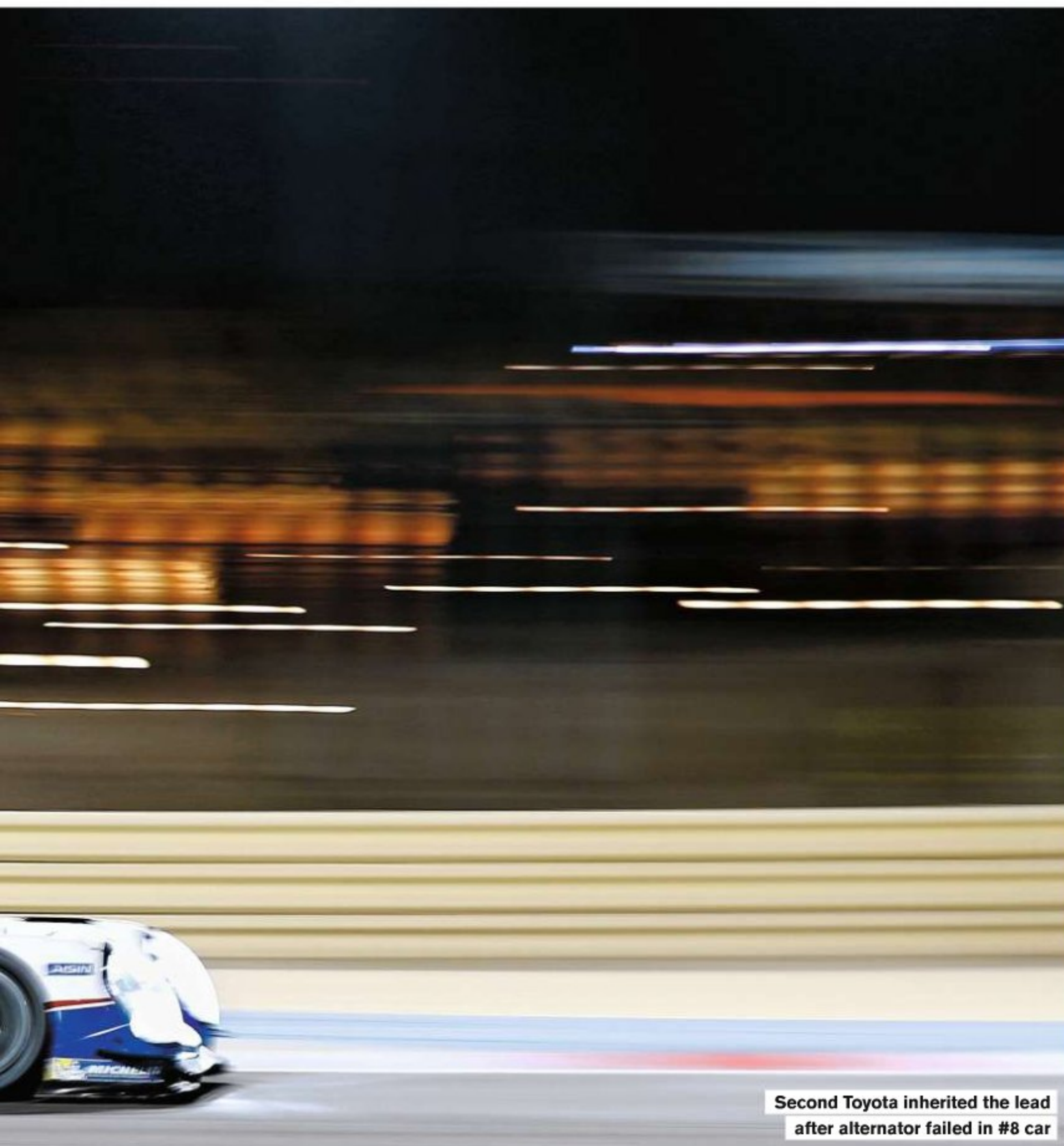
the lead until Sarrazin had to cut his pace in a successful bid to go a lap longer on the fuel during his second stint. The team made a strategic call to bring him in early during a full-course yellow early in the fourth hour. Toyota had expected the period to last longer, which meant there was less fuel to be saved while running at 80km/h.

Neel Jani in the pole-winning #14 Porsche 919 Hybrid was barely a second behind early in the final hour, but the Toyota had already completed its stop after making what was effectively an early splash during a full-course yellow early in the race. A more representative advantage of just under 50s was restored when the Porsche Jani shared with Roman Dumas and Marc Lieb made its final pitstop with 20 minutes to go.

The battle at the end was between the two Porsches, which were on different strategies. The #20 car had, like the Toyotas, made an early stop



#8 car finished 11th after delay



Second Toyota inherited the lead
after alternator failed in #8 car

and a gamble to double-stint its tyres for Mark Webber's run to the flag meant Jani came out of the pits just behind his team-mate.

The Swiss was quickly past the car Webber shared with Brendon Hartley and Timo Bernhard, which wasn't a match for its sister machine in Bahrain. That begged the question whether the #14 car would have been able to challenge the Toyota had Porsche opted to stop both cars early.

"I'm not sure, but I don't think so," said Jani. "But it would definitely have been closer."

Two tests at the 3.36-mile Bahrain International Circuit in January and February played a role in the increased race-day competitiveness of the Porsche, which Jani and Dumas had given a third pole of the year. A gradual race-by-race performance of the LMP1 newcomers was probably just as significant, reckoned Porsche technical boss Alex Hitzinger.

Porsche's increased competitiveness meant there was no chance for Lotterer and co to get the result they needed. The R18 e-tron was closer to the pace than it had been, though. Lucas di Grassi in the #1 car, Fassler and Lotterer all held fastest lap of the race at one point or another, which showed that the R18 had one-lap performance.

The problem was that the Audis couldn't maintain it. "We have less four-wheel-drive available than the others [because the Audi runs in the two megajoule hybrid class compared with the 6MJ of Toyota and Porsche]," said Lotterer. "The surface is abrasive here and if you have a traction issue, you are going to pay the price in tyre wear."



Porsche was
on pole again

Lotterer and his team-mates ended up one lap down in fourth, while team-mates di Grassi, Loic Duval and Tom Kristensen were a further lap down in fifth. That was actually an achievement given the circumstances Audi Sport Team Joest found itself in at the start of the week. The monocoques of both cars were found to be damaged on their arrival in Bahrain from the previous round at Shanghai. That meant full rebuilds, the #2 car around the spare tub the team carries and the #1 around a chassis that arrived at the track at 3am on the morning of first free practice.

This car sustained the same damage over the course of the opening day's free practice and was rebuilt around another tub that arrived that afternoon. The issue was believed to be caused by the cars striking kerbs between the wheels, and a modification to the mounting of the underfloor provided at least a pro temps solution.



G-Drive was hit
by two separate
suspension failures

LMP2

G-Drive moves into LMP2 lead

IT WAS A INCIDENT-PACKED EVENT FOR THE TWO teams at the top of the WEC LMP2 points table. The G-Drive Ligier was delayed right at the start and drivers Olivier Pla, Roman Rusinov and Julien Canal looked set to lose ground to the championship leader Sergey Zlobin. The Russian's SMP ORECA shared with Nicolas Minassian and Maurizio Mediani was on course for second after its most competitive showing of the year only to retire in the final minutes.

That flicked the balance in the championship around. Rather than going into the Interlagos series finale later this month 15 points behind, Pla and his team-mates now enjoy a lead of eight points. The G-Drive trio and Zlobin are now also the only contenders for the title. A second victory of the season for the Chinese KCMG squad's ORECA shared by Alex Imperatori, Richard Bradley and Matt Howson wasn't enough to keep their mathematical title hopes alive.

The OAK Racing-run G-Drive Ligier-Nissan JSP2 that Pla and Rusinov had put on pole suffered a broken right rear wishbone on the opening lap. The failure followed a clash from Kirill Ladygin in the second SMP ORECA-Nissan 03R, but Pla was adamant that the touch wasn't implicated in the failure. His arguments were backed up by a second failure, this time of the left-rear top wishbone, when Rusinov was driving early in the fourth hour. Both times OAK managed to change the broken suspension component in approximately six minutes, but the delays meant that the Ligier was firmly ensconced in fifth in class as the fourth-placed points-registered car as the race neared its end.

That was bad news for a trio of drivers who have been striving to make up lost ground to championship leader Zlobin since the Le Mans 24 Hours (the lead OAK car non-finished, while Zlobin collected a maximum 50 points as the first WEC P2 home, albeit in a distant 12th in class). But it looked as though things could have been even worse in the opening stint. Minassian led the class through his opening double on a day when the AF Corse-run SMP team's Michelin tyres were uniquely this year a match for their rivals Dunlops.

The balance of the race changed when Bradley took over from Imperatori and went up against Mediani. He closed down a 27s deficit and eked out some vital seconds over his double stint before handing over to Howson. A slow stop for SMP and Howson's pace advantage over Zlobin more or less secured the victory for KCMG. ►

► Minassian still had a sniff of victory when he made his final pitstop in the SMP car in the knowledge that the KCMG entry would have to make a splash-and-dash. The gap stood at approximately 50s when Minassian and Loic Duval in the #1 Audi came together.

It turned out to be a triple whammy for Minassian. The gearbox started malfunctioning after his spin, so he opted to keep his gearshifts to a minimum. Then he was called in for a stop-go for avoidable contact, which meant having to use all the gears leaving the pits.

Eventually the gearbox gave up the ghost and despite efforts to revive the transmission, the car didn't make it back out to take the line.

Minassian wasn't a happy man after the race. "I'm not annoyed at Loic, I'm annoyed at the officials," he said. "I think it was a racing accident. Going up through the gears after the stop-go really hurt us, I think."



GTE

Champions forced to drive flat out

GIANMARIA BRUNI AND TONI VILANDER SEALED the GT title with the kind of performance that has been their trademark this season. They drove flat out all the way through a five-stop race aboard their AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia to seal victory over the chasing Aston Martin Vantage GTE of Stefan Mucke and Darren Turner by just 1.8s.

The only two cars in the hunt for GTE Pro honours in Bahrain were out of sequence for much of the race. Aston Martin Racing, for the third WEC round in a row, opted for a six-stop strategy, believing it is the fastest way to get through the six hours. The problem for Mucke and Turner was that on two occasions the Aston got bottled up behind the Ferrari and weren't able to exploit the performance advantage that the six-stopper should have given them.

"The idea of seven equal stints is to maximise the time on the tyres when they are at or near their best and run a car that never has a full fuel load," explained AMR boss John Gaw. "But if you do that, you need to get the maximum out of the car to make up for the extra stop, and twice Bruni got ahead of Darren and could hold him up."

Aston's bid to win the race started to unravel at the start. Bruni got ahead of the pole-winning Aston as the field sprinted away and ran ahead of him until the Aston stopped for the first time

shortly before the 50-minute mark. Worse followed. The Aston had sustained damage to the rear wing and 20-odd seconds were lost to a change of the bootlid that carries the rear aerofoil.

Early in the third hour Bruni rejoined from his second stop behind Turner and then passed the Aston as Turner was trying to pass Jorg Bergmeister's factory Porsche. The losses added up to a 20s deficit for Turner after his final top.

The Briton managed to reduce that disadvantage to the eventual second-and-a-bit, which only brought the missed opportunity to win for a second time this year into sharper focus.

"It's much more disappointing when you finish second knowing you had a real chance," said Turner. "This was an opportunity missed and it came down to a few little issues."

Bruni and Vilander were chuffed to seal the title with their fifth victory of the season, but second place would have been more than enough for the duo to claim the crown. Their only title rival, Frederic Makowiecki, was never in the hunt in the factory Manthey Porsche he shared with Patrick Pilet, coming home a lap down in fifth.

The gamble of starting on the harder of the two Michelin compounds available didn't pay off, which left them a place behind the sister car of Jorg Bergmeister and Patrick Lietz. 



IN THE PADDOCK

GARY WATKINS
SPORTSCAR
CONTRIBUTOR

@gazzasportscars



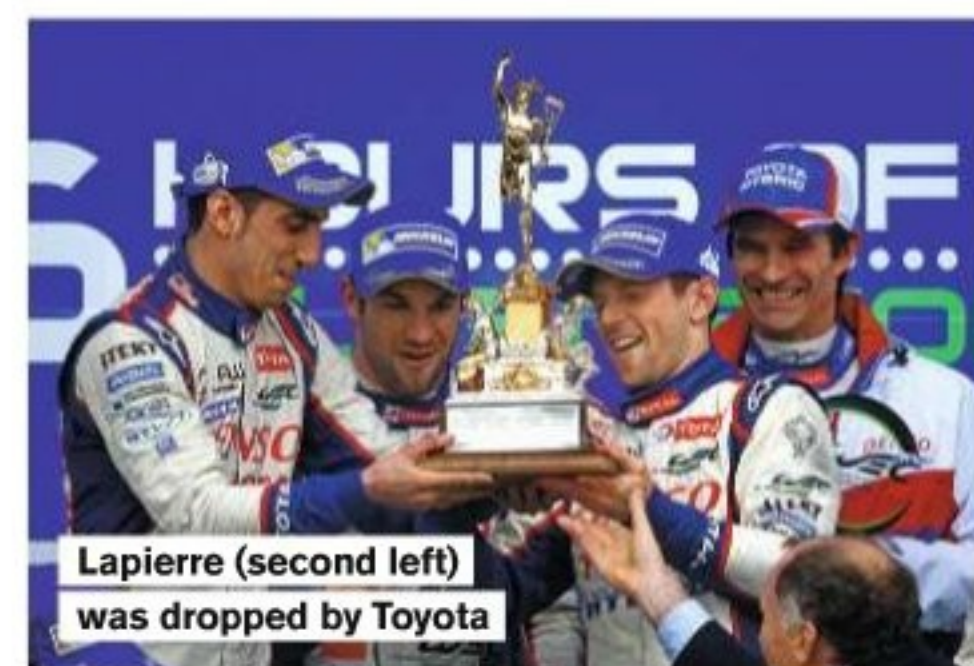
I DON'T MIND ADMITTING THAT I'M PRETTY happy about Toyota winning the WEC drivers' title. It's not that I'm partisan in any way, it's just that I reckon it has to be good for our branch of the sport if the same manufacturer doesn't win every year. An Audi monopoly would undoubtedly be a turn-off for the kind of casual fans the series needs to attract.

No one can have any complaints about the championship success for Toyota and drivers Sebastien Buemi and Anthony Davidson. The TS040 HYBRID has been the best car and they have been the best driver line-up. Or should that be two thirds of the best line-up?

Don't forget that two of the Buemi/Davidson car's four victories this year were shared with Nicolas Lapierre before he was unceremoniously dropped by the team ahead of the Fuji round last month. Toyota might argue that its championship success — and the manufacturers' title that will undoubtedly follow — provides the justification for dropping a driver who had lost the team points with wet-weather offs at both the Le Mans 24 Hours and at Austin in September.

That might be the case, but Toyota has treated a top driver who had been part of its success since 2012 pretty shabbily. His public humiliation by Toyota is not fair to my mind.

And what kind of message does it send to the rest of its driver line-up? Screw up and you're out? It looks that way to me. I would suggest that is not the kind of atmosphere you want to foster in a team that has still to take the ultimate prize in sportscar racing at Le Mans.



GILHAM/GETTY

BIG NUMBER

19

Years since Anthony Davidson last won a motorsport title. His previous title success came in the British Junior ICA kart series in 1995 before he started racing cars.

Qualifying rules to be simplified for 2015

THE WORLD ENDURANCE Championship's system of aggregate qualifying is set to be simplified for next season.

Under the current system introduced at the beginning of last season, the grid is determined by the fastest two laps set by each of a pair of drivers in a 25-minute session. Next year, the idea is that the aggregate will be calculated by just one lap set by each driver in a slightly shorter session.

Vincent Beaumesnil, sporting manager of series organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, said: "We wanted to make it a bit more simple. Having two drivers doing the qualifying is good, but why not take the average of just two laps?"

"We are not doing it for sporting reasons, but some people do not understand how it works. This will be more friendly for TV."

The qualifying rules currently dictate that each car must run on the same set of tyres with both drivers, except in LMP2 because of the strict tyre limitations in that class. The proposed introduction of tyre limits in LMP1 and the GTE divisions will mean that tyre usage in qualifying is opened up.

The rules for GTE Am will also demand that the mandatory bronze-rated driver must take part in qualifying.

Aston Martin Racing boss John Gaw said: "The system of an average lap time works. I'm glad we are keeping it, but I don't think it makes too much difference if it is one or two laps per driver."

"It is good that the bronze driver will have to do qualifying. That should have been introduced this season, but there was an objection."

The proposals, along with limits set on testing in LMP1, will go before the next FIA World Council in early December.



DANES WIN GTE AM

Kristian Poulsen and David Heinemeier Hansson claimed the GTE Am drivers' title with their fourth class win of the season together with Nicki Thiim aboard the #95 Aston Martin Vantage GTE. They had a clear edge on the sister car shared by Pedro Lamy, Paul Dalla Lana and Christoffer Nygaard, which also lost time with a stop-go penalty.

REBELLION ON THE UP

The lead Rebellion-Toyota R-One posted arguably its most competitive showing yet in the hands of Nick Heidfeld, Mathias Beche and Nicolas Prost. The car lost class victory in the LMP1 privateers' class with an alternator issue with minutes of the race to go. After a battery change the car resumed six laps down on the class-winning sister car of Fabio Leimer, Andrea Belicchi and Dominik Kraihamer.

PORSCHE SALES

Porsche has laid down two Porsche 911 RSRs ahead of likely sales for next season. WEC regulars Proton and ProSpeed are both aiming to run two cars, while there is also a chance of an additional customer car racing in the United SportsCar Championship next season, according to Porsche's head of motorsport sales Uwe Brettel.

SLOW ZONES DELAYED

Slow zones, as used in the Le Mans 24 Hours, were again tried in free practice in Bahrain, but their introduction has now been delayed until next season.

FITTIPALDI RETURN

Hopes that two-time Formula 1 world champion Emerson Fittipaldi will race in the Interlagos WEC finale, which he promotes, appear to rest on him doing a deal to drive AF Corse's #61 Ferrari 458 Italia. He would take the place of Alexander Talkanitsa Sr alongside Alessandro Pierguidi and Jeff Segal.

SMP TO TEST NEW CAR

SMP Racing's all-new LMP2 coupe is now scheduled to test for the first time in January. The Nissan-engined car, seen here as a wind-tunnel model, will be known as the BR Engineering BR01 in deference to team owner and SMP Bank boss Boris Rotenberg. It has yet to be decided if its two-car WEC programme will be masterminded by AF Corse, which has run its prototype programme since its entry into the division in last year's European Le Mans Series.



Strakka dome delayed again

THE RACE DEBUT OF THE STRAKKA Dome LMP2 coupe has been delayed again from this year's World Endurance Championship finale at Interlagos.

The Nissan-powered S103 had been scheduled to make its belated debut in Brazil after a rear-end re-design, but the entry was scratched late last week. A statement from the team cited concerns over the car's headrest achieving the necessary FIA approval as the reason.

The decision followed a successful shakedown for the revised Dome at Silverstone last Wednesday and 3500km of running over five days of testing at the Hungaroring last month.

Strakka, which joined forces with Japanese constructor Dome to build, develop and race its S103, has stressed its commitment to the project and is instigating a winter test programme ahead of next season.

Porsche GT aces for LMP test

THREE PORSCHE GT DRIVERS

will be given a second test in the 919 Hybrid should Porsche field a third LMP1 at next year's Le Mans 24 Hours.

LMP1 team boss Fritz Enzinger would not name the three drivers who would take part in the test at a yet-to-decided venue in early December, but when the names Frederic Makowiecki, Nick Tandy and Michael Christensen were suggested, he replied: "Could be."

"The first decision needs to be made by the board about the third car," he explained. "Then we will test some drivers and we expect to test three of the GT guys, but it will not be a shoot-out."

Enzinger could not say if the prospective third LMP1 would be raced exclusively by drivers promoted from the GT roster, but he did reveal that he was in contact with other drivers about any vacant seats.





SMITH/GETTY

NASCAR NATIONWIDE

Matt Kenseth scored his first race win for over a year in NASCAR, jumping into the lead at the final restart at Homestead and benefiting as Kyle Larson, Kyle Busch and Ryan Blaney fought over second place behind him. Busch pulled off a last-gasp, around-the-outside move on Larson at the last corner to grab second and make it a Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota one-two.

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES

Darrell Wallace Jr held off a last-corner lunge from Kyle Larson to win the series finale at Homestead, his fourth victory of the season. But that wasn't enough to prevent ninth-placed Matt Crafton from winning the championship for the second consecutive year.

MRF CHALLENGE

Ryan Cullen, Struan Moore and Mathias Lauda were the race winners in Bahrain. Cullen won races one and three, and although he didn't score a victory all weekend, Toby Sowery continues to lead the series by 25 points from Cullen.

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS

Allam Khodair and Sergio Jimenez were the winners of the two races held on the narrow streets of Salvador. Both started from the front row and led to the flag, but Khodair battled a gearbox gremlin all race.

McLaughlin won twice for Volvo



CIANFLONE/GETTY

V8 SUPERCARS PHILLIPISLAND (AUS), NOVEMBER 15-16 RD 13/14

McLaughlin steals Whincup's thunder

JAMIE WHINCUP SEALED HIS SIXTH V8 Supercar title in emphatic style with a win in the second of three races at Phillip Island.

Whincup won the title with three races remaining in the season in fine form, but over the course of the weekend had to give best to Scott McLaughlin. Volvo's young Kiwi won the opener from pole and looked to be in line for second place in the longer, Sunday race after chasing Garth Tander throughout the race. But Tander's Holden stuttered at the final corner and, within touching distance of the chequered flag, McLaughlin steamed past the fuel-starved HRT car to steal the win.

Craig Lowndes pushed McLaughlin hard in the first race but a tough Sunday, starting from mid-grid after a difficult qualifying session, now means he has much to do in the final races in Sydney to seize second in the championship from Mark Winterbottom. The Ford man was back on form at PI, taking fourth, second and third in the races.

Winterbottom gains an ally on the Ford side for the final race in Sydney, in which former champion Marcos Ambrose will race as a Wildcard entry in the DJR Team Penske Falcon. Whincup may be uncatchable but the battle for second is far from over.

● Phil Branagan

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Scott McLaughlin (Volvo S60 Polestar), 23 laps in 36m00.097s; 2 Craig Lowndes (Holden Commodore VF), +0.376s; 3 Jamie Whincup (Holden); 4 Garth Tander (Holden); 5 Michael Caruso (Nissan Altima); 6 Jason Bright (Holden).

Race 2 1 Whincup, 23 laps in 35m54.151s; 2 Lowndes, +3.594s; 3 Mark Winterbottom (Ford Falcon FG); 4 Tander; 5 Todd Kelly (Nissan); 6 McLaughlin.

Race 3 1 McLaughlin, 45 laps in 1h13m59.692s; 2 Tander, +0.452s; 3 Winterbottom; 4 Whincup; 5 Shane van Gisbergen (Holden); 6 Will Davison (Mercedes E63 AMG).

Points 1 Whincup, 3094; 2 Winterbottom, 2642; 3 Lowndes, 2547; 4 van Gisbergen, 2508; 5 McLaughlin, 2295; 6 Coulthard, 2280.

SUPER GT MOTEGI (J), NOVEMBER 16 RD 8/8

Matsuda and Quintarelli grab crown with victory

TSUGIO MATSUDA AND RONNIE Quintarelli sealed the Super GT title at Motegi in Japan at the weekend, as erstwhile points leader James Rossiter's championship hopes evaporated at the very first corner.

Rossiter's TOMS-run Lexus RC F, which started fourth on the grid, was hit on the right-hand side by Joao Paulo de Oliveira's Nissan GT-R, damaging both cars. De Oliveira, who spun wildly across the grass after the collision, received a drivethrough

penalty for his rash move.

Rossiter struggled on, despite losing crucial aerodynamic parts and with damage to his car's underbody. He handed over to team-mate Kazuki Nakajima while placed sixth, but he could only bring the car home in 10th, the last car on the lead lap.

The NISMO-run Nissan of Matsuda and Quintarelli qualified on pole and led from the start. Closest rivals Satoshi Motoyama and Masataka Yanagida were delayed by a 10s stop-go penalty for overtaking under yellow flags, then the Dome-run Honda NSX of Naoki Yamamoto and Takuya Izawa, which was promoted to second, stalled in the pits. Izawa dropped to 12th, but stormed back through the field to finish third.

Daisuke Ito and Andrea Caldarelli inherited second, after their car was forced to start 13th after Ito had spun off in qualifying. Caldarelli battled through to fourth in his opening



ISHIHARA/LAT

An untroubled run gave Matsuda and Quintarelli the title

stint, and Ito made up another two places, which ensured they finished second in the championship, ahead of the unfortunate Rossiter.

● Jiro Takahashi

RESULTS

1 Tsugio Matsuda/Ronnie Quintarelli (Nissan GT-R), 53 laps in 1h32m32.446s; 2 Daisuke

Ito/Andrea Caldarelli (Lexus RC F), +51.744s; 3 Naoki Yamamoto/Takuya Izawa (Honda NSX); 4 Michael Krumm/Daiki Sasaki (Nissan); 5 Satoshi Motoyama/Masataka Yanagida (Nissan); 6 Juichi Wakisaka/Yuhi Sekiguchi (Lexus).

Points 1 Matsuda/Quintarelli, 81;

2 Ito/Caldarelli, 79; 3 James Rossiter, 68; 4 Yamamoto, 64; 5 Kazuki Nakajima, 60; 6 Hironobu Yasuda/Joao Paulo de Oliveira, 60.



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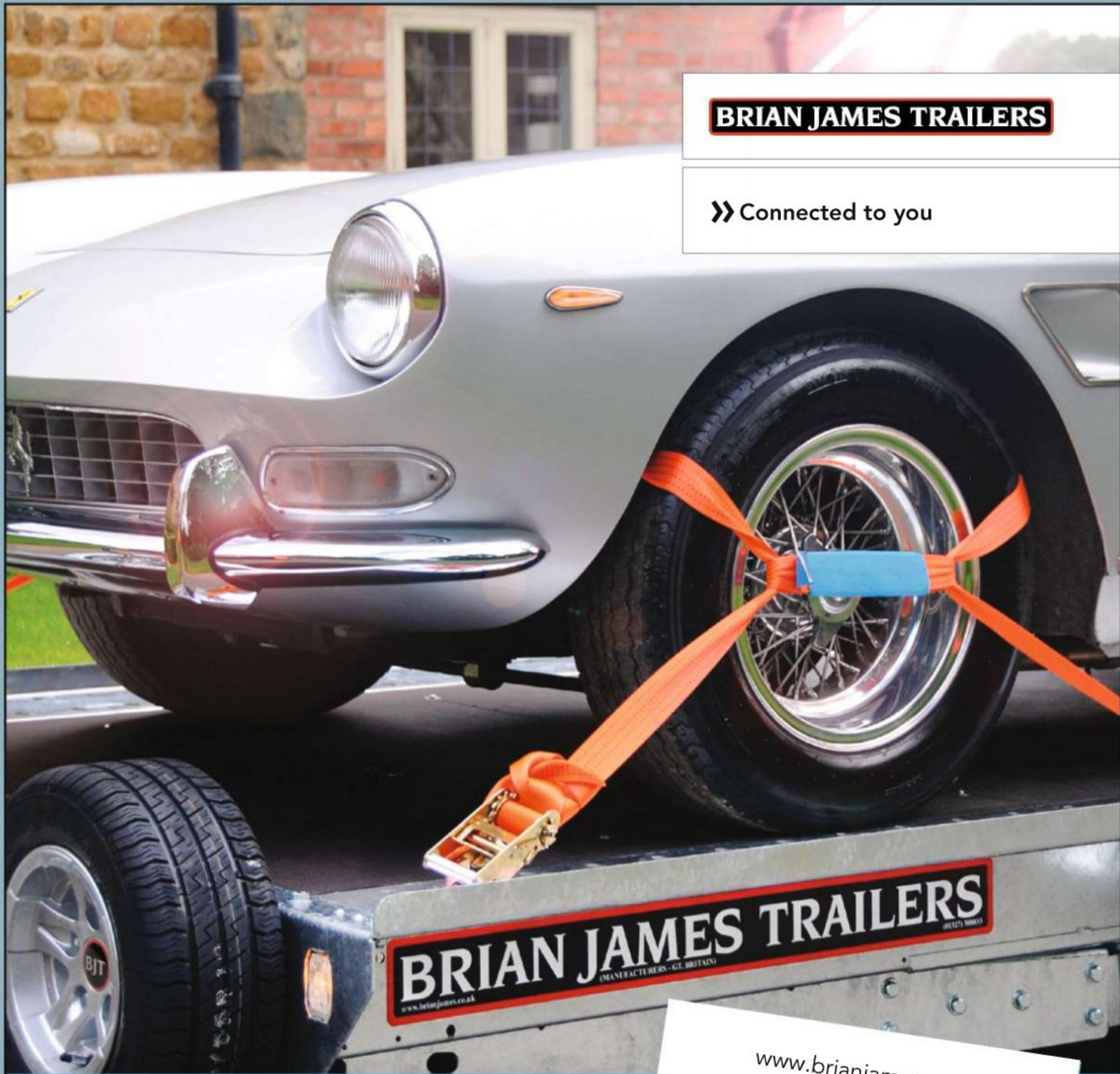
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Raven (right) emerged with victory in this year's Formula Ford Festival

HAWKINS

FFord Festival format revamp

BRSCC reveals nine-heat plan as classic event expands for 2015

FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL organiser the British Racing and Sports Car Club has unveiled plans for a major revamp of the classic event's format in 2015, with a dramatic increase in the number of races across the weekend to cater for an expanded entry.

The Festival hit capacity this year for the first time in recent seasons, prompting the BRSCC to widen the field from the current 56 maximum to up to 84 entries for 2015.

Under the proposed new format, nine 10-lap heats would take place across the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, with each driver racing three times. Qualifying sessions will set the field for the initial heats, with results from those shaping the following heats and drivers mixed up in new groups.

Points will be awarded for heat

results to decide the line-ups for the semi-finals, leading to the grand final as usual. The Historic Final remains and a Last Chance race is revived.

The revamp would mean a driver progressing to the final would go through five races over the weekend compared with the current three, and that everyone would be guaranteed a minimum of four races rather than two under the present two-heat system.

The BRSCC has invited competitor feedback on the proposals before committing to the format. It intends to keep the current £325 entry fee.

BRSCC competitions secretary Drew Furlong said: "We experienced a large gain in entries this year so we had to reset our targets and aim for more in 2015. This new format lets us run up to 84 cars, adding significantly more track time and means more FFord races on Sunday."

National FF1600 champion Stuart Gough welcomed the proposal. "It sounds good from a track-time point of view," he said. "It makes it more critical how you progress through the heats – more races means more opportunity to have problems, but also to come back through."

Brian Soule, whose Souley Motorsport team ran Jonny McMullen to second in this year's Festival, was concerned at the potential for costs to rise even with the entry fee unchanged. "I don't think it really needed a shake-up, just more cars on the grid," he said. "With that much racing in one weekend we're clearly going to need more than two sets of tyres, and to ensure I can turn the cars round for every heat I'll need more staff. Both put costs up. Limiting testing and increasing prize money would help."

The Festival revamp proposal comes amid plans for fellow FF1600 showpiece the Walter Hayes Trophy to expand to eight heats in 2015 (AUTOSPORT November 6). Gough added: "It's critical that both events work in unison and don't detract from each other. It's tough for club racers that they're so close together, many have to choose just one. But it's good that people are getting behind FF1600 and expanding the events. There's a real opportunity to get back to the glory days."



HAWKINS

A bigger field is expected in 2015

MATT BEER
DEPUTY EDITOR
AUTOSPORT.COM
matt.beer@
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ITS TYRES MAY BE TREADED, its cars wingless and its engines approaching prehistoric status, but it's easy to see why the quality of Formula Ford 1600 racing and the depth of competition it offers for a relatively modest price is so alluring for both fledgling racers and established national aces. And it's also easy to see why the current boom is tempting the category's prime-movers to eye expanded trophy events and for many in the paddock to ponder whether there's a market for a truly 'national' series with a more equal geographic spread than the present version.

Care must be taken, though, and that's why it's good to see the BRSCC floating ideas for consultation rather than just imposing them. FF1600's balance of regional hotbeds, quasi-national series and major shootout events is a rickety pyramid glued together by the dedication of the teams and drivers who held firm to the Kent cause as UK FFord flitted through its more modern, but less successful, incarnations. Finding paddock consensus can be tough when catering for teams both local and travelling long-distance, and both teenage drivers fresh out of karts and those in their fifth decade of racing, plus every background in between.

Its current success is partly because it's the most competitive starter option for young single-seater drivers of modest wealth. But even those using FF1600 as a springboard admit that it might be the most enjoyable car racing they'll ever experience and that they'll pine for its karting-style thrills if they do achieve their upwardly-mobile professional-racing-career ambitions. It's not just the money gulf above that makes FF1600 a hard world to leave.



Walter Hayes Trophy also plans to expand

EBREY



**Virtuosi ran
Andrea Roda
in Auto GP**

BRDC Formula 4

Virtuosi to evaluate drivers for F4 campaign

AUTO GP RACE-WINNING TEAM

Virtuosi Racing will select two drivers to run in a free BRDC Formula 4 test next month ahead of a planned move into the championship in 2015.

The British squad, established in 2012, is inviting drivers to apply to take part in its Snetterton test on December 4, which will precede a driver-development programme and BRDC F4 campaign next year alongside its Auto GP commitments.

"Junior formulae are there to teach drivers and hone their skills ready to move up the ladder," Andy Roche told AUTOSPORT.

"In the current climate it makes sense for drivers and sponsors to look at all the options carefully and ensure they choose the right championship and team that will give them the best learning curve on a sensible budget.

"Therefore, after evaluating various different junior series, we believe that

BRDC F4 affords the best value for money option for up and coming drivers at this stage."

Team co-owner Declan Lohan said Virtuosi had considered entering the MSA Formula category, but opted for BRDC F4 because it feared driver budgets would spiral in the new series.

"I totally agree with Adrian Newey regarding the costs involved in other entry level single-seater series," he said, referencing Formula 1 design guru

Newey's comments to AUTOSPORT last week (November 13).

"I'm delighted with the team we have and I think this will be a fantastic opportunity for these selected drivers to make use of the skills and knowledge of our staff and showcase their talent."

Any drivers that are interested in putting their names forward for consideration should contact Andy Roche via andy@virtuosiracing.com by November 24.

Porsche Carrera Cup GB

Robertson, Kruger eyeing switch to Carrera Cup

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

champion Charlie Robertson and provisional British Formula Ford title winner Jayde Kruger could move into the Porsche Carrera Cup GB in 2015.

The duo joined several drivers to take part in a Carrera Cup test at Silverstone earlier this month, with British GT4 champion Ross Wylie and Ginetta GT5 Challenge frontrunner Ollie Chadwick also among the runners.

Robertson said that he felt "really comfortable straight away" during the test, adding: "If I end up racing in the UK it will be in the Carrera Cup."

"The TOCA package is important but also the Porsche brand - it's highly credible and the prize fund, there's not anywhere else that can compete."

South African Kruger, whose Fford title is subject to an MSA national court of appeal hearing, said the Carrera Cup was his "first choice" for 2015.

"We're trying to secure the budget for that, but until your bum's in the seat, it's never certain," said Kruger, who added that his goal would be to reach Porsche Supercup "within a few years".



**Robertson was Ginetta
GT4 Supercup champion**

British GT

Radical ace Plato confirms British GT move for 2015

RADICAL FRONTRUNNER LEWIS
Plato will race in British GT next year.

Plato has tested GT3 machinery for numerous teams in recent months, including Ram Racing's newly acquired Mercedes SLS AMG and TF Sport's Aston Martin Vantage, but the 2013 Radical SR3 champion has yet to decide which team he will drive for.

"At the moment I'm talking to teams and trying to put together the right driving partnership," said Plato.

Ram Racing will race its new SLS at

**Plato is making jump to
GT racing from Radicals**



January's 24-hour race in Dubai but has not yet confirmed its 2015 plans, having withdrawn from the World Endurance Championship after the Le Mans 24 Hours for financial reasons. It is open to a move into the British GT Championship next year.

Team boss Dan Shufflebottom said that his outfit will run former British Touring Car star Tom Onslow-Cole, who tested the car alongside Plato, and Thomas Jager alongside a yet-to-be-confirmed third driver, in Dubai.

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Fun Cup

Brands track invader given eight-month jail sentence

THE MAN WHO DROVE A ROAD CAR onto the Brands Hatch circuit during a Fun Cup race has been sentenced to eight months in prison.

Jack Cottle had pleaded guilty to a public nuisance charge at Maidstone Crown Court last month after almost completing a full lap of the Kent circuit in his friend's Volkswagen Polo during the four-hour endurance event on June 14.

After being granted bail with a condition of residence, the 22-year-old was handed



Cottle startled Fun Cup racers

his sentence by Judge Martin Joy, who described Cottle's actions as "inexcusable" as he summed up.

"Your deliberate behaviour endangered not only your own life but those of your passengers, the competitors, the emergency services, the marshals, stewards and anyone else who was nearby," Judge Joy told Cottle.

"The sentence must reflect the need to deter others who might be tempted to act as you did," he added, having warned during Cottle's previous hearing that a jail sentence was likely.

In a statement, Jonathan Palmer, chief executive of Brands Hatch owner MotorSport Vision added: "[Cottle's] conviction and prison sentence will serve to reinforce the message that this kind of antisocial behaviour is not only stupid, but will lead to prosecution."

BRDC F4 Winter Championship

Gill weighing up '15 options

ALEX GILL COULD SWITCH TO BRDC Formula 4 full-time or to MSA Formula in 2015.

Gill was due to make his F4 debut in last weekend's Winter Series opener at Snetterton, but withdrew after his Mark Godwin Racing car sustained a gearbox failure during Thursday's test, before an oil leak ruled him out of Friday's sessions.

His father Steve said it was a mutual decision not to continue on Friday or take part in the races, despite paying for

the cost of the test days and the weekend, and was now focusing on finalising Gill's 2015 programme.

"We would like to do the Formula 3 European Championship or Formula Renault NEC, but we are also considering BRDC F4 and MSA Formula," he said.

Referring to Alex's FR BARC season, Gill Sr added: "With a deal that only allowed for four extra test days and no team-mate, Alex did not get the seat time to help with his progression as a driver."



Gill was a race winner in Formula Renault BARC

Renault Clio Cup UK

Cook to enter Clio squad

RENAULT CLIO CUP UK

runner-up Josh Cook will enter a multi-car outfit in the series next year under the 'Team Cooksport' banner.

Operating from new premises just outside Bristol, Cook could enter as many as four cars with his new team. But the 23-year-old confirmed he will not return to the championship himself.

"My father [Chris] will manage the team and we'll have the same engineers who were working with me this year," said Cook, who took six Clio wins in 2014.

"We're already talking to a few drivers, some experienced Clio racers and some newcomers," he added.

● Rory Collingbourne will race in the Clio Cup in 2015, stepping up from the Fiesta Junior championship. The 17-year-old has acquired a car from Paul Knapp, who contested selected rounds of this year's series with Collingbourne's team from Fiestas, Jam Sport.



Cook could enter up to four Clios next year

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club racing

Topliss gives R1A a celebratory run



Club members celebrate ERA's 80th anniversary

If the reverence in which English Racing Automobiles are held might seem disproportionate to major league successes in their youth, the longevity of the cars from Bourne never ceases to amaze. From R1A's 1934 debut to Bob Gerard's sixth places in the first two rounds of the inaugural World Championship in 1950 and beyond, they punched above their weight.

That there were only 17 A-D types, each subtly different, is a key to their charisma, and why 'custodianship' is, for many, a long-term aspiration. The fortunate few who have owned these splendid warhorses – particularly since values have rocketed from the few hundred pounds for which 'used-up racers' changed hands in the late 1950s/early '60s – are forever enshrined in their fascinating histories.

The ERA Club celebrated the 80th birthday of Raymond Mays and Peter Berthon's brainchild at Chateau Impney, Droitwich, on Saturday. The sight of Mays' works development R4D (now with Mac Hulbert) and Earl Howe's R8C (which the late Bruce Spollon acquired in '77) as door guardians made my spine tingle before I clocked Nick Topliss' R4A and Duncan Ricketts' GP1, first of two later Grand Prix cars, inside.

Earlier, Ricketts and Topliss had previewed the hill where the Spollon family – which took over the imposing hotel/conference centre in 2013 – will re-introduce motorsport next July, after a 48-year hiatus. At 1100 yards, the new course is twice the length of the original on which one-armed David Good (1100cc Cooper-JAP) set the first BTM on September 29, 1957.

BRDC member David, who hillclimbed and sprinted the

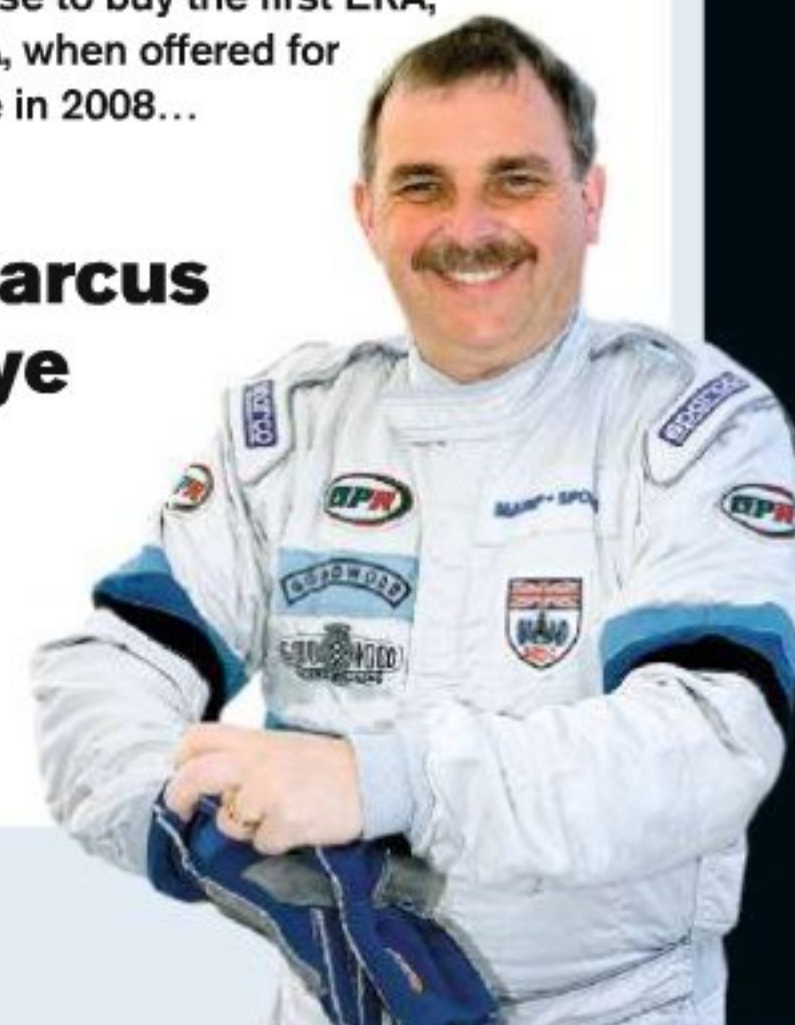
ex-Richard Seaman ERA R1B in '55 and '56, was among the throng of owners, drivers and engineers present. Fellow ERA tamers of yore in the celebration included Peter Waller, Brian Classick, Tony Merrick and Sir John Venables-Llewelyn.

Having campaigned R5B brilliantly for 24 years after his inimitable father Patrick's passing, Ludovic Lindsay's oration was a highlight.

"Ludovic Lindsay was honoured with the Francis Howe Trophy."

Just as Lindsay Sr spoke at the 1984 dinner and was honoured with the Francis Howe Trophy 'for furthering the ERA cause,' Ludo was the deserved recipient. As the only man to have let me loose in an ERA – I track-tested 'Remus' (American Charles McCabe's since 2010) for AUTOSPORT's 50th birthday issue in 2000 – he would have won my vote. Now, if only I had listened to my wife, who wanted to re-mortgage our house to buy the first ERA, R1A, when offered for sale in 2008...

Marcus Pye



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Wallace took the Champion
liveried Audi R8 to victory in
the Daytona Classic enduro



Daytona Classic 24 Hours

Wallace wins Daytona classic

THREE-TIME DAYTONA 24 HOUR winner Andy Wallace and co-driver Doug Smith won the highest profile class of HSR's inaugural Classic 24 Hour event at the Floridian venue on aggregate after four 45-minute races around the clock.

The showpiece embraced six age groups, from 1960-2013. The Champion Audi R8 raced by Wallace in 2001 did not have the pace of David Porter's ex-Rollcentre Pescarolo-Judd, but an error during the night by the expat Scottish FF1600 racer cost him time.

Second went to the 2003 Coyote-Chevrolet Daytona Prototype of Venezuela's Enzo Potolichio, while Michael Bartels anchored his 2004 FIA GT-winning Maserati MC12 to third with Niki Mayr-Melnhof and Neil Hommerson.

British success also came in the Group C era with Aaron Scott winning all four races in an ex-Leyton House Kremer Porsche 962, as Henrik Lindberg's Tic Tac 962 and several similar cars faded.

Victory in the earliest set, to 1972, went to the ex-Mecom Racing Lola T70

Mk1 of Belgian Marc Devis and Swiss Christian Traber, while Ollie and Grahame Bryant took second in their '67 Chevrolet Camaro. Philip Walker/Mike Jordan (Ford GT40) looked set for victory before an unlucky safety-car call and a clash with Chris Wilson/Nigel Williams (GT40).

Lotus F1 boss Gerard Lopez and Andy Ruhan shared an ex-Shelby 7-litre Ford GT40 Mk2 in this group, while Jurgen Barth, Jochen Mass, Brian Redman, Gijis van Lennep, Arturo Merzario and Christian Pescatori also starred.



In brief

GT Cup to Rockingham

The GT Cup (above) will race at Rockingham next season as part of an expanded 2015 calendar consisting of 22 races. The series will commence with a triple-header at Donington Park on April 25/26 and will end on October 10 at Oulton Park. May's Brands Hatch round will also act as a support event for the Blancpain Sprint Series.

Prema quits FRenault

Italian single-seater powerhouse Prema Powerteam has announced its withdrawal from the Formula Renault 2.0 Eurocup and ALPS series next season in order to focus on its European Formula 3 and Italian F4 programmes. The Milan-based outfit took Norwegian driver Dennis Olsen to second in the Eurocup points standings behind McLaren junior Nyck de Vries this year.

Allan Miles obituary

Popular historic racer Allan Miles died of pancreatic cancer on November 10, aged 62. Miles raced Sprites and a Formula Ford Merlyn before finding his forte in HGPCA events with Coopers and Gerry Hann's Cameron Millar Maserati 250F. Despite his illness, Allan competed at Monaco, Spa and Goodwood this season. His final race was at Portugal's Algarve Classic Festival last month.

Ken Nicholls obituary

Legendary fabricator Ken Nicholls passed away last week, having worked long into his 80s. Ken built his own Nike cars from 1961 – from a Formula Junior to an F5000 – although his FF1600s found most success. In later decades, his workshop in Holsworthy, North Devon was a mecca for racers seeking chassis repairs or replacement frames for race cars of many marques.

Caterham R300

Head to defend Superlight title

CATERHAM R300 SUPERLIGHT champion Aaron Head will continue in the series in 2015. The Team Parker Racing driver wants to build on his relationship with Stuart Parker's squad, which also runs cars in British GT and the Porsche Carrera Cup GB.

Head, 22, is a Caterham instructor with Parker and while a full British GT programme next year is out of the question he is hopeful of making a full-time switch the following season.



Head is sticking with
Team Parker



EcoBoost Ford cars
will race on in F5

Formula 5

BARC finalising F5 plans

THE BRITISH AUTOMOBILE

Racing Club is planning a new single-seater series next year, aimed at giving karters a route into car racing for as little as £30,000 per season.

The Formula 5 championship will use the now-obsolete EcoBoost Formula Ford chassis, which is being replaced by the FIA-backed MSA Formula Mygale in 2015.

Motorsport sponsorship consultant

Tony Lelliott is behind the concept, and is in the process of finalising both the exact budget and the calendar, which is likely to consist of six two-race events.

"I've always thought there has to be a more accessible way of helping karters graduate to cars, because at the moment you need a lot of money to do either BRDC F4 or MSA Formula," explained Lelliott.

BRDC F4 Winter Championship

Radical champ Smith may make F4 debut

RADICAL EUROPEAN MASTERS champion Bradley Smith could make his single-seater bow after testing his family team Mectech Motorsport's BRDC Formula 4 car this weekend.

Smith will take part in the two test days for the Winter Series finale at

Brands Hatch, after which a decision will be made as to whether the 23-year-old will race a second entry alongside the team's existing driver Connor Jupp.

"I'm there mainly to provide additional data for Connor," said Smith. "I could do more F4 races, but I'm too old to pursue

a career in single-seaters."

● Paul Sijes will join the F4 field after signing for Chris Dittmann Racing. The Dutchman has spent 2014 competing in the Formula Renault 1.6 NEC series, having previously raced at Brands during the Formula Ford Festival in 2012.



Smith has tested in
F4 but is yet to race



Kruger's clouded crown

JTR's recent winning tradition continued throughout the season but the final British Formula Ford title is still to be officially decided after a controversial last-round clash between frontrunners Jayde Kruger and Harrison Scott. By SCOTT MITCHELL

The final season of British Formula Ford developed into a cracker but ended in acrimony. At the time of writing we still do not have a confirmed champion.

After a season of utter domination by Dan Cammish in 2013, a two-way fight was a welcome change. JTR still proved the class act, with Jamun convert Jayde Kruger leading the line, but Falcon's sophomore Harrison Scott's consistency kept him atop the points for the majority.

Kruger won twice at Brands Hatch despite Scott qualifying on pole, and won twice again at Donington, with Scott's first victory of the season sandwiched in between (though Scott's race-three retirement while leading handing Kruger victory). James Abbott's reverse-grid win at Brands was the anomaly.

Another JTR car, Sam Brabham's, stole the limelight at Thruxton with two victories. Abbott's Radical team-mate Juan Rosso took

reverse-grid honours in between while Kruger struggled with a non-finish, a sixth and a second. Here, the signs of Scott's eventual consistency began to emerge, as the youngster took second and third before being punted into a spin and finishing seventh.

Scott won from pole at Oulton Park ahead of Kruger, who charged through to victory in the reverse-grid race with Scott behind after Brabham rolled out at Island, an incident which ended his season. Kruger and Scott repeated their race two results in the finale, but the JTR man toiled at Croft while Scott raced to victory in the opening stanza and bagged a pair of third-place finishes to take the lead of the points for the first time.

The star in the north-east was Ashley Sutton, who began the year with Meridian Motorsport and skipped Donington before returning at Thruxton with Jamun. Podiums immediately followed but Croft marked his maiden victory, and he replicated his second-place

finish in race one by chasing Abbott home in the final race.

If not for Sutton's emergence as arguably the quickest driver on the grid, Kruger could have waltzed into a strong lead in the second half of the year as Scott suffered from a lack of pace eventually traced to a chassis issue. To Scott's credit, he performed admirably despite going three weekends without the pace to challenge for victories.

While Max Marshall took a maiden win in the opener at Snetterton, Scott was second (Sutton and Kruger clashed on the opening lap). Sutton beat Ricky Collard to race-two victory, while Scott defended for his life from Kruger to take third. A third win from five races then beckoned for Sutton with Kruger P2, while Scott was fourth. Though he never had the pace to win, Scott extended his points lead during the weekend.

Kruger took a brace of victories in Knockhill, helped by race-one winner Sutton flying off the road at the final corner in race two with brake failure. Scott was second, third and third to keep the points loss to a minimum.

On the front foot, Kruger beat Sutton in the opening Rockingham race – handing team-mate Marshall a second win of the year – but retired from the second with a fuel-pump issue. Though he returned to win the finale, Scott had netted a trio of third-place finishes, putting him 17 points clear with two rounds remaining.

Scott's effort was boosted by a new chassis for Silverstone and he beat Sutton in a straight fight to nab second in the opener behind Kruger, only to finish the second race eighth after a clash with his rival early on. Sutton and Abbott beat Kruger to minimise the loss but another win for Kruger in race three, with Scott second again, meant the two entered the finale equal on points.

Scott won the opener after Sutton threw it off at Paddock, with Kruger only fourth. But then came the controversy – with Kruger leading race two, Scott attempted to pass him at Druids. They collided, and Scott was out immediately. Kruger went on to win, Falcon protested, and Kruger was thrown out. JTR then appealed and Kruger was reinstated – so although Scott won the finale, eighth was enough to win Kruger the title.

That remains provisional, though, pending an MSA hearing due in December. It leaves a dark cloud over an otherwise great season.

Ashley Sutton
established himself
as a pacesetter



CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

DRIVER	POINTS	WINS
1 JAYDE KRUGER	717	13
2 HARRISON SCOTT	711	5
3 ASHLEY SUTTON	567	5
4 JUAN ROSSO	561	1
5 MAX MARSHALL	560	2
6 JAMES ABBOTT	556	2

OTHER WINNERS

SAM BRABHAM	2
-------------	---

2014 PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB REVIEW

Rookie Webster excels

The GT newcomer stunned double champion and team-mate Michael Meadows by becoming the first driver to win the Carrera Cup GB in his scholarship season. SCOTT MITCHELL reports

The 2014 Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion was always going to go into the record books, be it Josh Webster for being a GT rookie, or double champion Michael Meadows pulling off a hat trick.

Few expected ex-single-seater racer Webster to take the fight to Meadows the way he did, though. A mid-season surge coupled with some mechanical misfortune for the series stalwart made the difference.

It was Meadows who took the early initiative. Webster was never a factor in the opening two races at Brands Hatch, which were won on the road by Porsche Supercup racer and guest driver Ben Barker. Meadows claimed pole position, but the ineligible-for-points Barker twice swept past at the start to win both with relative ease.

Meadows increased his victory tally further when the series moved on to Donington Park, and Webster – who had been third and fourth at Brands – found himself with a car between them again as Karl Leonard starred in second. That third place seemed of little consequence at the time, but it sparked a magnificent run for Webster in which he never again finished off the podium and ended up outside the top two just once for the rest of the season.

When Meadows moved across on Leonard and sent himself spinning to the back in race two at Donington, Webster was there to pick up the pieces, managed a mid-race downpour with impressive composure after pitting for wets, and took his maiden victory as Meadows managed fourth.

The champion recovered with a dominant brace at Thruxton, with Webster second twice, meaning Meadows led by 16 points heading to the championship's blue-riband round – a support race at the



Webster (9) took first win at Donington after Meadows (1) spun

Le Mans 24 Hours as part of a huge 60-car grid comprising the British and French Carrera Cups.

While the impressive Barker – back for the showpiece round as a championship entrant – won the race outright and took maximum British points, Webster delivered a sensational performance to charge through from 18th on the grid to finish seventh overall and second of the British runners, passing Meadows en route.

“Le Mans was definitely the one where my bid came alive,” says Webster. “I overtook Michael with a lap to go and to come through against that level of opposition, that’s when I thought I could take the fight to him.”

The next rounds back in the UK went only one way. Single-seater convert Paul Rees had a slow start to the year but claimed pole for the Croft opener, only for Webster to pass him immediately and romp into a seven-point championship lead as Meadows watched from the

sidelines after damaging his chassis in qualifying. Webster converted his first pole into a third victory of the year in race two as Meadows returned to finish second, but the new points leader was on a roll and took his tally to three poles and five wins after the summer break, comfortably beating an out-of-sorts Meadows twice at Snetterton to boost his lead to 16.

Knockhill, where Webster had never previously raced, proved an opportunity for Meadows to hit back and he duly won twice from pole, though Webster was again in his shadow. Another victory followed at Rockingham, and Webster just defeated Victor Jimenez to hold second again, though only after FIA Formula 3 European Championship racer Nicholas Latifi had spun out of the runner-up spot.

Rees broke the Meadows-Webster monopoly at the front in race two with a brilliant breakthrough victory. Meadows, who was running ahead of Webster in second, suffered a fuel pump problem that dropped him to a lapped 11th – advantage Webster again.

Meadows retaliated with a pair of grand slams at Silverstone to rescue every point on offer as Webster struggled to defeat Jimenez in the opener and was then third behind Rees in the second. A similar scenario at Brands would win him the title.

Last year’s British Formula Ford champion Dan Cammish turned up

in the guest car to steal both poles and stunned in the opening race with a dominant victory, but his ineligibility for points did not impact on the title fight.

What did was Webster getting the upper hand early on Meadows. The points leader was first on to slicks as the track dried in qualifying and pipped Meadows to the points for poles, with Cammish discounted. He then picked up maximum points despite finishing second in race one, with Meadows only fourth.

Rain complicated things further during the season finale, in which Cammish was long gone up the road when Webster opted to let Meadows past in order to play it safe as they both remained on the wet track on slick tyres.

The champion was jubilant, while Meadows insisted he had no regrets. “I couldn’t really have done much more,” he reflected. “It is a kick in the teeth but we had a lot of wins.”



Meadows won the most races but missed some chances to score

CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

DRIVER	POINTS	WINS
1 JOSH WEBSTER	357	5
2 MICHAEL MEADOWS	348	9
3 PAUL REES	250	1
4 VICTOR JIMENEZ	242	0
5 PEPE MASSOT	135	0
6 JUSTIN SHERWOOD	128	0

OTHER WINNERS

BEN BARKER	3
DAN CAMMISH	1

Remarkable Robertson

2012 Junior champion Charlie Robertson was set to race European single-seaters in 2014 but a return to the Ginetta fold beckoned – with impressive results. **RUSSELL HAYES** explains



Robertson re-ignited charge at Oulton after Thruxton slump

This season's Ginetta GT4 Supercup may have lacked substantial grid numbers at most races, but it certainly made up for that lack of quantity with a quality field and some outstanding racing.

Former champion Carl Breeze secured his customary late return, this time with British GT race-winning squad United Autosports, which made its series debut. Reigning champion outfit JHR Developments continued, as did Douglas Motorsport with second-year racer Andrew Watson, the Northern Irishman who was tipped as a title contender, while leading Renault UK Clio Cup squad SV Racing also made its debut with former Ginetta GT5 Challenge ace David Pittard.

But the really unexpected news on the grid was the sportscar return of 17-year-old Charlie Robertson. The 2012 Ginetta Junior champion made the switch to single-seater racing in last season's BRDC Formula 4 Championship. After a successful third place finish, along with a nomination for the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award and winter testing in a Formula Renault, the expectation was that he was laying the foundations to move up that particular car-racing ladder.

Robertson's return was therefore a huge surprise. The Scot entered with HHC Motorsport, with which he had success in Juniors and F4. But like Robertson, the team was also new to Ginetta's top category.

And although the team took delivery of his G55 less than a month before the season opener at Brands Hatch in March, Robertson was immediately at the sharp end, claiming a race victory.

It was Watson who led the early stages in the points though, claiming a win and two further podiums in Kent. However, Robertson soon set about dominating the early stages of race weekends, claiming a series of pole positions at Donington Park, Thruxton, Oulton Park, Croft and Snetterton. During that spell of 14 races, Robertson claimed five victories and three further podiums.

It wasn't without anguish. He suffered his worst weekend in Hampshire, where a clutch issue meant he fluffed the start from pole and was forced into a recovery job to rescue a fifth-place finish. Another fifth in race two followed, then a disastrous 10th on shot rubber in the final encounter. That, combined with Watson's victory, ensured the title race remained wide open.

Breeze and United Autosports suffered chronic setup woes early on, with understeer preventing any sort of success, while his teammate Luke Davenport at least claimed a solitary reverse-grid victory alongside Pepe Massot and Tom Oliphant.

Robertson's recovery began at Oulton Park with two victories, where Watson's fortunes went in the opposite direction. As Pittard



David Pittard (leading) won twice at Silverstone

began to demonstrate his mettle, Robertson reclaimed the championship lead at Croft despite not registering a win. From that point on, he would not cede the lead again.

Breeze began to make an impression after the summer break. Two wins and a further podium in north Yorkshire put him into the mix, and he moved into second in the championship at Snetterton as double victor Robertson dominated. The less consistent Watson continued to slide away.

Breeze was staunch in the defence of his race one lead from Robertson at Knockhill, and the former BTCC driver celebrated 100 Supercup starts with victory in race two. But fortunes were to take a turn, and his Scottish victories would be his last of 2014. Robertson kept motoring and Pittard found a rich vein of form which began with a double

victory at Silverstone, to the points leader's benefit as he stretched out a lead of 56 points to Breeze, ahead of the final weekend.

Watson finished second twice at Silverstone, then found further solace with a double win in the finale while Pittard stole second in the points when Breeze retired. Robertson wrapped up the title with second place and then won the last race to cap a magnificent season. 🏆

CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

DRIVER	POINTS	WINS
1 CHARLIE ROBERTSON	710	8
2 DAVID PITTARD	627	5
3 CARL BREEZE	615	4
4 ANDREW WATSON	608	5
5 TOM OLIPHANT	546	2
6 LUKE DAVENPORT	451	2

OTHER WINNERS

PEPE MASSOT	1
-------------	---

Pyro move
paid dividends
for Bushell



2014 RENAULT CLIO CUP UK REVIEW

Bushell's breakthrough

Team Pyro's charger bounced back from a troubled start to snatch the Clio title with a late charge. SCOTT MITCHELL looks at Mike Bushell's transformation to tin-top champ

A reduced grid of Renault Clios produced another ultra-close battle at the front in 2014, as Mike Bushell earned the first UK title with the new fourth-generation Cup car. Bushell's previous two seasons had been and gone without a race victory, though his move to Team Pyro was almost a guarantee that would change.

He started the season strongly, qualifying off the front row just once in the opening six races, and bagged that elusive first victory at Thruxton, the fifth race of the year.

But there were still errors, such as at the first corner during the second round at Donington Park when he squeezed poleman Jordan Stilp, hit the 20Ten man and ended up in the barriers. The clash allowed Josh Cook to nip past Stilp and move clear to complete a commanding double victory. That made it four wins from four for KX Academy-backed, SV Racing-run drivers following Alex Morgan's brace at the Brands curtain-raiser.

Morgan never reached those heights again but Cook continued to star. He more than doubled Bushell's tally in the opening half of the year as his rival, despite being in the top four in six of the first seven counters, could only manage a best result of fourth across the races at Oulton Park and Croft. Bushell reached the summer break with just three podiums from 10 races.

Cook seemed to be the only driver able to maintain front-running pace across consecutive weekends. When Bushell and James Colburn won at Thruxton, Cook was second and third. He then won at Oulton Park, before Colburn – third in the opener – won again in race two. Colburn was only 10th in the Croft opener (won by Stilp), then finished second as Stilp won again. The north-east round was the toughest weekend of Cook's campaign – fourth and a retirement – while Bushell was sixth and 11th.

Not finishing substantially reduced Cook's lead at the summer break, but he had more points, more

wins and more podiums than anyone else in the first 10 races. Bushell threw away a golden chance to rein in Cook at Snetterton when he was jumped from pole in race one and finished second to the points leader, then stalled on pole in race two and recovered to sixth while Cook completed his double.

"I have to be honest, I didn't think I was going to do it," reflects Bushell. "I put too much pressure on myself early in the year. Snetterton was the low, but I suddenly clicked."

It meant Cook was 34 points clear of Colburn with half a dozen races remaining and almost 50 free of Bushell, but after his missed opportunity at Snetterton, Bushell bagged what he felt was a "surprise" win in the Knockhill opener and grabbed third in the sequel behind Stilp and Ash Hand, another SV Racing driver who was as quick as anyone on his day, but would go missing most others in a highly frustrating fashion.

Bushell's resurgence, by coincidence, came as Cook faltered. His final eight races included the same number of wins as the first 10, but he retired twice, was eighth twice at Knockhill and ninth at Rockingham in the opener before beaching it in the Tarzan gravel in the sequel.

That weekend, Cook's low point, was the peak of Bushell's crescendo. He won twice, the first from pole, and hit the summit of the points for the first time.

Cook suddenly had a lot to do at the Brands finale, but gave himself hope with a measured victory in the first race as his SVR team-mates did their best to keep Bushell at bay – fourth for the points leader meant Cook would have to win again in the denouement with his rival outside the top six.

Cook was challenged by Colburn into Paddock for the first time and they touched, sending Colburn 180 degrees as Cook slewed sideways but just held it together. Bushell was in the firing line of the rotating car, and had to throw the anchors down to avoid a collision.

Into the lead went Paul Rivett – whose season had been below his usual excellent standards as he dovetailed driving responsibilities with a new role as team leader of fledgling Clio squad WDE.

The title was decided when Cook shot into the Paddock gravel as he tried to pass Rivett for the lead; Bushell was champion. He charged back through to third as Rivett finally took his first WDE win.

Cook's campaign ended
in the gravel at Brands



CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

DRIVER	POINTS	WINS
1 MIKE BUSHELL	415	4
2 JOSH COOK	372	6
3 JORDAN STILP	351	3
4 ANT WHORTON-EALES	342	0
5 JAMES COLBURN	330	2
6 ALEX MORGAN	330	2
OTHER WINNERS		
PAUL RIVETT		1

2014 GINETTA JUNIOR REVIEW

Mitchell to the fore

Jack Mitchell built on a race-winning rookie season to come out firing in 2014 against a horde of impressive new talents. By RUSSELL HAYES

Compared with its older brother, the Ginetta Junior Championship attracted a very healthy grid with driving standards markedly improved from 2013. In a talented field that included the Winter Series winner and a European karting champion, there was one driver who made an early impression to stand out from the rest of the pack.

Heading into the season, JHR Developments ace Jack Mitchell was the clear favourite alongside fellow second-year Junior entrant and winter winner James Kellett. Kellett had a new team-mate at the HHC Motorsport squad in European karting champion Lando Norris, who proved a high-profile if sometimes controversial addition to the grid.

It was Mitchell who stormed out of the blocks at Brands Hatch, claiming a confident double victory. Kellett took second in the opening

encounter but was then caught up in a start-line shunt, finishing 15th. That would be a hallmark of the season to come.

Another fine double for Mitchell followed at Donington Park with Norris claiming a brace of second places, demonstrating the threat he would become on a more regular basis as his experience increased. Kellett suffered problems in race two, ignoring a drive-through penalty, for which he was excluded.

Mitchell left Leicestershire with a 47-point advantage from Ryan Hadfield, who had made a strong start. But Kellett had a lot of work to do, 89 points behind the leader and down in eighth place.

Mitchell, who is part of the junior programme of British Touring Car squad Motorbase, suffered his worst weekend of the season at Thruxton. He was involved in an incident with Norris at the start of the first skirmish, leading to his retirement, although Kellett was

also caught up in the fracas. The points leader was then spun out of the frontrunning pack on the final lap of race two as he attempted to pass impressive rookie Jamie Caroline, and was forced to settle for sixth place. Mitchell's team-mate Dan Zelos, another rookie, took full advantage to claim his first win of the year.

Mitchell returned to winning ways at Oulton Park with Kellett once again his closest challenger. Norris was in the wars, and was disqualified after a final-corner clash for the final podium spot with Jamie Chadwick.

By the time Kellett scored his first win of the season at Croft, Mitchell's 93-point lead was dominant enough for him to reconsider his strategy heading in to the mid-season break. Instead of targeting race wins, he opted for banking consistent points throughout the rest of the year. He only took one more win, at

Silverstone in September following a clash between Zelos and Kellett.

Norris banked his first car-racing win at Croft, sharing the other with Kellett, and the duo also shared the victories at Snetterton and Knockhill as HHC put its stamp on the sharp end in style. Kellett, who claimed four further podiums during this period, clinched another victory at Rockingham before Zelos ended the team's run of wins in race two. Mitchell was cautiously picking up the points at this stage but was then let loose at Silverstone, where victory and a fourth place put him on the brink of the title.

When Kellett failed to claim pole position at the Brands Hatch finale, Mitchell was crowned champion, though his season ended on a sour note, up against the Druids barrier on the opening tour of the final.

Caroline had already taken the win in the opening race and followed Norris home in the second. Victory for Norris, who tangled with team-mate Kellett, meant he secured top rookie honours in the points, as Hadfield slipped to fourth by the end.

Lando Norris (11) and James Kellett (13) won for HHC squad



CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

DRIVER	POINTS	WINS
1 JACK MITCHELL	513	7
2 JAMES KELLETT	456	5
3 LANDO NORRIS	432	4
4 DAN ZELOS	377	2
5 RYAN HADFIELD	347	0
6 JAMIE CAROLINE	320	2

TOP 10

Drivers who stood out

We reveal the drivers that have impressed us most in the BTCC support package this season

10



David Pittard
Ginetta GT4 Supercup

Stepped up from the GT5 Challenge with aplomb and showed he was as quick on his day as arguably one of last year's best British junior single-seater racers. Would be a title favourite if he returned next year.

9



Josh Cook
Renault Clio Cup UK

You can make a good case for Cook being the quickest driver on the Clio grid this year. Impressive win tally, but the way his title challenge unravelled late on shows there's still work to be done.

8



Jack Mitchell
Ginetta Junior

The second-season racer came out of the blocks firing, winning six races before the summer break. Did what he had to do thereafter, and Silverstone victory showed he could still win when it mattered.

7



Michael Meadows
Porsche Carrera Cup GB

More wins in a season than ever before, but no title to show for it. Donington aside, the double champion was faultless this year, though ultimately Le Mans, Croft and Snetterton cost him dearly.

6



Harrison Scott
British Formula Ford

Remarkable podium tally bettered that of 2013 dominator Dan Cammish, and he ended the year with two wins after a difficult spell. McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award spot fully justified.

5



Josh Webster
Porsche Carrera Cup GB

Made a little bit of Porsche history in 2014 by becoming the first driver to win the title in his scholarship year. Bested Meadows four rounds out of nine and was never off the series podium after the opener.

4



Jayde Kruger
British Formula Ford

More wins than any other driver showed Kruger and JTR had the best package over the season. Difficult Thruxton and Croft meetings stymied his efforts, as did bad luck, but a deserving champion.

3



Mike Bushell
Renault Clio Cup

Bushell knew he needed to sort out his rough edges if he was to become a race winner, let alone a champion. Team Pyro did the trick and his form during the title run-in was as fine as any you'll see.

2



Ashley Sutton
British Formula Ford

Had he started the year with Jamun he would probably have been champion. Easily the most entertaining driver on the grid, and that's why he tops the title protagonists on this list.



1

Charlie Robertson
Ginetta GT4 Supercup

It was disappointing, though entirely understandable, that the youngster didn't follow the single-seater path this year, but that discipline's loss was the TOCA package's gain. Sticking with his favoured HHC team, Robertson adapted to GT cars in no time at all and was usually the quickest in the field. More importantly, he knew what to do when he wasn't. Mature beyond his years.

Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE, UK.
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5804 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5922
E-mail: autosport@haymarket.com Website: www.autosport.com

EDITOR
Charles Bradley ext.5889
charles.bradley@haymarket.com

DEPUTY EDITOR
Marcus Simmons ext.5807
marcus.simmons@haymarket.com

GROUP F1 EDITOR
Jonathan Noble ext.5810
jonathan.noble@haymarket.com

GRAND PRIX EDITOR
Edd Straw ext.5887
edd.straw@haymarket.com

F1 ASSISTANT EDITOR
Ben Anderson ext.5425
ben.anderson@haymarket.com

EDITOR AUTOSPORT.COM
Glenn Freeman ext.5309
glenn.freeman@haymarket.com

DEPUTY EDITOR AUTOSPORT.COM
Matt Beer ext.5811
matt.beer@haymarket.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Peter Hodges ext.5903
peter.hodges@haymarket.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Stuart Codling ext.5835
stuart.codling@haymarket.com

RALLIES EDITOR
David Evans
david.evans@haymarket.com

ART EDITOR
Lynsey Row ext.5914
lynsey.row@haymarket.com

SENIOR DESIGNER
Michael Cavalli ext.5381
michael.cavalli@haymarket.com

PHOTOGRAPHS
LAT Photographic

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Scott Mitchell ext.5370
scott.mitchell@haymarket.com

GROUP PICTURE EDITOR
Peter Mills ext.5918
peter.mills@haymarket.com

AUTOSPORT.COM TECHNICAL TEAM LEADER
Geoff Creighton
geoff.creighton@haymarket.com

AUTOSPORT.COM DEVELOPER
Tomasz Trznadel
tomasz.trznadel@haymarket.com

OFFICE MANAGER
Joanne Grove ext.5804
joanne.grove@haymarket.com

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Gary Watkins Mark Glendenning Alan Eldridge
Henry Hope-Frost Dieter Rencken Pablo Elizalde
Marcus Pye Gary Anderson

CORRESPONDENTS

ARGENTINA
Tony Watson
AUSTRALIA
Phil Branagan
AUSTRIA
Gerhard Kuntzsch
BELGIUM
Gordon McKay
BRAZIL
Lito Cavalcanti
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ADVERTISING

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5389
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5850
E-mail: autosport.ads@haymarket.com

DISPLAY SALES

MANAGER
Martin Lee
ext.5389
martin.lee@haymarket.com

DISPLAY ADVERTISING
Gary Lee Hoebeek
ext.5576
garylee.hoebeek@haymarket.com

Luke Picketts ext.5961
luke.picketts@haymarket.com

Don Ruppel ext.5244
donruppel@haymarket.com

CLASSIFIED SALES MANAGER
Jonathan Whitehead
ext.5908
jonathan.whitehead@haymarket.com

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

James Hunter
ext.5367
james.hunter@haymarket.com

Jamie Brooker
ext.5271
jamie.brooker@haymarket.com

ONLINE ADVERTISING
Leah Mimms ext.5846
leahmimms@haymarket.com

Matt Simpkin ext.5820
matt.simpkin@haymarket.com

SPECIAL PROJECTS SALES
James Robinson
ext.5384
james.robinson@haymarket.com

AD PRODUCTION

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5588 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5320

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Matthew Witham
LICENSING DIRECTOR
Jim James

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Ailsa Donovan
ext.5639
ailsa.donovan@haymarket.com

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER
Abbey Gunner
ext.5588
abbey.gunner@haymarket.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK 0844 8488817
OVERSEAS +44 (0)1795 592 974
EMAIL autosport@servicehelpline.co.uk

BACK ISSUES

Tel: 0844 8488817

MARKETING MANAGER
Karen McCarthy ext.5658
karen.mccarthy@haymarket.com

LICENSING AND SYNDICATION
LICENSING MANAGER
David Ryan ext.5024

MANAGEMENT

GROUP DIRECTOR
Tim Bulley
GROUP COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
Ben Guynan
GROUP EDITOR
Anthony Rowlinson
PUBLISHER
Stuart Williams

PUBLISHING MANAGER
Samantha Jemson
SPECIAL EVENTS MANAGER
Laura Coppin
DIGITAL SPECIAL PROJECT MANAGER
Simon Strang, ext. 5093
simon.strang@haymarket.com
DIGITAL PRODUCT MANAGER
Simon Grayson, ext. 5346
simon.grayson@haymarket.com

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Mark Payton
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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



Ecclestone says F1 has no need of a young fanbase

COATES/LAT

Bernie misses the point

I fear Bernie Ecclestone has lost touch with the business he has done so much to build. His assertion that a lack of spending power renders younger consumers irrelevant misses the point on a scale that is frankly embarrassing.

Brand equity and revenue are not determined solely by price point. For example, a high percentage of Coca-Cola sales are made to younger people. A can of Coke costs just 50p, but the company has

annual sales of over \$46 billion and is ranked the third most valuable brand in the world. If Bernie thinks F1 doesn't need such companies, he should perhaps consider that two of the remaining teams are bankrolled entirely through the sale of energy drinks at about £1 a throw.

I doubt many of the cash-rich 70-year-olds he wishes to target buy cans of Red Bull. Young people, however, do.

Daniel Durrant, Cromer, Norfolk

No, Mr Ecclestone, young

people haven't got a lot of money now, but they are the future of this world we live in – they're the next investors, the next drivers, the next engineers, the next spectators, the next designers...

A marketing manager once said to me: "Do you know why we need to get new customers? Because the old ones die!"
Bob Smith
By email

If Bernie Ecclestone's thoughts
on youth aren't proof he needs to go, I don't know what is.

While I certainly fit into the older age group he thinks he needs to attract, even I can see that the future of F1 lies with the younger generation. What happens when we oldies all fall off our perches or get so fed up with the way F1 is going that we

cease to watch? If he doesn't get the youth on board, what hope is there?

Sadly it just shows his elitist attitude where having money counts for everything but enthusiasm means nothing.

Tony Bagwell
Taunton, Somerset

It is beyond ridiculous to suggest
that Formula 1 can live without a younger audience. You only have to look at US motorsport to realise how bad a job F1 does in attracting sponsorship.

Matt Larnar
Solihull, West Midlands

At the end of such a fantastic
weekend, during which the best of British motorsport has been projected onto the world stage, there were many hundreds of people packing up and going home

bleary-eyed and exhausted.

These were the people who gave their time and made a huge effort to make it all possible, and they can be incredibly proud of their contribution to making this year's Wales Rally GB one of the best.

To all of you, I offer my sincerest thanks; we genuinely couldn't do it without you.

My abiding memories will be the stages lined with fans and a buzzing service park. Everywhere you looked there were smiling faces and families having a great time.

Thanks to the support of the Welsh government and the backing of Conwy council and other local authorities, the event has found a great new home in North Wales. We look forward to building on this success and making Wales Rally GB one of the best events in the world.

Ben Taylor, managing director,
International Motor Sports

In pictures

Images around the globe, from North Wales to Miami – via Macau

THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Macau offers the toughest street-race challenge of anywhere in the world – with some amazing backdrops too as the cars drive up the mountain section of track



SWANN DIVES IN AT THE DEEP END

Former England cricket star Graeme Swann rolled on the first stage but finished 45th driving a Ford Fiesta R200 on the Rally GB National



PLENTY OF ROOM THERE...

Jean-Karl Vernay demonstrates the skills required to heave his massive Bentley Continental between the walls of Macau's Guia street circuit



DAD, THEY'VE MADE A MESS!

Kevin Harvick's son Keelan didn't approve of the stars that were showered on his dad's winning NASCAR, so he thought he'd start cleaning them up



In the shops

Desirable new releases

GRAND PRIX ARTWORKS

From £40 – grandprixartworks.com
Artist Alan Walsh has created these distinctive graphic depictions of some of the legendary race circuits, including Monaco, Monza, Silverstone, Spa and Suzuka. A2 prints on 220gsm matt paper are £40, with framed, signed and numbered editions at £95. Check the website for the full range.



OFFICIAL WILLIAMS APPAREL

From £24.99 – autosport.com/shop
The official 2014 Williams Martini Racing range includes a 100 per cent cotton twill baseball cap (£24.99), a polyester mesh Sport T-shirt (£44.99) and a Pitcrew Polo shirt (£54.99). All the gear features the famous Martini stripes and the correct sponsors' logos.



TYRRELL 003 1:20-SCALE KIT

£47.45 – grandprixmodels.com
Much is expected of Ebbro's 1:20-scale retro F1 plastic kits, thanks to the incredible detail of its early efforts in the shape of the Lotus 49 and 72. Its latest offering, the 1971 Monaco GP-winning Tyrrell 003, upholds that reputation, with realism that raises the bar even higher.



WHAT'S ON

ON TRACK IN THE UK

BRANDS HATCH

MSVR

22-23 November

brandshatch.co.uk

The Kent circuit provides the backdrop for the second and final round of this year's BRDC F4 Winter Championship. After taking three of a possible four wins at the season opener at Snetterton earlier this month, Will Palmer, son of series boss Jonathan, will have one eye

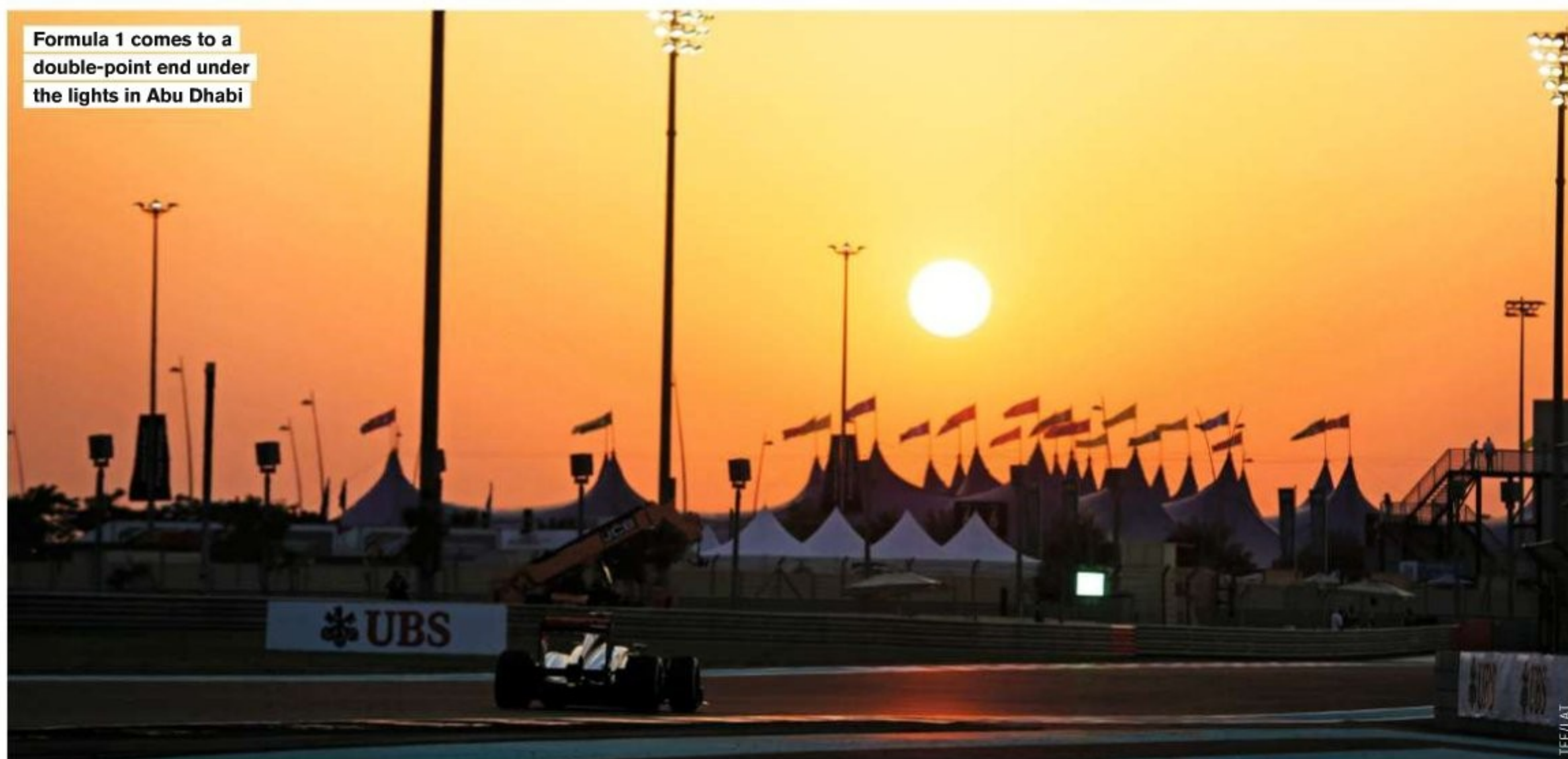
firmly on title glory. But chief rival Gaetano di Mauro will be hoping to ensure the points leader doesn't have things all his own way, while Adrian Newey's son Harrison will also be out to improve on an impressive UK single-seater debut. Support action comes in the form of the MSVT Trackday and Team Trophy events, as well as the Victor Meldrew Trophy, Monoposto and Formula Vee.



BRDC F4 winter series reaches a climax this weekend

ON TRACK AROUND THE WORLD

Formula 1 comes to a double-point end under the lights in Abu Dhabi



ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX

Formula 1 World Championship
Rd 19/19
Yas Marina,
United Arab Emirates
November 23
f1.com

GP2 SERIES

Rd 11/11
Yas Marina,
United Arab Emirates
November 22-23
gp2series.com

GP3 SERIES

Rd 9/9
Yas Marina,
United Arab Emirates
November 22-23
gp3series.com

FORMULA E

Rd 2/10
Putrajaya, Malaysia
November 22
fiaformulae.com



Formula E takes to the streets once more

Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world – plus TV and online

ON TELEVISION

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 20

1100-1145 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP press conference

2100-2330 Sky Sports F1

Classic F1: 2010 Abu Dhabi GP

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 21

0715-0805 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

GP2: Abu Dhabi practice

0845-1100 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP practice 1

0855-1035 BBC2 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP practice 1

1100-1135 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

GP3: Abu Dhabi qualifying

1245-1445 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP practice 2

1300-1435 BBC2 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP practice 2

1445-1535 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

GP2: Abu Dhabi qualifying

1600-1645 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP press conference

2100-2145 Sky Sports F1

Classic F1: 1982 US GP

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 22

0500-0730 ITV4 LIVE

Formula E: Putrajaya

0800-0900 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

GP3: Abu Dhabi race 1

0945-1115 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP practice 3

0955-1105 BBC2 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP practice 3

1200-1435 Sky Sports F1 Live

F1: Abu Dhabi GP qualifying

1210-1415 BBC1 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP qualifying



1435-1605 Sky Sports F1 Live

GP2: Abu Dhabi race 1

1605-1650 Sky Sports F1

Classic F1: 1986 Australian GP

2100-2200 BT Sport 2

Formula E: Putrajaya

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 23

0855-0955 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

GP3: Abu Dhabi race 2

1015-1130 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

GP2: Abu Dhabi race 2

1200-1530 Sky Sports F1 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP

1210-1530 BBC1 LIVE

F1: Abu Dhabi GP

MONDAY NOVEMBER 24

2100-2300 Sky Sports F1

Classic F1: 2011 German GP

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 25

2100-2145 Sky Sports F1

Classic F1: 1990 Hungarian GP

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 26

2100-2315 Sky Sports F1

Classic F1: 2013 Bahrain GP

ONLINE

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

You Tube IT'S HAMILTON V ROSBERG IN A WORLD TITLE DECIDER...



SEARCH FOR: WorldCap inJapan FA.mp4 (15:23)

The commentary is in Japanese, but it's easy to follow this titanic battle for the Formula A World Cup karting title between MBM team-mates Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg, 14 years before this weekend's fight for the F1 world championship.

AUTOSPORT+

Exclusive content coming up in our premium website this week

Follow every moment of the action from the 2014 Formula 1 title decider in Abu Dhabi this weekend with AUTOSPORT Live's commentary on every session, plus analysis from the paddock and in-depth features on the winner, the loser and the events that shaped their seasons.

GET AUTOSPORT ON THE MOVE

IN THE IPAD ISSUE THIS WEEK

● HIGHLIGHTS FROM NASCAR, WEC & WTCC – PLUS F1 PREVIEWS

● ON SALE ALL OVER THE WORLD FOR ONLY £2.99

DOWNLOAD IT NOW FROM AUTOSPORT.COM



Revved up over what's on the box

Can you have too much of a good thing? Last weekend was the last massive motorsport-fest of 2014, as far as the international scene is concerned.

From one o'clock in the wee small hours of Sunday morning, there was the Macau GT Cup race, followed by World Touring Cars there, which rolled into V8 Supercars from Phillip Island (you had to head online for the Super GT finale from Motegi). Then it was back to Macau for the Formula 3 Grand Prix, and then on to the Powerstage of Rally GB. I counted almost nine hours of live motorsport coverage – all before lunchtime!

And as if four hours of live broadcasting from the NASCAR finale at Homestead weren't enough on the nicest of niche

channels Premier Sports, BT Sport aired the best part of another four hours in an exhaustive studio-based season review



with a cast of hundreds.

OK, so you had to do some channel hopping (between BT Sport, Eurosport and ESPN) and there were some huge variances in quality-control – witness Martin Haven's excellent rant at the director in the WTCC, who had been pretty woeful all weekend if I'm honest – but the lack of coverage on traditional terrestrial television showed how the digital age has now totally transformed motorsport. As Jessie J sang: it's not about the money, money, money – most of these series don't command a huge rights fee, and only Formula 1 (globally) and NASCAR's Sprint Cup (in its domestic market) truly command a big-number price-tag (MotoGP

is in there somewhere too).

The sensible decision now would be for one of those broadcasters to mop-up all it can in terms of international motorsport rights. And the one that looks most likely to do so is BT Sport, whose business model is to sell its broadband wares on the back of its TV channels.

And as streamed-on-broadband TV becomes ever-more present in our homes, then surely the next step is to have a dedicated channel to motorsport (what Sky Sports F1 should have been).

And then the next step would be to rename the channel for what it really is, right? Autosport TV – that's got a good ring to it...

Revved Up

Terry Harryman

“We rolled and I lost my fags. I had to scrounge a pack from a spectator”

■ Lombard RAC Rally ■ November 25-29 1984 ■ Peugeot 205 T16 ■ First victory on home event



Vatanen/Harryman won
34 of the 56 stages to
take their third win of '84

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT my victory with Ari [Vatanen] on the RAC was 30 years ago. I remember it well and it doesn't seem that long ago.

We'd had some good times together – we finished second in Sweden in our first rally together in 1982 in the Escort and we won the Safari the following year in the Ascona 400 – but the Peugeot programme, in the height of the Group B days, was quite incredible when it kicked off in '84.

The car had shown what it could do when it first appeared in Corsica halfway through the year, but then Ari had one of his big accidents. It was a shame because we'd led for quite a while. Still, it didn't set us back too much – we just went to the next rally, the Acropolis, and got on with it. Until the engine went bang!

After that we had some great results, starting with victory in Ari's home rally in Finland. We also won in Sanremo to make it two in a row ahead of my home event, the RAC.

It didn't feel like there was any extra pressure on your home event – there was pressure everywhere – but the RAC was a proper rally; you had to have stamina. I'd retired from the past four in a row – twice with Malcolm Wilson and twice with Ari – so I wanted to do well.

Things started well, we took an immediate lead and hung on to it throughout the first three days.

There was a bit of drama fairly early on with the fire extinguisher going off in the car, but that was all.

We got into South Wales on the fourth day, the Wednesday, and were barrelling along still in the lead, when Ari rolled in the middle of the night. I forget which stage it was but it wasn't too bad – only a soft roll, but we lost a few minutes while spectators got us back on four

wheels. The car wasn't too bad – broken lights and windscreen, that was about all. I lost my glasses but had a spare pair luckily. Much more importantly, I lost my fags and had to scrounge a pack from a spectator!

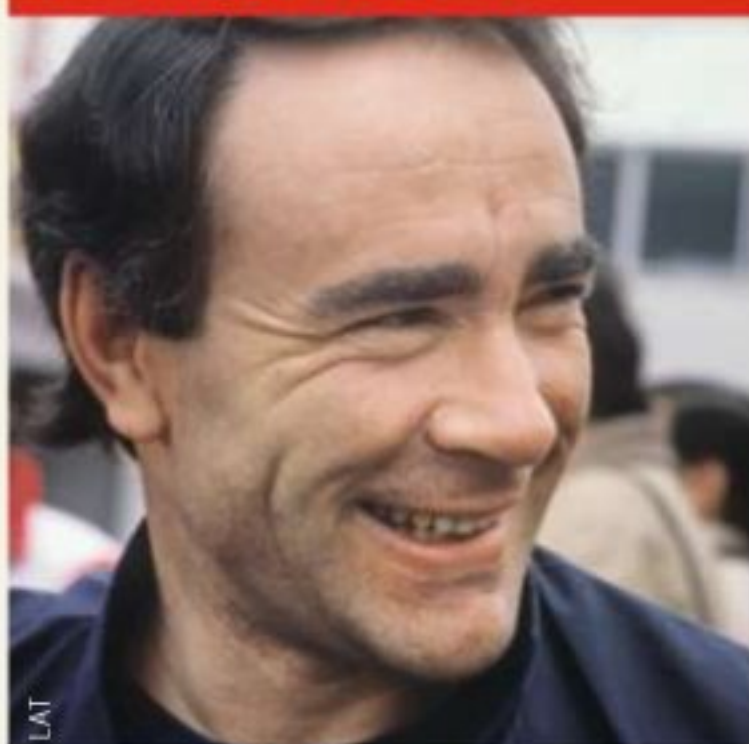
Hannu Mikkola's Audi Quattro took the lead for a bit after that but we were soon back with him and got back in front on the final day.

Then in the Clocaenog complex, the final three stages of the rally, we had a rear halfshaft fail so thought that was it. We only lost a bit of time and managed to hang on to beat Hannu by about 40 seconds.

It was a great fight with Hannu, with the car in third, Per Eklund's Toyota, almost 20 minutes behind.

It was great to be with Ari in Wales last week during Rally GB. The fans were great and enjoyed reminiscing with us about the win. There was lots of love for it, and the car, which is understandable – it was a great event. *Terry Harryman was talking to Henry Hope-Frost*

PROFILE



IRISHMAN TERRY HARRYMAN

first appeared in the WRC in the early '70s. He co-drove for Malcolm Wilson and Tony Pond before joining Ari Vatanen in 1982. They won five rallies in a row for Peugeot across 1984/'85 before a crash in Argentina almost cost Vatanen his life. Harryman continued until the late 1990s before competing in the Dakar Rally and in the Middle East with co-driving son Allan.

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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)

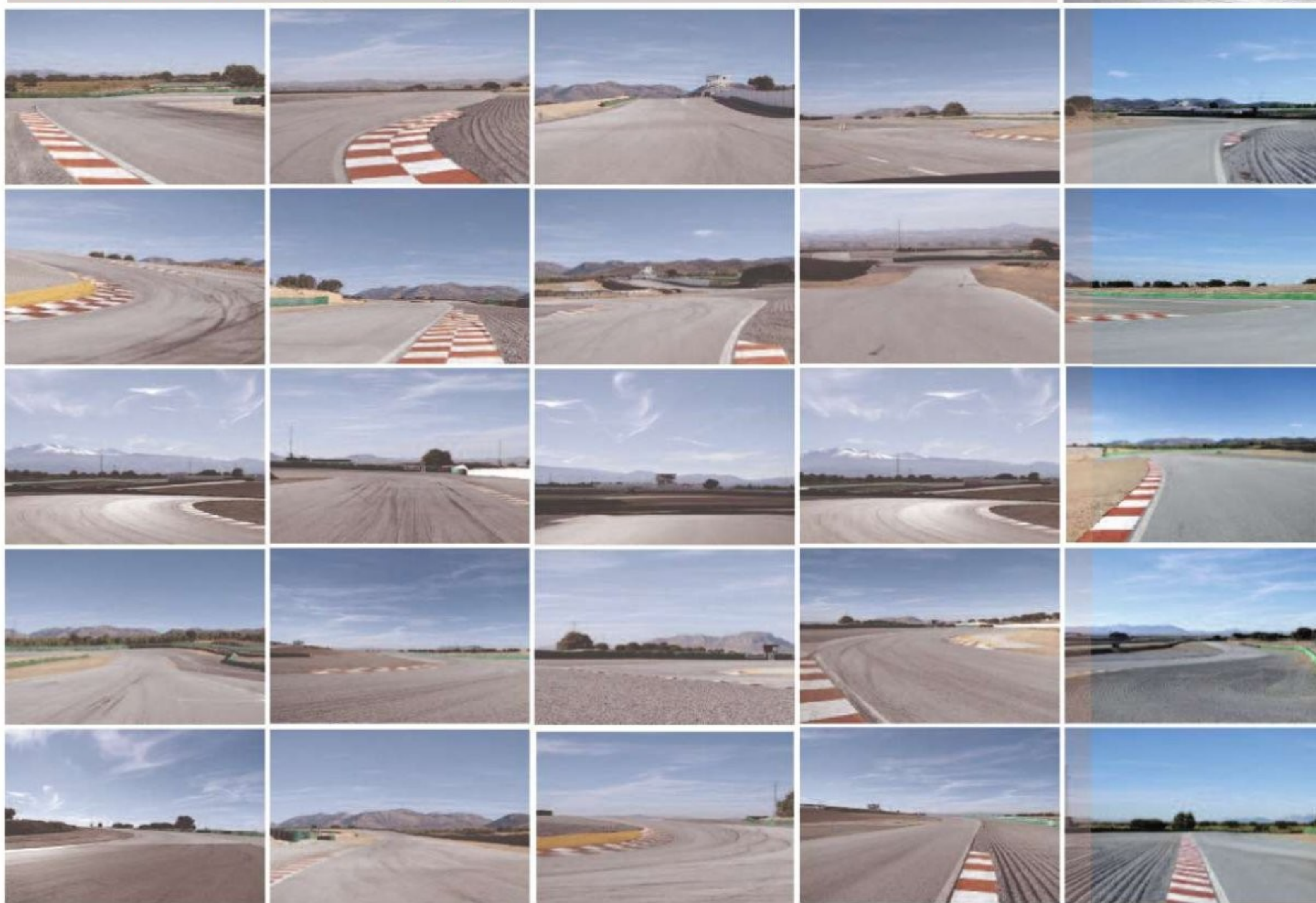
* 4 Pints of Abbot Reserve contain 14.8 units of alcohol (Source: Greene King) and each unit takes 1 hour to leave the body (Source: NHS). Therefore 14.8 hours after 9pm the alcohol will have passed from the body.



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