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THE WORLD'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

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WHO REALLY RUNS F1

FEATURING

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CHARLIE WHITING
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NIKI LAUDA
JEAN TODT

46
DAYS
TO GO!
F1 2015

THE
POWER
RANKING
LIST



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POLE POSITION

Money talks among the most powerful in F1

PIRELLI USED TO RUN AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN THAT used the tagline ‘power is nothing without control’. That proved a pertinent phrase when attempting to select the 25 most powerful individuals in Formula 1, picking those not only with the potential power to have a big impact, but those with the savvy to use it.

It’s not an easy task and the list that runs in this issue is unashamedly subjective. It represents the opinions of not one individual, but of AUTOSPORT collectively. Some of the names will be utterly predictable – for which we make no apology, since only a buffoon would attempt to exclude someone such as Bernie Ecclestone just to be controversial. But others will be a genuine surprise even to fans well versed with the F1 paddock.

What is perhaps most telling is that of the top three, two are purely commercial. And the other podium finisher is, while a team owner, not someone who has a day-to-day role in its activities.

That very much reflects the nature of the landscape in modern F1. The cars, drivers and technical minds are still the stars, but if you want to go racing you need to pay the bills. So it’s no surprise that with great financial clout comes supreme power.



EDD STRAW EDITOR

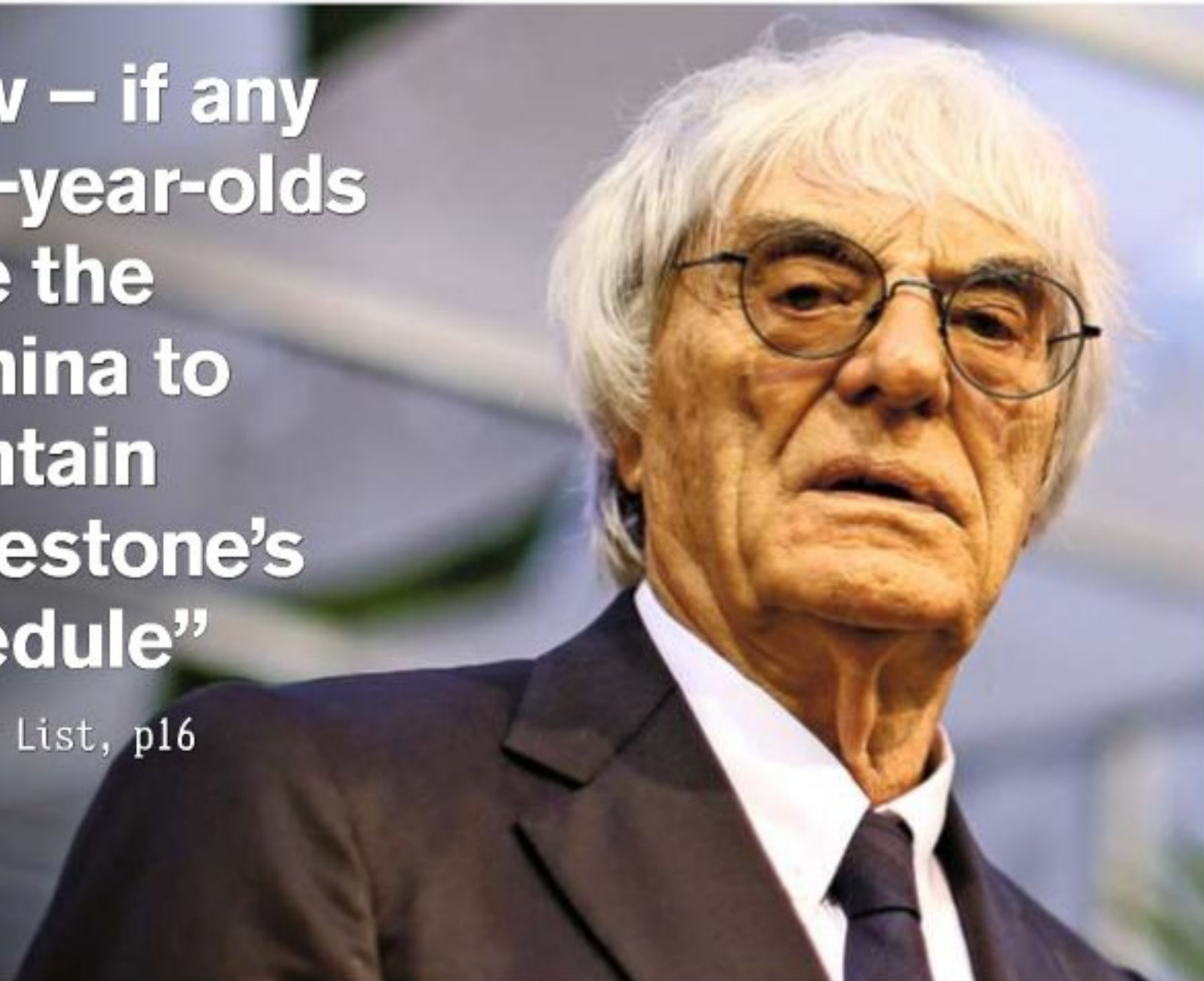
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COVER STORY

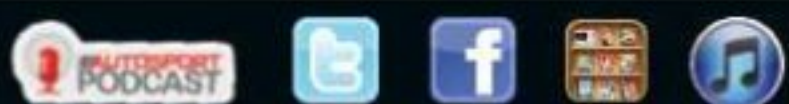
“Few – if any – 84-year-olds have the stamina to maintain Ecclestone’s schedule”

F1 Power List, p16



MASON/GETTY

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THE BIG PICTURE

Scott Dixon allows photographer Mike Levitt a glimpse inside his Ganassi Riley-Ford ahead of the Daytona 24 Hours. The Kiwi would go on to win for the second time

Photographer Michael L Levitt/LAT



This week in F1

LOTUS RELEASES FIRST IMAGES OF 2015 RACER

Lotus has released images of the new Mercedes-powered E23 Formula 1 car it hopes will get it back in the hunt for podium finishes.

After a disappointing 2014 campaign, in which it failed to score a single top-three result, Lotus has switched from Renault to Mercedes engines. It also spent much of last season consolidating its finances and restructuring its technical set-up.

Regulation changes have forced Lotus to abandon the unique twin-tusk design seen on the E22. The team has also worked hard to refine its suspension, after taking a big hit when FRIC (Front-to-Rear Inter-Connected) systems were banned.

The E23 is on course to get its first track running at Jerez in Spain this weekend, when the first official pre-season test kicks off.



6

JEREZ TEST DRIVER LINE-UPS

February 1-4, 2015

TEAM	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
Mercedes	Rosberg	Hamilton	Rosberg	Hamilton
Red Bull	Ricciardo	Kvyat	Ricciardo	Kvyat
Williams	Bottas	Bottas	Massa	Massa
Ferrari	Vettel	Vettel	Raikkonen	Raikkonen
McLaren	Alonso	Button	Alonso	Button
Toro Rosso	Sainz Jr	Verstappen	Sainz Jr	Verstappen
Lotus	Maldonado	Grosjean	Maldonado	Grosjean
Sauber	Ericsson	Nasr	Nasr	Ericsson



Ferrari calls for F1 'revolution' to maintain interest

Ferrari's new team principal Maurizio Arrivabene believes that changes planned for 2017 must be a "revolution" for Formula 1 if the sport wants to avoid alienating more fans.

Responding to comments by Niki Lauda in AUTOSPORT, saying F1 must push for 1000bhp cars, Arrivabene said he also

supports a dramatic overhaul.

"I share Niki's view that Formula 1 needs to be more spectacular," Arrivabene said. "I don't think a simple evolution is enough. A real revolution is called for, with significant and radical changes."

F1's technical chiefs are discussing how to make the leap to 1000bhp for 2017,

with team bosses are due to meet early next month.

Three-time world champion Lauda believes more powerful cars will improve the sport by making drivers work harder.

"Today you can drive an F1 car like a road car," he said. "I could do it, you could do it."

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



MERCEDES WARY OF RED BULL REVIVAL

Mercedes expects Red Bull to re-emerge as a serious threat during the 2015 season. Niki Lauda, Mercedes' non-executive chairman, thinks

Red Bull could return to form after a challenging 2014, with engine partner Renault predicted to make gains. "[Red Bull] will be right there, but the question is how far they get,"

Lauda told AUTOSPORT. "There is too little information about Ferrari at the moment, and McLaren-Honda will experience a difficult year."



Renault confident of better year

Renault believes it will close the gap to Mercedes this season, following changes to its power unit and restructuring of its F1 operations.

Changes to its engine for 2015 include a new combustion chamber and exhaust system, as well as tweaks to the turbo and Energy-Recovery System

Renault F1 boss Cyril Abiteboul said: "We believe we have made a very big step in performance and will be more reliable. We may not have erased all the gaps, but we are confident that we have gone a long way to making up the deficit of last season."

BIG NUMBER

48

The percentage of its power unit that each manufacturer is permitted to change during the 2015 season. That number will fall over the cycle of the current V6 hybrid turbo regulations.

RACE START TIMES ALTERED

Formula 1 chiefs have shifted the start times of five grands prix for 2015, as a result of lessons learned from Jules Bianchi's 2014 Japanese Grand Prix crash.

The investigation into Bianchi's accident recommended future daytime F1 races should not start when there is a risk of running in fading light.

The Australian, Malaysian, Chinese, Japanese and Russian GPs will all start one hour earlier than they did in 2014. Those events previously ran later to suit European television audiences.



THE START TIMES OF ALL 2015 F1 RACES

DATE	GRAND PRIX	TIME
Mar 15	Australia	16:00 UK: 05:00
Mar 29	Malaysia	15:00 UK: 08:00
Apr 12	China	14:00 UK: 07:00
Apr 19	Bahrain	18:00 UK: 16:00
May 10	Spain	14:00 UK: 13:00
May 24	Monaco	14:00 UK: 13:00
June 7	Canada	14:00 UK: 19:00
June 21	Austria	14:00 UK: 13:00
July 5	Britain	13:00
July 19	Germany	14:00 UK: 13:00
July 26	Hungary	14:00 UK: 13:00
Aug 23	Belgium	14:00 UK: 13:00
Sept 6	Italy	14:00 UK: 13:00
Sept 20	Singapore	20:00 UK: 13:00
Sept 27	Japan	14:00 UK: 06:00
Oct 11	Russia	14:00 UK: 12:00
Oct 25	United States	14:00 UK: 19:00
Nov 1	Mexico	13:00 UK: 19:00
Nov 15	Brazil	14:00 UK: 16:00
Nov 29	Abu Dhabi	17:00 UK: 13:00

Races highlighted in yellow will start one hour earlier in 2015



FIA working on cost cuts

The FIA has created a working group to investigate how costs can be reduced in Formula 1.

Headed by Damien Clermont, the FIA's chief administrative officer, the working group has been asked to determine where savings can be made through regulation changes.

The move follows an unsuccessful push by Force India, Lotus and Sauber to secure better re-distribution of F1's commercial revenue among teams.



Haas to use Marussia base

The Haas Formula 1 team will use the former Marussia factory in Banbury as a European base for its entry in 2016.

Haas hopes to begin preparing the Oxfordshire premises once the assets of the Marussia team, which were due to be auctioned last week and remain in the factory, are sold.

AUTOSPORT understands Haas has no plans to buy Marussia's F1 entry outright and enter F1 this season.

First out of the box

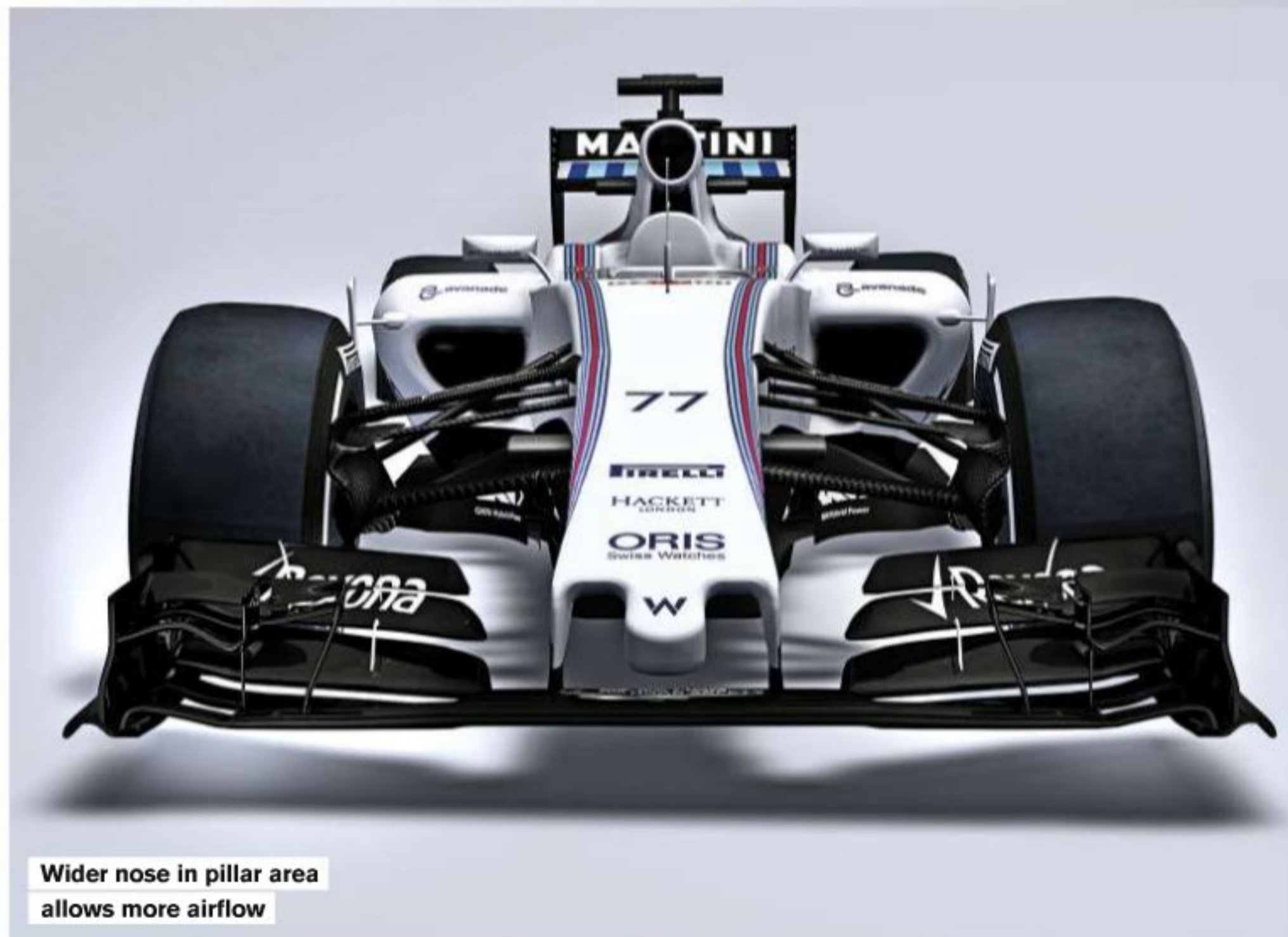
Williams was the first team to unveil its 2015 car, albeit in rendered form. GARY ANDERSON gives his first impressions

The side view of the new car shows how much Williams compress the airflow in and around the coke bottle area. The team can achieve this because of the very compact gearbox package, which allows it to have a horseshoe-style cooling exit out of the rear of the sidepods and engine cover.

Having this exit all around this area means that they don't suffer from different air speeds at the rear of the car, which can disturb how efficient the rear wing is. For 2014 the rear beam wing as we knew it was outlawed and

Williams found a way to introduce a lower version; by retaining some of the functionality of the beam wing the team has been able to make the diffuser more efficient.

Last year, Williams had one of the neatest nose solutions. The new nose is very squat but different to what Ferrari did in 2014, which was to get the airflow over the top of the nose very early to feed the leading edge of the sidepods. Williams has gone for a wider nose at the wing pillar area to allow more airflow between the pillars themselves.



Wider nose in pillar area allows more airflow



Compact gearbox enables tight rear packaging





“Last year Williams had one of the neatest nose solutions. The new nose is very squat but different to what Ferrari did in 2014”

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Jonathan Noble

F1's newshound

The move to push Formula 1 power outputs to 1000bhp and beyond is exciting – but it must also be affordable

The fans want it. The drivers want it. I want it. Even Formula 1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone wants it.

In fact, you would be hard-pressed to find anyone who does not support the plan to get F1's engines spitting out more than 1000 horsepower from the start of 2017.

What's not to like about the prospect of F1 getting back some of the magic that existed in the mid-1980s? Who could not be enthralled at the prospect of drivers turning up their turbo boost to the maximum for qualifying and threading their rocketships around what must have felt like a very thin strip of asphalt?

Breaking that mythical 1000bhp barrier again would be good for F1 on so many levels. It gives the sport an iconic power figure; it will make cars harder to drive and therefore more of a challenge for drivers; and it will showcase just how impressive new hybrid technology is.

Chatting to Grand Prix Drivers' Association chairman Alex Wurz earlier this week, a man who has experience of 1000bhp from his Toyota LMP1 car, he reckons F1 drivers would fall over themselves for the chance to get back to the mega power the stars had in the mid-1980s.

But he reckons the biggest benefit of all will be to F1 itself – because being able to sell the headline power figure would be so easy.

"It is a cool direction that we speak about but this is far more than just about the driver," he explains.

"There is a big marketing effect too.

"When we announced with Toyota last year that that

Lotus boss Gerard Lopez said last year that his team's annual power unit bill had jumped from eight million to 40 million Euros.

Of course, this increase has come about because of the huge development costs of the new V6s and hybrid technology. Manufacturers have sought to recoup these by selling their power units to the small teams.

No cap meant manufacturers dictated the figure that suited their business plan. Renault, for example, wanted payback for its investment over a much shorter period than Mercedes – so the cost of its power units was more.

With a potential new change to the engines coming for 2017 – and one that is gathering momentum because everyone wants it – F1 cannot allow this situation to get even worse. Limits must be put in place.

Perhaps it needs the FIA or Bernie Ecclestone to wade in, and only allow the change to happen if there are guarantees that any extra costs for manufacturers are not passed on to the smaller teams.

After all, this is a process being put in motion to help make F1 more marketable; to make more fans excited – and to make more of them want to go out on the Monday after a race and buy a Mercedes, a Renault, a Ferrari or a Honda. Why should Sauber, Force India or Lotus be forced to underwrite such an affair?

Wurz agrees that F1 has to look at the bigger picture here. He believes that the attraction of a bit more power under the right foot of drivers should not come

“Perhaps the biggest mistake of the V6 switch was that there were no price limits laid down”

we were going to have 1000bhp, then it was amazing to see the response of the hardcore fans. Everyone was talking about it – even people who had no idea about motorsport. Everyone was just going ‘wow.’”

But there is danger in this water. Not from the fact that more powerful cars could lead to more spills on track.

Instead, it's from the threat that another change to the engine rules could pose to the long-term health of the F1 grid if it is not implemented properly and costs spiral further out of control.

Perhaps the biggest mistake of the switch to V6 turbos last year was not the lack of noise, or the lack of power – it was that there were no price limits laid down for what customers had to pay.

At a time when a majority of F1 teams have been struggling to find the budgets to compete, either through falling sponsorship revenue or the increased costs of going racing, it was a double blow that teams faced a dramatic hike in engine bills, too.

at the cost of driving outfits out of business.

“We have to learn from the past,” he says. “Currently engine manufacturers run their engines under a business model whereby they finance the development of engines by putting the costs back to the customer teams with quite high fees.

“So if the current turbo engines go through their intended business cycle, then in the end the customers, the F1 teams, would have somehow subsidised marketing of the manufacturers. Why should they be a charity?”

“There needs to be a quite clear maximum annual cost cap on the whole power unit per team. That way we might make sure that small teams and F1 doesn't pay too heavy a price.

“We can't have more teams suffer, more people made redundant, because of expensive development being priced into the power units.”

The rewards for F1 making the jump to 1000bhp in 2017 will be great – but it cannot come at any cost. ❧

This week in motorsport

12



JEFF GORDON STATISTICS

- Starts **761**
- Titles **4** (1996, 97, 98, 2001)
- Wins **92**
- TOP 10** Top 10s **454**
- Poles **77**
- Laps led **24,663**
- Appearances on *The Simpsons* **1**

GORDON WAVES FLAG ON CAREER

Four-time NASCAR Sprint Cup champion Jeff Gordon will retire from full-time competition at the end of the 2015 season.

The 43-year-old, who made his Cup debut in the 1992

finale, informed his Hendrick Motorsports team of his decision last week, although he left the door open to make one-off race appearances in the future.

"I thought long and hard about my future this past year and during the

off-season, and I've decided 2015 will be the last time I compete for a championship," said Gordon.

"I won't use the 'R-word' [retirement] because I plan to stay extremely busy in the years ahead, and there's always the possibility

I'll compete in selected events, although I currently have no plans to do that."

Gordon said that he will continue to be heavily involved in Hendrick, in which he is a part-owner.

CHILTON IN INDYCAR PLAN

Marussia Formula 1 refugee Max Chilton has rejoined Carlin to help with the development of its Indy Lights car as he gears up for a future in the IndyCar Series.

Carlin, which ran Chilton to race wins in British Formula 3 and GP2, is also eyeing an IndyCar squad for 2016 as it undertakes its first season

in US motorsport this year.

Carlin ran its Lights cars for the first time in this week's Homestead test, with the team's Ed Jones going fastest on the Florida track's 'roval' on Monday and Chilton (below) fifth.

P32 CARLIN IN THE USA



Briscoe's 'Vette for Le Mans

Australian IndyCar star Ryan Briscoe will make his second Le Mans 24 Hours start for Corvette Racing this year.

Briscoe, who has a schedule of United SportsCar events aboard a factory C7.R, will replace Richard Westbrook, who is focusing on the USC. Fellow USC driver Jordan Taylor retains his seat for Le Mans.



Nakajima joins Toyota champs

Toyota driver Kazuki Nakajima is set to move cars and drive with World Endurance champions Anthony Davidson and Sebastien Buemi this season.

The Japanese shared with Alex Wurz and Stephane Sarrazin last season, but Toyota is understood to have decided that Mike

Conway, who substituted for Nakajima three times last year, should remain in the Wurz/Sarrazin car in his new full-time role.

Nakajima is likely to focus on his WEC programme up to and including Le Mans, but it remains unclear if he will miss races to take part in clashing Super GT events.

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

MARCIELLO BOARDS TRIDENT

Sauber Formula 1 reserve driver and Ferrari protege Raffaele Marciello has been placed with Trident Motorsport for his second season in the GP2 Series.

The 20-year-old Italian, who tested for Trident in late 2013 (right), took one win in his rookie GP2 campaign last year with Racing Engineering.

As well as Marciello, the Ferrari Driver Academy's other three prospects all have their 2015 programmes sorted.

Fellow Italian Antonio Fuoco makes his expected switch from the Formula 3 European Championship to the GP3 Series, and will line up with Carlin.

Meanwhile, Canadian Lance Stroll's F3 campaign with Prema Powerteam was expected to be confirmed this week.

Also joining Prema for F3 is Brandon Maisano, who is not an FDA member



STALEY/LAT

but who assisted Stroll – who leads the Toyota Racing Series – on his path to last year's Italian Formula 4 title.

China's Guanyu Zhou, the most junior of the FDA drivers, will graduate from karting to race with Prema in Italian F4.



Gotz gets Merc DTM verdict

Blancpain Sprint Series champion Maximilian Gotz has been given a seat in Mercedes' DTM line-up.

Mercedes motorsport boss Toto Wolff said that the drive was a reward for 28-year-old Gotz's "many successes with the SLS AMG GT3 in recent years."

Gotz, who tested the Mercedes DTM car at Jerez last month, said: "The moment when I found out I will be racing in the DTM will stay with me for a very long time."

Sorensen to Carlin for GP2

GP2 race winner Marco Sorensen has moved to Carlin for his first full season in the Formula 1 support series.

The 24-year-old Dane dovetailed the last of three FR3.5 campaigns with seven GP2 outings for MP Motorsport, securing a reversed-grid win at Sochi.

Lotus F1 junior Sorensen joins Colombian Julian Leal in Carlin's GP2 line-up. Team boss Trevor Carlin said: "He's undoubtedly very quick and in the right environment we'll see him flourish."

It will be a hectic season for Sorensen, who has already been announced as an Aston Martin driver in the World Endurance Championship.



STALEY/LAT

DID YOU KNOW?

Maximilian Gotz was runner-up to Nico Rosberg in the 2002 German Formula BMW standings, and followed that by beating Sebastian Vettel to the title in '03 (below).



MILTENBURG/XPB

GERMAN F3 AXED FOR '15

Germany's Formula 3 Cup will not be run in 2015, although organisers are hoping to revive it in the future.

The series was facing an entry crisis this year, after moves supported by leading teams Motopark, Van Amersfoort Racing and Performance Racing to merge with British F3 failed.

Organisers cited highly restrictive new testing rules written by the FIA for the F3 European Championship that would have made it very difficult for teams to compete in both series.

It would have faced a name change – to German Formula Open – as the three foreign rounds planned broke FIA guidelines for national F3.



Huracan blows into Blancpain

Lamborghini has unveiled the new Huracan GT3 with which it will undertake a factory assault on the Blancpain Endurance Series.

The Huracan, developed in-house at Lambo's new Squadra Corse competitions department, has been developed as a customer car, but the Italian manufacturer has linked up

with Blancpain Sprint Series frontrunner Grasser to field a pair of cars in the sister BES series.

Lamborghini factory drivers Fabio Babini and Adrian Zaugg, and ex-Formula 2 champion and F1 test driver Mirko Bortolotti, who is moving up from its one-make Super Trofeo series, will lead its driver line-up.

In brief

BYKOLLES UPGRADE

The renamed ByKolles team, which previously raced as Lotus LMP, is upgrading its AER-engined CLM P1/O1 for its 2015 WEC assault with revised aerodynamics and suspension, and a new gearbox. It plans to field one car for the full season and could expand to two after the Le Mans 24 Hours.

TDS BACK TO ORECA

TDS Racing will swap back to the ORECA marque in its bid to regain the European Le Mans Series title it won in 2012. The French team ran Onroak Automotive's Morgan LMP2 and Ligier JSP2 coupe last year, but has now purchased one of the new-for-2015 ORECA O5 coupes.

SWEDE AT STRAKKA

Formula Renault Northern European Cup race winner Gustav Malja will step up to FR3.5 this year. The 19-year-old Swede has joined Strakka Racing after two years in FR2.0, and is the British squad's first signing for 2015. Malja topped an FR3.5 rookie test session at Motorland Aragon in November with Zeta Corse.

MOTEGI WTCC DATE

Japan's round of the World Touring Car Championship will this year be held on the 'roval' course at ex-IndyCar venue Motegi on September 13. The track replaces Suzuka, which hosted the WTCC for four years. Both facilities are owned by Honda.

British F4 ace in Japan move

BRDC Formula 4 Championship race winner Struan Moore is to step up to Formula 3 this season – in Japan.

The 19-year-old Jersey-born driver has secured a drive in the Dallara-Toyota of Chinese team KCMG, and will compete in the top-level Championship Class.

"With KCMG, we've mapped out a clear development path with opportunities in WEC alongside my Japanese F3 commitments," said Moore.



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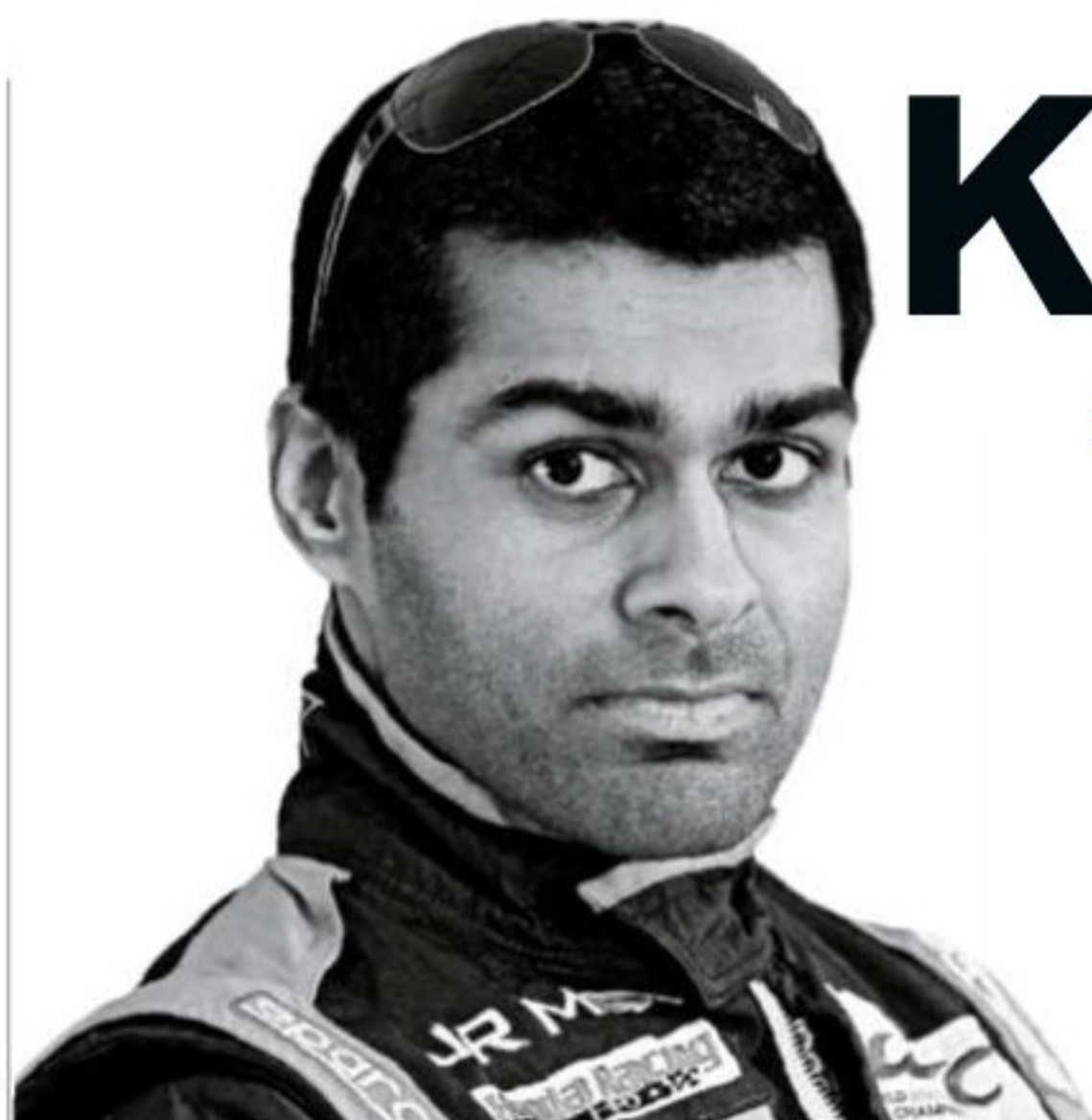
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Karun Chandhok

The racer's eye

Tension will be building behind the garage doors as Formula 1 gears up for its first test of 2015 – there's much to learn, and little time

The first test of 2015, which starts on Sunday, has come around so quickly; so much so that most people have only just about recovered from 2014. For the designers and engineers, it's now one elongated season, which now runs almost until December so one campaign blends into the next. While the drivers get a bit of time away from the racing world, it isn't long before those emails with simulator dates, seat fittings and engineering briefings start pinging into your inbox again.

The build up to the first test of the season is always a very exciting and nerve-wracking time. Publically, people will always play their cards close to their chests. We should all fully expect to read lines such as "It's only a shakedown", "We're just putting mileage on the car to see if we're reliable", "We need to see where everyone is in qualifying in Melbourne" and "It's early days in our new partnership". Beyond all this, however, every lap of every run matters to the teams and drivers to learn something about their new cars and to see if there's some other way to unlock some speed from the package.

For Fernando Alonso and Sebastian Vettel, despite having driven McLarens and Ferraris before (briefly in the latter's case, with a 2012 car), this will be an especially important day. The first time driving a car that will give them some indication of whether or not they've made the right choice for their futures.

While it's 100 per cent true that the first test doesn't give us any real form guide for the season ahead, those



season is a chance for a lot of these guys in the factory to improve and correct the wrongs from 12 months ago. The designers especially will want to know if everything fits right, works reliably without overheating or burning anything else, and critically if the numbers they see on track correlate to the wind tunnel and CFD models. This is hugely important at an early stage, which is why we'll see lots of weird instrumentation on the cars.

Out of everyone up and down the pitlane, the people I can see being the most nervous on the eve of the first test are the Honda engineers. Their first outing in this new era didn't really go to plan in Abu Dhabi and everyone in the team knows that it must run reliably at the opening test to be in a position to start working on

“Every lap of every run matters to the teams and drivers to learn something about their new cars”

behind the wheel will know pretty quickly if they have something they can work with or if they've got a bit of a lemon that's going to take a lot of pain to improve.

For the drivers who haven't swapped teams, the opening test is a chance to clean the rust off and hit the ground running in terms of getting to know whether their new car is better than the old one. First of all, am I comfortable in my seat and have I learnt what all the buttons in the cockpit do? Does the car feel like it has more downforce? Is the engine driveability better? Does the steering feel right and is it more stable on the brakes than last year? All these points can be addressed but the more things that are positive, the more time you can spend adding performance to the package rather than just solving problems.

The people most nervous before a first test are the engineers and designers. The 2015 regulations aren't too different to last year's, so for the most part the cars will be an evolution of their predecessors. However, a new

performance. It's been great to have them back and we've all enjoyed reminiscing about the previous McLaren-Honda era, but once the pitlane opens in Jerez none of that matters. Power, driveability and reliability do.

There are a lot of personnel changes, with new race engineers, designers and mechanics swapping teams over the winter. While it's all well and good to spend hours together at the factory where time is less critical, seeing how you gel in the pits when you have a plan to stick to is a totally different thing. The relationship between a driver and his race engineer is key – they'll spend more hours together in a year than either will with their wives or girlfriends! Most of the teams have had some form of change on the race-engineering front, with people including Dave Greenwood, Jock Clear, Guillaume Rocquelin and Toni Cuquerella moving around.

With team owners, fans and sponsors all around the world waiting and watching, there's a lot of intrigue up ahead... but most of it is within the teams themselves! ❄️

THE

POWER

16

Power is a tricky thing to define. With a racing car, it's easy enough to generate a bhp figure, but the way that potential is used is dependent on many other factors – tyres, suspension, track conditions, driver skill. Power off track works in similar ways. There are many factors you can hold up as indicators of power: wealth, job status, size of your workforce are all part of the equation. But what is far harder to pin down is influence. Power in the wrong hands is nothing more than

potential energy, just as a mastermind with a little influence can make it reach a long way.

AUTOSPORT has, for the first time, attempted to pin down F1's most powerful people. As you'd expect in a sport dominated by white men in suits, it's not the most diverse list you'll ever see. But that's the reality.

So how did we reach this ranking? Not without much debate. This list is compiled by multiple voices, and is unashamedly subjective. But it's also based on many years of experience in the F1 paddock and an understanding of how things work in the corridors of power.

As to how you weigh the power of a megastar driver such as Fernando Alonso versus a team boss like Monisha Kaltenborn and the ringmaster himself, Bernie Ecclestone, it's not an exact science. But we believe that the list that follows represents a fair interpretation of the real movers and shakers who define the direction of F1, dictate the public debate and have the biggest role to play in how the many pieces of the paddock puzzle will be arranged over the next 12 months.

If you disagree, get in touch (see top of p27) and tell us who you think should be included, and who we have over- or underrated. ►

WELDR



LIST

Profiles written by Ben Anderson, Jonathan Noble, Dieter Rencken and Edd Straw



THOMPSON/GETTY

24

Monisha Kaltenborn

Team principal, Sauber

Kaltenborn is a pioneer within the Formula 1 paddock. The Indian-born legal whizz has risen through the corporate ranks at Sauber since the turn of the millennium, eventually becoming a co-owner – and the first female team principal in F1's history when founder Peter Sauber decided to step back from front-line duties in late 2012.

Although her team is currently enduring its worst competitive period since it entered F1 in 1993, Kaltenborn remains an important player, often driving significant debates about the future direction of the sport and its hopelessly inequitable distribution of revenue. She is also not afraid to show

a ruthless edge when necessary. Sauber has struggled financially as the cost of competing has spiralled upwards and its own form on-track has dipped, but Kaltenborn hasn't shied away from cutting contracted drivers loose in search of better financial security for her squad.

Sauber's matriarch has also carefully navigated the tempestuous waters of the team's customer relationship with Ferrari, showing enough loyalty to keep them onside without being afraid to stand up and criticise F1's most egotistical entity when necessary.

In short, Kaltenborn is a shrewd fish in a rocky pond.



THOMPSON/GETTY

25

Adrian Newey

Head of Red Bull Technology projects

One of the most brilliant technical minds in Formula 1 history, Newey would be ranked far higher on this list were it not for the fact that he has taken a back-seat role with Red Bull.

The 56-year-old appears satisfied with keeping his hand in F1 while pursuing other projects. But should Red Bull be unable to hang onto him, every other team would move mountains to bring him in.

Even so, he remains a potent force

in terms of driving public debate. When he speaks, it's with intellect, authority and reason, meaning that when he does, people listen. Perhaps this is something that F1 as a whole needs to make better use of as it decides its future technical direction.

He still has an input into the technical direction of the Red Bull squad so, even if he is no longer at the forefront of the design team, his brainpower still has a bearing on the Milton Keynes trophy cabinet.

18

23

Vijay Mallya

Team principal, Force India

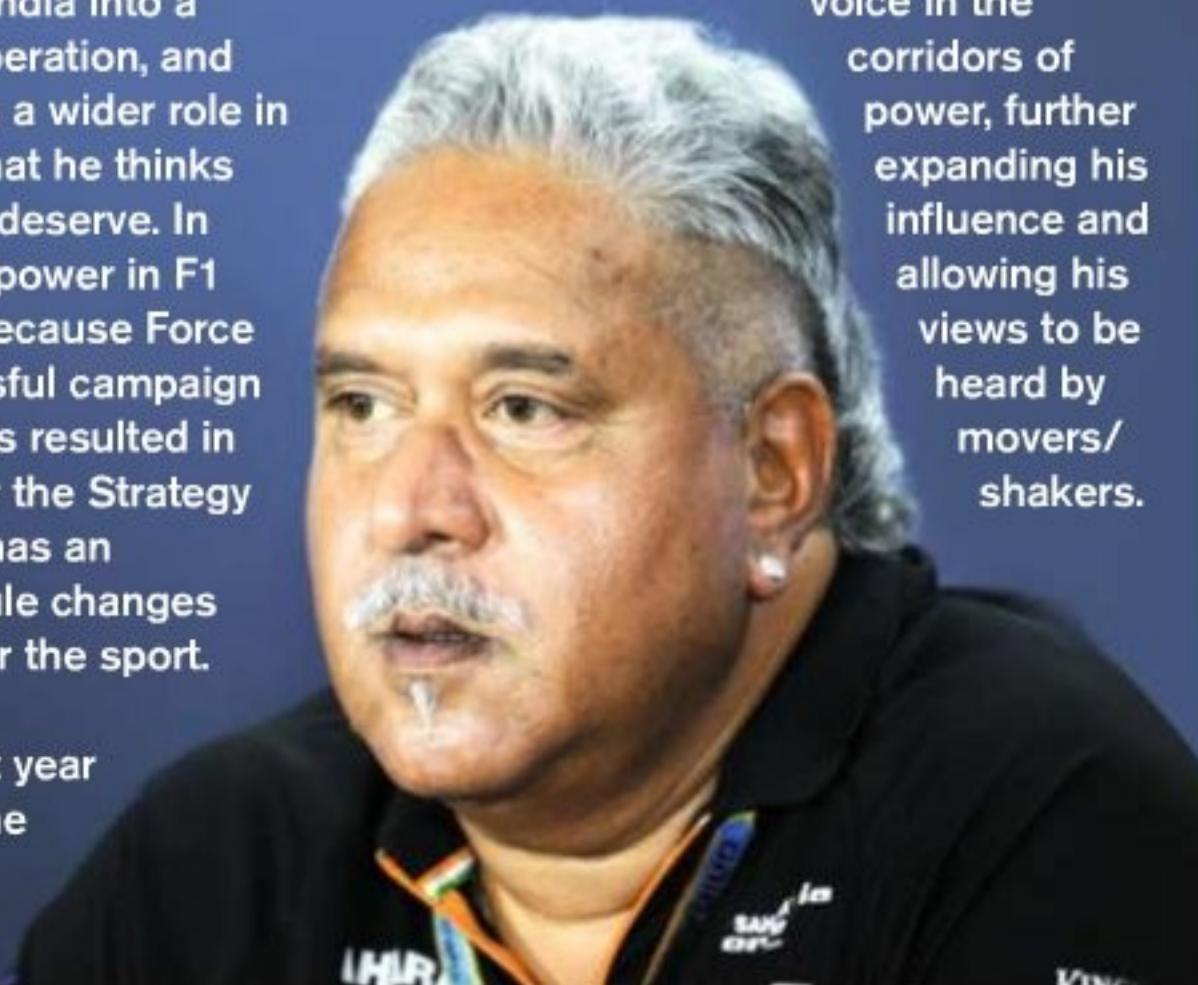
Vijay Mallya was once known as the 'king of the good times' – he seemed more focused on enjoying the kudos of being a Formula 1 team principal than knuckling down to push his squad on.

But over the years he has crafted Force India into a respectable operation, and started playing a wider role in pushing for what he thinks teams like his deserve. In 2015, Mallya's power in F1 will increase because Force India's successful campaign last season has resulted in it qualifying for the Strategy Group, which has an influence on rule changes and policies for the sport.

Mallya was outspoken last year when he felt the small teams were being

squeezed out, and it will be fascinating to see how far he's prepared to go in standing up against the sport's powerhouses for what he feels is right.

His role on the FIA's World Motor Sport Council also gives him a voice in the corridors of power, further expanding his influence and allowing his views to be heard by movers/shakers.



22

Peter Brabeck-Letmathe

Chairman of Formula 1 board

The Austrian-born Nestle chairman and former CEO retains his additional duty as chairman of Delta Topco, F1's holding company, despite an unspecified (but curable) illness and recent efforts to replace the 70-year-old. That confirms the respect he has from CVC Capital Partners and its allied shareholders.

While the Swiss-based businessman has no direct control over the sport, his influence ensures F1 generates the returns its voracious owners demand. Whether this profit-driven approach benefits F1 is moot: the fact remains that Delta Topco controls the sport, and decisions made during Brabeck-Letmathe's watch impact on teams and race promoters, and eventually on fans.

Through his various directorships and interests – he is a foundation board member of the World Economic Forum (Davos) – Brabeck-Letmathe brings a helicopter perspective to Delta Topco, which complements F1's myopia. The true test of his contribution has yet to come: input into who will replace him...



PA PHOTOS

21

Maurizio Arrivabene

Team principal, Ferrari

While the name Maurizio Arrivabene was not well known among F1 fans when he was announced as Ferrari's new team principal late last year, the Italian is a well-established figure in the paddock. He was the man behind Philip Morris's long-term association with Ferrari through the Marlboro tobacco brand, and sat on the F1 Commission, meaning that he is very well-versed in the politics of the paddock, both those pertaining to racing and the commercial side.

He also has a key role to play at Ferrari. While Sergio Marchionne has kick-started this new era for Ferrari, it is Arrivabene who is expected to be the architect through his day-to-day work at Maranello. That means he will have to prove himself in a very different arena. But Arrivabene is a shrewd character and has the skills required to harness the talents at his disposal. That will stand him in good stead, provided Marchionne is willing to be patient as a team that has fallen behind technically gets back on its feet. The key will be forming a partnership with technical director James Allison, who undoubtedly has the ability to turn Ferrari around if he is given the right support.

There is great potential for Arrivabene to climb this list as the year progresses. By default, whoever runs Scuderia Ferrari is a key player in F1's politics and he has huge influence to wield. He knows all of the other major players through his time in the paddock and has the wherewithal. The question is, how much of his time will be focused on trying to get his house in order in the next six months?



20

Claire Williams

Deputy team principal, Williams

Although Sir Frank Williams remains nominally in charge of the team he founded and built into one of the most successful in grand prix history, it is his daughter Claire who really pulls the strings these days.

Having worked in the communications department for 10 years before becoming deputy team principal in 2013, she knows the team inside out and has grown in stature and authority in her brief time at the 'top'.

A switch from Renault to Mercedes engines, plus recruitment of key technical staff over the past 18 months, means Williams has just enjoyed its most successful season in a decade under her watch. She has also shown she is willing to champion the greater good of the sport by chairing F1's Promotional Working Group.



LEE/GETTY

19

Sacha Woodward-Hill

Bernie Ecclestone's chief legal officer

FOM's trusted and highly capable in-house counsel and company secretary, Woodward-Hill's primary duty is to keep FOM afloat come what may, whether it be team, race-hosting, sponsor or litigation issues.

It's said that Bernie Ecclestone refuses to sign deals without her say-so, and bows openly to her acumen – team bosses speak highly of her, many with tales of how she halted some of F1's more hair-brained schemes. She has been in on all Concorde Agreement matters since FOM's first in 1998 and, crucially, knows EU matters backwards.

She currently holds 18 board appointments, having held over 30 during almost two decades of service, and is thus a proven, indispensable member of the team who knows all FOM's secrets.

While Ecclestone was relieved of executive authority during his Munich travails, Woodward-Hill shouldered a major portion of the load in addition to providing legal and personal support. When Bernie says, "Perhaps if I controlled the board I would probably say it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a woman being the chief executive," there is absolutely zero doubt as to whom he is referring.

Woodward-Hill lives modestly, and maintains a lower profile than even F1's ultimate boss Donald Mackenzie, with whom she enjoys excellent relations.



PA PHOTOS

18

James Allison

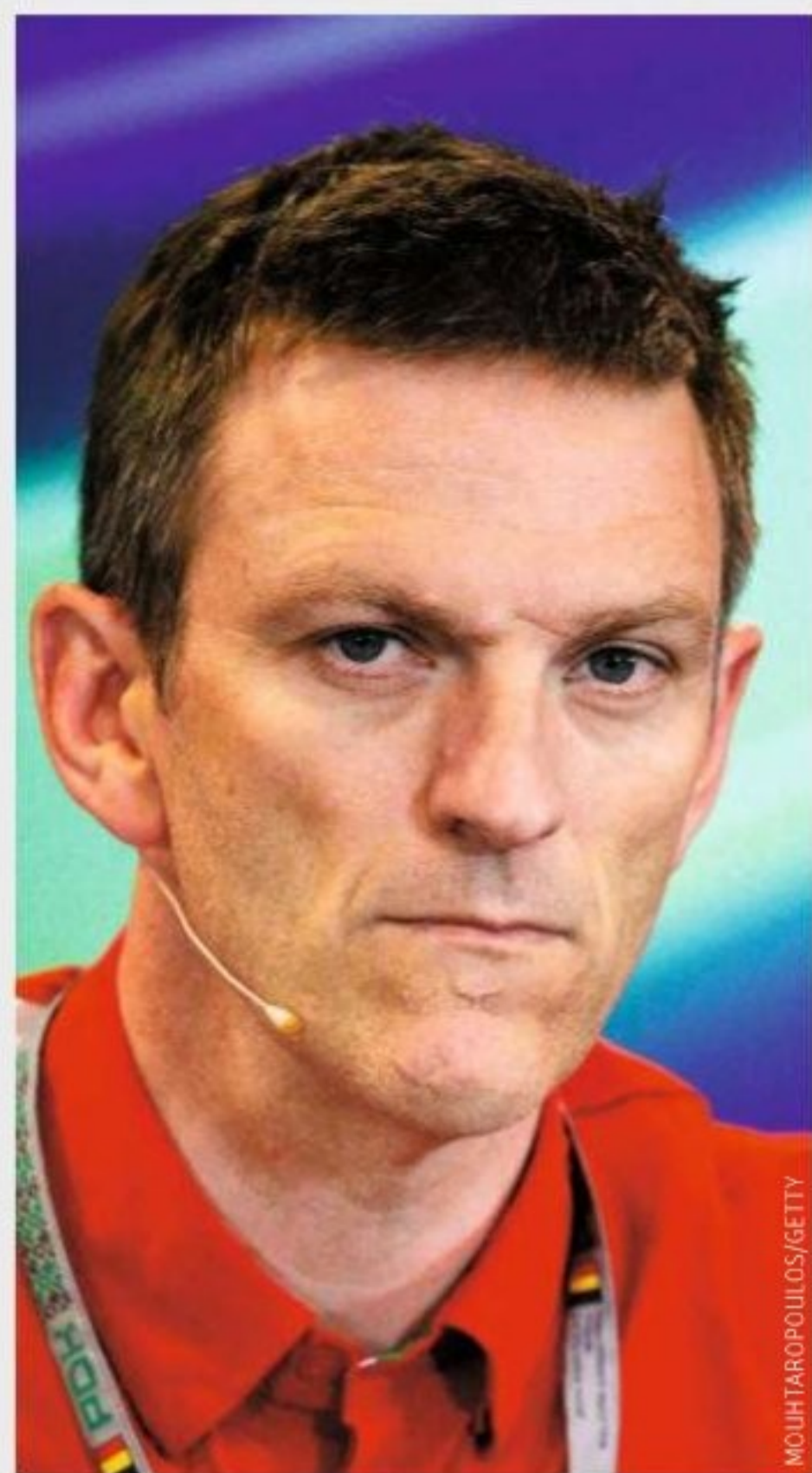
Technical director, Ferrari

Ferrari has pinned its hopes on delivering the car it requires to fight at the front upon the shoulders of James Allison.

The designer arrived at Maranello highly rated after his work at Lotus, which had been held back by the financial handcuffs at Enstone. He certainly has the credentials to know what's needed to make Ferrari win again, and in his time there has impressed and gained the full support of his three bosses: Stefano Domenicali, Marco Mattiacci and Maurizio Arrivabene.

Such is the way with the new rules that his success is slightly dependent upon the qualities of the power unit Ferrari produces, but equally it's his role to coordinate what's best for the car/engine package. Should he deliver, that will have huge implications in resurrecting the image of the Prancing Horse, which has been put in the shade by Red Bull and Mercedes in recent years and has been struggling to hold onto the status it once enjoyed in the sport.

If Allison can't transform Ferrari, it's hard to believe that anyone can. He's had the Midas touch wherever he's been in the past, and the Maranello titles he contributed to previously are a good reminder of what he's capable of.



MCUHTARPOULOS/GETTY

17

Fernando Alonso

Two-time world champion and McLaren driver

The man himself would have you believe he's the biggest player in town as far as the drivers are concerned. There's no doubting his prowess on-track, but the fact that he couldn't engineer himself a 2015 move to Mercedes (hastening his early split with the Scuderia) suggests Alonso maybe doesn't wield as much power as he thinks he does.

Red Bull wasn't interested and Mercedes views him as a back-up option if it loses Lewis Hamilton, so Alonso's taken a risk and rejoined a McLaren team (with Honda power) that hasn't tasted victory champagne for 38 straight races – its longest losing streak since it went 49 races without a win between 1994 and '97. Hardly a cast-iron first-choice option...

At 33 years old (and without a world title since 2006) he is perhaps in danger of being eclipsed by younger rivals, but there is no doubting that Alonso is still currently one of F1's major players.



COATES/LAT

16

Paddy Lowe

Executive director, Mercedes F1

A combination of Toto Wolff's high visibility, and the unusual management structure at Mercedes – which essentially amounts to it having two (two and a half if you count 'roaming' non-executive chairman Niki Lauda) team bosses – means Paddy Lowe flies slightly under the radar when it comes to the top brass at Formula 1's current top team.

Lowe, 52 (a Kenyan-born Brit), developed the active-suspension system that helped Nigel Mansell win the 1992 world championship for Williams. He also played a key role in Lewis Hamilton's first title win in 2008, while engineering director at McLaren. He rose to become technical director of the Woking team before being headhunted by Mercedes to replace Ross Brawn, a man who arguably rivals Adrian Newey as the most successful and influential technical mind to grace F1 over the past 25 years.

Many rightly credit Brawn for laying the foundations for Mercedes' dominant title double in 2014, but it's Lowe who's had to rise to the challenge and ensure 'the team that Ross built' delivered when it mattered.

Lowe has already achieved a great deal in his 18 months at Brackley. If Mercedes dominates in 2015, it will cement his standing as the paddock's current leading light as far as technical directorships go.



THOMPSON/GETTY

15

Ron Dennis

Chairman and CEO,
McLaren Technology Group



STALEY/LAT

It was almost inevitable that Ron Dennis's decision to step out of F1 back in 2009 was always going to be a temporary one, such was his passion for motor racing success.

The recent failures of his team to make progress was a call to arms, and Dennis has returned with some vigour, putting in place fresh structures, recruiting new staff and doing all he can to ensure that his squad's switch to Honda delivers the kind of success the partnership produced in the past. He remains a hugely influential figure in F1, and is not afraid of standing up to authority or adopting a confrontational approach to his rivals. It was his approval of a legal fight with Red Bull over aerodynamicist Dan Fallows last year that delivered what he had been after all along: the early arrival of Peter Prodromou.

Although no longer team principal, and leaving much of the day-to-day running of the team to Eric Boullier, he still has the final say in a lot of things. Sometimes this can be good, but other times there can be a negative, such as the dithering over Jenson Button's future. But make no mistake: Dennis is still as ruthless as he always has been in optimising opportunities, which is why rivals should ignore him at their peril.

14

Christian Horner

Team principal, Red Bull



THOMPSON/GETTY

The Red Bull team boss can too easily be underestimated. Yes, he is a Red Bull employee so speaks on behalf of owner Dietrich Mateschitz, and he's sometimes characterised as little more than a mouthpiece by those he is pitted against, but his role both as boss of one of F1's most successful teams and as a key player in paddock politics makes him so much more than that.

Horner is close to F1 ringmaster Bernie Ecclestone – too close, some of his rival team bosses would argue – but that only serves to add to his influence. After all, it means he has a very close relationship with two of the top

three in this power list. It's not without reason that he has regularly been suggested as a potential successor to Ecclestone, even though whenever the idea is raised he politely shrugs off the prospect of replacing the irreplaceable.

Horner also has Adrian Newey under lock and key, ensuring that even if the design genius is only playing a limited role in the F1 side, he is not being harnessed by a rival. That's his prize for having played a key role in recruiting Newey a decade ago in the first place and giving him the leeway he needed to create an F1 powerhouse.

13

Jean Todt

FIA president

Jean Todt's approach to running the FIA may be far less confrontational than his predecessor Max Mosley, but he remains the man with the final say in motor racing.

Although very limited in terms of what he can actually change, in part because the new structures laid down in F1's Bilateral Agreements limit the FIA's role, when there are avenues to make a switch he has pursued them.

Todt prefers operating within the confines of procedure, which has limited his impact on some areas of F1, such as making much-needed cost cuts. The downside of that approach was highlighted in 2014 when teams aborted plans for the cost cap he was so keen for.

But should Todt wish to step up and take on the teams, he's still in a position that would allow him to do so.



COMPTON/LAT

12

Andy Cowell

Managing director, Mercedes AMG High-Performance Powertrains

In the 10 years since this ex-Cosworth and BMW engineer joined Mercedes' F1 operations, no engine maker has powered cars to more GP victories (72 since 2005) than the Three-Pointed Star.

Blackpool-born Brit Cowell can claim a large slice of the credit for this success, having risen from chief engineer to managing director of the organisation that builds Merc's F1 engines in Brixworth.

Under F1's current V6 hybrid turbo formula, Cowell's team has produced

the market-leading motor – an engine that locked out four of the top six spots in the final constructors' points in 2014.

By reaching the top of the tree – and running by far the biggest customer engine programme in F1 today – Mercedes is now the biggest player in town. As the man responsible for that programme, Cowell is arguably the most coveted engineer in the paddock now that engines (and not aerodynamics) dominate the competitive equation. If not, he should be.



S BLOXHAM/LAT

11

Toto Wolff

Head of Mercedes-Benz motorsport

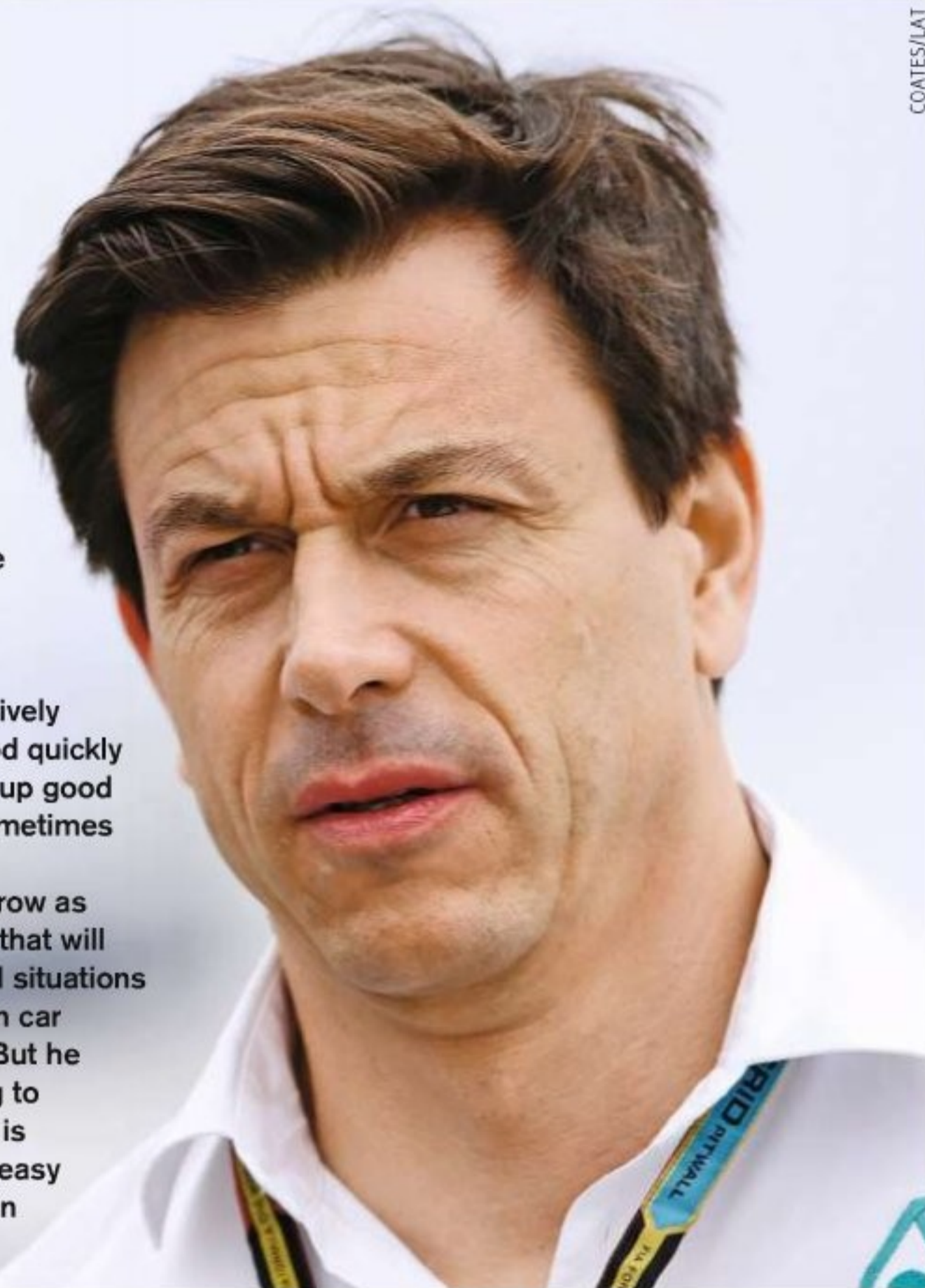
Toto Wolff's appointment as Mercedes-Benz motorsport boss back in early 2013 was a surprise to many, as his only Formula 1 credentials prior to that were as an investor at the Williams team.

Since then, Wolff has shown his effectiveness in getting things done, helping push on the work that was begun by Ross Brawn in taking Mercedes to its first F1 World Championship title in 2014. He has found his feet quickly, and as Mercedes' *de facto* public face he has established a strong profile. It was his comments after the Lewis Hamilton/Nico Rosberg Spa collision that set the tone for a change in dynamics at the team as the management reasserted its authority.

Yet his most effective work has gone on behind the scenes. He showed he was not afraid to make changes at Mercedes when he arrived, effectively serving to fast-track Ross Brawn's retirement and install a new management

structure, with increased resources from the Mercedes board to boot. He has also shown he is not afraid to take hard decisions, such as allowing his drivers to race hard for glory last year despite the inevitable headaches it sometimes caused. Although still relatively new to the paddock, he has understood quickly how the F1 game works and has built up good ties with Bernie Ecclestone, even if sometimes they disagree on certain matters.

Wolff's status in the sport will only grow as Mercedes delivers more success, and that will inevitably force him into tough political situations as rivals plot ways to bring the German car manufacturer's dominance to an end. But he showed last year that he was unwilling to compromise on engine rules, so there is little to suggest he will prove to be an easy pushover as the sights are firmly set on yet more Mercedes glory in 2015.



COATES/LAT

22

10

Sebastian Vettel

Four-time world champion and Ferrari driver

Along with Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso, Vettel is generally considered one of the 'elite three' drivers on the current grid – and is several years younger to boot.

He's certainly nowhere near as globally popular as Hamilton or Alonso – probably a legacy of his career-long association with Red Bull – but his move to Ferrari (if successful) will change that. The Scuderia is *the* biggest brand in

Formula 1, and driving for it carries a level of attention and scrutiny unlike anywhere else. Four-time world champion status undoubtedly makes Vettel a powerful player in F1 already, but his move to Ferrari offers a chance to take things to a higher level.

Ferrari has its own legacy in this sport, and becoming its new star driver will offer Vettel the chance to cement his own.



9

Niki Lauda

Non-executive chairman, Mercedes F1

The triple world champion wields huge influence through his relationship with Mercedes-Benz supremo Dieter Zetsche and old employer Bernie Ecclestone. Remember all the to-ing and fro-ing between Mercedes and Ecclestone over commercial terms for its participation in F1? Well, Lauda was the go-between.

Lauda was also key to bringing Lewis Hamilton to Mercedes. During the 2012 Singapore Grand Prix weekend, he met with the Brit and sold him on the Mercedes project. Hamilton was looking to leave McLaren after six seasons but still needed the Austrian to convince him that Mercedes, underperforming at the time, was worth joining.

Lauda also has a key role in the media. He knows how the game is played and has been known to let the cat out of the bag on various stories. This isn't accidental. When he speaks, people listen, and Lauda is canny enough to use that to the advantage of both himself and his allies.



THOMPSON/GETTY

8

Charlie Whiting

F1 race director

Charlie Whiting may be most visible to fans as the man who pushes the lights at the start of each grand prix, but his influence extends to almost every aspect of a Formula 1 weekend.

In his role as F1 race director and technical delegate, he has a wide range of powers that means not much happens in the sport without his say-so. He has the final say on safety matters, approving tracks, safety-car calls and leading the push for ever-stronger cars and driver protection. He chairs technical and sporting working group meetings to help steer rules evolution.

Whiting also oversees driver briefings to keep F1's stars in check, and he has first say in advising teams on technical interpretations to ensure that the rulebook is adhered to. Although he can only ever offer his opinion, because the final say is down to FIA race stewards, it's very rare that teams go against his advice. With F1's regulations having got ever-tighter over the years, the increasing emphasis on such interpretation has served to expand Whiting's influence.

His strength in managing the unique demands and challenges of his role has seen him become a trusted ally of Jean Todt – the man he effectively reports to – and that support has been vital in allowing him to get on with his job.



STALEY/LAT

7

Carlos Ghosn

Chairman and CEO, Renault

His engines power almost half of the grid and it's indicative of the authority that Ghosn exudes that Renault was one of those that played a key role in forcing F1 to change its engine formula. But Ghosn remains a potent force simply because, as he has shown time and time again, he does not see F1 as a must-have for Renault.

Ghosn has always seen F1 in terms of its value to the company. Even when his engines were mopping up world titles he was starting to question the marketing value of being in F1 given that Renault was often overlooked as part of the Red Bull package.

This means he must be kept happy, not just by those who run the sport but rivals. After all, Mercedes doesn't want to have to power an extra couple of teams should Renault walk away.



HONE/LAT

6

Dieter Zetsche

Chairman, Daimler AG and head of Mercedes-Benz

A Mercedes-Benz lifer, the handlebar-moustached, Istanbul-born Zetsche is chairman of the board of management of Daimler AG and head of Mercedes-Benz cars. He therefore carries overall fiscal and marketing responsibility for the company's performance, including the motorsport division.

In 2009, one of his first decisions upon reaching the top office was approval to purchase the world title-winning Brawn GP – going against the contemporary trend of motor-manufacturer withdrawal from F1. With almost half the current grid Mercedes-powered – four of 2014's top six teams were thus equipped – and a currently dominant 'works' team employing star drivers Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg, any reversal of policy would be catastrophic for F1.

When Ecclestone gibbed at paying Mercedes top dollar, Zetsche played the long game: eventually the Three-Pointed Star won concessions, including escalating revenues through to 2020. Under his watch the board has seen off numerous challenges to the firm's F1 involvement from shareholders, leaving no doubt about his iron grip and enthusiasm for the sport, which he attends with a broad smile at every opportunity despite his schedule.



ETHERINGTON/LAT

5

Sergio Marchionne

CEO, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and chairman, Ferrari

Ferrari has undergone something of a revolution in the past 12 months, and enters the new season without the chairman, team principal or lead driver that it had last year. Such a scenario was virtually unthinkable even in the middle of its difficult 2014 campaign.

The catalyst for such a dramatic overhaul has been Fiat Chrysler Automobiles chief – and new Ferrari president – Sergio Marchionne. In his short time of influence at Maranello he has swept through the corridors and stamped his authority in a manner that shows he's not afraid to be decisive and take action.

Clearly unhappy about Ferrari's recent form in Formula 1 (he feels it directly impacts on its road-car image), he has wasted little time in cutting loose those he feels were surplus to requirements. He is very much shaping the team the way he wants it to be, with team principal Marco Mattiacci getting dumped at the end of

last year and replaced by Maurizio Arrivabene.

But Marchionne's push is only partly fuelled by the competitive situation on track – part of the reasoning behind Arrivabene's appointment is about re-establishing the importance of the Ferrari brand in F1. Arrivabene, through his Philip Morris contacts, has had the ear of Bernie Ecclestone for years, and Marchionne is clear that Ferrari must regain its position as the most important team in F1.

Marchionne's tough work ethic means that he will not be afraid to ruffle a few feathers in his quest to get Ferrari back to where he wants it, which means he could have a very significant role to play in the future direction of the sport. He will not accept midfield mediocrity and, as Ferrari showed last year, when it succeeded in challenging the FIA over its own rulebook on the engine freeze, it's not going to sit back and do nothing if it believes action will deliver results.



24

4

Lewis Hamilton

Reigning F1 world champion

Many will argue Fernando Alonso is the best driver on the current grid – and thus should be considered the most powerful driver in Formula 1. But, as the reigning world champion in (currently) the world's best team, there is no denying Hamilton is the man of the moment.

There is arguably no team on the grid that wouldn't want the 30-year-old Brit – generally considered one of the finest racers of his generation – in one of its cars. The same cannot be said of Alonso, given the souring of the Spaniard's relationship with Ferrari in its fifth year over the course of 2014 – and the fact that Mercedes and Red Bull were not prepared to move heaven and earth to secure Alonso's signature for this season.

Hamilton's on-going negotiations to thrash out a new deal to remain in Stuttgart will make him unquestionably *the* biggest player in the 2016 driver market – no matter what Alonso might want the world to believe! No one else will make moves until Hamilton's deal is done – or not. That makes him powerful.

Beyond driver-market politics and



on-track derring-do, Hamilton has become an iconic athlete over the course of his eight-year F1 career, and arguably he is the biggest draw globally for fans of the sport.

To use social network Twitter as a crude measure, Hamilton's 2.59 million followers make him comfortably the most popular driver on the grid. Only Alonso (2.2 million) and Jenson Button (2.01 million) come anywhere close. To put that in greater perspective, you have to combine the followings of the Ferrari, Mercedes and Red Bull F1 teams to trump Hamilton's number...

Past controversies – such as the 'hooning' incident at the 2010 Australian Grand Prix, or releasing sensitive McLaren telemetry to the world after qualifying for the Belgian GP two years later – suggested Hamilton maybe lacked the maturity to be F1's true star of stars. But this quiet and unassuming Stevenage lad has grown up immeasurably since joining Mercedes in 2013. As a more mature double world champion, Hamilton is becoming a true global ambassador for the sport he currently dominates.

THOMPSON/GETTY

3

Dietrich Mateschitz

Owner, Red Bull

Dietrich Mateschitz's name is one that most F1 fans will be aware of. But can you picture him? Maybe not, for the Austrian lets his brand do the talking. Aside from visiting the odd race and test, his utterances in the media are limited to speaking to a select few. But don't mistake a relatively low profile for a lack of influence.

Mateschitz has a net worth estimated at \$10 billion by Forbes, which in itself is enough to make him a powerful figure in any arena. But in F1 he is hugely committed. Not only does he own one of the pre-eminent teams, Red Bull Racing, but thanks to possessing Scuderia Toro Rosso after acquiring what was then Minardi ahead of the 2006 season and rebranding it, he has control of 22 per cent of the likely 2015 grid. Oh, and he promotes one of the best events on the calendar – the Austrian Grand Prix at the revived Red Bull Ring, where no expense has been spared either for fans or those in the paddock.

But Mateschitz is more than the sum of his parts. Thanks to his widespread involvement in F1, which stretches back continuously to 1996 with the Sauber team, he has a long history to fall back on. That means he knows exactly how the game is played and knows exactly how and when to play the many cards he holds. He also knows the other major players and how to deal with them. As a key partner of Renault, Mateschitz has also been able to flex his muscles at Viry-Chatillon, leading to major changes in the way Renault Sport F1 operates after it started last year with a sub-par power-unit package.

This is what makes Mateschitz so formidable. He knows how to wield his power and influence, both in dealing with Bernie Ecclestone directly and through his Red Bull team principal, Christian Horner. Crucially, he knows when to make a stand and when not to, meaning he avoids becoming too much of a thorn in the side. That has helped him establish Red Bull as one of the big

teams on favourable financial terms with FOM.

Mateschitz also has tremendous power as a career-maker. While Helmut Marko runs the Red Bull scheme, Mateschitz has been known to flex his muscles and get involved in decisions regarding those at the top of the scheme. Had Marko had his way, it's understood that former drivers Sebastien Buemi and Jaime Alguersuari might well have stayed at Toro Rosso for 2012.

But there are dozens of drivers who owe their careers to Mateschitz, including Sebastian Vettel, Daniel Ricciardo and Daniil Kvyat. Over the past 15 years, nobody has thrown more money at young talent than Mateschitz.

All of this means that Red Bull gets more out of F1 than it puts in. As a promotional platform it suits the energy-drinks giant well, but over time this level of investment has led to Mateschitz becoming ever-more influential.

2

Bernie Ecclestone

Formula 1's commercial rights holder

Mr E – say it quickly to gain an instant feel of how F1's ringmaster is perceived – has hung about paddocks longer than most current team bosses have been alive, and took the helm of the sport while they were in short trousers. Since then he has seen it, done it, fixed it and profited.

Time after time rumours (falsely) abound about his ousting, yet he remains in charge despite past and looming legal challenges. This attests to his sheer relentlessness and inner need for the next deal, the biggest of which currently looms: remaining in office until he elects to go.

He has sold the business time and again – each time for greater reward – and in the process seen off media men and beaten a trio of banks at their game. Whatever deal Ecclestone cuts, be it maintaining his iron grip on teams, pitting Cape Town versus South Korea or Hockenheim against Nurburgring in the hosting stakes, you can bet the octogenarian comes out on top.

No other man in F1 could so regularly so sweetly talk Russian presidents, US entrepreneurs, TV moguls, the boards of motor manufacturers and high-rolling sponsors alike into parting with piles of cash so effortlessly. Then, crucially, they return for the next dose of Bernie Magic. Equally, few – if any – 84-year-olds have the stamina to maintain Ecclestone's mind, body and soul-punishing schedule, one that sees him flit across the globe in search of the next deal to seal. In short, this Suffolk trawlerman's son has made this global sport his own slot-car set, and how.

Who else could in this day and age get away with denouncing social-media platforms and denigrate youthful audiences with impunity? Who, indeed, could pass favourable comparisons about detested dictators or equate women to "domestic appliances" and retain his job?

Therein, though, lies F1's gravest threat, for he treats the business as though it were personal property, with all the dangerous consequences of self-centred

ownership. Power is a double-edged sword and, just as Ecclestone had the vision to create the sport unto his own image, so he has the ability to destroy – now, or whenever he departs for whatever reason. Donald Mackenzie put it succinctly when he told a London court: "The difficult situation [for CVC] was we had a manager who was [once] the owner of the company, who was also very powerful [and] who on the other hand was also difficult to manage." If ever proof were needed of Ecclestone's paddock power, that statement provides it.

There was a time when Ecclestone would have been undisputed #1, but age, circumstance and progress have overtaken his undisputed abilities, and thus he gives best to his boss, who still clearly has confidence in the man who took a rag-tag backyard pastime and single-handedly turned it into a sport able to challenge the Olympics.

The gap to Mackenzie is minuscule, which is no consolation to the man universally known as 'Bernie'...



ISTITENE/GETTY

1

Donald Mackenzie

Co-chairman of F1's owner,
CVC Capital Partners

It's a toss-up for top slot between Bernie Ecclestone or his *de facto* boss. Donald Mackenzie, co-founder/chairman of CVC Capital Partners – majority owner of Delta Topco, F1's ultimate commercial rights-holding entity – gets the nod by simple virtue of his ability to impose his tunes on the piper, whoever that may be, now or in the future.

CVC manages over £35 billion in investments spread over six European and two Asian funds, so in real terms F1, while being a global sport, is but a drop in the waters to Mackenzie and Co, who paid around £1.2bn (via leveraged loans) for 75 per cent of a business now worth at least four times that.

The secretive Scot is said to be both a country sports fan and Jim Clark admirer – sources maintain he keeps a Lotus 24/25 acquired from the Donington Collection at his hunting lodge in Hampshire – and has the right credentials to manage vast piles of money: parsimonious heritage coupled with chartered accountancy and legal qualifications.

Said by associates to be utterly ruthless and a “deal junkie of the first order who lives to extract maximum return from every investment”, he may have found his match in former car salesman Ecclestone, stating during a recent court testimony that “we [CVC] had been sold a pup [in F1]....”

Maybe not though: as an investment, Delta Topco regularly posts returns on investment of 40-plus per cent – making it CVC's star performer – and hence Mackenzie's keen interest in this unorthodox business.

In the interim CVC has extracted over double the initial purchase price in dividends and proceeds from the sale of half its shares while retaining control, making Mackenzie a financial colossus in a sport populated by billionaires. When the chips are down, as they were during F1's recent (and continuing) cash crisis, he bestrides the paddock, scuttling from team to team, his blue baseball cap, aviator shades and chinos making him almost invisible despite his lanky frame and sharp features, probing here, reassuring there.

Mackenzie's ambition is to take F1 public – with or without Ecclestone – and to this end plans were laid (twice), thwarted each time by the global economic crisis and the F1 tsar's well-documented travails.

But if/when that is no longer the case he will surely drop the man who built CVC's most profitable business – and that alone points to his supreme paddock power. 🏎️



Why Force India believes it can take on the elite

OK, the Silverstone-based team is missing the first test, but it doesn't see a problem in that. Instead, it's a chance to maximise work from the Toyota windtunnel. By **JONATHAN NOBLE**



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Force India team boss Vijay Mallya has set his sights on the squad fighting with the 'big boys' of Formula 1 for podium finishes this year.

But after a 2014 campaign in which the team failed to build on early-season momentum, and which ended with Mallya focused on hitting out at F1's revenue structure, such ambition may be a step too far.

It may be considered even more ambitious following the news that the team will not give its new car its track debut until after this weekend's first test at Jerez.

Behind the scenes, though, there is a quiet confidence within Force

India that it can make a genuine step this year and establish itself at the head of the chasing pack – and occasionally deliver some giant-killing performances.

Here, AUTOSPORT looks at why Force India feels it can make such progress in 2015.

LATE DEBUT FOR VJM08

Although there was plenty of media interest in the new Force India colour scheme that was unveiled in a glittering ceremony in Mexico last week, the first glimpse of the team's 2015 car will not be for a few more weeks.

After evaluating its plans over the



Toyota's windtunnel has given Force India the boost it needed

winter, the team felt that there was little point in rushing to sign off the final parts for its 2015 contender. It will instead be launched at the second test at Barcelona.

There were two reasons for this – the first was that the opening pre-season test runs at Jerez: a track with an unusual surface that makes meaningful running challenging.

As team manager Andy Stevenson told AUTOSPORT: "Jerez is the only track F1 can go to at the beginning of February. You can work on reliability, but not performance. We're reasonably confident with our reliability, as the car is an evolution of 2014.

"So we felt, given the resources,

we can give ourselves nearly a month to start with a stronger car. It's not all about the mileage in pre-season testing, it's the quality."

The main reason behind the delay though is the switch of windtunnel for 2015. On the back of an FIA rule-change that forces teams to make use of only one tunnel, Force India has elected to run at the Toyota facility in Cologne.

Its permanent work there only began a few weeks ago, meaning that the benefit of its new-found knowledge is only now trickling through the design office.

That is why the team wanted to keep the final design of its car open for as long as possible – something



The new livery was unveiled in Mexico

S. BLOXHAM/LAT

An evolution of the 2014 car, the VJM08 should be reliable



Interim VJM08 broke cover last week. The real car will test after Jerez this weekend



Green admits tunnel switch a big help

"We're looking to put the performance on as the season develops and be really strong in the second half of 2015"

Force India technical director Andrew Green

needed nowadays, the benefits will be dramatic.

As one example, the aerodynamic issues that caused its form to stall last year was only explained through work in Cologne – it had never been exposed at its former facility in Brackley.

Technical director Andrew Green said: "It is a significant step. We've been trying to shoe-horn a 50 per cent model into a windtunnel that was originally designed for a 25 per cent model. So it really is cramped.

"It's limited what we can do in that tunnel, because the walls are so close. We can develop the car in a straight line but anything else is a compromise.

"Toyota give us a huge working area in which we can work the car around and it's much closer to reality. It's a big deal for us."

The boost of windtunnel should be further cemented with an upgrade to Force India's CFD

facilities at the end of last year too.

Green added: "Last year we invested heavily in our CFD capability – we doubled our teraflops last year – we are well on our way to using CFD as a real complementary tool so as not to rely solely on the windtunnel. We're moving towards more of a CFD culture within the team."

PODIUMS THE TARGET

The proof of Force India's tactic, and the benefit of its Toyota deal, will only be realised from the start of the European season.

But the hope is that Force India do the opposite of 2014. So rather than falling away, they get stronger over the campaign.

"I think it's going to be a mirror image of the 2014 for us," said Green. "We're looking to put the performance on as the season develops and be really strong in the second half of the season."

MISSING FIRST TESTS

Skipping the first test is nothing new in Formula 1, and over the years teams have done so for various reasons. Sometimes the decision works, while on other occasions it backfires.

Here is a run-down of cars that missed the first test...



2009 BRAWN GP

Honda's late withdrawal forced a Mercedes switch, and team was unable to make opening test. It made no difference to pace, as Brawn went on to win the world title.



2010 RED BULL

Another title contender that was late was the 2010 Red Bull, as Newey wanted more development time.



2011 FORCE INDIA

The new Force India only appeared at the second test, and team went on to finish sixth overall in the constructors' championship.



2012 MERCEDES

Mercedes decided to focus on tyre work with its old car for the first test, but failed to gain enough knowledge as problems plagued its new contender all season.



2014 LOTUS

A late start with its 2014 car prompted Lotus to skip the first test – and the loss of mileage hurt it a lot as teams struggled to understand new regulations. A year on from fighting for wins, it finished only eighth in the standings.

THOMPSON/GETTY

Ten years old*

*that's the team, not the drivers



30

Toro Rosso is celebrating a decade in F1 by taking what many argue is its biggest risk yet. Will young rookies Max Verstappen and Carlos Sainz cope? BEN ANDERSON investigates

Toro Rosso is celebrating its 10th season in Formula 1 this year – and will run a special logo on its 2015 F1 car to mark an eventful decade since it transformed from the old Minardi team into Red Bull Racing's junior arm.

But the Faenza-based squad enters this landmark campaign with the least-experienced driver line-up on the grid – its 'greenest' since Vitantonio Liuzzi and Scott Speed formed up for its inaugural season in 2006. In a year that is likely to feature just nine teams (thanks to the likely absence of Caterham and Marussia) that represents something of a gamble, because it exposes midfield squads to the realistic possibility of becoming back-of-the-grid fodder.

All-rookie driver pairings are rare in Formula 1. Apart from Marussia fielding Jules Bianchi and Max Chilton in 2013, you have to go back to 2005 before you find a team that began a season with two race drivers

yet to start a grand prix between them. Coincidentally, that was Minardi, which ran Patrick Friesacher and Christijan Albers in its final year before its Toro Rosso metamorphosis.

There is no doubt that Toro Rosso is a very capable midfield squad, and there is also no doubt Formula 3 prodigy Max Verstappen and reigning Formula Renault 3.5 champion Carlos Sainz Jr are highly skilled racing drivers. But Formula 1 is a very different beast to tame, no matter how pure your pedigree.

ROOKIE SYNDROME

Take McLaren's Kevin Magnussen as an example. He strode in to F1 off the back of title success in the same championship Sainz has just won. The Dane scored a podium on his debut in Australia, but struggled to match experienced team-mate Jenson Button for much of the rest of the season – particularly (and crucially) on Sundays.

Team boss Eric Boullier said

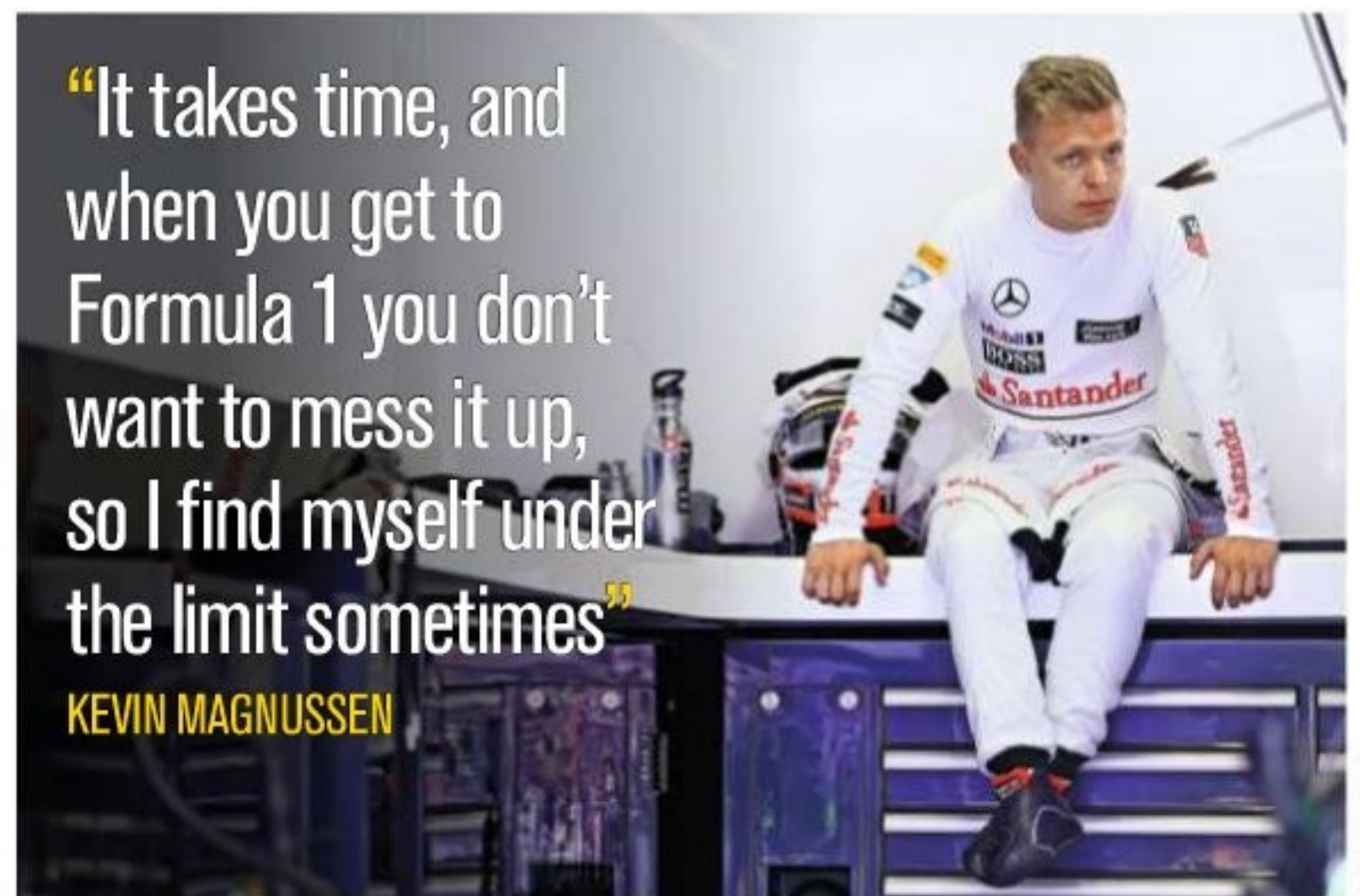
Magnussen began to suffer from 'rookie syndrome', whereby a young driver who is used to regular success in the junior categories finds it difficult to accept racing for minor results in inferior equipment. Although Magnussen overcame this as the season wore on, he admitted

to AUTOSPORT that he found the adjustment to racing in F1 tough.

"It takes time, and when you get to Formula 1 you don't want to mess up, so I find myself a little under the limit sometimes," he said. "It's tricky when you go to places you know but

"It takes time, and when you get to Formula 1 you don't want to mess it up, so I find myself under the limit sometimes"

KEVIN MAGNUSSEN



MASON/GETTY



Kvyat learned from Vergne in 2014

“For sure we should have some difficult moments, but I think in the end, if you have the speed, it should be fine”

MAX VERSTAPPEN

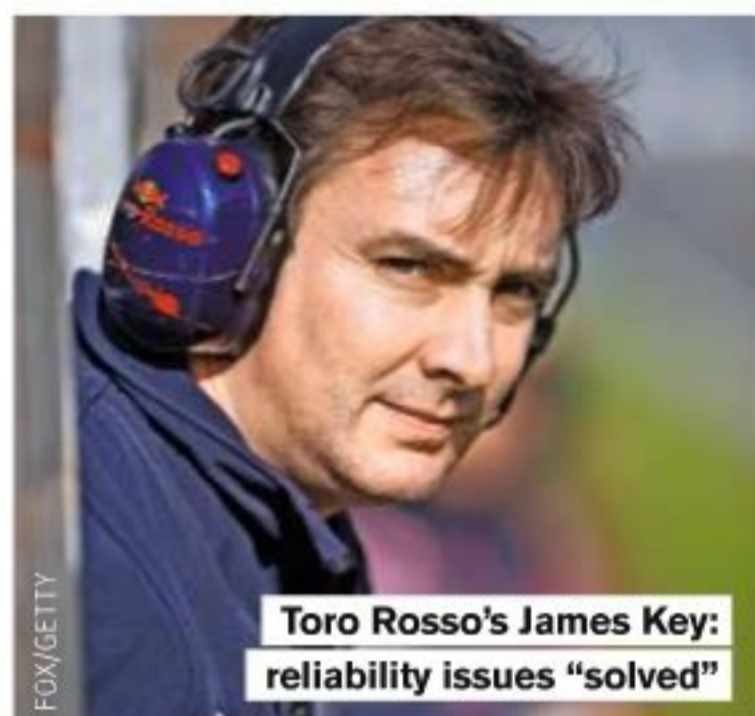
you haven't raced in F1.

“You drive the circuit much quicker than you do in anything else, the tyres are different, there's a lot more power. The car behaves differently – basically it's a completely different situation.”

TYRE TRICKS

Before Red Bull decided to promote Daniil Kvyat to its top squad and install Sainz in his place, Toro Rosso team principal Franz Tost expressed his preference to retain an experienced driver in his 2015 line-up, to help Verstappen with the challenges of F1 rookiedom.

One of the most difficult aspects of adapting to driving in F1 is managing the delicate Pirelli tyres. It's in this aspect that ex-Toro Rosso racer Jean-Eric Vergne felt he



Toro Rosso's James Key: reliability issues “solved”

aided Kvyat's rapid rise in 2014. It's also the area in which Magnussen struggled most without guidance from his McLaren team. Ultimately, his inability to get to grips with it fully across the season played a part in him losing his race seat.

“There are a lot of things you have to get your head around, but I think the main thing is probably the tyres,” Magnussen explains. “Getting to Formula 1 you suddenly have to manage your tyres, and you don't really have to do that in any other series – maybe GP2, but I never did GP2 [also true of Verstappen and Sainz].”

“So it's a very big thing, not only in your driving style and learning to drive in a different way, but also in setting up the car.

“That's also very different – you

can change many more things on the car, and if you know what you want then it helps you. But it's tough when you don't get that much time in the car. You need time to adapt to Formula 1.”

GETTING ITS HOUSE IN ORDER

If Toro Rosso fails to design a decent car, and its two new drivers struggle to adapt to the demands of F1 quickly enough, the team could find its 10th-season party pooped by propping up the constructors' championship table. The Faenza squad finished a clear seventh last season, so Sauber would need to make a big step after a point-less 2014, but Lotus is likely to make a leap after swapping Renault engines for Mercedes propulsion.

Toro Rosso lost a heap of points

to reliability problems in the first half of last season, as it pushed on with developing what was fundamentally a pretty quick car, but technical director James Key is confident. “We went through a patch of really unexpected and in some cases unexplained issues – either with the car or with the power unit,” he says. “Unfortunately, at all of these events we were looking reasonably competitive and definitely in a points-scoring position.

“We've now got a curve of reliability, if you like, and we're back on target with pretty much all of the teams ahead of us with our regular finishes. We perhaps lost a little of our competitive edge in the last few races, but we had the reliability, so I think we've solved that bit.”

Verstappen, 17, who in a few weeks' time will become the youngest driver ever to start a grand prix, has already deflected plenty of negative press concerning his meteoric rise to F1 after just a solitary season of single-seater racing. He is equally bullish when it comes to the pitfalls the team's rookie driver line-up could face.

“We are both rookies, so sometimes it will be a bit harder to find exactly what you want with the car, but the team has a lot of experience with young drivers, so they will sort it out,” he tells AUTOSPORT. “For sure we should have some difficult moments, but I think in the end, if you have the speed, it should be fine.”

Scott Speed and Vitantonio Liuzzi had little experience before Toro Rosso's first Formula 1 season in 2006



TORO ROSSO'S F1 LINE-UPS

With precisely zero Formula 1 starts between them before the first race of the new season, Max Verstappen and Carlos Sainz Jr represent the least experienced line-up in Toro

Rosso history. Even for a team used to bleeding new talent, this represents uncharted territory...

Here's how they stack up against Toro Rosso line-ups past:

YEAR	DRIVERS	TOTAL F1 STARTS
2006	Vitantonio Liuzzi/Scott Speed	4
2007	Vitantonio Liuzzi/Scott Speed	30
2008	Sebastien Bourdais/Sebastian Vettel	8
2009	Sebastien Bourdais/Sebastien Buemi	18
2010	Sebastien Buemi/Jaime Alguersuari	25
2011	Sebastien Buemi/Jaime Alguersuari	63
2012	Daniel Ricciardo/Jean-Eric Vergne	11
2013	Daniel Ricciardo/Jean-Eric Vergne	51
2014	Jean-Eric Vergne/Daniil Kvyat	39
2015	Max Verstappen/Carlos Sainz Jr	0



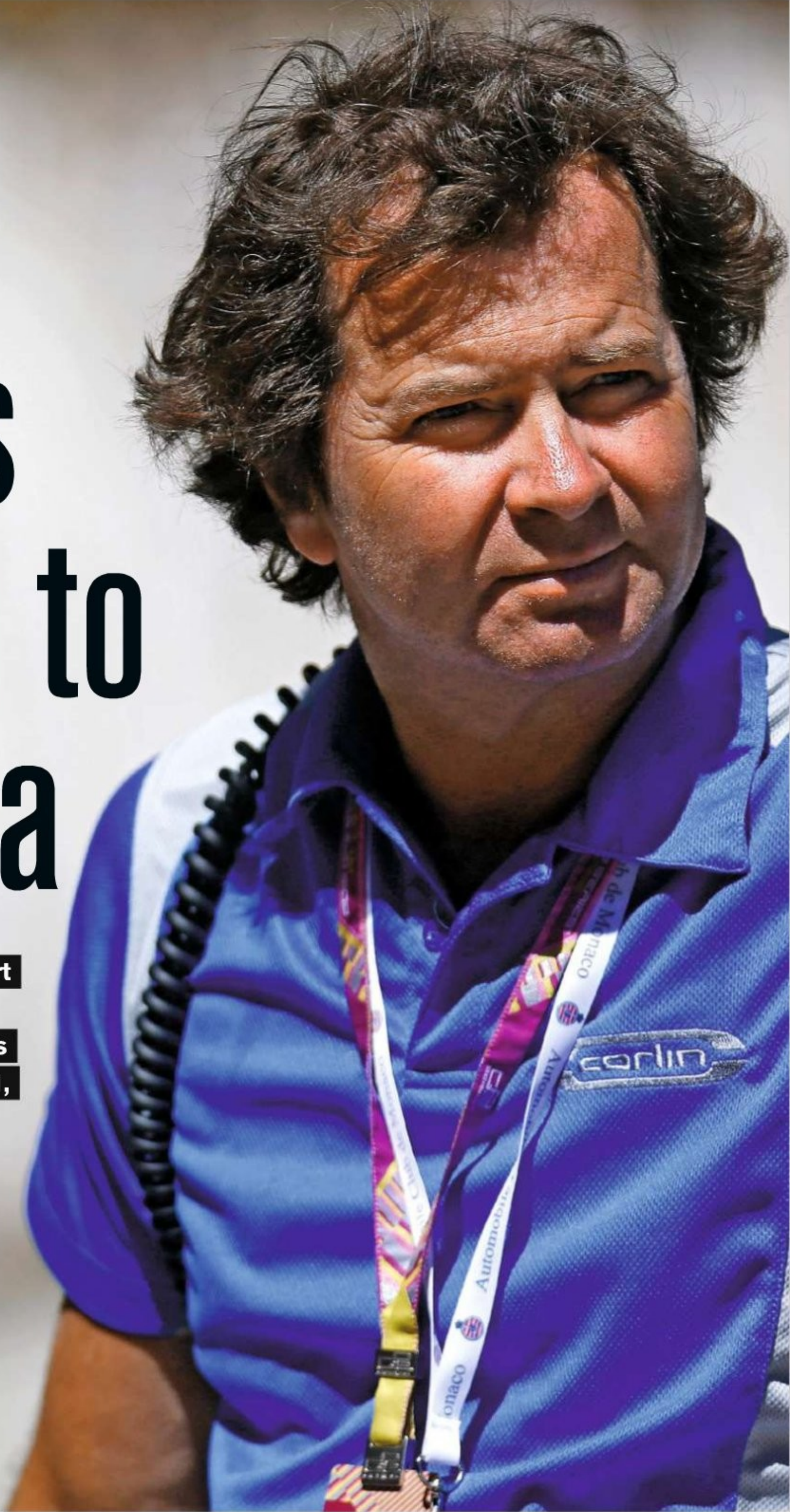
Team had to work on reliability last season

STALEY/GP2

Carlin's coming to America

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Trevor Carlin's organisation is looking to join the US motorsport elite, using Indy Lights as a foothold. An IndyCar campaign is the next step – but not Formula 1, he tells MARK GLENDENNING



OWNES



New technical package has sparked fresh interest in Indy Lights



A couple of hours north of Manhattan, up near the Connecticut border, the city of Poughkeepsie, New York, straddles the Hudson River, just as it has done ever since the Dutch set up shop there in 1720.

Its close proximity to estates once owned by wealthy 19th-century industrialist families such as the Vanderbilts and the Astors points to its history as a lively centre for shipping in the 1800s; the presence of a major IBM campus in modern times suggests that it has found a way to adapt to a changing and technology-driven world in a way that many other early industrial hot spots did not.

In motorsport terms though, Poughkeepsie has rarely made it onto the map. Its main claims to fame are being the birthplace of Jocko Maggiasco, who was involved in the 1988 crash at Pocono that ended the career of NASCAR legend Bobby Allison, and being the home of long-established American sportscar squad Dyson Racing.

That's about to change. This year, the Poughkeepsie sporting landscape – currently defined largely by the Hudson River Renegades, a minor-league feeder team to the Tampa Bay Rays – is going to be recast to include an Indy Lights team. A British Indy Lights team. Carlin's Indy Lights team.

In fact, Carlin's logic for putting down its US roots in a town that is roughly the same distance from Indianapolis as London is from Milan is completely sound. A more fundamental question is what business a European junior formula powerhouse such as Carlin has in the United States in the first place.

The team will enter the resurgent Indy Lights championship this year as a precursor to a planned IndyCar programme. Last week, it was confirmed that former Marussia Formula 1 driver Max Chilton, who raced for Carlin in British Formula 3 and GP2, is assisting with the Lights team in preparation for his putative IndyCar entry in 2016. Grahame Chilton, father of Max,

is CEO and chairman of Carlin, so the clear objective is that both team and driver should graduate to IndyCar together. IndyCar is already littered with Carlin alumni, notably former British F3 champion Takuma Sato, so it's logical that the team should follow in the footsteps of some of its graduates.

Trevor Carlin had been playing with the idea of running a team in the US since the 1980s when, as a twentysomething, he spent a few years trying to juggle a job at Ralt America with the various extracurricular distractions on offer around Redondo Beach, California.

Lights was always going to be the easiest way to establish Carlin's American outpost. For a long time, the only real obstacle was the increasingly antiquated equipment that the series was using.

"I'd looked at Lights for the past five or six years, and because I know the old car so well – it's basically a 2002 World Series [by Nissan] car – I just couldn't work out how they could still be racing because we'd disposed of those cars years ago," Carlin says. "So I thought, 'There's no way I'm going to invest money in something that's got such old technology.'"

The arrival of an entirely new technical package for 2014 brought an end to the 13-year racing life of the previous car, and has been the catalyst for a remarkable upswing in the outlook for a series that was fielding as few as eight starters last season. Not only does the series now have a contemporary car again, but the clean sheet that comes along with it lessens any disadvantage that a team such as Carlin might have against a more established American outfit such as Schmidt Peterson Motorsports or Andretti Autosport.

"The new car coming on board made all the difference for us," Carlin says. "And it means we're not so far behind the eightball compared with the local teams."

Even if everyone is starting from the same baseline with the car, Carlin still has a lot to learn: it hasn't raced on any of the road or street courses on the calendar, and ovals are – quite literally – a foreign concept. ▶



Trevor Carlin has ruled out racing in F1 like former F3 rival Manor did, as Marussia

► “Half of my guys haven’t even seen an oval,” muses Carlin, “let alone prepared a car for one. It would be naive to think that we’ll go out there and be immediately kicking ass or anything. We’re being quite calm about it, and can see that we’ve got a lot to learn. If we hit the ground running, then happy days. But we’re ready for a lot of hard work and a lot of effort.”

All that said, the team does have one ace in its hand. Carlin’s US team will initially be staffed largely by personnel drawn from its European programmes, with the aim of recruiting local team members once things are up and running. But it has made one significant US-based appointment already: Geoff Fickling, whose recent CV includes winning the last two Lights championships (with Sage Karam at Schmidt in 2013, and then Gabby Chaves at Belardi Auto Racing last year). Fickling has assumed the role of chief race engineer, and is already assisting with recruiting additional staff.

“Geoff is very passionate about his racing; he seems like a Carlin sort of guy,” says Carlin. “With him, I think we at least have a good starting point.”

The team also has a good workshop from which to base itself, and it’s here that the Poughkeepsie part comes into the story. Carlin did initially look into options for a headquarters in the Indianapolis area, but was swayed towards

upstate New York by Dyson Racing bosses Chris and Rob Dyson.

“The Dysons went out of their way to encourage us and help us, and in the end it was a no-brainer,” Carlin says. “And when I did the first trip from the UK to go and see Chris... actually, logistically, it’s a piece of piss. You get your flight – it’s a six-hour flight from London to Newark – and then it’s an hour and a half’s drive to Poughkeepsie. So all in all it’s not such a bad route if you’ve got to do it a few times.

“If you’re going to fly to Indy, you’ve got to go to Chicago or New York, and then you’ve got to change flights... so [the east coast] made a lot of sense for us.”

The two teams will be run from the same facility, meaning that in 2015 Carlin’s Indy Lights cars will share garage space with the Bentley Continental GT3s that Dyson campaigns in the US with drivers Butch Leitzinger and Guy Smith.

The other advantage for using the Dyson workshop is that it’s big enough to accommodate



Team will share workshop with US sportscar stalwart Dyson Racing



Max Chilton finished fourth in British F3 in 2009 with Carlin

“We could get into Formula 1 in some shape or form, but to be competitive in F1 is impossible” TREVOR CARLIN



Carlin's eponymous team made its debut with Stanton in 1997

CARLIN'S PATH TO WORLD DOMINATION

Trevor Carlin's first role in motorsport was as a schoolboy 'gofer' in the late 1970s with the works PRS Formula Ford 1600 team run by his uncles Steve and Vic Hollman. After leaving school he took on a role as mechanic at PRS, before joining Ralt.

Initially the stores man at Ralt, Carlin was sent to the US to work with the marque's Formula Super Vee customers, before being brought back to the UK in 1988 to join the Hollmans' new Bowman Racing Formula 3 team.

Carlin stayed five years as team manager at Bowman before it folded, and was on the verge of moving back to the US to work as a mechanic with Indycar team Walker Racing when he was offered a position at West Surrey Racing.

When WSR finished in F3 and joined the BTCC in early 1996, Carlin decided to quit. A few months later, he took on running the Williams Pitstop Challenge roadshow with fellow FF1600 old-timer Martin Stone, and together with Stone set up Carlin Motorsport to enter British F3 in '97 with Henry Stanton.

Steve Hollman later joined Carlin on the commercial side and the team went from strength to strength in F3, adding a World Series by Nissan (subsequently Formula Renault 3.5) arm in 2003 and starting a Formula BMW UK team the following year. Carlin also became sporting director of the Jordan F1 team – immediately after its takeover by Midland – for a few months in '05.

In late 2009 a takeover meant that the Carlin team – dropping the 'Motorsport' appendage – now became part of the Capsicum Motorsport group run by Grahame Chilton (Max's dad) and Rupert Swallow, but with Carlin himself still in charge of the teams.

Carlin expanded into GP3 in 2010 and GP2 the following year and, after a brief stint in European F3 in the late 2000s, returned to this series in '12. With British F3 and FBMW no more, that means that Carlin's European portfolio now comprises GP2, GP3, FR3.5, Euro F3 and the new-for-2015 MSA Formula.

Marcus Simmons

a couple of Carlin IndyCars, should the need arise in the future.

“I've had discussions with Chris about that and there is enough space there to run anything we want,” Carlin says. “So that's an added bonus.”

If everything follows Carlin's timeline then those IndyCars will be taking up that extra workshop space in exactly 12 months. “Of course we have to work very hard on funding and getting the team together,” Carlin says. “I'm confident that from a technical and staffing point of view

I can pull together a really good, solid [IndyCar] team. Once we've got over the work of setting up the Lights team, my immediate focus then will be on planning for IndyCar in 2016.”

Assuming that those plans come to fruition, IndyCar will represent the pinnacle of an extraordinarily comprehensive Carlin ladder system: it would theoretically be possible for a driver to move all the way up from MSA Formula to IndyCar without ever driving for another team.

“That's what we've done here in Europe, and of course there would then be the possibility to take our World Series or GP2 drivers straight to IndyCar or Indy Lights,” Carlin says. “So we're just trying to keep growing our ladder.

“It's impossible for Carlin to get into F1 and be competitive. We could get into F1 in some shape or form, but to be competitive in F1 is truly impossible. However, if we work hard and do a good job, we can get to IndyCar. So it's a great target for the team. You've got to have goals; we're ambitious, and I've got to keep growing the company so I can keep hold of all my good staff.”

The first candidates for upper steps of the Carlin ladder are Ed Jones, who moves across to Lights this year after racing in European F3 for Carlin in 2014, and Chilton, whose deal is currently limited to development work in '15.

Perhaps the most intriguing part of Carlin's US

expansion is not so much what it represents now – a new Indy Lights team – but the prospect of what this first step could ultimately lead to. Works efforts aside, there are very few genuinely global race teams, and not only is Carlin on the verge of becoming just that, but the vibrant motorsport scene in the US means that its horizons could be broadened even further in the future. Sportscars, for example?

“The way we go on, you can't rule out anything,” Carlin says. “We're ambitious, we're always looking for projects so we can promote chief mechanics into team managers, and mechanics into chief mechanics, and data engineers into race engineers. So we've always got a great pool of staff, and at the end of the day a race team is people. If you've got the right people, you can take on any project. And that's what we're coming to America with.

“I see Carlin coming to the United States as a long-term project. I expect us to be there, hopefully, in 10, 20 years. At the minute, we're a very good European race team. We want to get the USA business going well and become a global race team.

“We want to become part of the establishment in the States. We're not trying to take the establishment on, we want to become part of it. We're truly excited. This is the biggest thing we've done so far, by a long shot.”



Ed Jones will be Carlin's first Indy Lights driver

THE RACE REPORT

PROTOTYPE • PROTOTYPE CHALLENGE • GTLM • GT DAYTONA • RESULTS

Dixon on top in Chip's old block

Scott Dixon and his team-mates notched up Chip Ganassi Racing's sixth Daytona win in 11 years as the challenge of a new breed of LMP2 machinery fizzled out early on. **GARY WATKINS** reports



POLE/LAT

AT A GLANCE



"We knew that we needed to open the fuel window and that's what got us ahead"

SCOTT DIXON

DAYTONA 24 HOURS
Daytona Speedway

ROUND 1/12

LAPS 740

PROTOTYPE WINNERS
Scott Dixon, Tony Kanaan, Kyle Larson, Jamie McMurray – Riley
24h00m57.667s

PROTOTYPE CHALLENGE WINNERS
Tom Kimber-Smith, Mike Guasch, Andrew Novich, Andrew Palmer – ORECA
714 laps

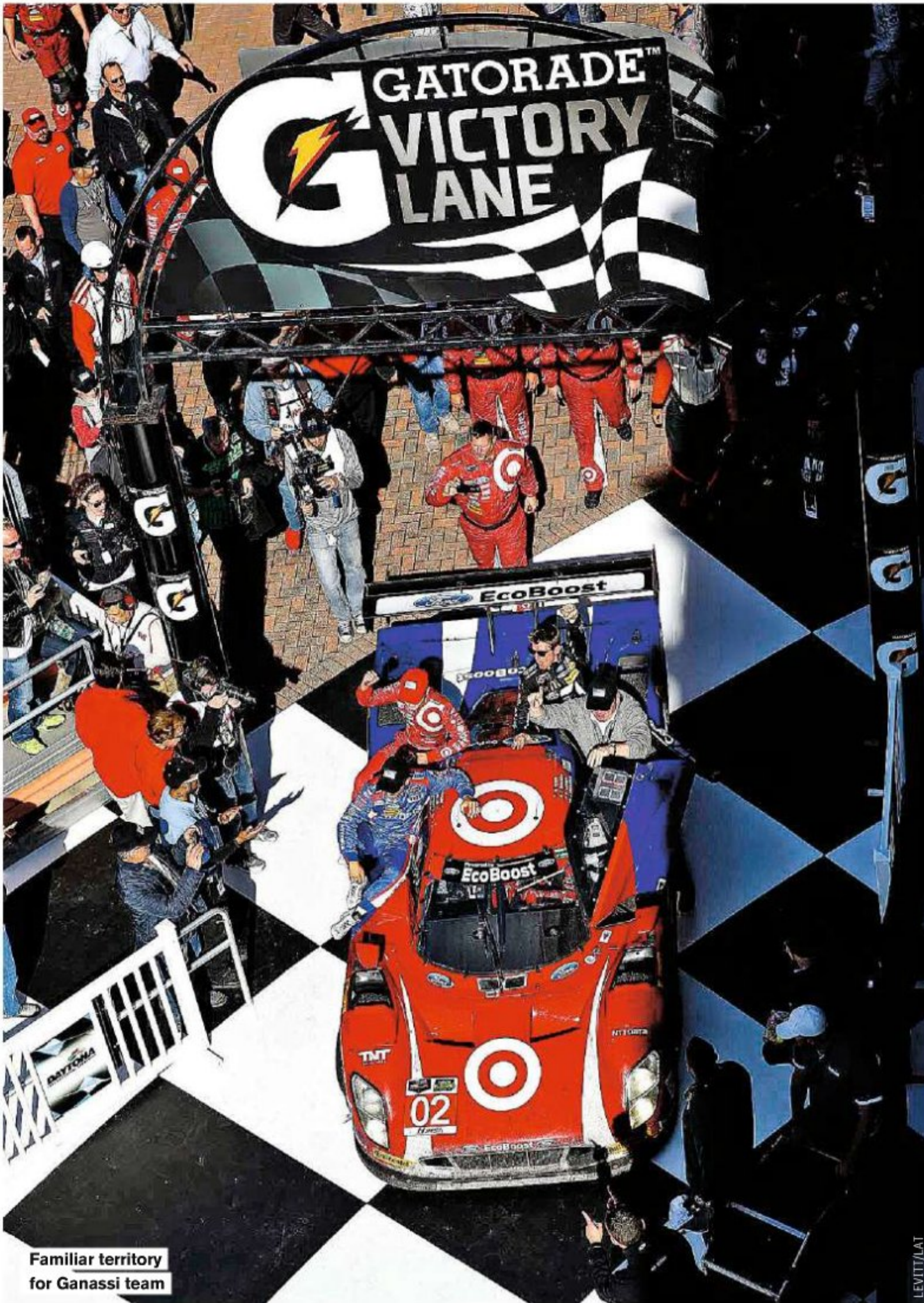
GT LE MANS WINNERS
Jan Magnussen, Ryan Briscoe, Antonio Garcia – Chevrolet
725 laps

GT DAYTONA WINNERS
Dominik Farnbacher, Ben Keating, Al Carter, Cameron Lawrence, Kuno Wittmer – Dodge
704 laps

POLE POSITION
Oswaldo Negri Jr
1m39.194s

RACE RATING
★★★★★ Exciting and eventful, but late-race yellow slightly distorted the outcome





Familiar territory for Ganassi team



Winners posed for ubiquitous 'selfie'

THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW BREED OF LMP2 COUPE didn't change the established order of things at the Daytona 24 Hours. The 2015 edition of North America's twice-around-the-clock enduro was once again fought out by the Daytona Prototype grandees. Victory went for the sixth time in 11 years to a Chip Ganassi Racing Riley DP with a cast of star drivers in Scott Dixon, Tony Kanaan, Jamie McMurray and Kyle Larson, and the winning margin was just over a second after a late safety car. So there wasn't so much that was different about Daytona in year two of the United SportsCar Championship.

Ganassi's second Riley-Ford EcoBoost DP ended up coming home 1.3s ahead of 2014 winners Joao Barbosa, Christian Fittipaldi and Sebastien Bourdais. The Coyote-equipped Action Express team only came close courtesy of a late-race – and entirely justified – safety-car period, and Ganassi's real rival in the sprint to the flag over the final hours was another DP regular and former winner of this race in Wayne Taylor Racing. WTR's Dallara-Chevrolet Corvette DP slipped to third in the final reckoning, while a distant fourth place went to the Spirit of Daytona team for a second year in a row.

The new P2 coupes, possibly the future of the USC, did make their mark, not least Michael Shank Racing's Honda-powered Ligier. It had claimed pole position in the hands of Oswaldo Negri Jr, as well as ending up with fastest race lap courtesy of AJ Allmendinger, but after 11 hours in the mix it slipped off out of contention when amateur driver John Pew went off at the first infield hairpin. That led to a long stop to rectify suspension damage and it was eventually classified 11th, although it was not running at the chequered flag after suffering a terminal engine failure with 20 minutes to go.

Extreme Speed Motorsports' pair of brand new HPD-Hondas and the Krohn Racing Ligier had long since been retired by the time the race distilled into a straight fight between the winning Ganassi Riley and the WTR Dallara in which Taylor brothers Jordan and Ricky were joined by team co-owner Max Angelelli. There was little to choose between the two cars as the race entered its final stages.

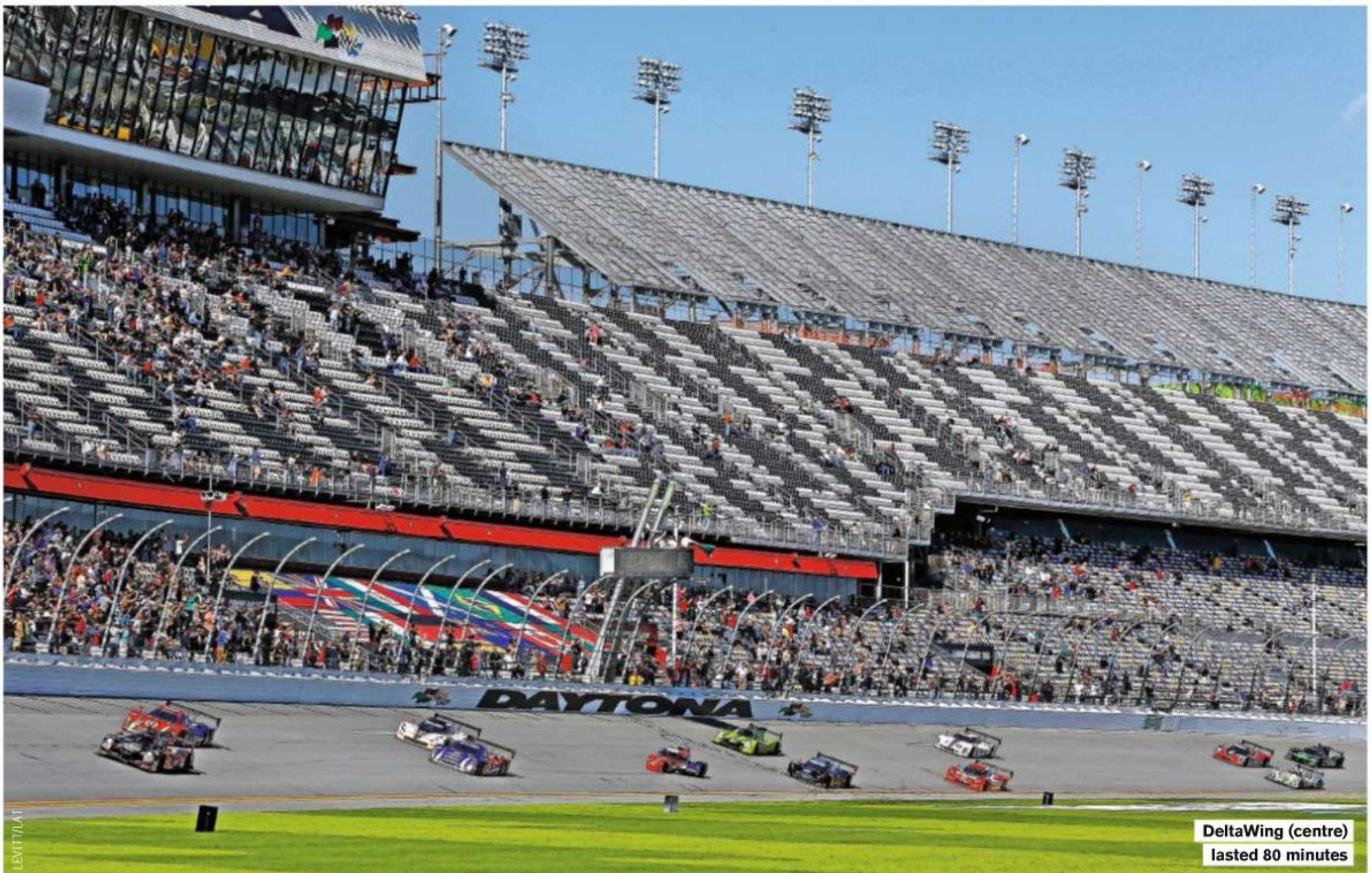
The Dallara held the upper hand and Jordan Taylor appeared equal to Dixon's challenge. The pitstop sequence meant that the Ganassi car was pitting later than its rival and the team tried to eke out its fuel to gain an advantage in the pits. When Dixon pitted early in the 22nd hour, he actually made it out just ahead of Taylor, only for the Dallara to sweep past as he rejoined.

When the cars stopped next, for the penultimate time, Dixon was out ahead and ran though the following stint with the Dallara almost glued to his gearbox. When they came into the pits for their final stops, he extended his lead to four seconds.

Extending the fuel mileage had been a key



Action Express had a fiery moment



DeltaWing (centre)
lasted 80 minutes

component of the Ganassi team's strategy in the closing stages.

"We knew that we needed to open the fuel window and that's what got us ahead of the #10 car," explained Dixon, whose Riley had briefly dropped off the lead lap during the night when Kanaan damaged the splitter as he ran over the kerbs at the Bus Stop chicane. "The cars were so close that it was always going to be difficult to overtake out on track, so we knew we needed to win it in the pits."

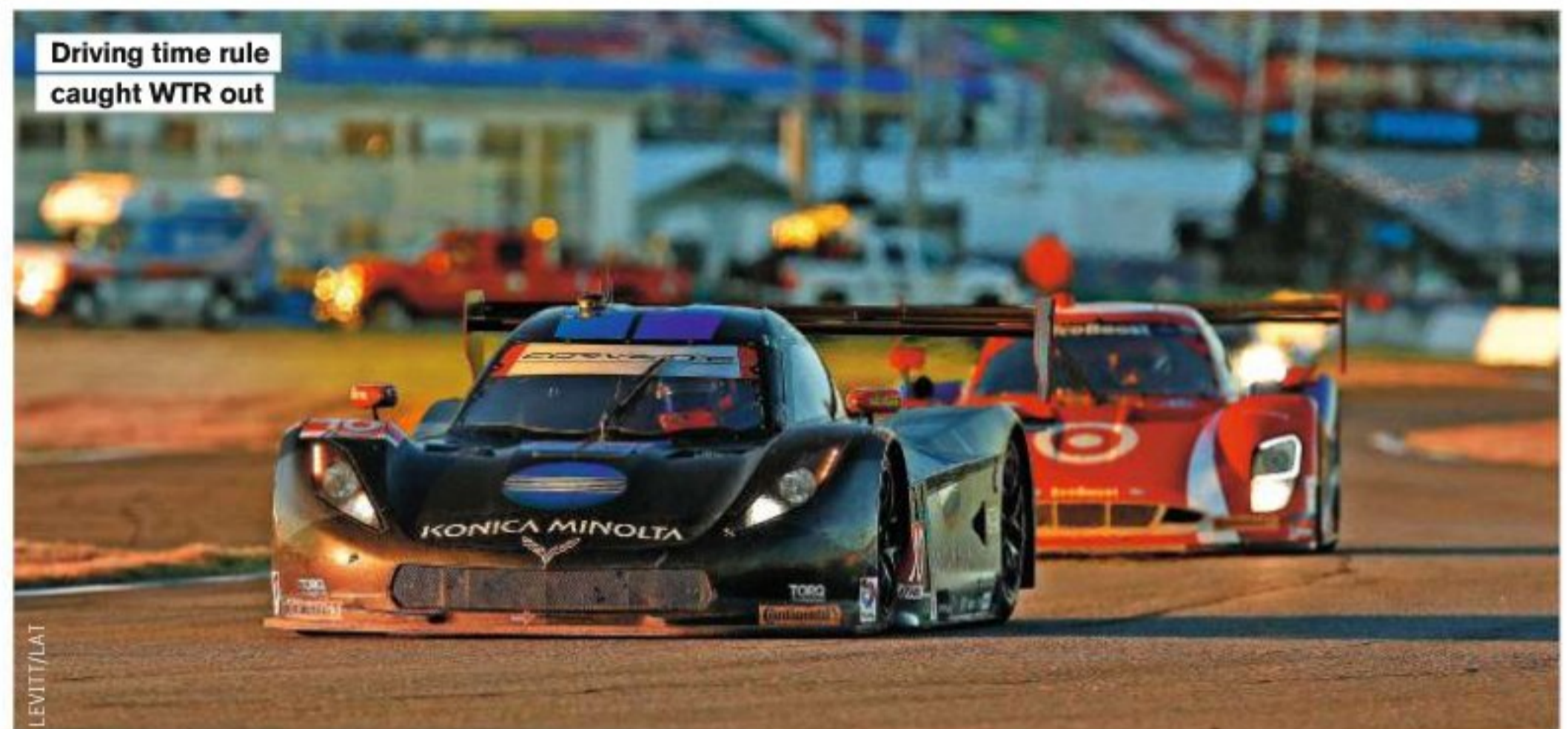
The four-second lead Dixon enjoyed after the final stops, at which both teams opted to double-stint their Continental tyres, looked like it was going to be enough to give Ganassi the win. That buffer disappeared with 20 minutes to go when the safety car came out, but Taylor was not in a position to take advantage.

WTR had made a miscalculation on driving time and was notified by race control that the younger of the Taylor brothers was about to contravene a rule that prevents a driver from spending more than four hours behind the wheel in any six-hour period. The team had no choice but to bring the car into the pits to strap Ricky Taylor back in, and that meant a drive-through penalty for entering the pitlane when it was closed under yellows.

Jordan Taylor reckoned he would have had the car to do the job when the race finally went green for a seven-minute run to the flag.

"Last year the #5 [Action Express] car had us on pace after the final yellow, but this time we had the car to do it," he explained. "We were better on tyre warm-up, so we would have had the golden ticket at the restart."

Third place for WTR was a result that looked unlikely after the first stint. The team was still fighting an electronic glitch that had left Ricky Taylor only seventh on the grid. The car was



Driving time rule
caught WTR out

cutting out on him and the traction control wasn't working, which put him in real danger of going a lap down.

"It was amazing really that we were fighting for the win into the last 20 minutes," explained team boss Wayne Taylor. "We went into the race with a car that wasn't running properly, but fortunately the guys were able to come up with a solution at the first pitstop."

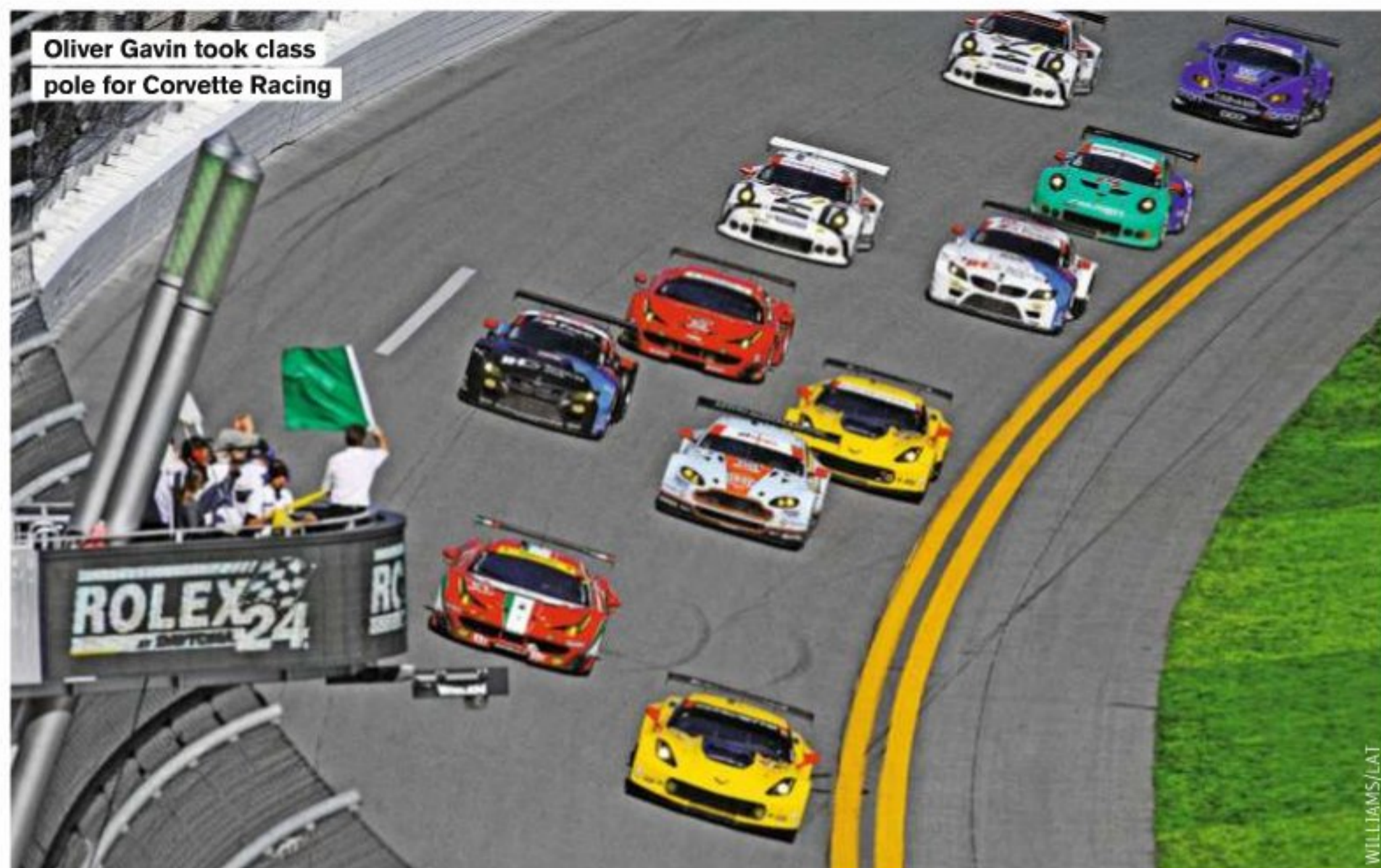
The lead Action Express car in the hands of Barbosa took up the chase of Dixon for the final five green-flag laps, but the Portuguese knew he wasn't in with much of a chance.

"It wasn't as close as it looked," revealed Barbosa, who had been part of a fight back from three laps down in the night after an electrical connector on the fuel pump worked itself loose. "The car changed a bit with the higher temperatures on Sunday and we weren't as competitive as we'd been earlier in the race."

Ganassi stalwart Scott Pruett missed out on

the chance to go clear of Hurley Haywood in the table of all-time Daytona winners courtesy of clutch problems late in the race. Ganassi's lead entry had been a match for the winning car early in the race and had an advantage over it during the night, but from Sunday morning it was more of a struggle for Pruett and his team-mates. The car, which he shared with Joey Hand, Sage Karam and Charlie Kimball, was one of four on the lead lap with four hours to go when the clutch started slipping. An attempt to rectify the problem by cooling the clutch in the garage failed, resulting in the car's retirement after one more lap.

The Spirit of Daytona Coyote-Chevrolet had its own struggle with electronic problems, compounded by a water leak, for the entire race. Richard Westbrook, Michael Valiante and Mike Rockenfeller had fought back from four laps down to within a lap of the lead on Sunday morning when a power-steering issue intervened and left the car six laps down. ▶



Oliver Gavin took class pole for Corvette Racing

IN THE PADDOCK

GARY WATKINS
SPORTSCAR CONTRIBUTOR

@gazzasportscars



I MADE NO SECRET OF MY DESIRE AHEAD OF the Daytona 24 Hours that I wanted an LMP2 car to win. Not that I would've bet on that outcome.

My desire for a P2 victory against the Daytona Prototypes stemmed from a belief that a win in the premier round of the USC would help cement the desires of the powers that be to make a wholesale switch to the new LMP2 rulebook for 2017, something that has to be good for sportscar racing.

The rhetoric from USC boss Scott Atherton suggested that they were headed in that direction ahead of an important rules meeting in Daytona Beach on Tuesday, but I still have my doubts. There are many bridges yet to be crossed.

A P2 victory was always unlikely in my mind, even after Ozz Negri had put the Shank Ligier on pole. Each of the four new-generation coupes had at least one amateur in their driver line-ups and it was two of those who robbed me of any chance of seeing my desired result: John Pew shunted the Shank car when he was caught out by cold brakes at a restart and David Heinemeier Hansson damaged the gearbox of the lead ESM HPD-Honda ARX-04b during a spin at a time when it was on the lead lap.

It wasn't really a fair contest, which is why it was the old DP guard of Ganassi, WTR and Action Express fighting it out at the end. I'd have loved to have seen a P2 car win, but at least I didn't put any money on it.



MARKLAND/GETTY

I knew I did a really bad job here last year and spent 12 months trying to figure out a way of not running this race



MARKLAND/GETTY

NASCAR Sprint Cup driver Kyle Larson on how, if he'd had his way, he wouldn't now be a winner of the Daytona 24 Hours.

GTLM

Performance breaks give Corvette the edge over BMW

THE TWO FACTORY CHEVROLET CORVETTE C7.RS were locked together at the front of the GT Le Mans field for much of the race on the way to Corvette Racing's first victory at Daytona since its outright triumph with the GTS-class C5.R in 2001. Jan Magnussen, Antonio Garcia and Ryan Briscoe ultimately took a narrow win over the best of the Rahal BMW Z4s after a late-race incident dropped the sister car out of contention.

The Corvette, which had been given restrictor and weight breaks after its poor form in last year's championship run-in, had the edge on the competition with the exception of the Ferrari 458 Italia (thanks to the Adjustment of Performance help it was given last season), but the BMW Z4 was only a smidgen behind and the Porsche 911 RSR had the speed to keep pace with the Chevrolets if not to ultimately race them.

The final safety car allowed the best of the Rahal-run factory BMWs in the hands of Dirk Werner onto Garcia's tail. The German kept the Spaniard honest over the run to the flag, but never looked like making a pass for the lead.

The BMW admittedly wasn't in the best of shapes. Bruno Spengler, who was brought in along with fellow DTM racer Augusto Farfus Jr to share with Werner and Bill Auberlen, had run across the grass after getting it wrong at the Bus Stop on Sunday morning and lost the rear bumper, which

cost the car downforce. Even so, Farfus wasn't sure that a healthy BMW could have beaten a 'Vette in a straight fight to the flag.

"They have a torque advantage in third and fourth gears even if our top speeds are pretty much the same," he explained. "But if we had been ahead they would still have had a pretty tough job overtaking us."

The winning Corvette, which led its class for 360 of the 725 laps it completed, also had the narrowest of edges over the sister car shared by Oliver Gavin, Tommy Milner and Simon Pagnaud. Pole-winner Gavin had the better car in qualifying, but some hard work by the #3 crew ahead of final practice on Friday gave Magnussen, Garcia and Briscoe the better race car.

Gavin and his team-mates ended up seven laps down in third after sustaining bodywork damage on two occasions. The drivers fought back from two laps down after Gavin damaged the front end during the night, but another incident when Milner was caught out by a slow-moving DP put the car out of contention in the 21st hour.

Porsche had been outgunned in qualifying, despite going quicker at the pre-event Roar test, but found itself with a more competitive car in the race. The CORE-run factory 911 RSR Jorg Bergmeister shared with Frederic Makowiecki and Earl Bamber came back from six laps down after an alternator change in the first hour, and was running third in Bamber's hands on the tail of team-mate Marc Lieb when the German had to lift on the slight kink behind the pits when he encountered a slower car. Bamber chose to take to the grass in avoidance and collected his team-mate at the following first hairpin.

Both cars sustained major suspension damage. Lieb and team-mates Nick Tandy and Patrick Pilet recovered to a distant fifth, while the Bamber car went out with engine failure. This was a repeat of the problem (though the exact issue wasn't disclosed) that put the Walker-run Falken Tire 911 RSR out in the 18th hour at a time when it was on the lead lap and looking like a potential contender.



Winning Corvette led class for 360 laps

WILLIAMS/LAT

Late shunt rocks CORE

A MAJOR ACCIDENT FOR THE Prototype Challenge-leading CORE Autosport entry with 20 minutes of the race to go handed class victory to the PR1/Mathiasen ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09 of Tom Kimber-Smith, Andrew Palmer, Mike Guasch and Andrew Novich.

CORE, which claimed Daytona PC honours 12 months ago, had an advantage of nearly 50s when lead driver Colin Braun was tagged by a slow DP car at the second infield hairpin. The former NASCAR racer, who shared the car with team owner Jon Bennett, James Gue and Mark Wilkins, was returning to the pits when the suspension collapsed at the exit of the Bus Stop, putting him in the wall, setting the car on fire and bringing out the safety car for the final time.

"It was a case of being in the wrong place at the right time," said the



PR1/Mathiasen benefited from CORE's misfortune

WILLIAMS/LAT



Johnny Mowlem claimed his first prototype pole

DOLE/LAT

26-year-old. "I must have made that move 150 times before without a problem."

The retirement of the CORE car, which had only previously been delayed by minor bodywork damage and a puncture, allowed the PR1/Mathiasen entry to claim the victory despite a troubled run. The car had lost time early on with a broken oil union and had no power steering for more than half the race.

Second place went to the lead BAR1

Motorsports car in which Johnny Mowlem had claimed his first-ever pole position at the wheel of a prototype. A holed oil filter at the end of the first hour lost the car 10 laps, but the wave-by rules allowed the car, which Mowlem shared with Tom Papadopoulos. Tomy Drissi, team boss Brian Alder and Martin Plowman to briefly get ahead of the PR1 car and within a lap of the lead until Plowman had a puncture, leaving the car one lap down at the finish.

Shank sets sights on 2016 Le Mans with LMP2

MICHAEL SHANK RACING HAS revealed ambitions to take its new Ligier LMP2 coupe to the Le Mans 24 Hours next year.

Team boss Michael Shank, whose eponymous team has switched from running a Riley Daytona Prototype for this season, explained that one of the reasons for buying the Ligier-Honda JSP2 with which he

will undertake the full United SportsCar Championship this season was to be able to fulfil an ambition to race at Le Mans in the future.

"There were various reasons for going with a P2, and one of them is about being able to take the car to Le Mans," he said. "I don't think doing the whole World Endurance Championship is appropriate for us;

we want to race in the US and have the chance to go to Le Mans.

"I think we can make it happen for next year; this season is too early for us because we've only just taken delivery of the car. John [Pew, one of the team's long-term drivers] wants to do it and will be part of it, and we have already got some good partners on board."



Le Mans is a long-held ambition for team boss

LEVITT/LAT

DELTAWING OUT EARLY

The latest iteration of the DeltaWing was an early retirement. The Elan/Mazda-engined DWC13 coupe qualified an impressive fifth in Andy Meyrick's hands, but the team was never hopeful of getting through the race with a brand new EMCO gearbox design that had only run for the first time in the week of the race. The car the Briton shared with Katherine Legge, Memo Rojas and Gabby Chaves ran on the lead lap for the first hour before the expected gearbox failure intervened and put the car out after 80 minutes.

CLASS WIN FOR DODGE

GT Daytona honours went to the Riley Motorsports Dodge Viper SRT GT3-R shared by Dominik Farnbacher, Kuno Wittmer, Ben Keating, Al Carter and Cameron Lawrence by a shade over seven seconds from the Alex Job Racing Porsche 911 GT America driven by Shane van Gisbergen, Andrew Davis, Leh Keen and Cooper MacNeil. The Viper had a clear advantage last weekend, according to V8 Supercars driver van Gisbergen. "They have a good half-second on us," he said. The lead Riley Viper, whose roster of drivers included Jeroen and Sebastiaan Bleekemolen and Marc Goossens, had looked a good bet for victory until a problem with its engine electrics in the 17th hour.

LATE CALL FOR FILIPE

Audi factory LMP1 driver Filipe Albuquerque was a late addition to the Starworks team's Prototype Challenge entry. The Portuguese, who joined Renger van der Zande, Alex Popow, Mirco Schultis and Mike Hedlund in the ORECA FLM09, got the call when the team's negotiations with Brazilian ex-Formula 1 driver Enrique Bernoldi broke down.

RESERVES MISS OUT

Porsche factory driver Michael Christensen was brought in as reserve driver for the 24 Hours and was listed in both CORE-run 911 RSRs at Daytona, but did not drive during the race. Guy Cosmo was added to the Spirit of Daytona line-up on race morning and also didn't get behind the wheel of the car.

VAUTIER BACK TO JDC

Former Indy Lights champion Tristan Vautier (below) raced the PC car fielded by the JDC Motorsports squad, with which he won the 2011 US Star Mazda title.



LEVITT/LAT

RESULTS

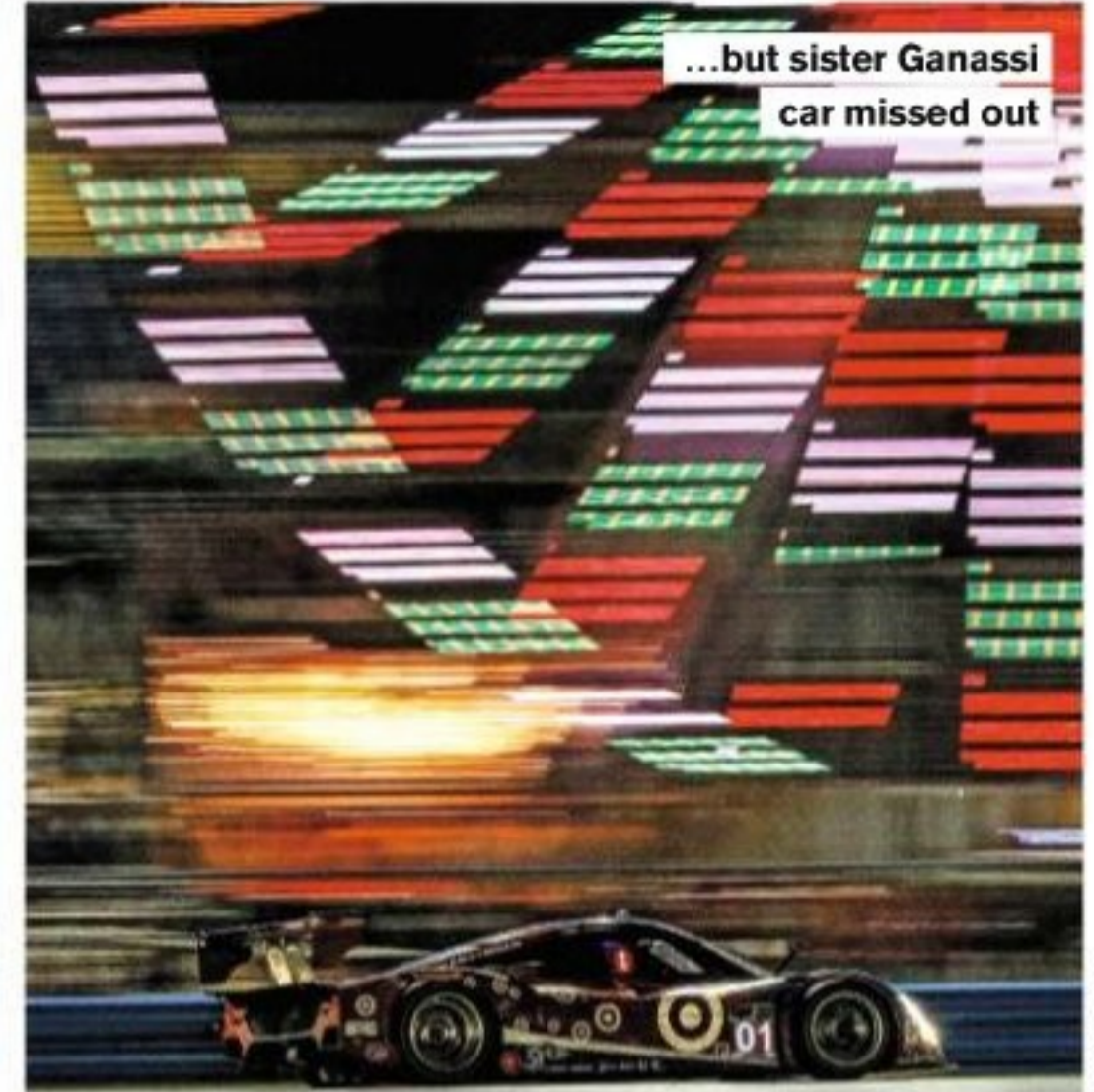
LEVITT/LAT



Lead BMW was half a second from GTLM win



Kanaan was number one...



...but sister Ganassi car missed out

LEVITT/LAT

DAYTONA 24 HOURS – 740 LAPS, 2634.400 MILES

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	RESULTS	GRID
1	Scott Dixon/Tony Kanaan/Kyle Larson/Jamie McMurray	Chip Ganassi Racing	Riley-Ford EcoBoost DP	P	24h00m57.667s	2
2	Joao Barbosa/Christian Fittipaldi/Sebastien Bourdais	Action Express Racing	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	+1.333s	4
3	Ricky Taylor/Jordan Taylor/Max Angelelli	Wayne Taylor Racing	Dallara-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	+1m07.741s	7
4	Richard Westbrook/Michael Valiante/Mike Rockenfeller	Spirit of Daytona	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	-6 laps	24
5	Jan Magnussen/Antonio Garcia/Ryan Briscoe	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTLM	-15 laps	29
6	Bill Auberlen/Dirk Werner/Augusto Farfus/Bruno Spengler	BMW Team RLL	BMW Z4 GTE	GTLM	-15 laps	31
7	Max Papis/Eric Curran/Dane Cameron/Phil Keen	Action Express Racing	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	-19 laps	9
8	Oliver Gavin/Tommy Milner/Simon Pagenaud	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTLM	-22 laps	25
9	Tom Kimber-Smith/Mike Guasch/Andrew Novich/Andrew Palmer	PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09	PC	-26 laps	14
10	Johnny Mowlem/Tom Papadopoulos/Tomy Drissi/Brian Alder/Martin Plowman	BAR1 Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09	PC	-27 laps	11
11	Oswaldo Negri Jr/John Pew/AJ Allmendinger/Matt McMurry	Michael Shank Racing	Ligier-Honda JSP2 LMP2	P	-35 laps - engine	1
12	Colin Braun/Jon Bennett/Mark Wilkins/James Gue	CORE Autosport	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09	PC	-36 laps - accident	13
13	Ben Keating/Kuno Wittmer/Dominik Farnbacher/AI Carter/Cameron Lawrence	Riley Motorsports	Dodge Viper SRT GT3-R	GTD	-36 laps	53
14	Leh Keen/Cooper MacNeil/Andrew Davis/Shane van Gisbergen	Alex Job Racing	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-36 laps	44
15	Jan Heylen/Madison Snow/Patrick Dempsey/Philipp Eng	Wright Motorsport	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-38 laps	38
16	John Edwards/Lucas Luhr/Jens Klingmann/Graham Rahal	BMW Team RLL	BMW Z4 GTE	GTLM	-39 laps	28
17	Stephen Simpson/Mikhail Gokhberg/Chris Miller/Rusty Mitchell	JDC/Miller Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09	PC	-39 laps	17
18	Matt Griffin/Pasin Lathouras/Michele Rugolo/Rui Aguas	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTD	-39 laps	46
19	Christopher Haase/Bryce Miller/Dion von Moltke/Rene Rast	Paul Miller Racing	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-45 laps	45
20	Townsend Bell/Bill Sweedler/Anthony Lazzaro/Jeff Segal	Scuderia Corsa	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTD	-49 laps - clutch	43
21	Damien Faulkner/Kuba Giermaziak/Mike Skeen/Rory Butcher/Michael Avenatti	GB Autosport	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-53 laps	51
22	Derek DeBoer/Max Riddle/Eliseo Salazar/Kris Wilson	TRG-AMR	Aston Martin V12 Vantage	GTD	-62 laps	52
23	Jeroen Bleekemolen/Ben Keating/AI Carter/Marc Goossens/Sebastiaan Bleekemolen	Riley Motorsports	Dodge Viper SRT GT3-R	GTD	-66 laps - engine	36
24	Markus Winkelhock/Robert Thorne/Satoshi Hoshino/Tomonobu Fujii	Flying Lizard Motorsports	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-70 laps	40
25	Scott Pruett/Joey Hand/Charlie Kimball/Sage Karam	Chip Ganassi Racing	Riley-Ford EcoBoost DP	P	-71 laps - clutch	3
26	Shane Lewis/Robert Gewirtz/Mark Kvamme/David Cheng	RG Racing	Riley-Dinam/BMW DP	P	-96 laps	10
27	Nick Tandy/Patrick Pilet/Marc Lieb	Porsche North America (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	-100 laps	32
28	Pedro Lamy/Paul Dalla Lana/Darren Turner/Stefan Mucke/Mathias Lauda	Aston Martin Racing	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTLM	-108 laps	27
29	Andy Lally/John Potter/Marco Siefried/Martin Ragginger	Magnus Racing	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-124 laps	42
30	Markus Palmtala/Andy Priaulx/Boris Said/Michael Marsal	Turner Motorsport	BMW Z4 GT3	GTD	-136 laps	50
31	James Davison/Christina Nielsen/Christoffer Nygaard/Brandon Davis	TRG-AMR	Aston Martin V12 Vantage	GTD	-147 laps	35
32	Jim Pace/Byron DeFoor/David Hinton/Dorsey Schroeder/Doug Smith	Highway to Help (Doran)	Riley-Dinam/BMW DP	P	-150 laps	20
33	Frederic Makowiecki/Jorg Bergmeister/Earl Bamber	Porsche North America (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	-159 laps - engine	34
34	Daniel Serra/Francisco Longo/Marcos Gomes/Andrea Bertolini	Scuderia Corsa	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTD	-195 laps - accident	39
35	Marc Basseng/Darryl O'Young/Matteo Beretta/Connor de Phillippi	Muehlnher Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-201 laps - running	49
36	Chris Cumming/Bruno Junqueira/Jack Hawksworth/Gustavo Menezes	RSR Racing	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09	PC	-205 laps - engine	19
37	Spencer Pumpelly/Patrick Lindsey/Jim Norman/David Ducote/Kevin Estre	Park Place Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-208 laps - gearbox	41
38	Bryan Sellers/Wolf Henzler/Patrick Long	Team Falken Tire (Walker)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	-210 laps - engine	33
39	Rubens Barrichello/Brendon Hartley/Ryan Hunter-Reay/Tor Graves/Scott Mayer	Starworks Motorsport	Riley-Dinam/BMW DP	P	-314 laps - engine	8
40	Connor de Phillippi/Jim Michaelian/Michael Lira/Ricardo Flores/Niki Mayr-Melnhof	Muehlnher Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-326 laps - running	48
41	Ryan Dalziel/Scott Sharp/David Heinemeier Hansson	Extreme Speed Motorsports	HPD-Honda ARX-04b LMP2	P	-351 laps - gearbox	23
42	Martin Plowman/Marc Drumwright/Ivo Breukers/Shelby Blackstock/Remo Ruscitti	BAR1 Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09	PC	-379 laps - engine	16
43	Tom Long/Joel Miller/Ben Devlin/Sylvain Tremblay	Speedsource	Lola-Mazda Skyactiv-D B12/80 LMP2	P	-392 laps - overheating	22
44	Pierre Kaffer/Davide Rigon/Giancarlo Fisichella/Olivier Beretta	Risi Competizione	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTLM	-430 laps - engine	30
45	Renger van der Zande/Mirco Schultis/Alex Popov/Mike Hedlund/Filipe Albuquerque	Starworks Motorsport	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09	PC	-441 laps - engine	15
46	James French/Jerome Mee/James Vance/Sean Johnston	Performance Tech Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09	PC	-502 laps - damage	21
47	Mario Farnbacher/Ian James/Alex Riberas	Team Seattle/Alex Job Racing	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-507 laps - engine	47
48	Gianmaria Bruni/Francois Perrodo/Emmanuel Collard/Toni Vilander	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTLM	-529 laps - accident	26
49	Jonathan Bomarito/Tristan Nunez/James Hinchcliffe/Sylvain Tremblay	Speedsource	Lola-Mazda Skyactiv-D B12/80 LMP2	P	-542 laps - oil pump	18
50	Christopher Zochling/Klaus Bachler/Christian Engelhart/Lance Willsey/Rolf Ineichen	Konrad Motorsport	Porsche 911 GT America	GTD	-564 laps - engine	37
51	Olivier Pla/Tracy Krohn/Alex Brundle/Nic Jonsson	Krohn Racing	Ligier-Judd/BMW JSP2 LMP2	P	-568 laps - engine	6
52	Johannes van Overbeek/Ed Brown/Jon Fogarty	Extreme Speed Motorsports	HPD-Honda ARX-04b LMP2	P	-691 laps - engine	12
53	Andy Meyrick/Katherine Legge/Gabby Chaves/Memo Rojas	DeltaWing Racing	DeltaWing-Elan/Mazda DWC13	P	-698 laps - gearbox	5

In each car, first-named driver both set the qualifying time and started the race. Winners' average speed: 100.677mph. Fastest lap: Allmendinger, 1m39.576s, 128.804mph; PC: Hawksworth, 1m43.248s, 124.186mph; GTLM Magnussen, 1m43.942s, 123.350mph; GT Daytona: Aguas, 1m46.994s, 119.888mph.



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CENTRE FOR ADVANCED PERFORMANCE ENGINEERING



The Centre for Advanced Performance Engineering at the University of Bolton enjoyed another triumphant exhibition at Autosport International 2015.

We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to visit our stand at the NEC, as well as those of our partners FibrLec and Keating. Highlights of the event included:

The University's Vice Chancellor, Prof George E Holmes and Ginetta Chairman, Dr Lawrence Tomlinson unveiling for the first time the new Ginetta-Nissan LMP3.

Our free racing simulator, attracting hundreds of people to the stand over the three days with a grand prize of a Ginetta track day.

Rob Garofall, Kelvin Fletcher and British Women Racing Drivers Club elite racer of the year, Anna Walewska spoke with renowned journalist Gordon Burns.

Daily competition pitting our professional racing drivers against one another on our racing simulator.

You can see much more at the University, including our advanced performance engineering degrees which are second to none. See you at our open day on Saturday 7 March 2015.



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Challenge winners



Keen impresses on Daytona debut

Sunoco Whelen Challenge winner Phil Keen delivered a stunning performance at this year's Rolex 24 At Daytona. Driving the Action Express run Whelen Chevrolet Daytona Prototype, Keen impressed the team and the huge crowds of spectators by matching the pace of the front-running drivers from the word go. Following a technical problem at the start of the race that dropped the car to the lower end of the 53-strong field, Keen played a large part in the fight back that enabled the team to finish an impressive 7th overall and 5th in class.



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... shine at Daytona



Krüger shows potential in the Sunoco Camaro

Having won the Sunoco 200 Challenge, and the opportunity to drive a Sunoco-liveried Chevrolet Camaro in the supporting race to the 24-hour event, 2014 Radical Clubman's Cup PR6 Champion Oskar Krüger from Sweden, showed he was capable of a strong performance. He held his own against more experienced drivers in similar machinery and, if it wasn't for a broken fan-belt and 15-minute delay, his team were confident that a top-ten finish would have been easily achievable. Oskar proved by his performance at Daytona that he is ready for the next level of competitive racing.



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DAYTONA 24 HOURS:

A RACE THAT'S FINDING ITS PLACE

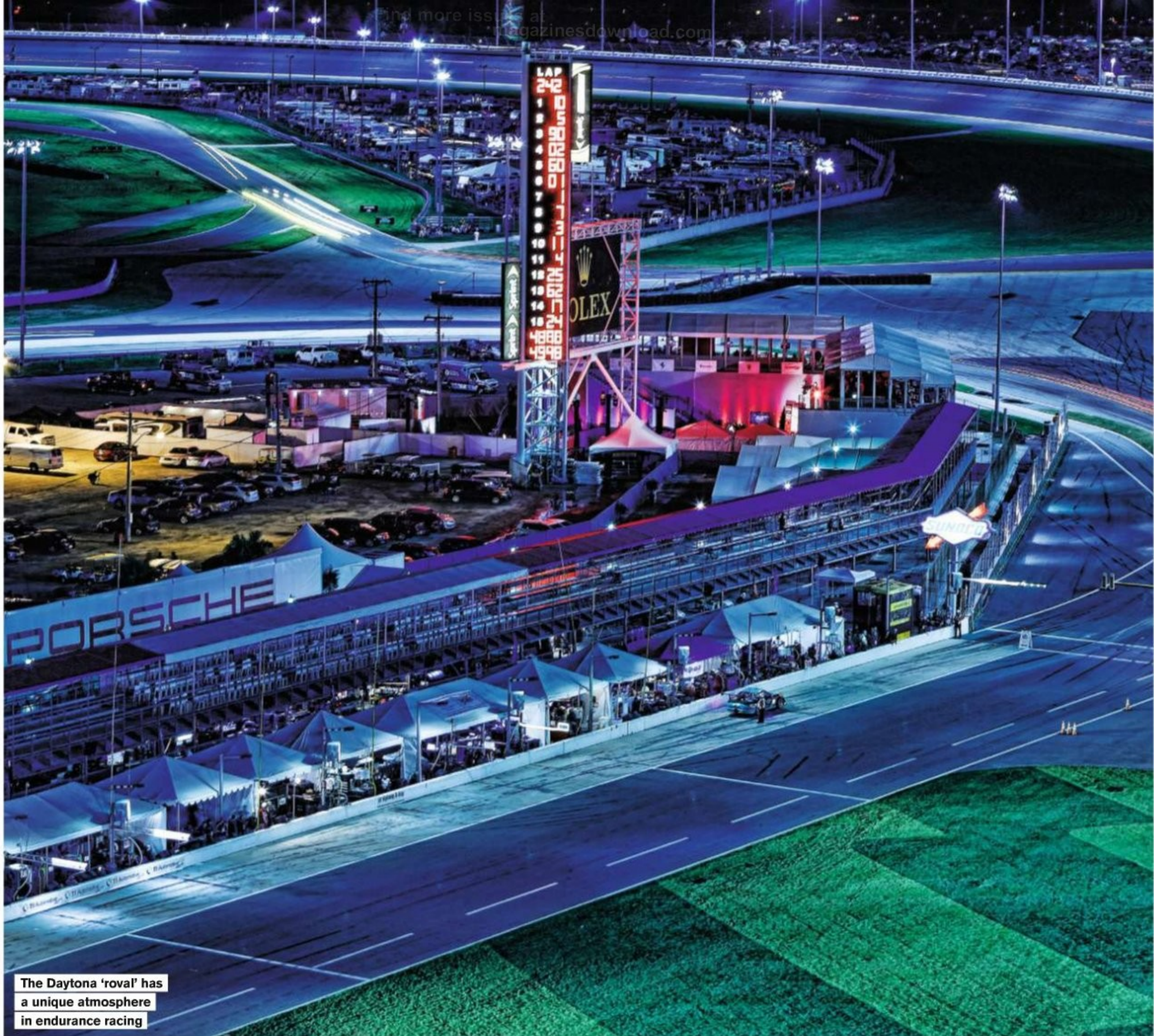
Long in the shadow of its fellow Floridian race, the Sebring 12 Hours, Daytona's twice-round-the-clock endurance event has been growing in recent years. **EDD STRAW** explains why

Half past two in the morning. The Daytona 24 Hours has just entered its second half but the melange of floodlights, headlights and campsite lamplights creates a lurid perma-day that is a stark contrast to the deep, impenetrable gloom that cloaks much of the Circuit de la Sarthe at a similar time during the Le Mans 24 Hours.

There's a smell of burning, one that briefly makes you search frantically for a smouldering car stopped on the infield section. But this is a very different kind of odour, one in which hot engine oil and burning rubber is only a small part of its make-up. For just a few metres from the track is a community of fans in motorhomes, barbecues on the go to keep everyone warm at night. It's a relatively small, but select, group of enthusiasts who attend the race, understandable given that it's only the start of the Speedweeks, which culminate in the Great American Race — the famous Daytona 500 itself. But they give the race a very different character either to Le Mans or the Sebring 12 Hours, which despite its shorter duration is traditionally considered the greatest US sportscar classics. ▶



LEWITT/LAT



The Daytona 'roval' has a unique atmosphere in endurance racing

► What Daytona offers is something very different, and genuinely unique. The driver line-up is more eclectic than any major motor race in the world. There is nowhere that fans can watch the skills of Formula 1 race winner Rubens Barrichello, NASCAR ace Kyle Larson, sportscar specialist and five-times Daytona winner Scott

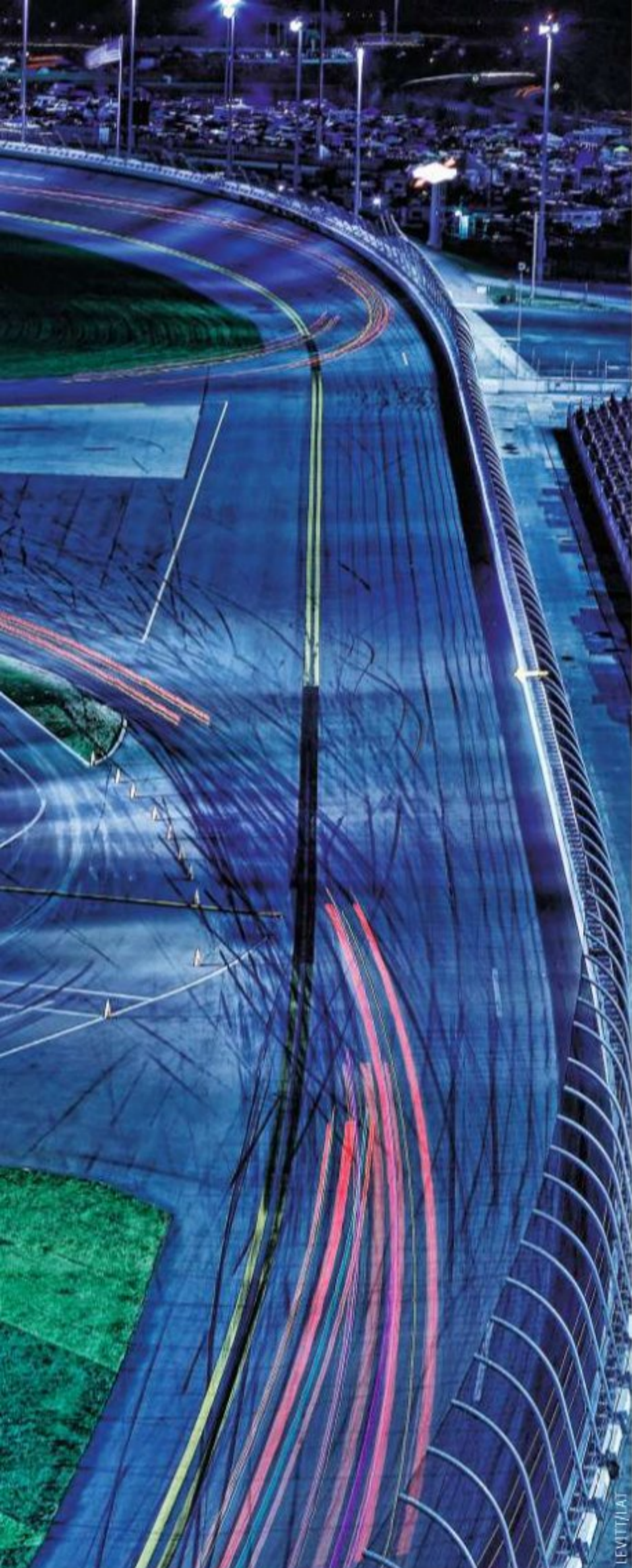
Pruett, IndyCar champion Scott Dixon, open-wheel rising star Jack Hawksworth, triple World Touring Car champion Andy Priaulx and gentlemen drivers of all ages. Each year, the many champions competing are lined up for a photograph on the Friday between qualifying and the race start the next day.

This diverse appeal is reflected in the fact that the fan base is drawn from as far and wide as South Korea, Nigeria and, of course, the United Kingdom. This is a true connoisseurs' race, one that should be on the bucket list of any dedicated race fan. And the \$400 million 'Daytona Rising' project to redevelop the main grandstand, which was something of a building site this year even though it remained open to fans, shows that the spirit of crowd-pleasing 'Big Bill' France, who built the circuit to accommodate the races that had grown too big for Daytona Beach itself, remains. While some European tracks focus on paddock facilities, in the United States it's the fans who come first.

The spectacle of a close finish is almost guaranteed, as this year's 1.33s winning margin of Dixon over Sebastien Bourdais proves. The downside is that the preponderance of yellow-flag caution periods that creates this situation renders a lot of the racing in the build-up moot. The key is to ensure you simply remain on the lead lap and time things right to have your gun driver and good rubber on the car come the final showdown. This year, that was set up by Colin



Fans can get close to cars and drivers ahead of the race



WINNING OVER THE NASCAR KID

NASCAR rising star Kyle Larson didn't take to the Daytona 24 Hours when he first competed for Chip Ganassi Racing in 2014. But on his return the event won him over, and not just because he was part of the victorious crew alongside Scott Dixon, Jamie McMurray and Tony Kanaan – an experience he described as the biggest win of his career.

"I have enjoyed it a lot more than last year," he said shortly after his final stint in the race before handing over to Dixon. "It's just it's hard to enjoy things when you're upset with yourself and you feel you aren't doing the best job that you can. This year I came in a lot more relaxed, less nervous and have been more comfortable in the car and run more competitive lap times."



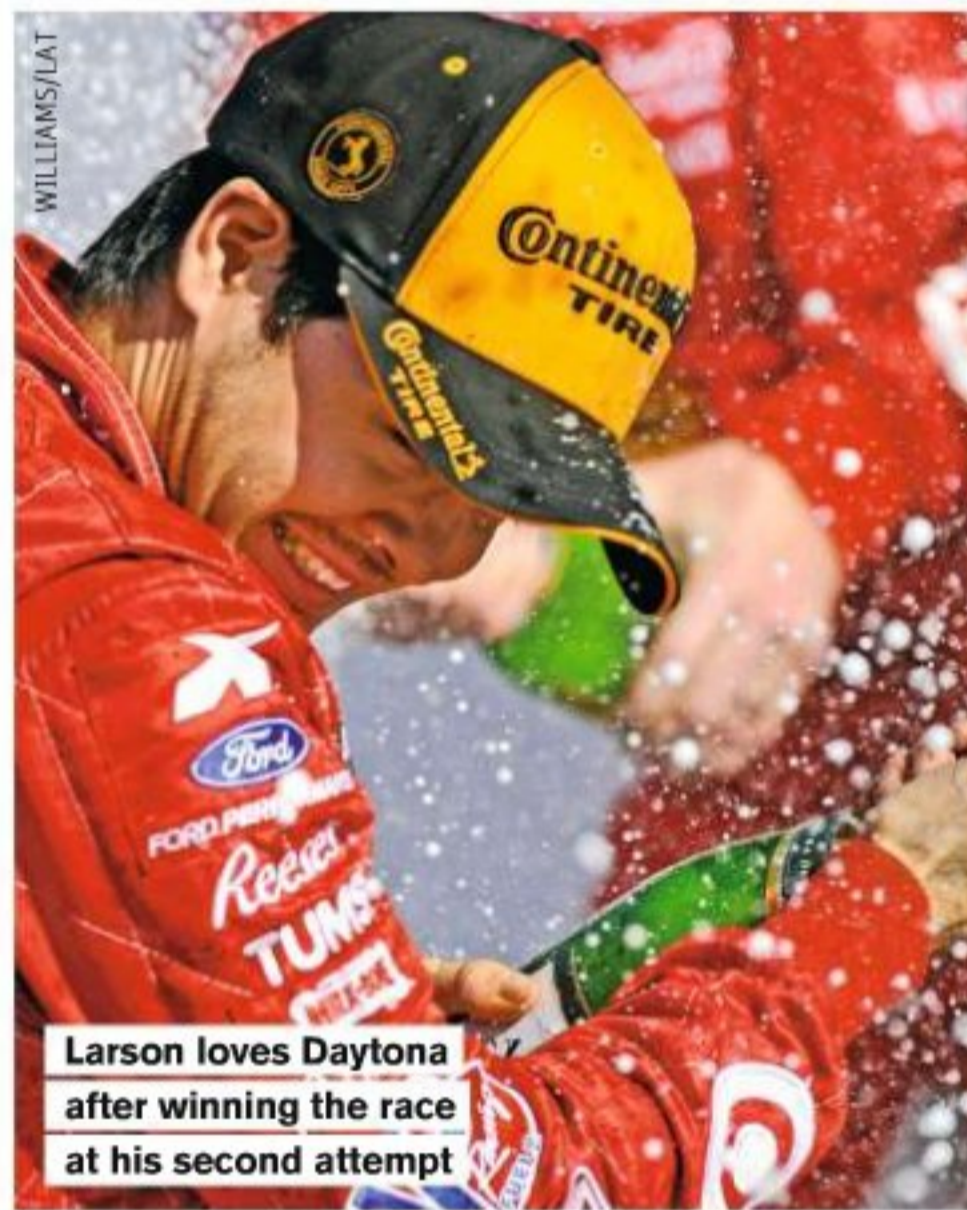
Larson swapped Chevy Cup car for Riley Prototype

"I'm having a blast this year. Last year I didn't want to do this race, it was my least favourite race in the world, but now I can't wait to get back next year!"

Larson's experience is a reminder of just how different a challenge the Daytona 'roval' is compared to the Speedway itself. Twice the drivers cut off the oval, with the challenging left-hander that drops off the banking cutting into the main infield section and the brief bus-stop chicane that slows the cars into what would be the last turn of the oval. This makes for a bigger test of driver skill than the more celebrated version of the steeply banked oval used for NASCAR's Daytona 500.

"The prototype car versus the Cup car is very different, you can't compare it at all," explained Larson. "If we ran the prototype on the oval, it would probably feel the same because we hold it wide open just like the Cup car. On the banking, we are coming up to speed out of the bus stop and Turn 6, but in the Cup car I'm already going at 200mph the whole time."

If Larson ever wins the Daytona 500, that will obviously displace the Rolex 24 as his biggest win. But if just a small percentage of NASCAR's fan base can be won over as he has, Daytona's less-celebrated race should start to get the appreciation it deserves in the United States.



Larson loves Daytona after winning the race at his second attempt

'Allan McNish, with all his success at Le Mans and Sebring, still cares that this was a race he never won'

what would be the engine bay of a front-engined car. It turned out to be an unfortunate possum, nicknamed 'ballast possum' by the team.

The 24 Hours is a race that is slowly, but surely, finding its place in the world. It has often lived outside the motorsport mainstream, in recent years missing out when the American Le Mans Series was at its peak. While the Daytona Prototypes that have been the mainstay of the race for over a decade did their job of keeping costs down – although the spending has multiplied over the years – the fact that the race is becoming more aligned with the sportscar mainstream can only continue to boost its relevance.

The LMP2 machinery now permitted in the United SportsCar Championship, created in 2014 by the merger of the ALMS and Grand-Am series, should become prevalent in the next few years. And while the return of the top class of sports-prototypes seems a long way off, were Daytona to join the World Endurance Championship and bring back the quickest factory giants, what a curtain raiser for the season that would be.

But even without the works squads, it's a trip worth making. Just over an hour's drive from

Orlando and, with Daytona Beach (just a few miles away) visible from the higher vantage points at the circuit, it's a vibrant place to visit. The atmosphere is more that of an overblown club race than a major international event, and that is meant in the best possible sense. The drivers and cars are accessible too, so there is plenty of opportunity to spot the megastars, which is not so easy to do at some other events.

Despite all that, make no mistake, this is a serious race. Shortly before Grand Marshal Jochen Mass gave the order for the field to 'start your engines', the front stretch was swamped with fans enjoying the team presentations. In a matter of seconds they disappeared when the time came for the race to get under way.

You only have to look at the example of this year's honorary starter to see what it means to the drivers. Allan McNish, with all his incredible success at Le Mans, Sebring and in the World Endurance Championship, still cares that this was a race he never managed to win.

Daytona matters. And seeing the race up close shows why some of the biggest names in motorsport worldwide keep coming back. ❧



The race attracts a global spread of aces and amateurs

Braun suffering a fiery crash while leading the Prototype Challenge class late on, prompting a five-lap dash to the flag.

Daytona is also a race in which strange things happen; just ask Andy Lally. At around 5am, he clattered into some debris on the banking, which he reported over the radio. He thought nothing more of it until the Magnus Racing Porsche later returned to the garage with a gearbox problem. The team discovered that the debris, which had penetrated the floor and chassis, was lodged in

A KEEN APPROACH TO A NEW CHALLENGE

Winning a Daytona 24 Hours prize drive went some way to making up for British GT title heartache for Phil Keen.

EDD STRAW watched him in action

50

By the time Phil Keen turned a lap in anger in last weekend's Daytona 24 Hours, any chance of his #31 Action Express Coyote DP achieving a top result had long since evaporated. Early on, a torsion-bar problem developed with Max Papis at the wheel, leading to a lengthy stay in the pits while the problem was fixed. It wasn't until seven and a quarter hours into the race that Keen finally had the chance to get behind the wheel when Dane Cameron headed to pit road.

Some might have struggled to lift themselves to meet the challenge of such a scenario. But Keen isn't that kind of character. A straightforward, honest, hard-working driver having his first experience of the Florida classic, he was determined to show what he could do, to do the job expected of a professional.

Keen owed his seat in the second Coyote DP run by reigning United SportsCar champion team Action Express Racing to winning the Sunoco Whelen Challenge, which awards a prize drive at Daytona to the most successful driver across several major, mostly UK-based, series. Keen had caught the eye with how quickly he got down to competitive lap times in testing but, with little experience in traffic and around 56 laps in the car before his stint, the race was a different proposition.

On his fourth lap of green-flag racing, Keen was the fastest driver on the track. And then he repeated the trick on his fifth lap. Even though, by his own admission,

there's still a little more to come in traffic, it was seriously impressive.

"You always drive the same," he says of the bleak situation in which he jumped into the car. "Whether you're in the lead or not, you push and you always try to get the best out of the car. So that's what I did; drive as fast and safely as I could and try to make up some time."

Keen, who found the Daytona Prototype to feel more like a quicker GT car than the European prototype machinery he has experienced in the past, carried on in exactly that vein. Both his night stint and his dawn running went well, and he played a key role in the car recovering to the top 10. The leading prototypes were well out of reach, but Keen, who also did the final stint, brought the car home seventh. Good, considering the early woes, but it could have been so much better.

"I'm a bit gutted, to be honest," says Keen. "It's nice to finish, but anything other than the top step is a little disappointing. We came here to do well, we're with one of the best teams with a good driver line-up so had a real chance of a good result. But the fact that we stayed 17 laps down [for most of the race, though the car ended up 19 laps down by the end], and didn't lose any more since a few hours in proves we did a good job."

Even so, Keen has good reason to look back on this race positively. He's shown that his pace compares with the best of them in a brand-new arena and, while he modestly downplays the value of his pace given it wasn't backed up by a top result, by rights this showing should open doors. That has to go some way to making up for missing out on the British GT Championship in 2014 when, sharing a Trackspeed Porsche with Jon Minshaw, a puncture in the penultimate round at Brands Hatch robbed them



of victory and cost them the title.

While the Daytona ride appears to be part of a masterplan, Keen only had the chance to win the challenge thanks to the support of Peter Belshaw, whose Radical Keen shared on his way to the SR3 title last year, racking up the points needed to win the Sunoco Challenge.

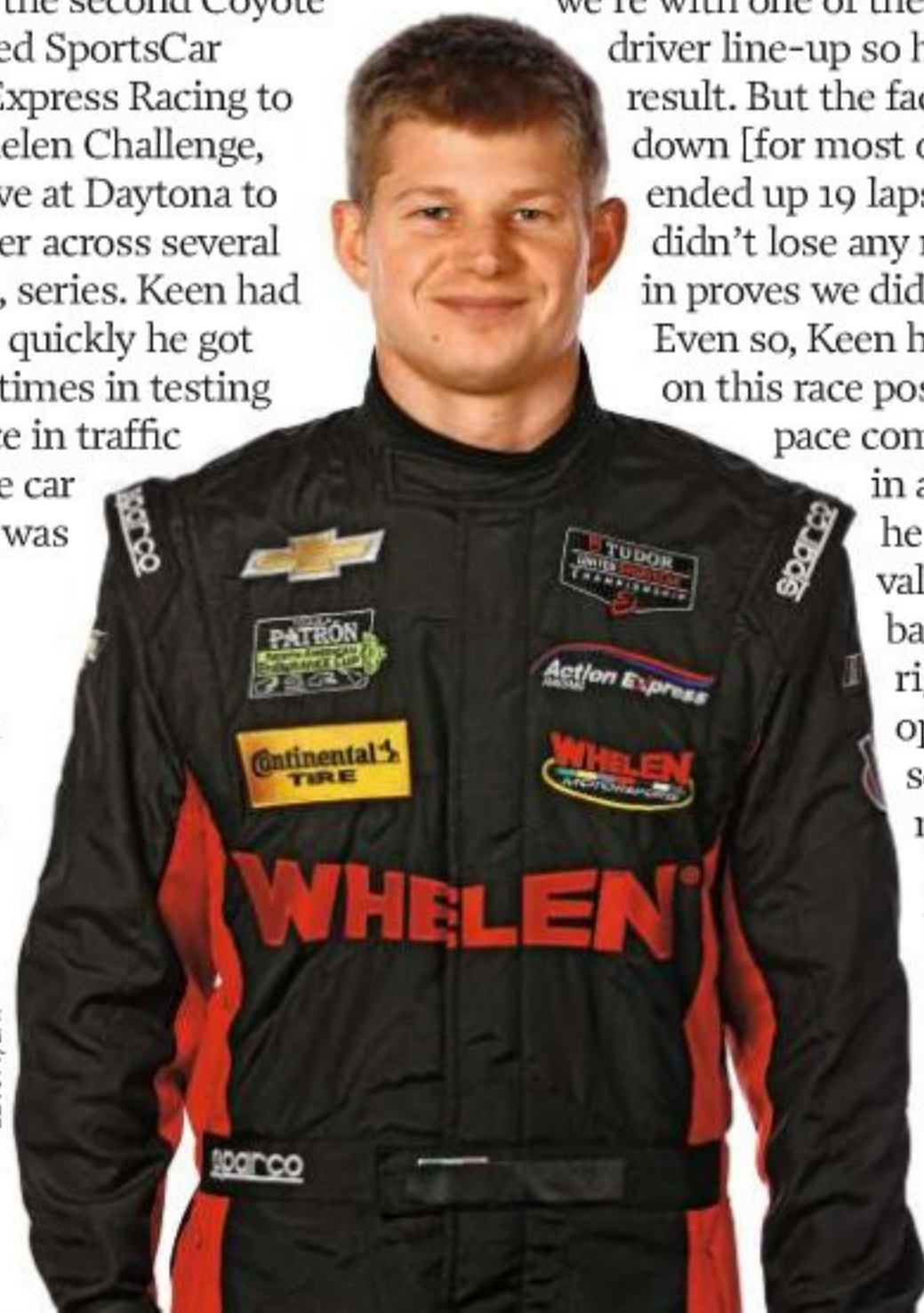
"We were going to do a few races but won the first couple so were leading the championship," explains Keen. "Peter felt that as we were winning, we might as well carry on but suddenly we realised I could win the Daytona drive, so Pete pushed me towards it. I owe a lot to him as he did a lot of races he didn't necessarily want to do but he did them for my benefit. I'm very grateful."

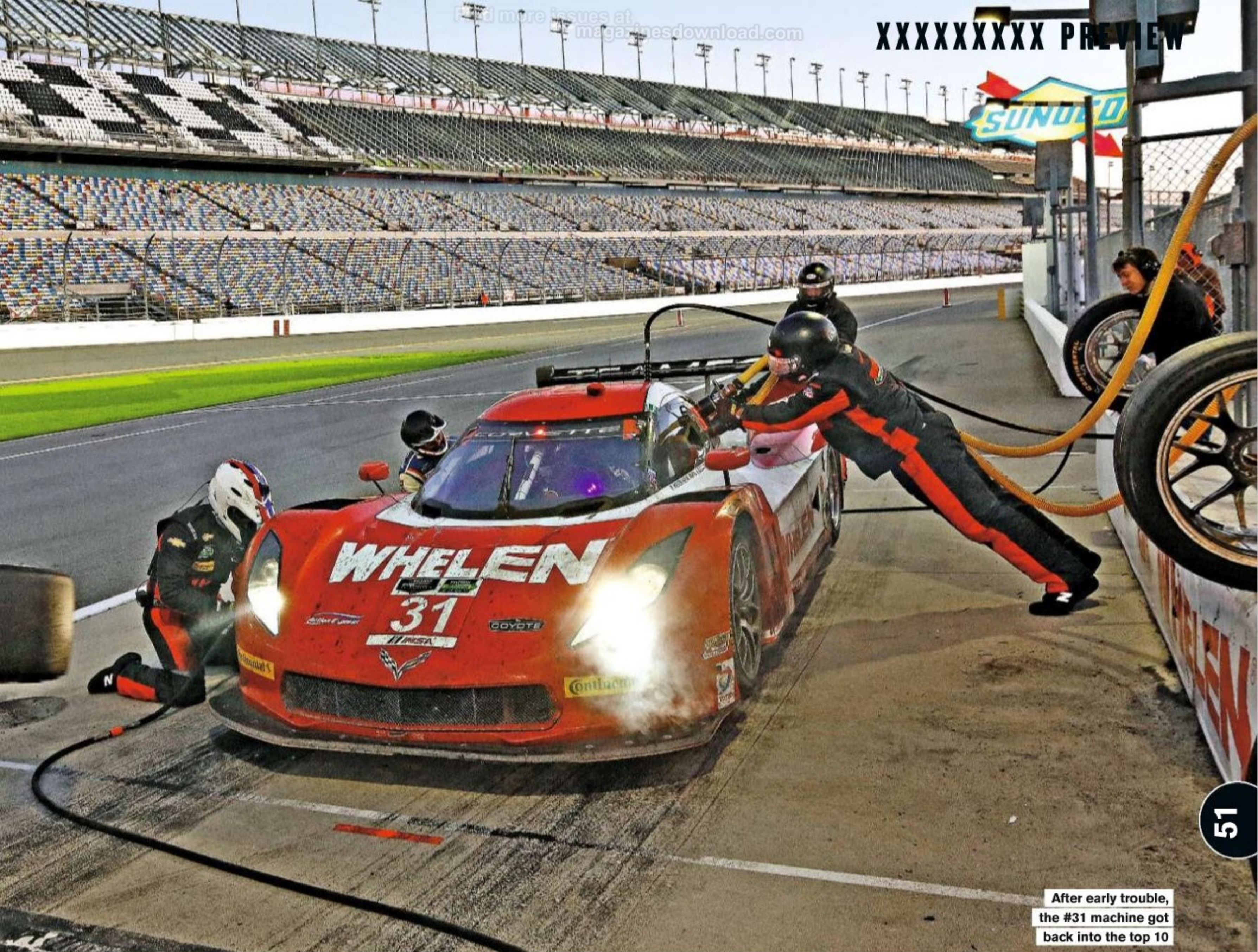
Keen is an underrated driver who merits further opportunities off the back of this, but he already has plenty of racing planned in the UK. He returns to British GT with Minshaw, this time sharing a Barwell Motorsport BMW Z4 GT3, for another crack at the title and will also take in some International GT Open rounds sharing a Ferrari 458 Italia with Shaun Balfe, a partnership that earned a GTS-class win at Barcelona late last year.

Hopefully the phone will ring and there will be other chances, perhaps to return to Daytona next year. After all, Keen proved to be right up there with the best of the past Sunoco Challenge winners. Considering the benchmark is Sauber Formula 1 driver Felipe Nasr, who finished third in 2012, that's irrefutable proof of his credentials. ☞

Keen was the fastest guy on track in the early part of his debut

LEVITT/LAT





After early trouble, the #31 machine got back into the top 10

Stop-start Daytona debut for Kruger

You're a few minutes into the race of a lifetime and settling in well. Then you notice the water temperature rising. An alarm sounds. The radio crackles into life and you are told to stop the car.

That's the scenario that faced 19-year-old Oskar Kruger in the Continental Tire SportsCar Championship race supporting the Daytona 24 Hours. The winner of the Sunoco 200 Challenge prize drive adapted admirably to the unfamiliar Chevrolet Camaro GSR, but after parking trackside he was recovered to the pits thinking that was that.

"I thought the race was over, but they got under the hood and replaced the fanbelt," says the 19-year-old Swede, who earned the prize by dominating the UK-based Radical Clubmans Cup. "I went back out – they told me to be cautious with the water temperature – but we were eight laps behind."

Kruger managed to drive for around half of the two-and-a-half-hour race, although the car did not finish after suffering a clutch failure with team-



Kruger adapted well to the heavy Camaro

mate Dylan Murcott at the wheel.

But for Kruger, who is unsure where he'll race in 2015 but suspects, budget allowing, that he'll compete in Sweden, this was still a great experience. He describes the outing as "a bonus" having not entered the Radical series last year with winning the prize in mind. While the drive isn't a gateway to a career in the USA, much as he would like it to be, the

experience of a challenging weekend will stand him in good stead. After all, he hadn't even heeled-and-toed prior to driving the Camaro.

"I've learned to adapt to a heavy V8 car that is completely different to what I've driven," he says. "To drive on the banking, race for three or four times as long as I'm used to, and with all the attention, has been the best experience I've had."

Champion Ogier's perfect defence

Sebastien Ogier let returning nemesis Sebastien Loeb take the early glory before it went sour for the nine-time champ. The reigning title holder then took control to top a VW 1-2-3. By **DAVID EVANS**

ALL PICTURES BY MCKLEIN DE



Rally Monte Carlo

World Rally Championship
Round 1/13
Monte Carlo (MC),
January 22-25



RESULTS

15 STAGES, 220.895 MILES

1	SEBASTIEN OGIER (F)/JULIEN INGRASSIA (F)	
	VW Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC #1	3h36m40.2s
2	JARI-MATTI LATVALA (FIN)/MIIKKA ANTTILA (FIN)	
	VW Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC #2	+58.0s
3	ANDREAS MIKKELSEN (N)/OLA FLOENE (N)	
	VW Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC #9	+2m12.3s
4	MADS OSTBERG (N)/JONAS ANDERSSON (S)	
	Citroen Total Abu Dhabi Citroen DS3 WRC #12	+2m43.6s
5	THIERRY NEUVILLE (B)/NICOLAS GILSOUL (B)	
	Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC #7	+3m12.1s
6	DANI SORDO (E)/MARC MARTI (E)	
	Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC #8	+3m12.9s
7	ELFYN EVANS (GB)/DANIEL BARRITT (GB)	
	M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC #5	+5m23.7s
8	SEBASTIEN LOEB (F)/DANIEL ELENA (MC)	
	Citroen Total Abu Dhabi Citroen DS3 WRC #4	+8m34.7s
9	MARTIN PROKOP (CZ)/JAN TOMANEK (CZ)	
	Jipocar Czech National Team Ford Fiesta RS WRC #21	+9m54.8s
10	KRIS MEEKE (GB)/PAUL NAGLE (IRL)	
	Citroen Total Abu Dhabi Citroen DS3 WRC #3	+10m55.6s

OTHERS

18	OTT TANAK (EST)/RAIGO MOLDER (EST)	
	M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC #6	+19m49.3s
23	FRANCOIS DELECOUR (F)/DOMINIQUE SAVIGNONI (F)	
	Tuthill Porsche Porsche 911 RGT #20	+33m21.4s
R	ROBERT KUBICA (PL)/MACIEK SZCZEPANIAK (PL)	
	RK Motorsport Ford Fiesta RS WRC #16	SS14 - accident

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	OGIER	25	6	SORDO	8
2	LATVALA	19	7	EVANS	6
3	MIKKELSEN	15	8	LOEB	6
4	OSTBERG	12	9	MEEKE	4
5	NEUVILLE	10	10	PROKOP	2

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	VW MOTORSPORT	43	4	M-SPORT WRT	12
2	HYUNDAI WRT	27	5	JIPOCAR CZECH NATIONAL	6
3	CITROEN TOTAL WRT	12	6	FWRT SRL	1

STAGE TIMES

SS1 ENTREVAUX - ROUAINE (13.24 miles)
FASTEST: Loeb 15m53.5s
Leader: Loeb. Second: Tanak +22.0s

SS2 NORANTE - DIGNE-LES-BAINS (12.23 miles)
FASTEST: Ogier 13m57.1s
Leader: Loeb. Second: Ogier +13.3s

SS3 LA SALLE EN BEAUMONT - CORPS 1 (9.84 miles)
FASTEST: Loeb 10m23.5s
Leader: Loeb. Second: Ogier +28.3s

SS4 ASPRES-LES-CORPS - CHAUFFAYER 1 (16.04 miles)
FASTEST: Kubica 15m27.0s
Leader: Loeb. Second: Ogier +24.3s

SS5 LES COSTES - SAINT-JULIEN EN CHAMPSAUR 1 (15.78 miles)
FASTEST: Kubica 15m13.2s
Leader: Loeb. Second: Ogier +3.0s

SS6 LA SALLE EN BEAUMONT - CORPS 2 (9.84 miles)
FASTEST: Loeb 10m26.1s
Leader: Loeb. Second: Ogier +6.6s

SS7 ASPRES-LES-CORPS - CHAUFFAYER 2 (16.04 miles)
FASTEST: Kubica 14m36.1s
Leader: Ogier. Second: Loeb +8.0s

SS8 LES COSTES - SAINT-JULIEN EN CHAMPSAUR 2 (15.78 miles)
FASTEST: Ogier 15m15.9s
Leader: Ogier. Second: Latvala +1m45.4s

SS9 PRUNIERES - EMBRUN 1 (12.38 miles) CANCELLED

SS10 LARDIER ET VALENCIA - FAVE (32.12 miles)
FASTEST: Kubica 30m41.9s
Leader: Ogier. Second: Latvala +1m04.9s

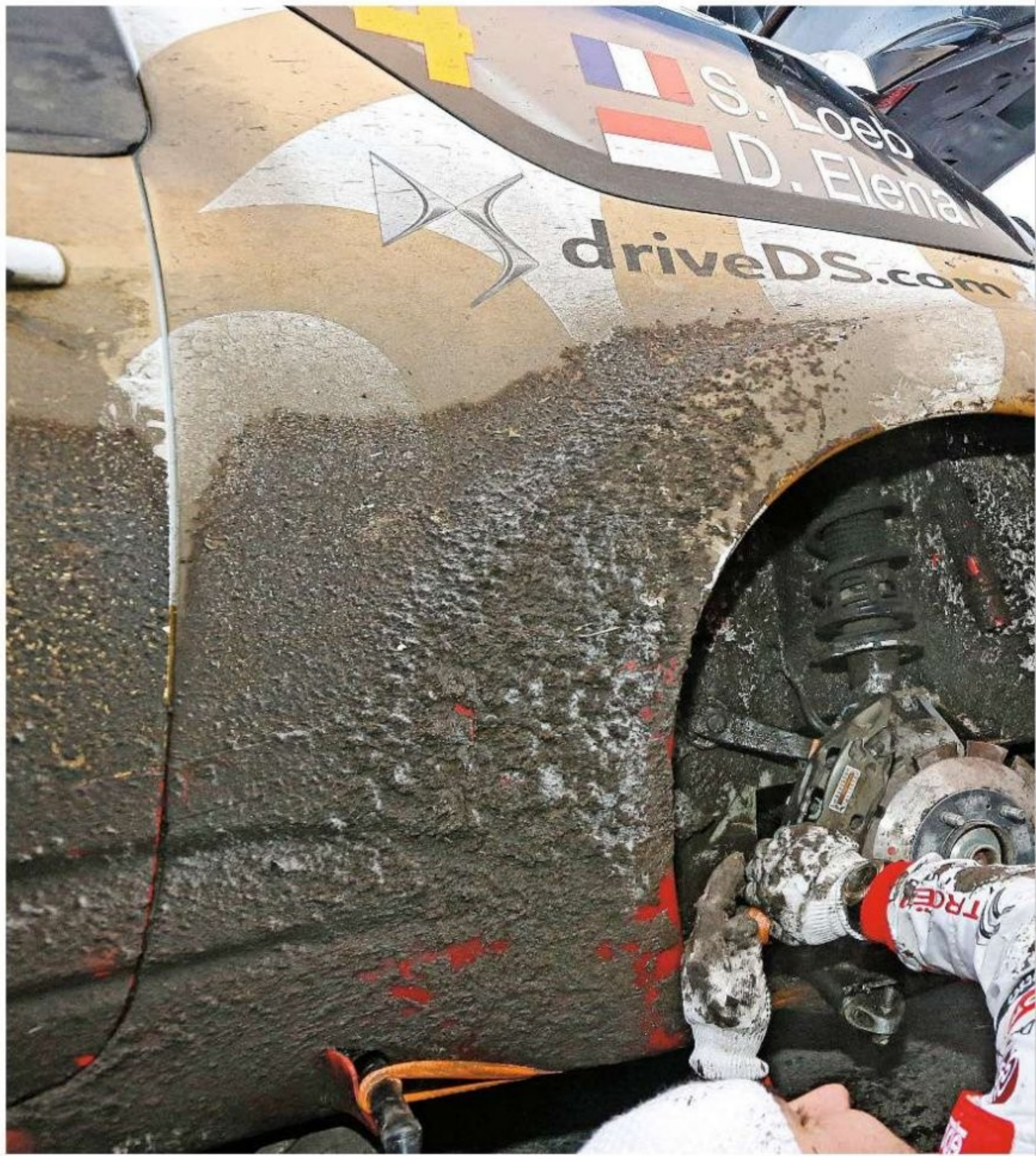
SS11 PRUNIERES - EMBRUN 2 (12.38 miles)
FASTEST: Loeb 10m42.4s
Leader: Ogier. Second: Latvala +1m02.8s

SS12 SISTERON - THOARD (22.90 miles)
FASTEST: Meeke 24m32.9s
Leader: Ogier. Second: Latvala +42.8s

SS13 COL SAINT JEAN - SAINT LAURENT 1 (6.52 miles)
FASTEST: Meeke 6m33.7s
Leader: Ogier. Second: Latvala +47.4s

SS14 LA BOLLENE VESUBIE - SOSPEL (19.67 miles)
FASTEST: Loeb 22m27.3s
Leader: Ogier. Second: Latvala +59.8s

SS15 COL SAINT JEAN - SAINT LAURENT 2 (Powerstage) (6.52 miles)
FASTEST: Meeke 6m30.5s
Leader: Ogier. Second: Latvala +59.0s



IN A DREAM THAT LASTED 20 HOURS, THE WORLD Rally Championship last week came alive with one of the most fascinating, entertaining and intriguing battles in the history of the sport. It was everything everybody had hoped for: Sebastien Loeb and Ogier coming together once more and scrapping.

In terms of sporting spectacles revisited, this was motorsport's Ali-and-Liston rematch. Trouble with that analogy is that you'd pitch nine-time champ Loeb as Ali and the result of last week's WRC opener didn't exactly bear out events of Lewiston, Maine, 1965. The anticipation, however, was just the same.

Loeb's ride back into the world championship

was anything but smooth. He'd been off the road more than once in his pre-event test and then, on the eve of the rally start, he rolled his recce car on a road section on the way to a stage.

Nerves in the Citroen camp were not exactly settled ahead of shakedown on Wednesday. Except for Loeb's. He doesn't do nerves. He's seen it all before. And, let's face it, what does he have to prove?

"I'm here for fun," he said with a smile, pulling on his gloves in readiness for shakedown.

And then he went fastest, beating Ogier by 1.1 seconds across the two-mile test. Game, most definitely, on.

Anybody hoping to hype up the rivalry between



Mikkelsen made it a VW 1-2-3 with third

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Loeb damaged the Citroen but fought back to eighth

the pair ahead of the event would have best avoided the pre-event press conference, where the two Frenchmen chatted like long-lost buddies. Before them, heads were bowed in an attempt to avoid the truth, which looked in grave danger of standing in the way of a good story.

Then came the kind of explosive opener that not even the most optimistic of French bobble-hatters would dare hope for.

Standing near the village of Rouaine, deep in the heart of the Alps at just past nine o'clock last Thursday, were a hundred or so hardcore rally fans. They'd dodged the gendarmes at the junction and sneaked down between the trees.

Car 1: championship defender and road-opener Ogier arrived. The side of the Volkswagen Polo R WRC was obliterated from view by the mass of media waiting on the word of the mountain man from just up the road in Gap.

Ogier looked calm, despite what had been a shocking lack of grip for his 13-mile journey from Entrevaux. More than 30cm of snow had fallen 24 hours earlier and, while much of it had melted through Thursday, rapidly falling temperatures had frozen the road solid. "It was tricky," he said with a wry smile, "there was not so much risk for me."

Those following soon put it into context. Or tried to. Citroën's Mads Ostberg slowed his DS3 and shook his head. "There are no words," said the

Norwegian, "to describe those conditions..."

M-Sport returnee Ott Tanak was running a couple of places ahead of Loeb on the road and the Estonian's time, 8.9s up on Ogier, hinted that the road might be getting quicker, the ice being broken up in places to offer marginally more resistance between Michelin's studded winter cover and mother earth.

But nothing prepared the watching world for what happened next.

A Citroën World Rally Car with 'Loeb' on the window came into view at a stage end for the first time in 14 months and the noise began to build stage-side. It wasn't cheering or chanting, more that audible sense of anticipation.

Written on a board, just visible by the crowd, Tanak's time read 14m15.5s. The marshal approached the board, placed his pen next to 'Car 4' and wrote 13m... the message spread through the crowd in an instant. A field half-full of people went mental.

Loeb was bathed in sweat. Reaching a steaming, gloved hand out of the open door he pointed at the board. "What was the time?" he asked.

AUTOSPORT told him, but he couldn't hear. We tried holding three fingers up and mouthing the word "thirty..." Still no use. His focus was taken by live television, so '-30' was scrawled on the AUTOSPORT notepad, before tapping him on the leg and showing him.

He smiled and shook his head. "No..."

Er, yes. Granted, he'd only had 22 seconds out of Tanak, but the full half-minute out of Ogier.

"But it was so slow in there," he said. "I said to Daniel [Elena, co-driver]: 'We are completely stopped... it feels so slow!' Not so bad, though."

The second stage was slightly different in nature, more open, more susceptible to cars cutting corners. Ogier cut every corner possible and pushed hard, admitting he'd been caught on the hop by his rival's incredible start. Last year's Monte winner halved Loeb's advantage in SS2, leaving the pair separated by 13.3s when the cars completed their journey from Monaco to Gap shortly before midnight.

Friday morning couldn't come soon enough. The sun rose on service and the talking began. Road temperatures remained sub-zero and dense fog on the first stage, particularly in the middle section that ran up above 1200 metres, ensured there would be little if any dry asphalt around. But then the next two stages could clear and warm quickly. It was a classic Monte conundrum.

The leaders departed with studs between them and the ice-laden lanes.

Ogier came through and confirmed the fog. "I expect to lose on this one," he said. "The road will get quicker for the guys behind."

It did. Loeb pulled back everything he'd lost in SS2, banking another 15 seconds to rebuild an advantage of close to 30.

There could be little doubt that Ogier had copped the worst of the conditions at the front of the field, even though he had Superallying Sebastien Chardonnet and Robert Kubica ahead of him on Friday morning. But, as temperatures rose, he knew the road would come to him. When the car's compass turned north, certainly, there would still be plenty of ice to catch out the unwary, but when the stage faced south and the sun shone bright, Ogier put the hammer down and chopped his way through every corner possible, hauling out as much snow, mud and gravel as possible.

"We've had a disadvantage on the road," he said. "Now we're trying to make our advantage by pulling snow on the road for the guys behind."

It was just as the pair had predicted. Running 14 cars – and 28 minutes – apart meant the road and the weather could and would vary wildly. The advantage swung one way, then the other. And when Ogier spotted a big wave, he got on and rode it, slashing Loeb's lead to just three seconds at lunchtime service.

The morning hadn't been the easiest, but the end of stage five had given Ogier plenty to smile about. Hammering the Polo down the hill for the last couple of miles, he was on a high and heading home. The stage ended in St Julien-en-Champsaur, home to family Ogier for 20 years.

Anybody thinking France had a voice only for ▶



Ogier cruised to victory after Loeb had gone off



Ogier kisses the trophy as Ingrassia shows who's #1

► Loeb couldn't have been more wrong. Ogier allowed himself a moment after turning right onto the D43, a road he knew well.

"Maybe it's because I know this road a little better," he said, "but I had a chance to look to the side and I saw so many people, so many people. The support was incredible. Honestly, it lifted me. It was so nice."

Then came the time for pasta and more meteorological data crunching; what time and at what height would freezing point come? And what about the fog between La Salle en Beamont and Corps?

Ogier stuck with the studs; Loeb went with the winters, gambling on there being less ice around. Both had a couple of supersofts in the boot, to be used most likely in the day's final two stages.

The fog and ice remained and, by his own admission, Loeb risked all for fastest time, 3.6s up on Ogier. The lead was 6.6s, but what was coming in the next two? How much mud, how much ice?

Ogier pulled two studded boots off and crossed them with a brace of racers. He wasn't happy.

"It was so slippery," he said. "I do not have the good tyre choice."

Behind him, Loeb was struggling even more. "I thought I had a good stage," he said, "we lost five seconds at a hairpin, but..." Fifteen seconds down on Ogier, the lead he'd held from the start was gone.

Unbeknown to Loeb, he looked to be in for a spanking in stage eight. Six miles in and Ogier was already seven up.

Pushing as hard as possible, Loeb saw the exit of a right-hander and got on the gas. Yes, there was some ice. But it would be OK. Slide. Slide some more. Ditch. A little bit more ditch. Throttle. Full throttle. Rock.



P10 and a Powerstage win were Meeke's consolation

"It was hidden beneath the snow," said Loeb, some hours later.

The impact had smashed the left-rear suspension and transmission on the Citroen, the skewed wheel dragged along by the limping DS3. The dream was done.

"OK, it's finished," said Loeb. "I'm sorry for Citroen, we can't make the big points anymore. It doesn't matter for me, I don't need them. It was frustrating this afternoon. The second two stages were just terrible, such a mess. In the car, I was pushing like hell..."

Loeb remained typically nonchalant about the situation. He'd come, given it his shot. But now the race was run. He would spend the weekend Superallying, but still smiling.

Ogier arrived at the end-of-leg press conference and looked relieved. Smiling at his team-mates Jari-Matti Latvala and Andreas Mikkelsen filling the seats reserved for second and third, he mischievously observed: "Are there any other teams in this rally?"

As the season and Ogier's future unfolds, this rally will grow in importance. It could become a watershed event for the champion. He watched his biggest rival race away into a big lead, what could be a killer lead on other events, but he didn't panic. He stayed cool. He kept his head and he stuck to his plan.

In the past, Loeb's got under his skin, messed with his mind. Not this time. Mentally and physically, Ogier was the man of the Monte last week and richly deserved his win.

There's no denying that Loeb's eighth-stage exit did leave the rally a little flat. "You enjoyed the race..." said Ogier, "...it was great also for Julien [Ingrassia, co-driver] and me in the cockpit. A great race." And it wasn't bad for Volkswagen, either, starting the season with a podium lock-out and the best result to date on an opening round for both Latvala and Mikkelsen.

THE REST...

Ostberg was the top Citroen home in fourth place but, frustratingly for the French firm, he wasn't registered for points. Not that the Versailles boys went home empty-handed: Loeb and Kris Meeke did bring some points home, after making their way back into the top 10 with a flurry of fastest times from both.

Meeke had fallen foul of the same stage as Loeb and come out with almost identical damage to the left-rear of his Citroen. The frustration was enormous; like Loeb, he'd paid heavily for an innocent-looking icy tank-slapper. The Brit did, however, enjoy the last laugh with victory on the Powerstage and the epic Sisteron stage. ❧

IN THE SERVICE PARK

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR
@daviddevansrally



WHEN HENRI ROUGIER EMERGED FROM THE snow and ice of the Alps into the southern French sunshine to win the 1911 Monte Carlo Rally, he did so in full knowledge that the event had served its purpose.

It had brought car owners from north of the mountains south, at a time of the year when such a trip seemed pointless, not to mention precarious. But Monaco in January can be a sight to behold. And it was last weekend too.

And so was the journey to get there. Once the midweek rain had gone and Wednesday night's snow settled, the azure blue arrived in time to frame the peaks in a perfect winter picture. It was with a heavy heart that the journey south from Gap was started on Saturday, but an hour into the Route Napoleon and the road demands all of your focus. It's a fabulous ribbon draped down the middle of scenery that takes spectacular and makes it better. And, even better than that, it takes you on a journey of place names packed with history. Puget Théniers... where Ari Vatanen caught and passed Walter Rohrl in 1985. Or Grasse, the hometown of Michele Mouton.

Before finally Monaco and all its excesses.

For some reason, Monte Carlo – and much of France come to that – is never in any hurry to pull down Christmas decorations. Normally I'm a stickler for tradition, but not this time – the festive forest in Casino Square provided the perfect backdrop to the WRC's arrival in a town full of madness.

And, 104 years on, the tourists are still coming in their thousands.



WRC 2015 kicked off to a festive backdrop

BIG NUMBER

25

Sebastien Ogier's Monte win takes him level on career WRC wins with the late Colin McRae



VW may not stop at three Polos to secure the title...

Volkswagen ready to run fourth car for title push

VOLKSWAGEN TEAM PRINCIPAL

Jost Capito is ready to draft a fourth front-line driver into his squad, if that is what is needed to keep the German marque's World Rally Championship hat-trick bid on track.

Capito has previously spoken out against the running-order rule – which forces the championship leader (or reigning champion Sebastien Ogier on the first round) to go first on the road – and cited the potential for Citroen to give Sebastien Loeb more outings in an effort to land more success for

the French firm. Now Capito is ready to follow that lead.

"I'm not blaming Citroen or Loeb," he said. "They have to do what the regulations allow and you have to utilise the rules. The fault is not with the teams here; we maximise the opportunities we are given. The fault here lies with where the rules are written.

"I will do everything the regulation allows to win the manufacturers' championship. We will use the regulation to the fullest to win it. That's my job. If we didn't win the title and I said, 'Ah, I could have done that but I didn't

want to,' then I am sacked."

Volkswagen team leader Sebastien Ogier said the effects of the running-order rule change were already felt on last week's Monte Carlo Rally.

The double world champion said: "I announced this last year and I fight with everything I have against these rules. It's the first example that this is going to kill the close battles between the drivers. I am sure this is going to happen with my team-mates as well. It's a shame because we have some nice, exciting battles."

Coulthard rides in Evans' Fiesta

FORMER MONACO GRAND PRIX

winner David Coulthard was attacking Monte Carlo's famous street circuit again last week, but this time doing it as a passenger alongside fellow Brit Elfyn Evans in a Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

The Scot emerged from the M-Sport car to reaffirm his admiration for what Evans and his colleagues do.

"He didn't disappoint at all," said the 13-time GP winner. "It was a real eye-opener going into Rascasse – it was dry to damp and for us single-seater drivers that means backing out of the throttle. But the speed he carried into there, I said, 'Well, we're going to hit the barrier.' But we didn't!"



DC was shown round by Evans



Elba had a lesson from Ogier in Monaco

Elba to contest Circuit of Ireland

TV ACTOR IDRIS ELBA WILL

contest the Circuit of Ireland in April driving a Ford Fiesta R2.

The *Luther* star was present at last week's launch of the World Rally Championship in Monaco, riding alongside champion Sebastien Ogier before revealing to AUTOSPORT his plans for the Belfast-based event.

"I learned so much from Sebastien

around the stage in Monaco," he said. "It was an amazing opportunity to sit with him. I learned some interesting things, which I'll use in my training for Ireland."

Elba will drive the event as part of a new, four-part television series and added: "I know it a little bit, I'm studying the event as much as I can – I know the stages are quite bumpy and it's not going to be an easy one to start with."

TOYOTA TO REVEAL ALL

Toyota will announce its motorsport plans for the coming year in Tokyo tomorrow (Friday), with a World Rally Championship programme for 2017 reckoned to be on the agenda. In the meantime, Toyota Motorsport GmbH has confirmed the GT86 CS-R3 will run competitively for the first time on Rally Niedersachsen, near Hanover, on July 4.

WRC SET FOR CORSICA

France's WRC round looks set to return to Corsica for the first time since 2008 after the Rally of France organisers last week admitted the regional-government backing for Alsace had made another Strasbourg event impossible. The only problem with Corsica is that it's an ERC round, which means complications with Eurosport holding the broadcast rights.

DELECOUR IS TOP 911

Francois Delecour dominated the opening round of the FIA R-GT Cup last weekend. The man who won the 1994 Monte Carlo Rally outright acquitted himself perfectly in a Tuthill-run Porsche 911, showing fellow 911 man Romain Dumas the way home to the tune of three minutes. "I grew up watching Bjorn Waldegaard and Jean-Pierre Nicolas driving Porsches on this event," said Delecour. "For me, this win is a dream."

MIKKELSEN 'AT HOME'

Volkswagen made much of Sebastien Ogier competing close to his family's home in St Julien last weekend, but actually it was Andreas Mikkelsen who was closest to his own bed. On arrival in Monaco, the team's service area was set up on Quai Antoine 1e, which is exactly the same road in which the Norwegian lives. Despite being just 50 yards from home, he still stayed in the team hotel.

WRC2 TO LEFEBVRE...

Stephane Lefebvre won WRC2 in Monte Carlo last week, the job made easier after Martin Koci went off late in the event. This was Lefebvre's first asphalt outing in a Citroen DS3 R5.

...AS BREEN TAKES P2

Craig Breen made up for a disappointing opening round of the European Rally Championship with second place in WRC2. The Irishman and co-driver Scott Martin will now focus their attentions on the second ERC round of the season, next week's Rally Liepaja in Latvia.

GILBERT'S JUNIOR JOY

Quentin Gilbert, the man hoping to follow Stephane Lefebvre as this year's Junior WRC champ, made a good start to his campaign with victory in the category last weekend.

Spectators love the commitment Kubica brings to the sport



BETTIDOL/GETTY

Kubica's (very) full Monte

After an uncertain winter, Robert Kubica returned to the WRC fray as the driver-manager of a weeks-old team. **DAVID EVANS** asks him about the scale of the challenge ahead

From the outside, you would think nothing has changed for Robert Kubica one round into his second full season in the World Rally Championship: more speed and more bent panels.

You'd be right. And wrong. Twelve months ago, Kubica posted a couple of scratch times on the Monte Carlo; he'd come fresh from the Janner Rally and with a mind free from everything except tyre choices and pace notes. And the weather had come to him on the opening morning of the 2014 event.

This time around, he hit the ground running with a weeks-old team, a couple of days of testing,

Pirellis not Michelins and a head absolutely full of everything but tyre choices and pace notes. Yet, in the same weather and road conditions, he took four fastest times, and he took them on merit.

Granted, he did drop it a couple of times and ended the event in the wall after the flying finish of Turini. The last one meant no powerstage and a thorough investigation into what went wrong.

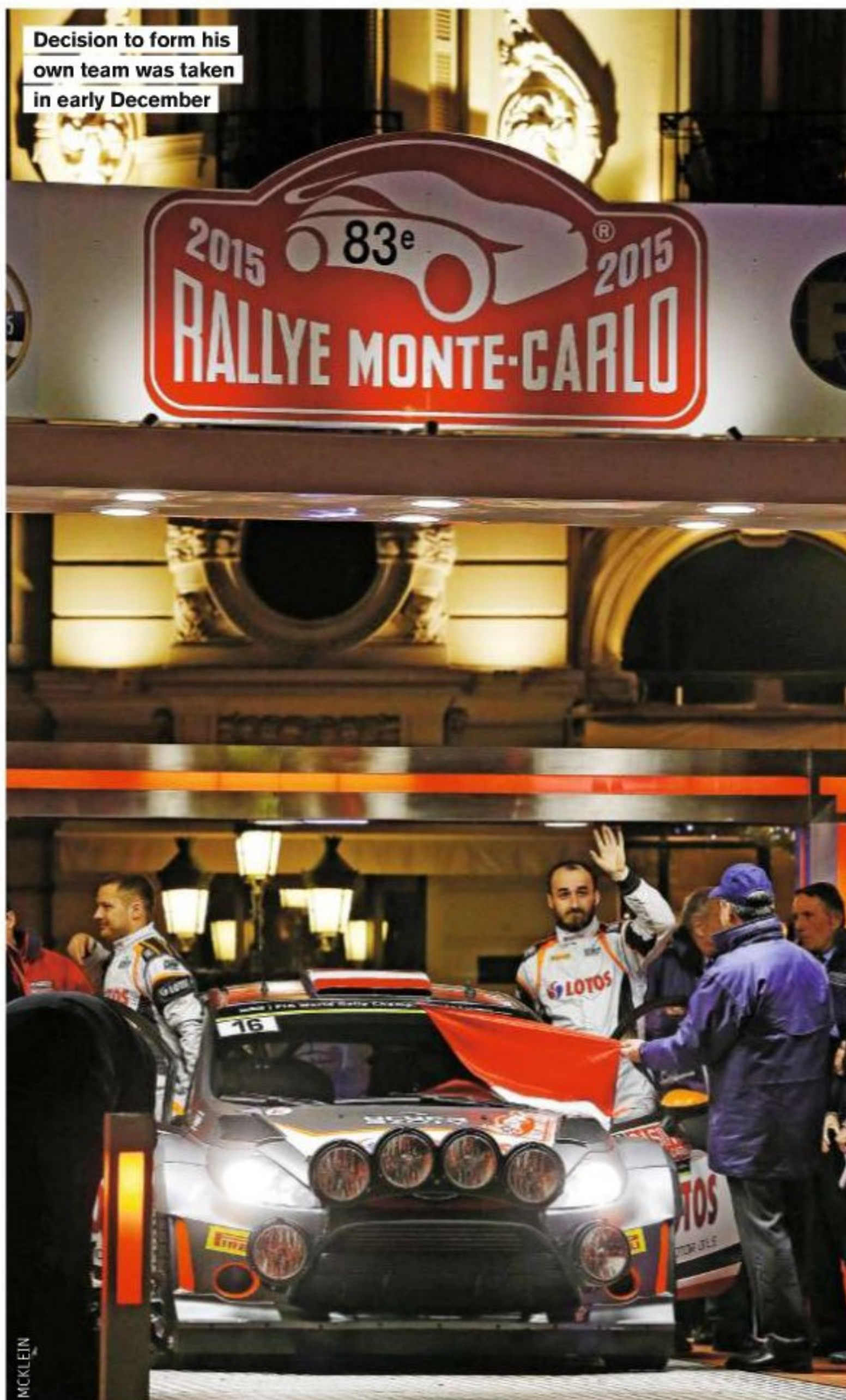
"It was quite strange in that stage," Kubica told AUTOSPORT. "Normally when you lose the brakes, you get some pad knock-off, they fade or you get the long pedal — but this time we got nothing. They were



Post-stage brake failure on the Col de Turini ended encouraging run



Magnitude of impact is clear from the damage to the roadside wall



Decision to form his own team was taken in early December

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

It's little wonder Robert Kubica has grown a beard; shaving has had to be put on the back burner since the start of December.

That's when the decision was taken to form the RK World Rally Team.

"It was a late decision," says Kubica. "Actually, a very, very late decision! But we had some great collaboration with M-Sport, who worked very well to help us to prepare for Monte Carlo."

Kubica's team is currently sharing a facility with A-Style, the Italian squad which ran the Fiesta he used to win in Monza and Bologna last year. But, by next month, Kubica's outfit will have its own facility near Lake Como.

"The next few months will be a big rush," he says. "We got to Monte Carlo, but there was no time really to enjoy what we did – already we have to think about Sweden, Mexico..."

Rushing is something that the RK World Rally Team has had to become accustomed to since the start of winter.

Team co-ordinator Marcin Czachorski musters a smile at the question of whether he had a good Christmas.

"I don't think I was very popular with my wife," he says. "In Poland, Christmas is a very traditional period with a holiday and time with the family. But we seemed to be on-line all of the time sorting things out. This time was really tight and demanding. But,



Kubica: driver, team principal, chief engineer

generally speaking, we are quite happy with the outcome."

Kubica eschewed the route of becoming a points-scoring WRC Team. There are obvious benefits to that route, but it would also burden the LOTOS-backed team with the need to pair engines, transmissions, chassis, while also imposing testing restrictions.

"Don't think we are about to start 40 days of testing," said Kubica. "We're not. But being private gives us more freedom."

there, then when I came to the finish, after a fast downhill section, there was nothing. The pedal went to the floor and I took handbrake."

The investigation into what went wrong with the brakes will be taken on by the chief engineer or the team principal – both of which are roles being played by the number one driver of the RK World Rally Team. That'll be Kubica, then.

Unable to find the solution he wanted elsewhere in the service park, Kubica set up his own squad (see panel). Running a team could put a different slant on the season for Kubica, but he's adamant he won't let it get in the way once he's at each event.

"As soon as I get to the pre-event test or the recce," he says, "I am the driver and I am doing my job. But between these events, I am busy doing a lot of other things. For example, this morning I have been on the telephone sorting out fuel stops in Mexico."

There's a pause as this sinks in. "But I am enjoying it," he says. "It's a new challenge."

"I'm not a businessman. I don't have the mentality for that. But we are building and I have experience which can be useful"

ROBERT KUBICA

Typically for any driver who has worked in Formula 1, the best is unlikely to be quite good enough – but for a driver who's been pretty much as high as anybody in that environment, coming to rallying provided something of a dusty culture shock.

"When you are in F1," he says. "You are used to the highest standards. Now, my dream is to build a team which is as good as the teams at the top of the World Rally Championship."

Kubica doesn't strike you as an obvious driver-manager, looking to expand his empire and run a fleet of top-class cars around the world.



Pirelli tyres enabled Kubica to push when conditions were right

"I'm not a businessman," he says. "I'm not a team principal, I don't have the mentality for that. But at the moment, we are still building the team and I have some experience from the different teams I drove in, which can be useful. But I am the driver. What we have done is the best thing for this year and maybe for the future, but it's only for my car. This is the plan for the moment."

And what about the day job. What's the plan for the year ahead? "I want to be more consistent," he says. "But I don't want to lose so much speed to become consistent. This is the difference with the very

good drivers – they get to the finish setting fast times throughout the rally. Anywhere in motorsport, this is the fine line."

And Kubica stepped both sides of the line in the Alps last week, but overall the message was positive.

"If somebody had told me two or three weeks ago that we would have been able to show so much pace in Monte Carlo, I would never have believed it," he says. "But, when we tested with the Pirelli tyres for the first time I thought it could be possible. When the conditions were right, I knew we could push. Who knows, maybe these will be the first and the last fastest times we set this year. We know that in some places we can have an advantage or disadvantage with the Pirellis, but as well, we shouldn't forget we are in a private car fighting with new cars from Volkswagen and Citroen."

One thing is sure, Kubica had the look of a man with the weight of the world on his shoulders in Wales last season. This year, he has the weight of an entire team on him – and he seems to be revelling in it. ❧



Loeb was fastest when roads were icy



LOEB

THE LEGEND'S RETURN

Unsurprisingly, Sebastien Loeb stole the spotlight on his Monte Carlo Rally return. **DAVID EVANS** explains why we need to accept the rally legend is a racing convert

Sebastien Loeb was definitely getting tired of this. Nice bloke that he is, enough was enough. One journalist had made it his mission to get Loeb to admit his secret. The nine-time champion obviously wanted a full-time return to his former life; he just hadn't accepted it yet.

For the umpteenth time last weekend, Loeb trotted out the very well-worn line about Citroen offering him the Monte chance, in the winter, and it not getting in the way of WTCC testing, so why not?

The conversation moved on. Then came back.

But what about Argentina? Surely, the thinking was, he would want to be back in Argentina?

Somewhat surprised at this moment of *deja vu* again, Loeb was ready to close the door. But only succeeded in leaving the smallest of gaps.

"No, no, I don't know," he said. "I have no plan and we never spoke about it. I will not say yes or no. I don't say it's open."

Unperturbed, Loeb's indefatigable inquisitor replied: "So it's open?"

Citroen's communications manager Marie-Pierre Rossie stepped in.



Loeb scotched talk of rally comeback

"For the moment, it's a no," she offered in another attempt to close the deal.

After a moment's hesitation — no doubt becoming increasingly concerned about the prospect of informing an irate editor that there might be no story... "But it's open?"

Nowhere. Final roll of the dice.

"You never say never?"

Loeb smiled, thinly, perhaps beginning to admire the persistence.

"You can never say never, for that I don't say no," he replied with an air of finality.

What did Loeb expect, though? He'd come back to a rally for the first time since retiring from the World Rally Championship in the autumn of ▶

► 2013. And the WRC wanted him back. Some would say *needed* him back.

Add to this reports that he's not having the best of times in the World Touring Car Championship and suddenly you have the perfect fit and a story that flies.

Trouble is, Loeb's reasons for making the switch in the first place still stand.

"It [WTCC] was what I wanted," he says. "I wanted a life that was a bit cooler, with a bit less travel and a bit more time at home – it's what I wanted. For sure it's very different and it's very different to rallying. Of course, I still enjoy rallying, but one day you have to decide to do something different. That's what I'm doing."

Despite his legendary chilled exterior, Loeb starts everything he does to win. It's that single-mindedness, allied with a quite extraordinary natural talent, which carried him

"To come back and drive like this after time away from the rally car, that's not normal. That's Loeb" SEBASTIEN OGIER

to 78 world rally wins and nine titles. It also took him up a Colorado mountain at mind-boggling speed. Don't forget, while the rest of the world traded tenths or sometimes seconds on the run up Pikes Peak, Loeb mullered the benchmark by more than a minute.

There's no doubt he would have made a solid fist of Formula 1, had the FIA not been so bizarrely short-sighted when it came to the matter of issuing him a super licence. He hasn't won Le Mans yet, but he's got the Sarthe sussed.

So, to touring cars and, conveniently, touring cars with Citroen. And now he's really been made to work. This one's got him thinking.

"This is a big challenge for Seb," says team principal Yves Matton. "He does great things, he won in rally, he won Pikes Peak and now he wants to be able to prove that he is able to do something different also."

Citroen dominated the WTCC last season, but Loeb won two races. Being beaten by a team-mate is something completely alien to him. But it's something which has to be kept in perspective.



WTCC campaign has been less successful – so far



Loeb attacked the rally as if he had a point to prove

"He improved his level a lot in a few months," says Matton. "He has more [to come] but he is fighting with Yvan Muller, a four-time champion.

He is always really close [to the pace in WTCC], but in the pure level – in making a time in qualifying he is always there. After, it's about knowing the job and the experience that he doesn't have is to see when he has to pass and when not. You cannot learn this on the simulator, you can only learn in life on the tracks. It's experience and you cannot force this."

Citroen's deputy team principal Xavier Mestelan-Pinon is the man responsible for designing and building pretty much every rally car Loeb succeeded in. And he's bridged the gap to World Touring Cars by penning the C-Elysee as well. Few know Loeb, and what makes him tick as a driver, better.

Present in France for Loeb's return and to oversee the introduction of the DS 3 WRC evolution, Mestelan-Pinon said comparisons between WTCC and WRC were unreasonable.

"You cannot compare," he says. "We work with

him in touring cars so he is five millimetres from the wall or from the kerb. If you try to do that here, your rally would last four corners. In the touring car we work a lot with the onboard camera with the engineers looking through all of the data – we do this for every lap to improve the next one. In rally the drivers go through a stage one time, or two times at the most. It's so different. Only the concentration is the same.

"He is a nine-time world champion in a World Rally Car, not in a World Touring Car, so it's natural that he is going to be faster in a rally car than in a race car. When he took the choice to move to WTCC, it was a big challenge for him. Rally is more natural for him, but now our challenge is to win in touring cars for the second time – and if possible with him; we made this challenge together."

Plenty within Citroen dreamed of the kind of impression Loeb made on the first stage last week – beating Ogier by half a minute – but were not sure it would come.

Mestelan-Pinon says: "It was a surprise. But he worked for this. And this is the question when people are asking will he come back for another rally. We have to think to the work this involves. To make a good result in WRC, he must think to that a lot; his mind was free, he didn't make any test in the touring car since Macau. Now, if we look at another rally and say: 'Ah, OK, maybe we go to Germany rally tomorrow and try to catch Ogier...' It's impossible. You need to work at it and he worked at it in Monte Carlo."

Much as Loeb talked about having fun on his return to the WRC last week, he did work. And arriving in the principality for the post-event press conference not smelling of champagne is not a situation he's known since 2001, when he was driving a Citroen Saxo. Even then, he won the Super 1600 category, so probably found a bottle or two to spray. Even when he went off the road in 2006, such was the dominance and ferocity of his fightback to second, the Mumm flowed freely.



DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR

What did you expect? Now be honest – none of this wise-after-the-event stuff.

No, we didn't see it coming either. In all honesty, if Sebastien Loeb didn't know, how could any of us?

Regardless of the result, the story was a simple one: the return of the king. Sebastien Ogier is a big name and getting bigger, but Loeb's still the one. And, while last week might have been a rally, the Loeb star now shines brightly across two strands of world motorsport – widening the appeal further.

I hadn't seen him for a while and it was good to observe that, genuinely, nothing had changed. Still didn't shave once the rally was underway and still couldn't leave the hotel without the short, dark shock of an early morning espresso.

It might have been a while since he led a rally – day one of the 2013 Rally of France, to be precise – but it was like he'd been doing it all last season.

And when it went wrong, it was the same faces that gathered around him when he got back to service. Yves Matton, Xavier Mestelan-Pinon, his old engineer Didier Clement, they were all there, listening intently. And, as usual, laughing when it was all over. That was always the way with a Loeb retirement, such was their infrequency that there was always something or somebody around to lighten the moment.

Out on the stages, the 2015 Loeb looked a slightly different animal. As the sun came up and his advantage waned, he set about the stages in a fashion onlookers had rarely seen. The DS 3 WRC was dirtier than the cars around it, not just because it had been through the puddles faster and splashed harder, but because it looked to have used more of the road. The angles Loeb attacked were indicative of a man on a mission.

That aspect wasn't much like old times. Everything else was.

Talking to Loeb in the immediate aftermath of his departure from the fight at the front against arch-rival Sebastien Ogier, the frustration is as clear as it is understandable.

The Frenchmen were separated by 14 places on the road; when it was icy, Loeb had the edge as the grip levels improved by the car. But as the sun found those south-facing slopes, the ice melted and muddied the road.

"I could not expect anything from this rally," says Loeb. "The problem was that when you start at car 14, you don't know what can happen. You cannot plan because maybe the road will decide something else. And that's what happened today. It was impossible in my situation to do the best times. I was slower than [Sebastien] Chardonnet in the first part of the stage and pushing on the maximum on the same tyres. That's just how it is. I couldn't expect anything special. When I was leading I was trying and I saw the opportunity to do something, but I had to push very hard.

"I couldn't regret to come back and do this, we still had some driving to do and we enjoyed it."

And, as the dust settled, Ogier was quick to pay tribute. And a sincere tribute at that.

"What he did," says the Volkswagen driver, "to come back here and drive like this after some time away from the rally car, that's not normal. Don't think that's normal. That's Loeb."

Rival team principals were the same. Then again, Malcolm Wilson's always been a fan – right from the moment he watched Loeb test one of his factory Ford Focus RS WRCs in 2005.

"He's shown just what a special guy he is hasn't he?" says Wilson. "To come here and do what he did on the first stage was just incredible. And testament to his natural ability."

Despite being tormented by Loeb for years, the Cumbrian would still relish one more season fighting against him.

"I'd love to see him back," continues Wilson. "Imagine the story..."

Such is the fickle nature of the Monte, when



Loeb did come back last week, he knew more than most that he couldn't expect anything on his return. But, when he got a sniff, when his nose was in front again, it all came back to him. And he wanted it all over again.

Privately, those closest to him in the team had their eyes opened at just how hard the Alsace man was pushing. Ultimately, he was unlucky in the manner of his exit; running slightly wide on the exit of a slow right-hander, the Citroen's left-rear connected with a rock and imparted significant suspension and transmission damage.

Would the story have been different if he'd missed that rock? Who knows?

Will he be back again? Again, same answer.

If he's not, we'll certainly miss him. Again. The dry sense of humour has been missed. Talking on the eve of the event about having his buddy and co-driver Daniel Elena calling notes to him again, Loeb lowered his voice and smiled.

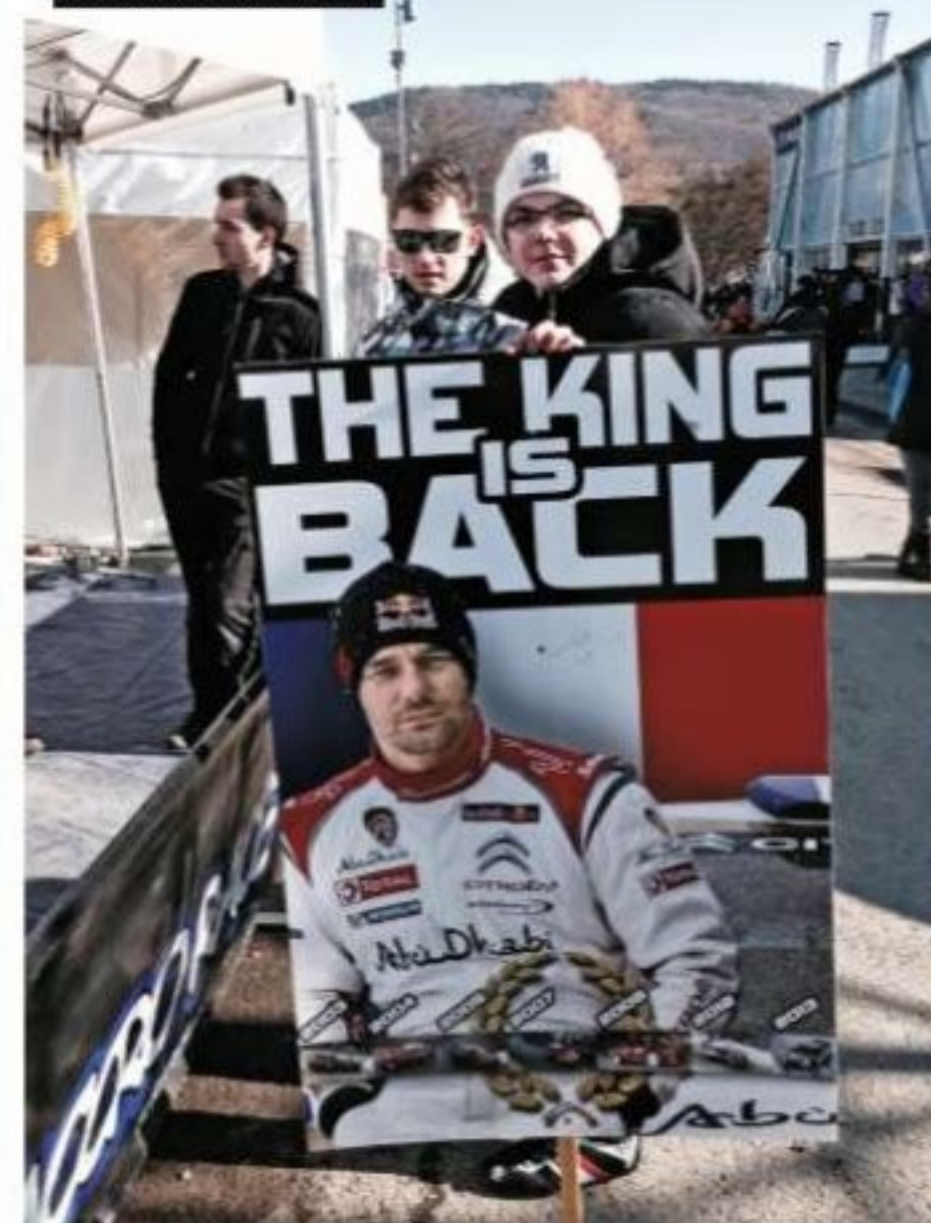
"I'm just glad he still fits in the car..."

The WRC has missed the pair of them. In and out of the car.

So, just for the record, Seb, will you be back?

"No," he says, this time with a grin. "I'm a racing driver now." ❧

Fan artwork captured
the Monte mood





“I will definitely miss racing, but you have to look at the bigger picture”

GP2 champion Jolyon Palmer will spend 2015 without a race seat after joining Lotus as its third driver, a deal that will give him mileage in the car. EDD STRAW finds out why

Edd Straw: Ideally you would have wanted an F1 race seat, but presumably you have known for a while that a third-driver role was the best-case scenario...

Jolyon Palmer: Exactly. It was pretty clear, especially when Caterham and Marussia folded late last year, it was going to be ambitious to get on the grid. All the opportunities were taken so it was about deciding to try to still push for F1 or to go elsewhere. Still, I wanted to push for F1 because there were some good opportunities and now the aim is to be on the grid for 2016. Lotus was the best opportunity that I could have.

ES: Lotus has guaranteed you mileage in the F1 car and there's the possibility of progression next year. Was that what swung it for you?

JP: Yes. The first thing is to have enough mileage in the car. Lotus have been very keen to have me on board and they have given me the best opportunity for mileage in the car and to work with the team. It's all about progression to 2016 and the most important thing is mileage.

ES: In terms of 2016, is there anything you can do that would guarantee you a drive, beyond finding \$20 million lying around?

JP: There's not but you never know. I have an opportunity so what I can do is do my best to be quick when I'm in the car but also to work well with the engineers, to provide the best feedback. There's going to be a big progression for Lotus this year with Mercedes engines, but it's going to be a bit harder work because it's new to everyone there. I've got to work my hardest in all areas to be desirable to the team for 2016.

ES: Do you know how long it will be before you get your hands on the car?

JP: Hopefully pre-season. I'm not expecting to



Palmer tested for Force India at the end of 2014

PALMER CV



- Name**
Jolyon Palmer
- Age:** 24
- 2014** GP2 champion for DAMS (4 wins)
- 2013** 7th in GP2 for Carlin (2 wins)
- 2012** 11th in GP2 for iSport (1 win)
- 2011** 28th in GP2 for Arden
- 2010** 2nd in Formula 2 (5 wins)
- 2009** 21st in Formula 2; 1 win in Formula Palmer Audi
- 2008** 3rd in Formula Palmer Audi (1 win)
- 2007** 10th Formula Palmer Audi (2 wins)
- 2006** 5th in T Cars
- 2005** Car racing debut in T Cars Autumn Trophy



Shaking on new deal with Lotus CEO Matthew Carter



GP2 title came with DAMS, in Palmer's fourth season

be in for the Jerez test, but hopefully I will be out at Barcelona at some point and then some Fridays from then on.

ES: How difficult is it to go from years of racing into a situation where you're focusing on something very different? It must feel like one step back to take two forward...

JP: Yes, it is exactly that. That was the toughest part of the decision because I think all drivers want to race. It's a privilege to be driving an F1 car and that's great, but I will definitely miss the racing side of it. And racing is one of my strengths. But you have to look at the bigger picture. It's a different year, but it's something I have to do and put the hard graft in to be a more complete driver after learning a lot.

ES: Is there any possibility of racing outside F1 to keep yourself sharp?

JP: I don't have anything directly in the pipeline, but it's something I would consider because I think it would be nice to keep myself sharp. Especially because, you never know, I could end up in the car at an F1 race [if a reserve is needed]. It's definitely something I would consider.

ES: How did the Lotus deal come about?

JP: We were speaking to Lotus a bit last year while leading GP2 and looking for a seat on the grid. I did the Force India test, which was a great experience and was talking to them about a

similar role. Then Lotus contacted us and they had a really good offer with good opportunities. It happened fairly quickly because they were very keen to have me on board and what they were offering was perfect for me as well.

ES: You've won the GP2 title and don't have a race seat – do you get frustrated with that situation?

JP: It was very frustrating. I knew after Davide Valsecchi and Fabio Leimer [the previous two GP2 champions] didn't move to F1 that it wasn't a given. What I set out to do last year was to dominate the whole championship, which was what they didn't. They were very strong, but won it in the last round and I thought I could show more strongly. The whole of last year couldn't have gone much better, leading from the start in a really competitive year. I thought that should be enough, given that GP2 is the main feeder series, and was hopeful it would be enough. But that's not the way it is at the moment. It was especially frustrating when there's people in F1 who I've beaten, but I have accepted it. I have to focus on my own future.

ES: How do you feel about the progression you've made as a driver? A lot is made of you being in your fourth GP2 season, but you did come to that level with less experience than others...

JP: I think I have progressed a lot. I agree with you because when I came into GP2,

I'd only raced in Formula Palmer Audi and F2 and was sporadically quick, but there was so much to learn. But I've progressed every year, learned from my mistakes and become a better driver. In 2012 and 2013 I had a bit of bad luck, so the results didn't show what I was capable of. It was obvious to stay in GP2 for 2014 and put it all together because I felt in '13 that already the potential was there.

ES: All of that progression means that this really was the perfect time to step into an F1 race seat?

JP: Yes. I think having four years in GP2 is not always a bad thing because the experience you gain is huge, the cars are really good and a similar pace to F1 and you work with Pirelli tyres. So I don't regret it as it's made me a better driver. Each year, I've progressed as a driver and this year I'm quite confident of doing a good job.

ES: With that progression, do you feel you have established yourself as a driver in your own right rather than as [former F1 driver] Jonathan's son?

JP: That's important, to have your own identity. It was important if I did get the chance in F1 in whatever role that I would have deserved it on merit rather than any other reason. I wanted to earn the right to be there and make a name for myself, which is what I'm pleased I did. ❧



TOYOTA RACING SERIES TERETONGA (NZ), JANUARY 24-25 RD 2/5

Stroll on top as Leitch wins finale

CANADIAN LANCE STROLL STRETCHED his lead in New Zealand's Toyota Racing Series by winning the second round at Teretonga.

The 16-year-old Ferrari protege showed bravery as well as speed in race one as he unusually passed other drivers on the outside of the Loop corner at the end of the main straight, a fast sweeper that turns through more than 180 degrees.

"A driver's got to do what he has to do," Stroll said. "I had to go for it and the car stayed on track so the risk was worth it."

Stroll actually crossed the line third in that race, after qualifying eighth, but was elevated to victory

when the first two finishers – Indian Arjun Maini and Frenchman Brandon Maisano – were penalised for restart infringements.

Kiwi James Munro and Austrian Stefan Riener were raised to second and third respectively.

Scot Sam MacLeod was eliminated after tangling with Riener at Turn 1. "I was ahead but he wouldn't cede the corner," MacLeod said.

Local rookie Jamie Conroy started race two from pole in a partly reversed grid and led all the way in only his second wings-and-slicks meeting, staying clear of Russian GP2 driver Artem Markelov. Stroll was third. "I was getting a good drive

off the final corner so I was able to get clear and drive off," said Conroy.

Another local driver, Brendon Leitch, had qualified fastest for the final, the Spirit of a Nation Cup. He also led all the way, despite pressure from American Formula 3 racer Santino Ferrucci, to complete a fine day for the Kiwi drivers.

The 19-year-old Leitch said he just "relaxed and concentrated on getting everything right".

MacLeod ran third but later was overtaken by Stroll and Maini as his tyres faded.

Northern Irish driver Charlie Eastwood qualified sixth and seventh in the two sessions but his race

results were 14th, 12th and 10th. English karting graduate Callum Ilott had another difficult weekend with race results of 15th, 14th and DNF.

● Bernard Carpinter

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Lance Stroll, 15 laps in 16m59.936s; 2 James Munro, +0.818s; 3 Stefan Riener; 4 Brendon Leitch; 5 Artem Markelov; 6 Jamie Conroy. **Race 2 1 Conroy**, 15 laps in 15m07.767s; 2 Markelov, +0.891s; 3 Stroll; 4 Munro; 5 B Leitch; 6 Ferdinand Habsburg. **Race 3 1 B Leitch**, 20 laps in 18m07.109s; 2 Santino Ferrucci, +1.763s; 3 Stroll; 4 Arjun Maini; 5 Sam MacLeod; 6 Brandon Maisano. **Points 1 Stroll, 399**; 2 Maini, 311; 3 B Leitch, 247; 4 Munro, 244; 5 Tom Randle, 237; 6 Conroy, 234.

99

CONTINENTAL TIRE GT

Matt Plumb won the Daytona 24 Hours supporter by seven seconds from Scot Robin Liddell's Chevrolet Camaro, after taking over from brother Hugh in their Porsche 911. Mike McGovern, sharing a Ford Mustang with Jim Click, was in the hunt before running low on fuel shortly after being passed for the lead. Polesitter Scott Maxwell led early on but radio problems meant he failed to pit at the right moment under the safety car and dropped back, recovering to fifth after Billy Johnson took over.

NZ V8 TOURING CARS

Australian veteran Jason Bargwanna established a 149-point lead when long-time rival Nick Ross had to retire his Nissan Altima in the final race at Teretonga. Bargwanna won two heats in his Toyota Camry, and Ross the other after a good battle with the Aussie.

NEW ZEALAND FF1600

Taylor Cockerton won all three races at Teretonga, only pressured for a time in the final race by 14-year-old Caleb Cross.

MRF CHALLENGE IRUNGATTUKOTTAI (IND), JANUARY 24-25 RD 3/3

Sowery brings trophies back from India

BRITISH TEENAGER TOBY SOWERY claimed the MRF Challenge title in the second of four races in Chennai.

GP3 racers Sebastian Balthasar and Ryan Cullen claimed the fastest two qualifying times, but a chain-reaction shunt at the start forced this duo plus Oscar King out of contention. Sowery was promoted to the lead and held on to win, fending off a challenge from local hero Tarun

Reddy and Brazilian Gustavo Myasava when drizzle fell late on.

Sowery doubled up from a starting position of sixth in the reversed-grid race two, charging through to take the lead when Raj Bharath went off on lap three. With Sowery's closest title rival Cullen in fifth, the title was decided.

Cullen got a consolation when he won the third race, with Sowery

close in his mirrors throughout.

The reversed-grid finale provided a great battle, with King pulling off a superb outside double-pass on Myasava and race leader Matt Solomon to win. Of the other Brits, Jordan Albert took a best of fourth on his MRF debut, while Laura Tillett had two eighths – and a roll in race two after a tangle with Freddie Hunt.

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Toby Sowery, 15 laps in 28m46.640s; 2 Tarun Reddy, +0.513s; 3 Gustavo Myasava; 4 Jordan Albert; 5 Raj Bharath; 6 Vinicius Paparelli. **Race 2 1 Sowery**, 15 laps in 24m00.595s; 2 Myasava, +3.457s; 3 Oscar King; 4 Reddy; 5 Ryan Cullen; 6 Bharath. **Race 3 1 Cullen**, 15 laps in 24m08.570s; 2 Sowery, +0.773s; 3 King; 4 Bharath; 5 Myasava; 6 Matthew Solomon. **Race 4 1 King**, 15 laps in 24m15.066s; 2 Solomon, +2.976s; 3 Myasava; 4 Cullen; 5 Sowery; 6 Albert. **Points 1 Sowery, 221**; 2 Cullen, 174; 3 Bharath, 148; 4 Kyle Mitchell, 112; 5 Reddy, 87; 6 Mathias Lauda, 71.



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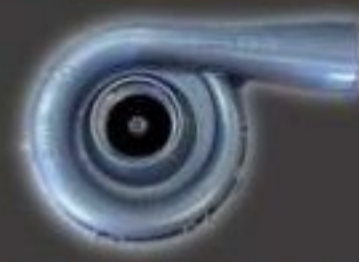


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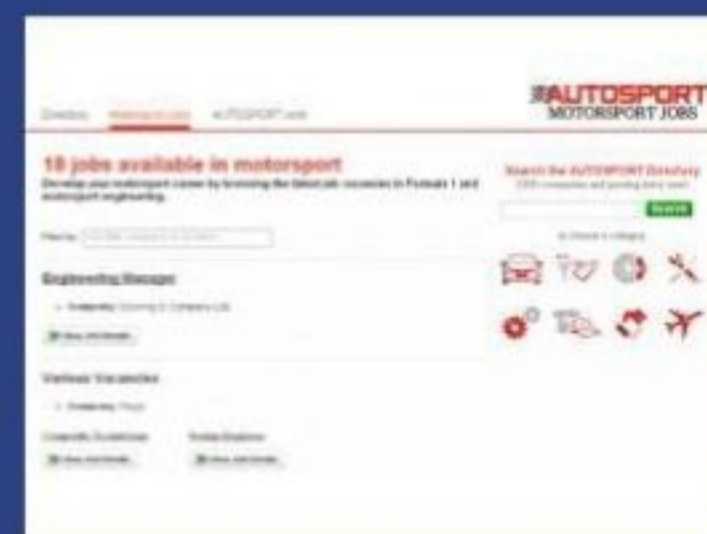
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Carroll shared
FF Corse Ferrari
in British GT in '14

EBREY/LAT

Carroll's British GT title attack

Ex-A1GP ace lands full-time FF Corse Ferrari seat after 2014 outings

ADAM CARROLL WILL EMBARK on his first full season in the British GT Championship in 2015 after extending his deal to partner Gary Eastwood at FF Corse.

The former A1GP champion partnered Eastwood for five races in 2014 behind the wheel of the team's Ferrari 458 Italia GT3, replacing Rob Barff and securing podium finishes at Snetterton and Spa-Francorchamps.

Those results helped Eastwood to sixth in the championship, but the 55-year-old has his sights set on winning the title alongside Carroll this year.

"Adam, FF Corse and I come into this season with the belief we can lift the title," said Eastwood.

"There's a very strong line-up of teams, which will make for tough competition, but that's what British GT is all about – it's not

for the faint-hearted. We're in it to win."

Factory Aston Martin Racing driver Jonny Adam echoed Eastwood's views on the strength of the 2015 field, after he and 2013 British GT champion Andrew Howard confirmed they would return in the Beechdean Vantage V12 GT3.

"Looking at the way this year's entry is shaping up, I think this will be the most difficult year ever for us in British GT," he said. "Every year the competition ramps up, but this year we've got several Blancpain-standard teams confirmed."

MACLEOD SET FOR DEBUT

Ex-British Formula Ford champion Callum MacLeod will make his British GT debut this season as he hopes to forge a career in GTs.

The former McLaren

AUTOSPORT BRDC Award finalist hasn't raced regularly since his single-seater career ground to a halt following a part-season of GP3 in 2011, but he will now share a Team Parker-run Audi R8 LMS with Ian Loggie.

"So far, we're planning to do the Paul Ricard International GT Open round and Silverstone British GT this year," said MacLeod. "Then we hope to do the Pro-Am class in the Blancpain Endurance Series in 2016 with a third driver."

MacLeod has coached Loggie in recent years, the duo sharing a car in the Radical European Masters races at Silverstone last August.

SERIES' DAYTONA 24H LINK

Drivers competing in the GT3 class will be eligible to win the Sunoco Whelen Challenge prize drive in the 2016 Daytona 24 Hours.

British GT originally counted towards the Challenge rankings when it was inaugurated ahead of the 2009 running of the American endurance classic, but dropped out when Sunoco was replaced by WP Group as fuel supplier for 2012.

Sunoco will again be the fuel supplier this year, leading to the championship's reinstatement. British GT frontrunner Phil Keen won the 2014 prize after clinching the Radical SR3 Challenge title.

SCOTT MITCHELL
FEATURES
EDITOR

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I'VE NEVER PARAPHRASED

Voltaire before, but it's appropriate here. For while I don't believe it's correct for people who live near race tracks to complain about the noise, they have every right to do so.

Along those lines, I can accept the go-to argument of 'if someone moves next to a race track they can't complain it's noisy' from motorsport fans. But I don't agree with it. It's not a train station or a main road, where you expect there to be noise a lot of the time. In most instances it's a small addition to often-rural (or at least sparsely-populated) locations and it's easy to understand – not agree with, understand – why locals balk at it being used too much.

All that is why I tentatively agree with the response the government has issued to a petition that has been doing the rounds since the end of last year. Forcing people to bite their tongue is the wrong approach, so I dislike the idea of forcing residents to sign away their right to complain. What, for example, would happen if – as Mallory Park did – a track hugely exceeded their agreed limit?

For the record, I do think it is unfair that some circuits have to operate within draconian conditions. But that is the hand that has been dealt and circuits have found a way to make them work, for the most part anyway.

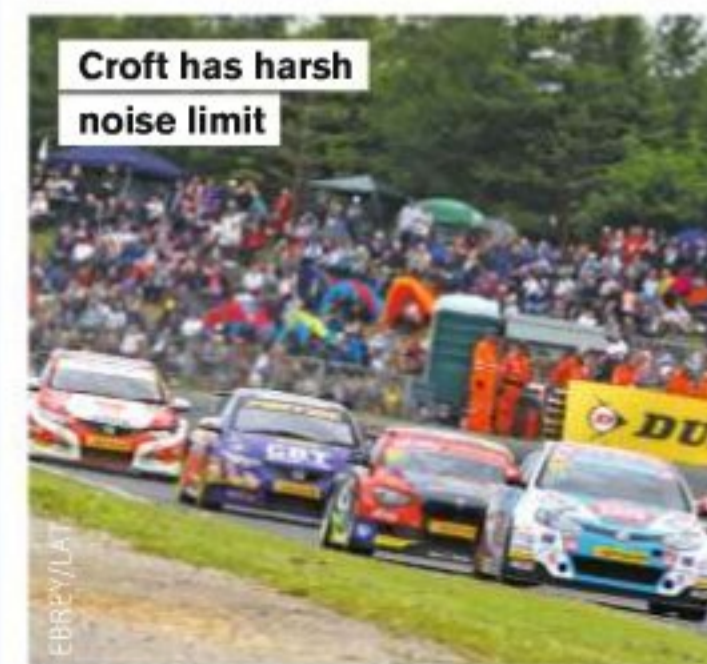
Compromise is key wherever the community is involved with racing, because irate residents have caused enough aggravation and damage to British motorsport already.

Why people can think that it would be wise to add more tension to the relationship by attempting to enforce silence on one side is beyond me.



MacLeod will
race TPR
Audi R8

EBREY



Croft has harsh
noise limit

EBREY

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Pirelli will supply tyres to BRDC F4 from this year

BRDC Formula 4

ART GP3 test part of BRDC F4 prize boost

THE 2015 BRDC FORMULA 4 champion will receive a GP3 test drive with leading team ART and a potential financial prize of more than £70,000. Series organiser MotorSport Vision announced a deal earlier this month with Formula 1 tyre provider Pirelli, which also supplies the GP2 and GP3 feeder categories. The Italian company has played a key role in bolstering the prize package.

In addition to the championship's £35,000 prize for winning the title and the post-season Abu Dhabi test with ART, which has run Lewis Hamilton, Nico Rosberg and Valtteri Bottas to titles in GP2 and GP3, Pirelli will provide €50,000 towards the champion if they choose to graduate to GP3. BRDC F4 founder Jonathan Palmer said: "We've got a situation with Pirelli

that is fantastic. We've got the best tyre technically, one that's competitively priced and, in terms of its characteristics, filters on to the top level of motorsport. "They were quick to contribute to the prize pot and recognised it was critical to a driver's progression. Most of these guys don't have huge budgets at their disposal. We want BRDC F4 to provide the best value and the best level playing field."

The champion could also claim the championship's Jack Cavill Pole Position Cup and David Poole-Warren Team Pole Position Cup, the prize funds for which amount to another £5400, and if British will join the BRDC SuperStar ranks. Last year's F4 champion George Russell starred on his prize GP3 test run with Arden Motorsport, and also won the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award.

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MSA Formula

Collard switches to Arden for MSA Formula campaign

BRITISH FORMULA FORD DRIVER Ricky Collard will join single-seater powerhouse Arden Motorsport for this year's inaugural MSA Formula season. After finishing seventh in Formula Ford in 2014 with five podium finishes, the 18-year-old moves across from Falcon Motorsport to join karting graduates Enaam Ahmed and Sandy Mitchell in the three-car Arden stable.

package, so has invaluable track and Mygale-Ford knowledge." ● Double R Racing has confirmed MRF Challenge race winner Tarun Reddy as its first MSA Formula signing. The 17-year-old Indian raced for MGR in Formula Renault BARC last year.

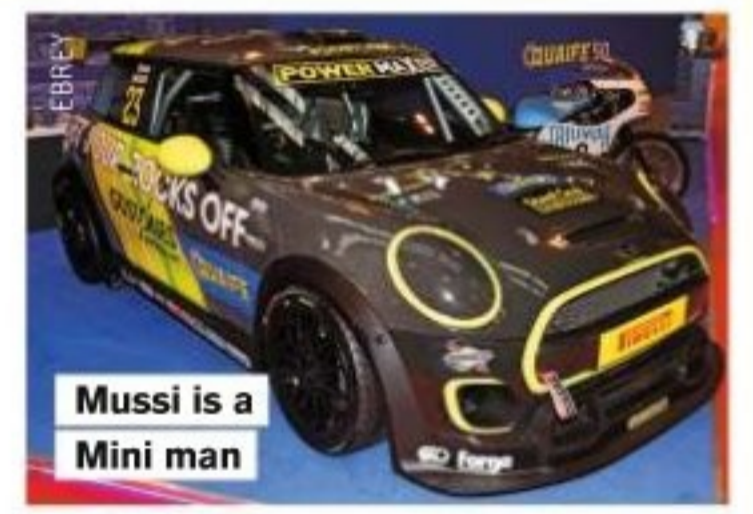


Collard scored FFord podiums

"I'm buzzing to get going again and really get stuck into the championship, which looks to have the best junior talent in the country this year," said Collard, son of British Touring Car stalwart Rob. Arden team principal Garry Horner added: "Ricky already has a year's experience racing on the BTCC

Mini Challenge

Mussi set for full-time racing comeback in Mini Challenge



Mussi is a Mini man

FORMER GINETTA AND SEAT Cupra racer Fulvio Mussi is close to a deal to return to full-time competition in the Mini Challenge this season. The 28-year-old is set to compete in the series' JCW class with an as-yet-undecided team after track-day organiser GD Stones, for which Mussi instructs, purchased a new F56-generation Mini. Mussi, whose last full championship campaign was in the Ginetta G50 Supercup in 2009, tested the car at

Brands Hatch late last year. "I was very impressed with the F56," said Mussi. "It's got a lot of presence on track and great power, plus a load of mechanical grip. "It's been a frustrating few years but I've concentrated on coaching and I was working on a GT deal, but I miss the door-to-door style of sprint racing. "The deal is almost there; we just have a few loose ends to tie up with some sponsors," added the 2007 SEAT Cupra Cup runner-up.

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UK Racing

UK government will not act to silence noise complaints

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DOES not plan to act on a petition aiming to stop noise complaints from residents local to UK race circuits.

Launched late last year, the petition requests the introduction of a mandatory waiver blocking "anyone who wishes to buy or rent a property" near to an existing circuit from complaining about noise.

It has amassed more than 38,000 signatories since, prompting a response from the Department for Environment,

Food and Rural Affairs, which said existing planning guidance and safeguards specific to motorsport venues meant formal legislation was not required.

Circuit owners are responsible for arranging and adhering to an agreement with its local authority to ensure it operates as a "responsible user" of the land it is built on, the response adding that legislation would impinge residential rights and worsen the relationship between circuits and the local community.

"Removing the rights of incomers to protect themselves against nuisances would discriminate against them and probably intensify the enquiries made by prospective residents, making transactions more complicated and expensive," it said.

The petition remains online, and will be considered for discussion if it reaches 100,000 signatures.



Croft has been involved in noise disputes in the past

GTs

Fielding to make GT switch

McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC

Award finalist Sennan Fielding is poised for a switch to GT racing this season.

The BRDC Formula 4 race winner has tested two-litre Formula Renaults since the end of last season but is seeking a change of discipline due to budget concerns.

Fielding, 18, has been in discussions with Lamborghini Super Trofeo team boss Vincenzo Sospiri, who ran him in a part-programme of Italian F4 races, but is

also evaluating a British GT campaign.

"I've got to get involved with a manufacturer ultimately," said Fielding. "It's not going to be easy but GT is the most sensible option. There's a lot of money in single-seaters, even down to junior levels. I'm still getting offers but the budget just to make the next step is quite significant.

"I'd love to carry on along that route but I've got to be realistic. I could do another year but then not be racing in 2016 at all."



Fielding made GT5 debut in 2014

Ginetta GT4 Supercup

Jackson joins Supercup grid

BRITISH TOURING CAR REGULAR

Ollie Jackson has confirmed a switch to the Ginetta GT4 Supercup this season.

Jackson will race in the TOCA support series with an as-yet-undecided team following three seasons of full-time BTCC competition, in which his best results were a trio of eighth-place finishes in 2012.

The 30-year-old has made the switch following a points-free campaign behind the wheel of a Welch Motorsport-run Proton Persona last year, and is expecting stiff competition in the GT4 Supercup.

"It would be nice to find myself towards the front of the field and take home a

selection of silverware," said Jackson, who raced in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB for Motorbase in 2009-10.

"But there will undoubtedly be a field of very strong drivers, often with a lot of experience in the G55, so I'm realistic about what I can achieve in year one."



Jackson is BTCC refugee

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club racing



Pye wants F5000 to be worldwide again

How about a world series for thundering F5000s?

Europe's winter break provides a welcome opportunity for competitors to regroup, but sensational racing action can still be found elsewhere. While my racing heart beats faster every time I think of New Zealand – where period ace Ken Smith is still weaving his magic in Formula 5000 as an historic class – anticipation is also growing for upcoming events in South Africa, the US and Australia.

Having first visited NZ in 1990-91 for the six-week Formula Atlantic-headlined Peter Jackson tour, my third pilgrimage in 2010 took me to the opening of the Hampton Downs facility, between Auckland and Hamilton. Although the undulating circuit is brilliant, a favourite with racers and spectators, finance has never been its strong suit. Five years on, the proposed extension – which it doesn't need – has not been built.

There are more F5000 cars per acre on the twin islands than anywhere else on the planet, which makes NZ nirvana for those who adore the V8s' roar. Fanatical owners bring their examples from far and wide, just as their predecessors did to the Tasman Cup rounds when the cars were new.

It is 45 years since F5000 debuted in Britain and 43 since I witnessed my first race for it, the Rothmans European Championship finale at Brands Hatch in September 1971. That Brian Redman, one of my ultimate heroes, won in Sid Taylor's Castrol McLaren M18 doubtless emboldens the memory, but Aussie Frank Gardner – the champion – chased the Lancastrian relentlessly in the prototype Lola T300.

These bolides could not have been more different, the McLaren rendered almost antediluvian by the

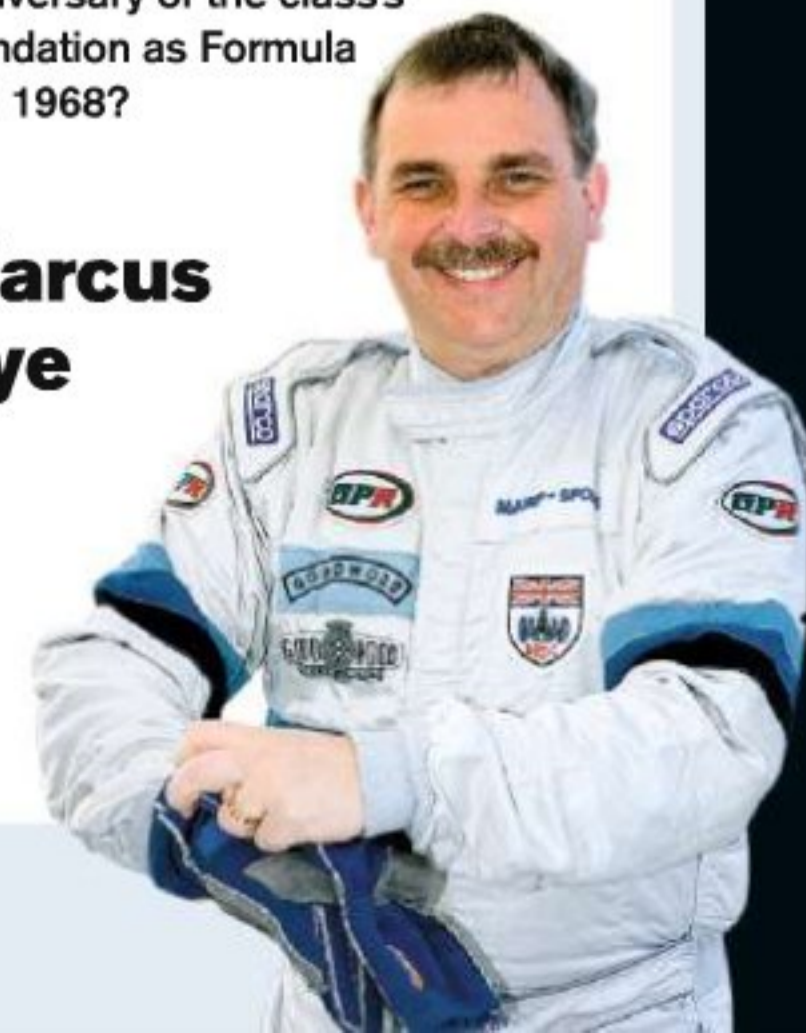
futuristic and frankly dangerous-looking Lola, essentially a somewhat flimsy T240 F2 monocoque with a small-block Chevrolet nailed to its stern.

Older McLarens, a Surtees trio, Trevor Taylor's Leda, Max Reinhardt's ancient Kincraft on its F5000 debut, Terry Sanger's vast Harrier and Fred Saunders's Rover-powered Crossle completed the 16-car pack.

"NZ is nirvana for those who adore the V8 roar of the Formula 5000s"

Fields averaged 23 cars over this month's Gulf Oil Howden Ganley F5000 Festivals and the presentation of the cars, with greater reliability courtesy of after-market aluminium cylinder heads, is sensational. How about an eight-event World Tour – with two meetings at different circuits on successive weekends spanning NZ (January), Australia (March), GB (July) and the US (September) in 2018, the 50th anniversary of the class's foundation as Formula A in 1968?

Marcus Pye



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Caroline has gained Pirtek support for the 2015 season



In brief

Formula 5000 demo

Hampton Downs' Gulf Oil Howden Ganley Festival hosted a five-man demonstration last weekend. Kiwis Graeme Lawrence (Lola T332) and Dexter Dunlop (McRae GM1) were joined by Australians Warwick Brown ('77 Australian GP-winning VDS Lola T430 HU2), Bruce Allison (T332) and Belgium's Teddy Pilette (T430 - pictured above). Nick Gethin joined them in his late father Peter's Chevron B24.

Caygill joins TT grid

Josh Caygill will contest the new-for-2015 Audi Sport TT Cup on the DTM support bill. The 25-year-old will be the sole Brit on a grid that includes such stars as ex-Spyker Formula 1 driver Markus Winkelhock and triple Le Mans 24 Hours winner Marco Werner.

Free Classic testing

The Silverstone Classic is offering its entrants a free day of testing on the Grand Prix circuit during its media preview day on Wednesday 15 April as part of its 25th anniversary celebrations. Slots will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

MG Trophy eyes boost

The MG Trophy Championship is confident of boosted entries for the second season of its Class D concept, catering for road-going versions of the ZR160 model, after four cars turned out last year. "We should start this year with at least six and then push for double figures," said coordinator Pete Macwaters.

CORRECTION

750 Motor Club Bike Sports racer Richard Wise will race a Class A Spire powered by a 1400cc Hyabusa engine this year, not a 1585cc engine as reported last week. 750MC Bikesports regulations cap engine capacity at 1500cc. We sincerely apologise for the error.

Ginetta Junior

Caroline back in Ginetta Juniors

GINETTA JUNIOR WINTER SERIES champion Jamie Caroline will return to the main championship in 2015 with the backing of Pirtek and former British Touring Car champion Andrew Jordan, as part of a capacity grid.

Having taken two wins for Total Control Racing en route to sixth in the points in his maiden Ginetta Junior campaign last year, Caroline switched

to the front-running HHC Motorsport outfit for the Winter Series and took a clean sweep of race victories.

The 15-year-old will now contest a second full season in the category, in a Pirtek-liveried Ginetta G50 run by the Yorkshire-based team.

"Pirtek wants someone new who they can bring into the fold and help progress for the future," said Jordan, a long-time

beneficiary of Pirtek's support. "I think Jamie's probably the favourite as he dominated the Winter Series.

Caroline will be part of a capacity field for the new season, Ginetta announcing that the maximum amount of 26 entries has now been reached.

The series says it will examine the possibility of increasing grid sizes in response to its ongoing popularity.



F5000

Rout secures Smith's title

KIWI KEN SMITH (LOLA T332) earned the inaugural Formula 5000 World Series title at Hampton Downs on Sunday when he completed a six-race rout over the twin-legged Gulf Oils Howden Ganley Festival.

Smith, who is in his 47th successive season of racing, defeated Steve Ross (McRae GM1) and Australian Paul Zazryn (T332) in the

overall standings to secure the title.

He qualified on pole but unlike the previous weekend, was briefly led by Clark Proctor (March 73A) in Saturday's race.

He and Ross bagged a second and a third apiece in the heats, the latter finishing runner-up in the final from which his rival retired with clutch problems.

Circuit of Wales

Public inquiry for Welsh track

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE planned £300m Circuit of Wales facility has been delayed again after a public inquiry was called.

Last autumn the Heads of the Valleys Development Company, which is overseeing the project, made an application to deregister 600 acres of common land at Rassau in Blaenau Gwent, where the circuit would be built.

But the Welsh Planning Inspectorate has now opted to call an eight-day public inquiry, to start on March 10, to hear evidence over the development's use and environmental impact.

A statement from the HotVDC said it supported the inquiry, insisting this would be "the final hurdle" in the process and claimed work would begin on the site swiftly if it produces a positive outcome.

New series had slow start



Ford Puma Cup

Puma series gets standalone Mallory race

THE DUNLOP-BACKED FORD Puma Cup will continue on the Classic Sports Car Club bill this season, and organisers have arranged for it to have a standalone race at Mallory Park.

The category was introduced last season by former production Porsche

racer Alex Eacock to provide an entry-level series for self-built cars, but struggled with numbers as part of the CSCC's own Tin Tops grid.

It picked up later in the year and Eacock hopes the Mallory event on August 1-2 event will spark its own grid in

2016, with 20 cars currently being built.

"We had a slower start than I'd hoped for but now we're about where I thought we'd be," he said. "We should be able to start with 10 cars. I'm hoping Mallory will be the watershed moment. If we can have 18 or 19 cars ready I'll be chuffed."



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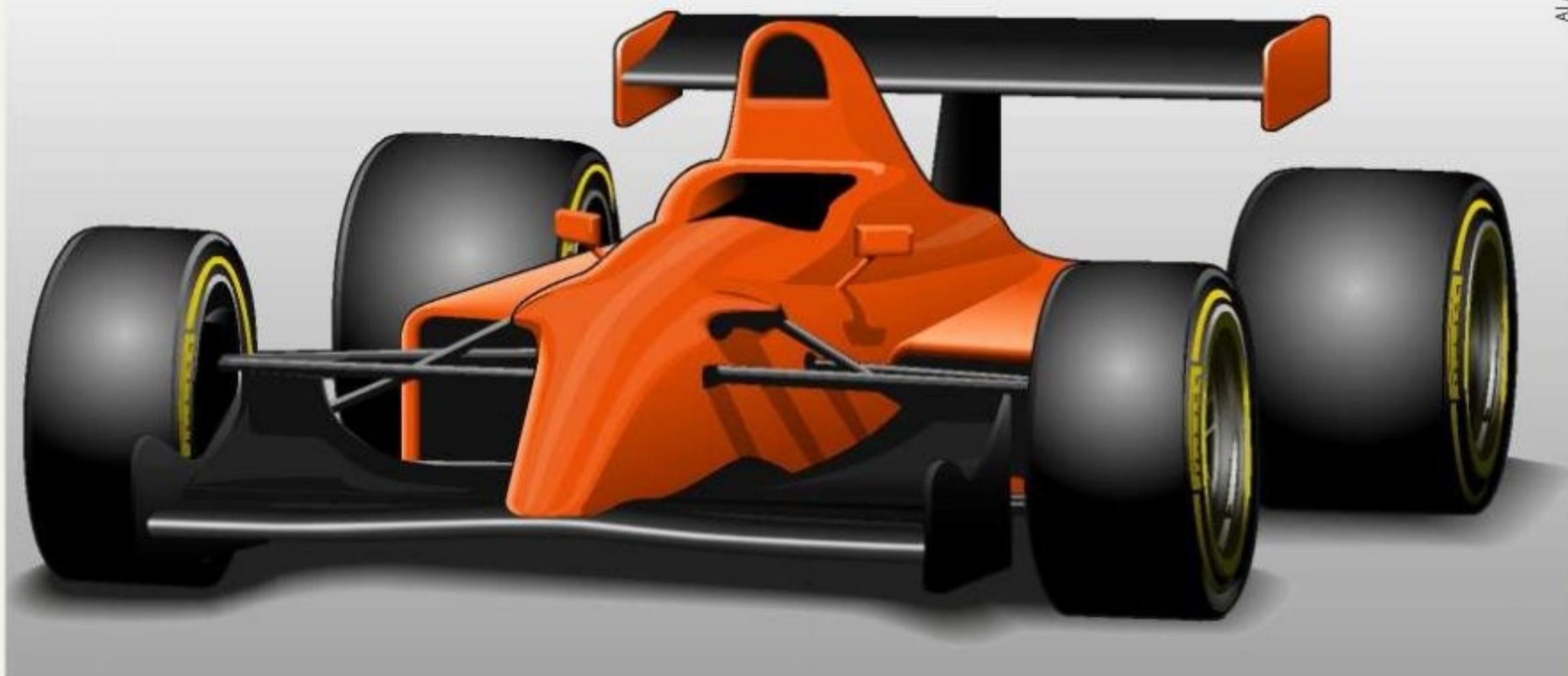
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THIS WEEK

LETTERS • ON TRACK • TV PICKS • FROM THE WEB • AUTOSPORT.COM

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week

Big tyres, less aero, more power – a winning combo



ALAN ELDRIDGE

Get back to 'beast mode'

I just love Alan Eldridge's stunning artwork of a possible future Formula 1 car (January 22, p27). That's what proper, aggressive F1/Indycars should look like.

We IndyCar fans are longing for a return to 'beast mode', something like those firebreathing Lola-Buicks of Jim Crawford and Scott Brayton would do nicely! I'm desperate to see what the new bodykits will bring; will they look half as good as that gorgeous IL-15 Indy Lights Dallara, and just how

will they affect the racing?

We have endured those dreadful-looking narrow-tracked contraptions in F1 for almost 20 years – no mercy, please! Get it back to its spectacular basics: low-downforce, wide-tracked, low-nosed cars with mountains of horsepower. Cars for heroes to race, not schoolchildren.

Could we also find a way to chop those stupid dorsal fins off the LMP cars without them flying off the track as well?

Peter Kerr, Hamilton, South Lanarkshire

I have mixed views about the revamp of the BRC. Celebrated as a big step forward, it draws attention to the bizarre decision not to have a BRC in 2015. Can you imagine the FA deciding not to run the Premiership for a year?

I attended the BRC prizegiving at AUTOSPORT International, along with about 30-40 others at the Pirelli stand, and cheered Daniel McKenna and Arthur Kierans.

But, had he won, I would equally have cheered Osian Pryce, for this was a battle for the ages, not unlike McRae/Brookes of old, albeit in dull cars. Flat-out all year, with gaps as tight as at the top of the WRC. Either of them would have made worthy winners.

And a word for Dean Raftery too, following in Billy Coleman's steps, as is McKenna.

And that's my problem. Following in the steps. I got to look at that magnificent trophy. There, engraved, is Roger Clark's name, and Mikkola, Vatanen, Coleman, Brookes. The championship we all grew up on, with the best in the world competing.

It has a rich heritage that simply cannot be ignored, and is certainly incompatible with the ceremony staged at ASI.

Hats off to Pirelli, who have supported more talent than just about anyone, but why did it fall to them to be the hosts, rather than the MSA?

While I wish the new BRC well, will it be appreciated that my unease has nothing

to do with nostalgia but everything to do with respect? To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, if this is the way the MSA treats its champions, it doesn't deserve to have any.

Damian Crawford
Letterkenny, Co Donegal

Question: has Ferrari lost its special something? Answer: yes.

They bring very little to the party, not even a large Tifosi turn-out in Italy anymore. Their 'special status' is a joke, even Bernie struggles to justify it.

All the teams should have a say. The sooner the EU commission sorts it out, the better.

Richard Hargrave
By email

BIG NUMBER

13 Number of nationalities in the Toyota Racing Series: New Zealand (4); UK (3); Russia, Austria (2 each); Mexico, Armenia, USA, Denmark, Canada, France, India (Arjun Maini, right), Italy, Australia.



MILESTONE

10 Although Jean-Philippe Dayraut recently broke Yvan Muller's record for Andros Trophy race victories, he only has five titles to the ex-BTCC ace's 10.



WHAT'S ON TRACK



SuperTourers have first round of 2015 in New Zealand

EUAN CAMERON

TOYOTA RACING SERIES

Rd 3/5
Hampton Downs, New Zealand
January 31-February 1
toyota.co.nz

NEW ZEALAND SUPERTOURERS

Rd 4/7
Hampton Downs, New Zealand
January 31-February 1
v8st.co.nz



Andros action in France

B. BAUDE

ANDROS TROPHY

Rd 6/6
Super Besse, France
January 31
tropheeandros.com

2014 CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS

Many thanks to all those of you who sweated over the festive period in an effort to unlock the mysteries of the annual AUTOSPORT Christmas Quiz. Here are the answers to the 60 teasers

A 2014 and all that

- How many teams ran more than two drivers during the GP2 season? **8** (Hilmer, Rapax, Arden, Caterham, MP, Trident, Venezuela GP Lazarus, Campos)
- Other than Takuma Sato, who else raced for AJ Foyt's team in IndyCar? **Martin Plowman**
- How many European drivers scored points in the top class of Japanese Super GT? **9**
- Name all the WTCC polesitters who didn't win a race. **Tom Coronel and Hugo Valente. Tiago Monteiro also accepted, although Slovakia race two was cancelled**
- Which World Rally Championship event had the highest number of different leaders? **Rally Italy (5)**
- What was Briton Gary Paffett's highest position in a DTM race? **Eighth, Oschersleben**
- Who was the highest-scoring British driver in the World Endurance Championship's GTE Am-class points table? **Johnny Mowlem**
- Among the NASCAR Sprint Cup scorers, who racked up the fewest points? **Clay Rogers**
- How many times did a Nissan driver start a V8 Supercar race from pole? **Once (James Moffat)**
- What was the combined final points tally of the seven former champions racing in the BTCC? **2013**

- M Franchitti, J Herbert, O Jarvis, S Kane, A McNish, J Rossiter, G Smith, S Soper, A Wallace, J Weaver (British ALMS race winners)
- 23, 22, 20, 4, 41, 11, 1, 3, 7, 7, 1, 17, 36, 7, 7, 26** (Car numbers of Le Mans-winning Porsches)
 - K Burt, T Harvey, R Huff, A Priaulx, S Soper, T Walkinshaw** (British Macau Guia race winners)
 - R Petty, D Pearson, J Gordon, B Allison, D Waltrip, C Yarborough, D Earnhardt, J Johnson, R Wallace, L Petty** (Top-10 all-time NASCAR race winners)
 - Schkee, Lola, Spyder, Prophet, CAC, Frisbee, March, VDS, Ensign, Porsche** (Chassis that won races in the second-era Can-Am Championship)
 - G de Ferran, C Fittipaldi, M Gugelmin, B Junqueira, T Marques, R Moreno, A Pizzonia, R Rosset, Ricardo Sperafico, Rodrigo Sperafico, R Zonta** (Brazilian FIA F3000 race winners)
 - P-G Andersson, X Pons, J Ketomaa, J Hanninen, P Sandell, A Mikkelsen, M Prokop, B Sousa, O Tanak, C Breen, H Paddon** (winners in SWRC 2010-2012)
 - L Chinetti, Lord Selsdon, J-F Gonzalez, M Trintignant, O Gendebien, P Hill, P Frere, L Bandini, L Scarfiotti, J Guichet, N Vaccarella, M Gregory, J Rindt** (Ferrari's Le Mans 24 Hours winners)

C Where in the world?

- Shah Alam, Malaysia
- Nivelles, Belgium
- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Zhuohai, China
- Albi, France
- Norisring, Germany
- Crystal Palace, England
- Pescara, Italy
- Mugello, Italy
- Pukekohe, New Zealand



Pescara was longest track to host an F1 GP, in 1957

D Winners' gallery

- Timmy Hansen
- Markus Pommer
- Mehdi Bennani
- Scott McLaughlin
- Roman Rusinov
- Osian Pryce
- Laurens Vanthoor
- Sergey Sirotkin
- Stephane Richelmi
- Nelson Panciatici



Monegasque Stephane Richelmi was a GP2 winner

E Who, what, where, when?

- John Taylor, Brabham BT11, French GP, 1966
- Jo Bonnier/Phil Hill, Chaparral 2D, Sebring, 1966
- H Linge/J Williams, Porsche 908, Le Mans, 1970
- Andrea de Adamich, McLaren M7D, French GP, 1970
- Derek Bell/David Preece, Aston V8, Silverstone, 1979
- J Palmer/D Wilson, Ford C100, Brands Hatch 1982
- Schroeder/Wollek/Haywood/Maassen, Lola, Daytona 24hrs, 2001
- C McRae/D Ringer, Peugeot 309, Cumbria Rally, 1988
- Eddie Keizan, Tyrrell 004, South African GP, 1973
- C Craft/T Taylor, McLaren M8C, Brands Hatch, 1970

F Forgotten F1 folk

- Vic Wilson
- Corrado Fabi
- Ingo Hoffmann
- Peter Ashdown
- Harry Schell
- Teddy Pilette
- Siegfried Stohr
- Shinji Nakano
- Henry Taylor
- Paolo Barilla



Vic Wilson. Not, as some thought, Bob Bondurant

B Missing link

- T Brooks, J Laffite, R Patrese, J Rindt, R Schumacher, J Surtees, G Villeneuve (Six GP wins)
- A Aho, M Anttila, S Harjanne, I Kivimaki, J Lehtinen, K Lindstrom, R Mannisenmaki, M Markkula, R Pietilainen, J Piironen, T Rautiainen, J Repo, M Tiukkanen (Finnish WRC-winning co-drivers)
- T Chilton, J Cocker, A Davidson, P Drayson,

SILVERSTONE

Experience is everything



1ST WINNER
Receiving two three-day passes to the 2015 British Grand Prix at Silverstone
Congratulations to Phillip Edwards of Staines, Middlesex, who produced a perfect score, with good detail to boot!

RUNNERS-UP
Receiving 2014 Le Mans, BTCC and WRC DVDs
Well done to Peter Howarth, Michael Regan, Glen Smith, Tom Taylor, David Thomas and Hedley Thomas.

FROM THE SOFA

WHAT'S ON TELEVISION

Q&A

JACK NICHOLLS

FORMULA E AND BBC 5 LIVE F1 COMMENTATOR

@Jack_Nicholls

AUTOSPORT: Are you surprised you went from commentating on Mazda MX5s to F1 and FE in about four years?

Jack Nicholls: I gave myself a timeframe of 'by the time I'm 40, I'd like to be doing F1'. That was the goal. And then I was there at 23... so it was all a bit bizarre. There are probably a million people who want to be an F1 commentator, but they don't go, 'OK, I'd better start with Mazda MX5s' in the way that if you want to be a Premier League commentator, you start by getting experience in the Conference. I think that has helped me.

AS: How have your some of your commentary peers responded to your rapid rise?

JN: Some have been amazing, Ben Edwards in particular has been incredible. I took over FIA GTs when he started doing F1 simply because he said 'try this guy'. But there are others who naturally get ruffled feathers because they've been doing it however many years and then I come along and do jobs they wanted to do. You have to remember that you're getting the stick because you're doing all right.

AS: Have you ever felt out of your depth?

JN: I've never felt out of my depth at the time – I've looked back and realised I was out of my depth. I was



"I love shouting at cars, especially when they're really close to me"

called up a week before my first-ever Blancpain Endurance event for instance, and I hadn't come from a GT background particularly. As a fan, single-seaters were my knowledge base. But you can only learn so much from studying things. There's nothing to match actually being involved for so many years, and that can be my downfall – with my age I haven't been able to be part of something for that long.

AS: You mix motorsport with football and Olympic sports. How does racing commentary compare?

JN: Motorsport commentary on television is so descriptive – the difference to radio is very minimal compared with football, for instance. For a football match on the radio you'd hear 'Rooney runs down the wing, crosses it in with his right foot and it's headed in by Van Nistelrooy' – I've

gone a bit retro – whereas on the TV that would be just 'Rooney... [silence] Van Nistelroooooooy!'. But motorsport TV commentary isn't too different to radio. I think that ultimately came from Murray [Walker], because he came from radio commentary, took that style into TV and it became *the* style.

AS: What keeps you doing club meetings alongside F1?

JN: I don't want to sound too pretentious about it – 'aren't I great to still do club motorsport!' – but you have to remember why you started doing this. I love motorsport, I love shouting at cars, and I especially love it when they're really close to me. I've always wanted to have motorsport commentary positions in the grandstands as opposed to being in these soulless, soundless commentary boxes. Somewhere like Knickerbrook at Oulton Park is a much more visceral experience than sitting up in a booth watching the telly, which I still love too. *Jack Nicholls was talking to Matt Beer*

TV pick of

Edited by Matt Beer



JEREZ F1 TESTING: PADDOCK UNCUT

Sky Sports F1
Sunday-Wednesday 2100-2115

Sky's empty-track-heavy foray into live Formula 1 testing coverage a few years ago proved that a winter test is best followed minute-by-minute via AUTOSPORT Live's rolling text updates. The nightly news-digest format adopted for 2015 should instead be a good format for wrapping up events at Jerez and getting a first proper look at F1's latest breed in action. It's a 15-minute round-up followed by a Ted's Notebook each night.



2013 AUSTRALIAN GP HIGHLIGHTS

Sky Sports F1
Sunday 2130-2230

Worth watching for anyone already putting money on another Mercedes one-two in the 2015 Australian Grand Prix, or who misses the days when Kimi Raikkonen won stuff. Time and time again Melbourne's quirky nature produces unexpected events in a season-opener, and here's a reminder of how a Red Bull-dominated build-up two years ago became a Lotus/Ferrari, Raikkonen/Alonso victory battle. There were a few Red Bull wins later in the year, admittedly...



Nicholls perfects the foot-on-desk style

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ONLINE

the week



DAYTONA 24 HOURS HIGHLIGHTS

Motors TV
Thursday 2205-0115 (+ repeats)

If you couldn't spare 19 hours to follow Motors TV's ample live coverage of the United SportsCar opener at Daytona last weekend but fancy a digestible recap, then the three-hour highlights package should be an ideal solution, and a chance to see all the action you've just read about in Gary Watkins' analysis of another highly dramatic start to the US sportscar season elsewhere in these pages. Given the winning margin was just 1.333s, it's well worth a watch.



GLOBAL RALLYCROSS 2014

Motors TV
Friday 2000-2100 (+ repeats)

It's not just the FIA's World Rallycross series that's thriving, America's Red Bull-backed 'Global' RX championship attracted ex-Formula 1 names such as Nelson Piquet Jr and Scott Speed, plus European rally/rallycross converts Patrik Sandell, Joni Wyman and Sverre Isachsen to take on native aces such as Ken Block and Travis Pastrana. Motors TV is recapping the 2014 season through the winter, with the Washington and New York rounds up this week. There's plenty of sideways action to be enjoyed.



TOYOTA RACING SERIES: RUAPUNA HIGHLIGHTS

Motors TV
Saturday 1855-2000 (+ repeats)

The racing season never stops for a junior single-seater driver these days, with the New Zealand-based Toyota Racing Series now attracting a horde of rising Europeans keen for pre-season miles. The local stars still tend to emerge with the titles, but those trying to change that in 2015 include Ferrari's teenage protege Lance Stroll, BRDC Formula 4 title contender Arjun Maini and F3 racers Santino Ferrucci and Sam MacLeod.



GP HEROES: JODY SCHECKTER

Sky Sports F1
Saturday 2000-2100

This week's pick from the 'massive tyres and massive sideburns' era archive options features Jody Scheckter. He went from wild young gun who triggered what was then F1's biggest-ever pile-up in the 1973 British Grand Prix to the wise old hand who beat Gilles Villeneuve to the 1979 title, via wins in a six-wheeled Tyrrell and in Wolf's debut GP, then walked away to run first a firearms business, then organic farms. Not your average career.



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ADMIT IT, IF YOU'RE A FAN OF Formula 1, this is one of the most exciting times of the year.

Launch season is upon us, and you can count the days until testing begins on one hand. Along with the build-up to the first GP of the campaign, the anticipation at this time of year gets the juices flowing after you've struggled through the off-season.

AUTOSPORT.com will bring you all the pictures of the new cars as they are revealed (highlights are McLaren today (Thursday), Ferrari on Friday, and Mercedes on Sunday), and we'll

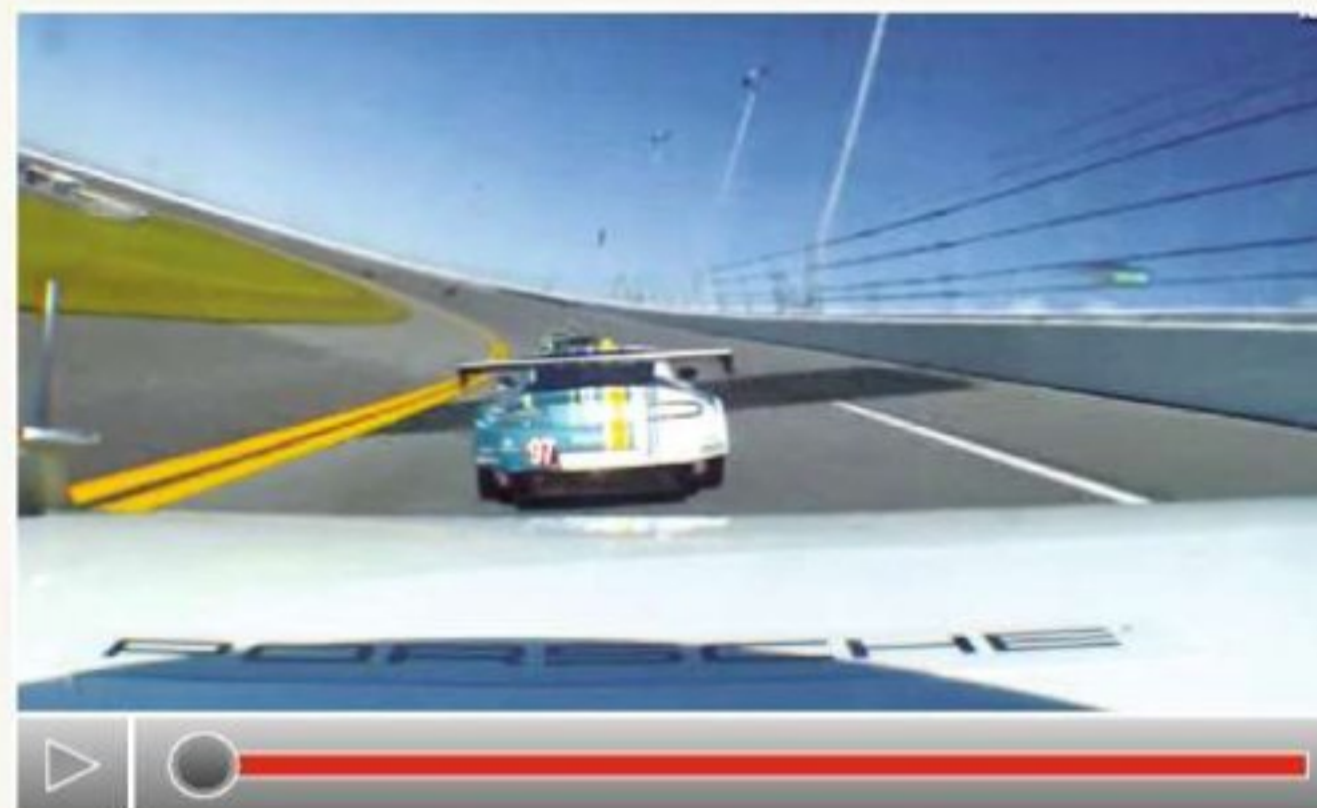
have four journalists on site at Jerez from the weekend as our unmissable live coverage of testing gets underway on Sunday.

As always, we'll have expert technical analysis on the new cars, and when the action ends each day we'll bring you news and reaction from the paddock. Testing is famously hard to read in this era of large fuel tanks, but we'll provide expert insight from the track at the end of each day to paint a clearer picture of what's really going on in Spain.

We're just as excited as you are.

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube ONBOARD AT DAYTONA WITH FACTORY PORSCHE



SEARCH FOR: Take a lap with Jorg Bergmeister

You've read the in-depth coverage of the 2015 Daytona 24 Hours in the pages of AUTOSPORT, so why not take a guided tour of the track itself? Porsche factory driver Jorg Bergmeister talks you round Florida's famous 'roval' course.

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Ricardo Rosset

■ Silverstone F3000 International Trophy ■ May 7 1995 ■ Reynard-Cosworth 95D ■ Debut win



Rosset leads his Super Nova team-mate Sospiri

86

My grand prix debut at Melbourne in 1996 was memorable. I had very little testing with Footwork but managed to finish in ninth place, which would have been in the points today. I even have that car now in my office, along with a Tyrrell chassis I drove!

But I have to choose my International F3000 debut at Silverstone in 1995. It was the perfect weekend as I took pole, the win and fastest lap. I was really surprised it happened liked that because there was some really tough competition. My team-mate at Super Nova was Vincenzo Sospiri, who was very quick but also very experienced by then. There were also many talented guys like Allan McNish, Kenny Brack, Tarso Marques and Marc Goossens.

I remember that I was able to pull out a good gap over Tarso who was on the front row with me. But soon Vincenzo was up to second place. At the same time I started to have a pretty unusual problem.

At about half distance I became aware of something uncomfortable in my seat around the neck area. It turned out to be my headrest, which had worked loose. It was becoming a big issue for me when it came away completely and flew off into the gravel trap!

After that I was able to maintain the gap to Vincenzo and took the chequered flag about seven seconds

ahead. It was an unbelievable feeling and I was very pleasantly surprised to be able to achieve that result in my debut F3000 race.

I had the best engineer I ever worked with – Mick Cook. We worked together very well and he was very creative and a master at reading the set-up. In fact when I went to Footwork for 1996 I tried to take him with me, but he stayed in

F3000 and ended up winning races.

I suppose that result gave me lots of confidence but it was also tough to keep up the level of performance. The start of the season in 1995 was fantastic and I went on to win again at Enna and I was really close to Vincenzo in the championship at that stage. But when it came to tracks that I did not know, like Pau and Hockenheim, the experience of the other drivers showed. Vincenzo went on to win the title and he deserved it. We then ended up as team-mates at Lola in F1. The less we talk about that the better!

I won races in F3 and F3000 against some great opposition. F1 was a different story and each of the three teams I was with in F1 were in a lot of trouble and going through big changes.

However, I will always remember that perfect day at Silverstone when the only problem I had was that loose headrest. ☼
Ricardo Rosset was talking to Sam Smith

PROFILE

A latecomer to racing, Rosset (now 46) raced in British F3 in 1993 and 1994, winning at Snetterton in his second season. He was runner-up to Vincenzo Sospiri in the '95 International F3000 series before making his Formula 1 debut the following year with Footwork. After joining the abortive Lola project for '97, Rosset signed for Tyrrell but a single eighth place was his only return. After a decade away from the sport he made a comeback in GTs, taking the 2010 and 2013 Porsche GT3 Cup titles in Brazil.



NEXT WEEK

F1 2015: THE NEW CARS
Every new grand prix car analysed in depth

OUT NOW!

The story of F1 legend Emerson Fittipaldi - in his own words



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Emerson Fittipaldi

with foreword by Sir Jackie Stewart

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