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**SPECIAL REPORT**

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Artiste line-up subject to change

**POLE POSITION**

# F1 is neither broken, nor in perfect health

**THE MUNDANE AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX DID NOT** indicate Formula 1 is a disaster, just as the gripping Malaysian GP did not mean all is perfect. There are many things that are right about grand prix racing, but there are some key areas that must be addressed. As Bernie Ecclestone put it, “we just need to do better”.

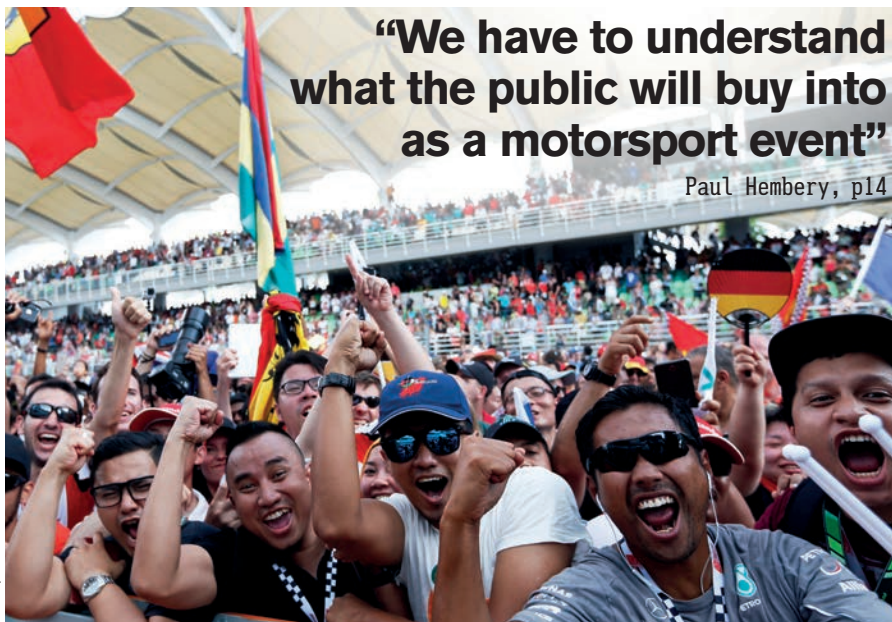
Ben Anderson attempts to address the ways in which F1 could do just that with his special report. His article avoids the pitfalls of offering quick fixes and easy answers, suggesting a potential direction for F1 to pursue if it really is to tackle these areas of weakness and deliver on promises to make the racing better and introduce more spectacular cars as soon as 2017. One thing is for sure, simply adding a small amount of bhp won't really change anything, much as some base-10 obsessives believe the magic 1000 is the answer to all F1's ills.

Anyone who offers a set of simple, ready-made solutions is, frankly, wrong. What AUTOSPORT strives to offer is a more measured, nuanced, mature signpost to the ways F1 should look at impending changes, rather than merely stampeding for the latest magic bullet. After all, it's never that simple.



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**COVER STORY**



**“We have to understand what the public will buy into as a motorsport event”**

Paul Hembery, p14

STALEY/LAT

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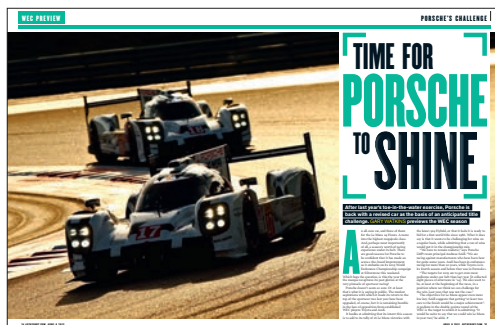
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# THE BIG PICTURE

The bonhomie-filled vibe of the British GT paddock lasted until the start of race one on Easter Monday, when the wheel-to-wheel combat – and ensuing shunts – began

Photographer Ebrey/LAT





# This week in F1



## McLAREN CLAIMS 'MASSIVE' PROGRESS

McLaren-Honda is already seeing a "massive difference" in its performance across the first month of the season, says the team's racing director Eric Boullier.

Although the revived partnership has yet to score a point or get beyond Q1 in a qualifying session, and only has one finish to its name so far from Jenson Button's 11th place in the Australian Grand Prix, Boullier is encouraged by the level of progress since McLaren's troubled winter.

McLaren and Honda languished at the foot of the mileage charts after the 12 days of testing. But after trailing the field on pace in Australia, McLaren was at least able to battle

with other cars in Malaysia before engine problems caused Button and Fernando Alonso to retire.

"We're not in the points," Boullier told AUTOSPORT. "Yeah, we're in front of the Force India but that's not where we want to be."

"We are not measuring the absolute performance yet – that is when you start to fight for pole positions and wins – but we are measuring the relative one compared with Barcelona testing and Australia, and it was a massive difference."

There is still a long way to go as there's not so much you can do in two weeks, but what we have done is exceptional



Jenson Button on McLaren's improvement between Australia and Malaysia

## Ferrari gives Vettel "feel"

Ferrari's car is enabling Sebastian Vettel to play to his strengths, claims his former team boss Christian Horner.

"He's obviously got the feel that he needs from the car that Ferrari are providing him," said Horner. "He's very good at looking after the tyres, and in that he's often unbeatable."



### HOW LONG DID IT TAKE OTHER FERRARI DRIVERS TO SECURE FIRST WIN?



#### NIGEL MANSELL

The Briton won the 1989 Brazilian GP on his Ferrari debut in what was a famously surprising success for a hitherto unreliable car. The team had not even expected him to finish the race.

#### KIMI RAIKKONEN

Following his switch from McLaren, the Finn qualified on pole position by a half-second margin and eased to victory in the 2007 Australian GP in Melbourne on his Ferrari debut.

#### FERNANDO ALONSO

The Spaniard, having joined from Renault, triumphed on his Ferrari debut in the 2010 Bahrain GP after erstwhile leader Vettel's Red Bull slowed down with a spark plug problem.

#### MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

Ferrari's most successful driver did not win for the Scuderia until his fifth start, guiding an unwieldy early-1996 car to victory in a rain-hit Spanish GP.

#### ALAIN PROST

The Frenchman won on his second attempt in a Ferrari, securing victory in Brazil in 1990 after Ayrton Senna clashed with backmarker Satoru Nakajima and had to make a pitstop.

For all the breaking news, visit [AUTOSPORT.COM](http://AUTOSPORT.COM)

At the moment, what is right for the team is the set-up we have



Manor's Graeme Lowdon on the prospect of Roberto Merhi keeping his drive



## Tost: 'Stupid' Verstappen critics silenced

Toro Rosso boss Franz Tost believes "stupid people" who criticised the selection of Max Verstappen will have been silenced by his first two grand prix performances.

Verstappen, the youngest ever F1 driver at 17, became its youngest scorer as well when he finished seventh in last weekend's Malaysian GP.

Asked by AUTOSPORT if he felt Verstappen's critics were now answered, Tost replied: "I said this in October when all the people criticised. He will answer them on the racetrack because the answer on the racetrack means stupid people can understand."

### BIG NUMBER

# 18

Max Verstappen will not turn 18 until the end of September, meaning that his first race as an 18-year-old will be the Russian Grand Prix at Sochi on October 11.

## HAMILTON: FERRARI STEP NOT JUST POWER

Lewis Hamilton believes downforce gains were pivotal to Sebastian Vettel's Malaysian Grand Prix victory, and that Ferrari's improvement shows Formula 1 is not just about engine performance.

Vettel's Sepang win was Ferrari's since the 2013 Spanish Grand Prix, ending a 30-race win drought.

"Ferrari have made a huge step," said Hamilton. "It is with both the car

and the engine. A lot of people talk about engines being fast but ultimately it's the car and the downforce which can make just as big a difference. They did a fantastic job."



## Ferrari suggests cost savings



Ferrari boss Maurizio Arrivabene believes standardisation of some parts could offer a solution to the financial troubles faced by some teams.

Marussia required a last-minute rescue package to survive, while other teams asked F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone for support before Melbourne.

"We have to do our best to make F1 a bit more affordable," Arrivabene told AUTOSPORT. "Standardisation in certain parts of the car could be an interesting cost saving way.

"Of course, not in all of the parts in the car. We are Formula 1, not another series where all the cars look the same and there is no spectacle."



## Force India delays upgrade

Force India has pushed back the introduction of its B-spec car until the Austrian Grand Prix in June.

The team hoped an updated car would run in Monaco, after pre-season delays had hindered development.

But deputy team principal Bob Fernley told AUTOSPORT: "The development is going well, but we won't see that until probably Austria. It's a major B-spec as we're looking to introduce a significant upgrade.

"Austria is a good place to do it. There is more logic in that than trying to rush it and get it to Monaco, where it won't be a huge benefit."

## Bottas hopeful over bad back

Valtteri Bottas says he is expecting to be fully fit for the Chinese Grand Prix following the injury he sustained during qualifying in Australia.

The Williams driver, who missed the season-opener in Melbourne before returning to finish fifth at Sepang, said: "The new driving position I had felt good in Malaysia, and I am sure in China it will be 100 per cent and no problem in the future."





## To victory. Together.

At the Monza circuit on 11-12th April, Bentley and Mobil 1 will once again compete together in pursuit of glory. Two racing legends in single-minded collaboration, with victory their shared objective and their sole aim.

We wish the entire team good luck, from everyone at Mobil 1. We might not all make it to the track, but we'll all be watching.

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AND







# Lawrence Barretto

## From the paddock

The battle between the Mercedes team-mates could be settled much earlier this year unless one of them returns to winning ways soon

**W**hen Nico Rosberg missed out on the 2014 Formula 1 world title to Mercedes team-mate and childhood friend Lewis Hamilton, the German vowed to come back stronger this year.

Rosberg could take heart from some impressive performances, including victory around the streets of Monaco and on home soil in Germany, as he controlled the championship from late May to mid-September in what was his first season as a title contender.

"I saw glimpses of success last year and I want to make it happen this year," said Rosberg at Mercedes' first press conference of 2015 in Melbourne. "It's my dream to be Formula 1 world champion."

He went on to talk eloquently about how, at 29, he is not yet at his peak of performance. He was saying all the right things. By contrast, Hamilton appeared distracted and kept his answers short. He seemed more interested in examining the minutiae of the detailing on his new helmet, which sat on a table beside him.

Then, when asked to outline his thoughts about the forthcoming racing year, the reigning world champion said, "I anticipate a very similar season to last year," before returning his attention to the helmet.

If you were to score that first battle of 2015, you could argue Rosberg came out on top. And he kept himself there on Friday at Albert Park, topping both practice sessions. But that's about as good as it got as Hamilton hit back, when it mattered, clinching top spot in final practice and



Hamilton's seven. But on the evidence of this year so far, he seems to have lost that edge, making mistakes when it matters – while Hamilton, who struggled on the one-lap shootout last year, is oozing confidence in that area.

Race day results don't make for much better reading either, with Hamilton picking up where he left off in 2014.

"A race is a constantly evolving beast and you've got to live by your senses, and that's where Lewis is stronger," says ex-F1 driver Anthony Davidson. "When you're going through the race with changeable conditions, there's no way you can stop, have a look at the data and then go back out again. You're there, surviving by yourself."

That's what Rosberg needs to prove he's capable of doing. In Malaysia, he was unlucky in that he was forced to queue behind Hamilton during the first stops, but he didn't cut back through the traffic as efficiently as his

**"Nico Rosberg has to fight back – and fast – because Lewis Hamilton's confidence is rising"**

then smashing it out of the park in qualifying as he beat Rosberg by a massive 0.594s to take pole.

Since then, Rosberg has been trying to hang on to his team-mate's coat tails – but after just two races, already that grip is slipping.

Rosberg blamed mistakes for that sizeable gap and said he remained confident he could match Hamilton's pace. But when the rain hit during qualifying in Malaysia, it was Hamilton who danced his Mercedes around Sepang on his first flying lap, finishing 1.2s clear of Rosberg, who appeared lost in the tricky conditions. The German even asked his engineer what racing lines "the guy who is first" was trying. His team was unable to help, since driver coaching is banned, but it highlighted Rosberg's desperation at that point. While Hamilton was delivering, Rosberg was seeking answers and did not have the artillery to respond.

That's particularly worrying for Rosberg because qualifying was one area in which he looked to have the advantage over Hamilton last year, taking 11 poles to

team-mate, and, though quicker in the closing stages, he was unable to challenge.

Racer-turned-pundit Martin Brundle says that in wheel-to-wheel combat, Rosberg has "got to beat" Hamilton "because he never passed him and made it stick last year". He has to fight back – and fast – because Hamilton's confidence is rising. And this weekend's race in China would be the perfect place for him to do that; not only was it the scene of his first pole and victory back in 2012, but it is also a track Rosberg believes suits him well. We didn't see a straight fight between them there last year because Rosberg lost telemetry before the start then made a poor getaway, dropping to sixth on lap one while Lewis romped away. This year he has to do the business.

Ultimately, if Rosberg does not cut out the mistakes and start putting pressure on Hamilton soon, he faces the prospect of a season where, once more, he will be perceived as but second best to a driver who has been beating him since they were 13... ❧

# This week in motorsport



1 Pierre Gasly 1m39.632s



2 Stoffel Vandoorne +0.014s



3 Mitch Evans +0.047s



4 Alexander Rossi +0.083s



5 Raffaele Marciello +0.088s



6 Alex Lynn +0.252s

## TEST HINTS AT MEGA-CLOSE GP2

DAMS driver Pierre Gasly topped the final GP2 pre-season test in Bahrain, with the top six drivers separated by just 0.252 seconds.

The Red Bull junior pipped title favourite Stoffel Vandoorne (ART) by 0.014s, with Russian Time's Mitch Evans third ahead of Racing

Engineering driver Alexander Rossi. The leading times were set on Friday morning, the final day of the test.

With Raffaele Marciello (Trident) and Alex Lynn (DAMS) fifth and sixth, McLaren protege Vandoorne believes the timesheets reflect how tight the competition will be this year.

"I would say the morning session was quite representative," said the Belgian. "Some drivers had two sets of option tyres left and some had one left, but in the end I think it's quite a good view of how close the field is. The drivers we saw at the front will be the drivers we will be fighting

with over the season."

Racing Engineering's Jordan King was fastest on the opening day of the test, and seventh overall.

Vandoorne's ART team-mate, Nobuharu Matsushita, was fastest on day two ahead of Arthur Pic and Marciello.

## Russians eye Moscow debut

The Russian makers of the ARTech P315 have targeted August's Moscow Raceway round for their new Dallara challenger's Formula 3 European Championship debut.

According to ArtLine Engineering, which has designed and built the car, it recently passed a series of crash tests. ArtLine hopes to hit the track in May for testing.

### REMEMBER WHEN

2005



The last F3 car to take on Dallara over a full season in European-series competition was the SLC R1, which Fabio Carbone raced to a best finish of fourth in the 2005 Euro Series.



## Wirdheim joins Greaves squad

Ex-Formula 3000 champion Bjorn Wirdheim and former GP2 racer Jon Lancaster will contest the European Le Mans Series with the Greaves team.

Wirdheim and Lancaster, who raced together with the team in one WEC round in 2013, will share its solo Gibson-Nissan O15S LMP2 with Swiss driver Gary Hirsch. The duo took part

in last month's official ELMS test at Paul Ricard and have been signed up after the confirmation of the Greaves team's sponsorship deal with data encryption company Kairos.

Tim Greaves said: "Bjorn and Jon helped us out in the past and we have repaid them because we have the opportunity to chose our drivers."



## Vaxiviere leads way in Aragon

Lotus F1 Junior Matthieu Vaxiviere topped both of last week's pre-season Formula Renault 3.5 test days at Motorland Aragon.

Vaxiviere's Charouz-run car was quickest in three of the four sessions, lapping only 0.027 seconds slower on the second day, which was reserved for low-downforce-configuration running.

Britain's Dean Stoneman was the only other driver to top a session, the DAMS-run Red Bull junior also going second fastest in Monday's classification. Tio Ellinas was second on day two with Strakka Racing.

Third on the first day was Russian rookie Egor Orudzhev, before Brit Oliver Rowland took that slot on Tuesday.

For all the breaking news, visit [AUTOSPORT.COM](http://AUTOSPORT.COM)

## 180 cities in Formula E bids

Formula E boss Alejandro Agag says more than 180 cities have requested a round of the all-electric single-seater series.

"Many of them are ready to pay quite substantial money," he said, "so we are now in the process of evaluating the whole picture."

Agag added that, apart from Monaco and Long Beach, the only established venue that appeals is Singapore.



## INDY 500 FOR DE SILVESTRO

IndyCar racer Simona de Silvestro has secured a return to Andretti Autosport for the Indianapolis 500.

The Swiss competed with the team in the season opener in St Petersburg, but the team's #25 Dallara-Honda has already been earmarked for British veteran Justin Wilson for the 500.

Now Andretti has expanded to a fifth car for the Month of May, so de Silvestro joins Wilson, Ryan Hunter-Reay, Marco Andretti and Carlos Munoz in the line-up.

"I'll for sure have one of the best opportunities to win during the Month of May," she said.



## In brief



### EUROTECH GOES TOCA

The Eurotech British Touring Car team has switched engines for 2015. Following Jeff Smith's return to the team as owner/driver, it has dropped the Honda VTEC engine for a Swindon-built TOCA unit, pursuing mid-range performance. Martin Depper and Smith bagged points with 13th and 14th in race three.

### PANTHER LOSES SUIT

Panther Racing's lawsuit against Rahul Letterman Lanigan Racing and IndyCar over the loss of its National Guard sponsorship for 2014 has been rejected by a Federal judge. The team closed its doors last August.

### FE LOOKS AT PITLANES

Formula E could switch to conventional pitlanes for car swaps next season. Last weekend's Long Beach race used bays in the IndyCar pitlane without problem, in a departure from the series' norm of garages.

### MRF CHANGES

Ex-Carlton British Formula 3 team manager and FIA Formula 1 man David Lowe has been made series coordinator of the India-based MRF Challenge. The 2015-16 MRF season will expand to four rounds, with aero upgrades for the Dallara-built cars.

### NEWMAN TAKES A HIT

NASCAR racer Ryan Newman has suffered a major blow to his Sprint Cup Chase hopes after being penalised 75 points, dropping him from sixth to 26th. The verdict came after illegal modifications to the tyres of his Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet at Fontana. Three crew members have been suspended.



## Morocco: too dangerous for AGP; not for WTCC

The Auto GP series has cancelled its opening round in Marrakech "due to the difficult political situation that has been involving the northern African area in the last few months".

The decision to can the April 18-19

event comes despite the headlining World Touring Car Championship confirming its Moroccan trip is safe.

Auto GP's season now starts on May 2/3 at Hungaroring, giving more time to assemble a representative field. These

prospects have been enhanced by Paolo Coloni Racing announcing that it will run three cars.

Reigning champion Kimiya Sato has secured a two-race Super GT deal in Japan with a JLOC Lamborghini.

## DTM TWEAKS DRS RULES

The DTM has overhauled its DRS rules for 2015 in a bid to produce more on-track overtaking, with drivers now permitted to use it up to three times per lap.

DRS was introduced to the German tin-top series in 2013, and last year drivers could use it only once on a lap they started within two seconds of the car in front.

This season they will have to be closer – within one second – but the three opportunities to use the DRS will each feature an increased boost in straightline



speed, with the lowering of the rear-wing angle when DRS is engaged being increased from 16 degrees to 18.

I rushed myself that morning and didn't take very good care of myself, and just ended up dehydrating myself



Kyle Larson will return to NASCAR action this weekend after missing Martinsville.

## Blancpain GT targets US

The Blancpain GT Series is set to kick-off in the US next year at Austin.

Series boss Stephane Ratel has outlined draft plans for a US round of one of his championships – most likely the Blancpain Sprint Series – as part of his organisation's link-up with the North American-based Pirelli World Challenge. It would be part of a reciprocal agreement under which the PWC would join the bill at one of his end-of-season races next autumn.

Ratel stressed that his idea was still in the formative stage and that he would only proceed with the backing of his teams.



### BRIT HUNT GEARS UP FOR DAKAR ATTACK

Britain's Harry Hunt will drive a Mini on next year's Dakar Rally. His preparations for the South American marathon began with third place on his debut in the dunes at last week's Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge.

# And we're off!

This weekend saw over 70 more racers sign up to both Sunoco Challenges during the British GT season premiere at Oulton Park. It was action on and off the track which changed the Challenge standings throughout the weekend! In the Sunoco Whelen Challenge British GT3 Racers Griffin and Butcher in the Oman Racing team gained vital points towards the Challenge putting them a close second to the Cockhill brothers in Radical Enduro Championship.

Radical Sprint's McClughan is leading the way by over 10 points in the Sunoco 200 Challenge - but we have more Challengers to sign up over the coming weeks, and a whole season to wait-and-see who will take the Sunoco Challenge prize drives in Daytona in January 2016!



[www.sunocochallenge.com](http://www.sunocochallenge.com)



1	H Cockhill	Radical Enduro	92.50
2	E Cockhill	Radical Enduro	92.50
3	L Griffin	British GT3	90.75
4	R Butcher	British GT3	90.75
5	J Adam	British GT3	88.00



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1	P McClughan	Radical Sprint	113.33
2	G Johnson	British GT4	101.75
3	M Robinson	British GT4	101.75
4	B Dimmack	Radical Sprint	98.33
5	G Kershaw	British GT4	90.75

Points correct as of 07.04.15



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## Next eligible races

### Sunoco Whelen Challenge

Radical European Masters 10-12/4  
Radical Enduro 26/4  
British GT3 2-3/5

### Sunoco 200 Challenge

Atom Cup 18/4  
MINI Challenge, GT Cup & F3 Cup 26-27/4  
British GT4 2-3/5

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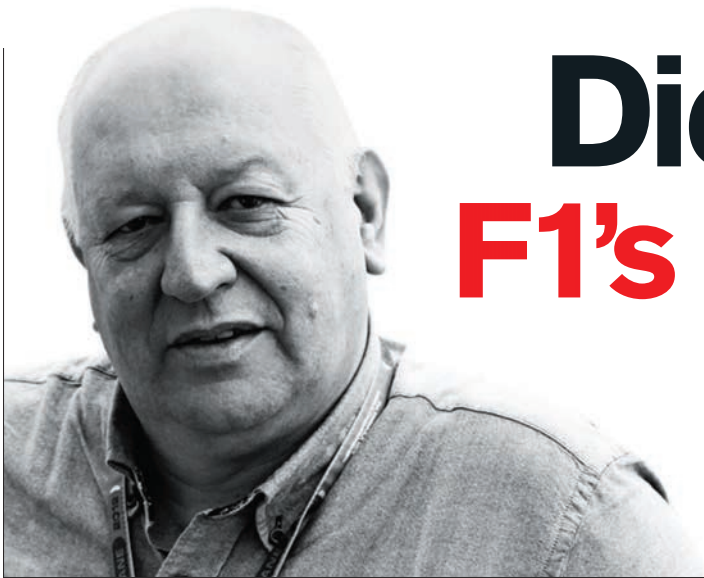
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# Dieter Rencken

## F1's political animal

Formula 1 has to move with the times to keep its audience, but its leaders seem ludicrously out of step with reality

**D**esperate times are often used to justify desperate measures. Formula 1 has its troubles, not least the massive financial and constitutional divides between the privileged constructors' championship bonus teams, who sit on Formula 1's rule-framing Strategy Group and share huge annual bonuses, and the rest, who enjoy no such rights regardless of performance. Reports of the results of the latest round of 'blue-sky thinking' supposedly aimed at addressing the sport's problems led this writer to consider the wisdom of the award-winning anti-apartheid writer and activist Alan Paton.

"You ask yourself," he wrote during South Africa's most troubled days, "not if this or that is expedient, but whether it is right [or wrong!]"

Paton's words resonated after news broke of a meeting of team bosses called by F1 CEO Bernie Ecclestone on the Friday of the Malaysian GP. According to sources he urged them to "consider all options [to improve F1]; nothing should be off the table." Ecclestone, it's said, is desperate to halt F1's popularity slide: a 30 per cent drop in TV ratings over five years and plunging live audiences is leading with grim inevitability towards waning sponsor interest and competitors on the edge of financial doom.

To compound matters, Red Bull, in the run-up to the weekend, had suggested it may withdraw from the sport (this in spite of a previous commitment to compete through to 2020), while Renault admitted to reviewing its options. Ending its F1 participation is among them.

As for ersatz wet races, one of the attractions of the sport's various venues is that their weather is generally unpredictable. Bahrain has been known to experience unseasonal drops, while it never ceases to amaze that Singapore has yet to host a wet race. Introducing artificial moisture smacks of Dubai's 'ski' run, complete with its plastic reindeer. Would the International Olympic Committee stage the Winter Games in the Emirates?

One would have thought that the sport would have learned from the near-universal derision the introduction of double points for the 2014 finale received. But no, F1's top dogs have discussed a format that will prove even more controversial – namely 20 points awarded per race, divided 10 each for victory and pole position. Since when does topping qualifying equal winning grands prix, particularly given the importance of tyre strategy?

Artificially spicing up the show with tawdry measures that smack of expediency, yes, but the best brains in the business added a further twist: the fastest driver in qualifying should start 12th (in Australia that would have entailed lining up on the penultimate row), and the rest of the grid jumbled "so you're going to get a whole bunch of decent guys starting in the middle of the field."

Talk about tax on human performance in an endeavour that used to be arguably the most meritocratic activity on the global sporting calendar.

So F1 takes stock of the current situation – 15 cars on the grid in Melbourne, and further team closures in the

**"F1's top dogs have discussed a format that will be even more controversial than double points"**

During this meeting, the concept of an all-woman championship – comprising races held on race-day mornings – was aired, as were suggestions that selected events should enjoy 'Grand Slam' status (at an additional fee, of course). Then, some races should be run wet on tracks watered artificially, much as Pirelli sprinkles circuits during testing of wet and intermediate tyres.

Not surprisingly, the concept of Female F1 received cool receptions from the FIA's Women in Motorsport Commission downwards. Women racers wish to compete on equal terms, not be patronised through curtain-raiser events cynically staged in toned-down cars.

Had Ecclestone not suggested more than once after Danica Patrick qualified and placed fourth in the 2005 Indianapolis 500 that "women should be dressed in white, like all domestic appliances," the response might have been somewhat warmer. But then Bernard never did permit history to obstruct desperate measures, as German Grand Prix promoters can attest.

offing – and grid-fiddling and the token embrace of female participants are among the best solutions it can offer. Meanwhile the World Endurance Championship celebrated recent success in attracting an additional manufacturer (Renault's alliance partner Nissan) to its frontrunning ranks by announcing an increase in the number (to 60) of garages at Le Mans, as well as imposing a total ban on 'grid girls' at future events.

"For me that is the past," said WEC CEO Gerard Neveu. "The condition of women is a little bit different now."

Rather than seeking to reinvent itself through gimmicks, the WEC (and its previous incarnations) has worked with the FIA in adopting hi-tech regulations – while ensuring the cars continue to look great – and visiting pastures new, all while respecting tradition and history. F1 faces two choices: take heed of this, or continue bearing the consequences of its inequality, which simply cannot be papered over through desperate measures, expedient or otherwise. ❧

**SPECIAL  
REPORT**

14

# HOW CAN F1 BE MADE *BETTER?*

It may not be in as bad a shape as some claim, but  
Formula 1 still has some serious problems to address.

**BEN ANDERSON** investigates ways to tackle those areas





**V**ictory for Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari in the Malaysian Grand Prix couldn't have come at a better time for Formula 1. Off the back of a dull season-opener in Australia, events at Sepang, in particular the avoidance of another Mercedes 'silverwash', have helped stave off (at least temporarily) the wolves baying for the sport's blood.

But that doesn't mean Formula 1 doesn't still have some serious problems it needs to address. The sport exists in a state of perpetual angst. Debates about its supposedly perilous future are endless, and asinine in their lack of resolution. How should commercial revenues be distributed? Should budget caps be introduced? Should technical regulations be more restrictive or less? Should the cars be harder to drive? Should the engines be cheaper and louder, or quieter and more technologically advanced? Does the show trump purity of competition? On and on and on it goes...

Perhaps this is no wonder. After all, this is a sport that thrives on repetitive self-analysis. But against a backdrop of escalating costs and teams feeling the financial pinch, there are those who claim F1 is on a collision course with catastrophe.

Television audiences are falling and sponsorship is increasingly difficult to find. The introduction of the 1.6-litre V6 turbo hybrid engines means Formula 1 has never been more expensive for manufacturers to compete in, and there is a real risk of the grid shrinking as development of this immature and massively complicated technology (and the associated spending war that inevitably comes with it) ramps

**Rising costs mean there is a risk of the grid shrinking**



BARON/GETTY

**Sebastian Vettel's win in Malaysia was a timely one for the sport in general**



up. Vettel's surprise victory aside, when a single team has dominated the competition for as long as Mercedes has, this sense of unease grows and spreads from off-track (where it always exists) onto the circuit too.

Nevertheless, there is also much about F1 that can be admired. It is a perpetually strong and genuinely attractive world championship, globally recognisable, with an established reputation as the pinnacle of all motorsport, both in terms of the technology used and the people involved. Even if it is struggling for identity, direction, financial sustainability and audience it still retains enormous power, wealth, status and reach.

And it is a sport that constantly evolves, driven by the fact technological innovation can gain its participants a competitive edge. Usually, the regulations are modified to arrest this development (as well as improve safety of course), but these regulatory cycles also present opportunities to alter the identity, direction and nature of the sport – if there is a collective will and desire to do so.

The trouble is, agreement between key stakeholders is nigh on impossible to find. The teams have the power to agree the rules, but struggle to put their own self-interests aside to shape the sport in a collaborative way. The venture capitalists that run the commercial side cannot be relied upon to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the product; and the sport's regulator struggles to find common ground with these other powerful entities.

However, looming on the horizon are two big opportunities to set the hand-wringing aside and shape the sport for the better. In the short-term, discussions are already under way concerning the 2017 technical regulations, which represent a chance to reshape the fundamental basis of Formula 1 – the cars. Beyond that, the present commercial deals struck between the rights-holder and F1's current competing teams expire after 2020, offering a window of opportunity to reshape the sport financially.

But what should Formula 1 look like in the coming years? How should it change to grow its audience, become more sustainable for its competitors and more exciting for its fans?

## IMPROVING THE RACING

The recent Malaysian Grand Prix, where Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari utilised a two-stop strategy to wrong-foot Mercedes and defeat Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg in a straight fight, emphasises that any changes made to the current regulations should focus on improving the quality of the racing. F1's continued success and popularity rests upon it.

As with any sport, Formula 1 faces a problem when it becomes too predictable. What's the point of watching if you can predict the likely outcome before the event takes place? We're not talking crystal balls here – no one can ever be certain of the outcome in advance – but if one team or driver is so far ahead of the rest they should win every time they race, provided nothing goes wrong, then F1 becomes predictable and fans begin to switch off.

The more exciting and unpredictable you can make the racing, without compromising the nature of competition that is central to the sport's appeal, the more popular your sport should be. The fundamental nature of F1 racing







Malaysia offered the perfect conditions for unpredictable racing

— attempting to complete a certain distance around a set course in the fastest time possible — will always exist. The question is how to improve that as a spectacle for the fans?

To answer that question, F1 needs to examine very carefully the exact components that make for exciting races. A degree of overtaking on the circuit is obviously a crucial element. But as the by-product of other conditions, it isn't something that really needs to be analysed in itself. The focus here has traditionally been on aerodynamics, but take downforce away and you will automatically make the cars slower and undermine a key tenet of F1's appeal: speed.

The point here is unpredictability. F1 teams spend millions of pounds attempting to neutralise variables, in order to predict the best outcome and then follow the fastest path to the best result. They simulate and strategise before they arrive at the track, and they only usually fall foul when something unexpected throws them off course, such as when the track conditions are unpredictable, or the tyres are difficult to manage.

Malaysia was a superb example of what fundamentally makes races exciting. Extremely hot conditions made the one genuine equaliser in current F1 — the tyres — difficult to manage. Suddenly, carefully honed strategies and set-ups were rendered obsolete and the teams had to become reactive. The more often you can create this, the better the racing in F1 will be.

## PROPOSAL

Replace the current set of dry tyre compounds with random ones introduced specifically for each grand prix. This will render existing tyre data meaningless and force teams and drivers to think on their feet. It is fair, because Formula 1 operates under a single supplier, but it will require investment to develop bespoke tyres for each event. An alternative short-term measure would be to require the supplier to choose the most aggressive compounds possible for each race, ensuring the tyres (and therefore the cars) are not suited perfectly to the surface. ▶

**“TEAMS SIMULATE AND STRATEGISE OFF THE TRACK, ONLY FALLING FOUL WHEN SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENS”**

## LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

► After Lewis Hamilton's win in Australia appeared to signify the very real prospect of another season of almost complete Mercedes domination, Red Bull team boss Christian Horner called on the FIA to equalise engine performance in F1, or risk turning fans away from the sport.

Engine equalisation, he argued, would close up the competitive order and make the racing more exciting. And Horner is not alone; there are many in the paddock who believe that balancing performance of all the cars, in a similar manner to that seen in GT racing, could be the way forward.

Debates about budget caps have been ongoing for years, while some have even suggested the sport go further and become a single-make, single-engine category, similar to most of those seen at the junior levels. This would simultaneously reduce costs, because car development would be largely eliminated, and effectively turn Formula 1 into a pure drivers' championship.

Providing all the drivers in the championship with the same engines would, so the argument goes, mean that fans can identify more with the star performers in F1, much as they do in other



Christian Horner called for engine equalisation to stop one team dominating



Australia appeared to indicate another season of Mercedes domination

less technology-driven sports. In equal machinery, the drivers' relative abilities would be easily comparable, without such judgements being clouded by the quality of their equipment.

Undoubtedly, any or all of these measures would close up the competitive order, but the key question is whether they would improve the racing. Sadly, the answer is 'probably not'.

As anyone who has spent time watching the plethora of single-make junior single-seater championships out there will testify, even when the competitors are evenly matched, the racing can often be processional. These races tend to come alive when additional variables – extreme weather conditions or reversed grids – are thrown in. And even without the capacity to buy obvious competitive advantages, certain teams still tend to dominate.

Given that technical equalisation risks undermining the innovative aspect that helps make Formula 1 unique, and doesn't guarantee better racing anyway, perhaps the sport should experiment with something that can be altered without too much difficulty – the race format.

The introduction of three-part qualifying in 2006 has been highly successful in building a dramatic spectacle. It has achieved this without prejudicing competition among the teams and drivers, because it is fair to all those involved. So why not go further?

Formula 1 has five hours of track time before the race at each grand prix weekend, but these hours could potentially be deployed in a better way. Provided the cars were still operating for the same length of time, there would be no tangible impact on the cost of competing. Essentially, this is an area in which Formula 1 could be improved free of charge.

One of the big problems facing promoters is how to draw crowds to the circuits on Fridays, when the teams essentially test for three hours. Without a competitive element, the sport loses its ability to attract spectators, so a better solution would be to reduce the amount of practice (again instantly making the competitive equation harder for teams to solve) and replace it

with extra competition. Fans would be treated to something more entertaining on the first day of a grand prix, while teams would not have three hours to perfect set-ups and thus render the rest of the weekend more predictable.

Furthermore, the fact F1 insists on starting its races in qualifying order instantly increases the chances of predictability. It would be very simple to introduce a race format that alters this, such as the heats and finals format seen in karting.

Here, grid orders are set randomly (but equally) across three races, which then determine the starting order for the main event. This format forces drivers to start out of position and race their way to the front.

Not only would this format make the first day of each event more interesting, the extra jeopardy and difficulty it creates for teams and drivers throughout the weekend would massively increase the chances of the whole grand prix being more exciting. It would also force those with inherent pace advantages in their equipment to work harder for results and, if adopted in F1, would provide a tangible link with the grassroots of the sport.

## PROPOSAL

F1 should practice for one hour on Friday, before a one-hour time trial session (held using the current qualifying template) in the afternoon, for which championship points are awarded. This would still allow fans to see the fastest cars on the planet run flat out on low fuel.

On Saturday, three grids would be drawn up at random, with each driver's three individual grid positions adding up to the same total to ensure parity (essentially each driver would start a race from the front, middle and back of the grid).

Drivers would then complete three heat races of one hour each, the results of which would also award points (on a lesser scale) for the championship, and determine the grid order for the full-length grand prix itself, which would take place as usual on Sunday.

# WHY SOME MANUFACTURERS DON'T NEED F1

Though manufacturers have always come and gone in Formula 1, the sport has never been able to resist their charms, not least because they confer wealth and status on the category and help drive forward technical innovation.

In 2008, before the most recent global financial recession, there were six different manufacturers competing in F1. Seven years later four remain: Ferrari, Mercedes, Renault and Honda (thanks to its 2015 return with McLaren).

So where are the rest? Well, the short answer is sportscar racing. Toyota has joined Audi, Porsche

(part of the same VW group) and now Nissan at the top level of sportscar racing – LMP1 in the WEC, while BMW (which, like Toyota, quit F1 after 2009) is focused on GT racing and the DTM.

Rumours swirl from time to time about Audi making a switch to F1, but the marque's sporting boss Wolfgang Ullrich reckons the WEC is a better place for manufacturers to develop and showcase technology.

"There is no better place to be if you want to showcase future-orientated new technology," he tells AUTOSPORT. "It is a completely different way of racing [compared to

F1], but if you really look into technology, the ACO has been the right place for a long time.

"For someone to jump in to F1 was always very difficult. In endurance racing, maybe technology-wise it is even more difficult, but if you are competitive here, you have shown something. This could be convincing people to come to the WEC.

"If you look back to last year, all three manufacturers came with new cars out of a complete new rulebook, and it worked from the beginning. That just showed the high level that is here."



Porsche views the WEC as a better – and cheaper – showcase for technology

LORD/FEBREVLAT

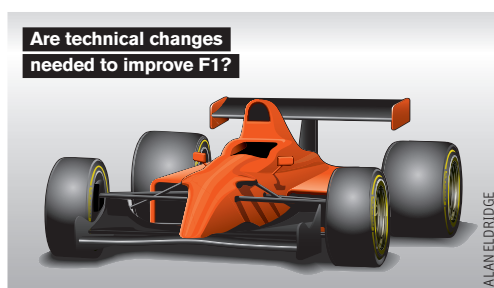
## THE NATURE OF THE CARS

Big technical changes to Formula 1 for 2017 are currently under discussion, in order to increase the appeal of the sport. Within this debate are competing views about whether F1 cars should fundamentally look different and be faster, and how best this should be achieved: bigger tyres, more downforce, increased power, continuing with the same engines as we have now, or introducing different ones?

The problem here is that a sound argument exists to say that regulatory change drives up costs. As one team boss put it "every time you change the rules you have to spend money". All teams apparently agree on this fact (how rarely do you hear that!), so perhaps F1 would be best served by settling down, allowing costs to come down naturally through stability, and thus allow competitors to make sturdier business plans.

More fundamentally, will changing the cars actually make the racing better *without* undermining the fundamental technological and competitive make-up of the sport? Does a big part of F1's appeal lie in the technology of the cars, or does the average fan not care?

This could be argued both ways. On a 'local' level, the British Touring Car Championship has high levels of technological restriction, but the championship is massively popular with spectators, thanks to the exciting racing it regularly produces. The cars look different (and



Are technical changes needed to improve F1?

ALAN ELDREDGE

often have different engines) to one another, but are otherwise broadly single-make. And they are relatively cheap to run.

The World Endurance Championship has huge technological innovation within its rules, but requires a fraction of the costs of competing in F1. However, with the exception of Le Mans, which transcends the championship in many ways, long distance racing does not draw the same crowds and cannot offer the same level of exposure.

The F1 paddock is forever posing questions about what direction the sport should take. Should the rules be more open and place more emphasis on technological innovation? That would surely only increase costs, and eventually result in fewer teams running more cars. Motorsport history tells us this is not usually a productive path to follow.

Should it be purely a drivers' championship? They are the stars, and this would be better for knowing who is the best on a given day. But do fans want to see identikit cars? The racing would be closer, but not necessarily 'better'. Single-make championships are still dominated by the best teams, even if margins are small. Is F1 being out of step with the rest of the single-seater scene a strength or weakness?

The real question is what do fans really want to see? This is where F1 needs to do some serious, detailed market research.

"I'm not really sure we have a model of where we really think the sport can be," says Pirelli's motorsport director Paul Hembery, who offers a unique take on F1 as a major sponsor and supplier. "What do we foresee Formula 1 as being? What should it be? Should it be a technology-driven sport? Should it be a driver-led sport? We have to understand what the public will buy into as a motorsport event."

## PROPOSAL

Conduct detailed market research into why people engage with Formula 1, and why those sports fans that don't engage reject it. Through this, it should be possible to shape the direction of the sport for a common good, rather than out of competitive self-interest. ▶

## COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE

# IS F1 A CLOSED SHOP FOR NEW TEAMS?

Formula 1 often seems like a closed shop, and in many ways it is. How often have new teams joined the grid in recent history, and lived to tell the tale?

The answer is 'once' and that team (Manor/Marussia) is clinging on by its fingernails. You have to go back to 1997 to find the last time a genuinely new outfit came into F1 and survived. That was the Ford-backed operation started by three-time world champion Jackie Stewart, which went on to become Jaguar and – eventually – Red Bull.

So why can't more independent teams make it work? "It's more than a \$64 million question!" says Trevor Carlin, whose eponymous team runs multiple successful single-seater operations in other categories and – in theory – would be the ideal candidate to step up.

"There's no open formula outside Formula 1 for a start, so no team has the infrastructure to build its

own cars. F1 has moved on so much. Let's be honest, if a team like us or ART or DAMS wanted to be competitive, we'd need at least €1 billion as a starting point, because Ferrari and McLaren has probably spent €10 billion over the past 30 years. If you want to compete with them you've got to have their sort of money."



Carlin believes the cost of entering F1 is prohibitive

To make it possible for squads such as his to enter, Carlin argues F1 would need to adopt a very different regulatory framework that massively slashed the cost of competing.

"The obvious thing is GP1," adds Carlin, who suggests creating a working committee to decide the rules and ensure F1 continually updates its technical package to keep it close to the cutting edge.

"It needs a high-powered, exciting car that is pretty much the same basic chassis and engine [for each team]. If it cost €20 million to run two cars, all of a sudden it's a lot more affordable and you'd have more money left to pay the best drivers. Everyone wins.

"Get it back to basics and leave all your hybrid electric stuff to the WEC, where your manufacturers want to be and love being. F1 is a sport; we're not trying to put a man on the moon."

Stewart GP was the last new team to prosper in F1, but that was back in 1997



► F1 currently has 10 teams competing in the world championship, though one of those has only recently emerged from administration. And at least three others have been forced to ask for advanced payments of commercial-rights income in order to meet the initial cost of competing this season. By any measure, that is hardly a healthy state of affairs.

Whatever your feeling about the nature of F1 and what type of championship it should be, the ultimate measure of strength for any series is the number of sustainable entries it has. Presently, you could argue F1 only has six secure teams, with the other four in varying states of financial difficulty. Gene Haas's team is due to arrive in 2016, but the key question for the sport is how to ensure the stability of the existing grid, before deciding whether it needs to attract more entries.

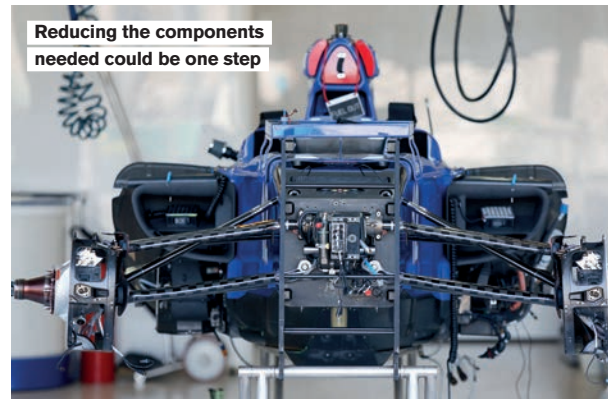
"We need to do a lot better," conceded commercial chief Bernie Ecclestone, when asked about the current state of the sport. "We don't have to wait until 2020. We are only in trouble probably on some things until 2016 or '17. If the teams were all grown up, then we could agree today and get it changed for the next race."

Given the present commercial agreements are locked in until 2020, and budget caps have fallen on the same sword as Max Moseley's FIA presidency, the simple solution of fairer financial distribution within F1 looks unachievable in the

## "IF THE TEAMS WERE GROWN UP, WE COULD GET F1 CHANGED FOR THE NEXT RACE"



Even Bernie concedes that F1 could do a lot better



Reducing the components needed could be one step

short-term. The question is whether anything can be done within the current structure to make F1 a more viable proposition for its competitors.

Cyclical debates about allowing customer cars into F1 (or at least massively reducing the number of bespoke components teams need to qualify as a constructor) have returned, while Red Bull sparked a new debate recently by suggesting windtunnels should be banned in favour of using computational fluid dynamics (CFD) – much in the same way simulation has replaced testing in modern F1. One team boss estimates the cost of a windtunnel at £40 million, and the cost of equivalent CFD capability at £1 million.

# AUTOSPORT'S FIVE-POINT ACTION PLAN FOR F1



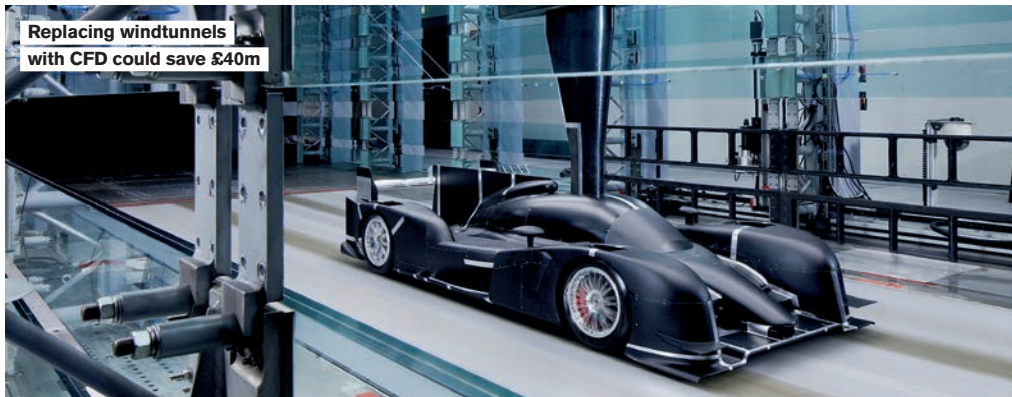
STALEY/LAT

- 1** Conduct detailed research into what sports fans like and don't like about Formula 1. From that research it should be possible to determine exactly which elements of the sporting weekend are popular and necessary to keep spectators engaged.
- 2** Take a firm decision on short-term changes or stability in the current regulations, to make the sport more sustainable for its current competitors and make gains in terms of audience engagement.
- 3** Market research should also indicate where fans see the ideal balance between technological innovation and human performance in Formula 1. A firm consensus can then be established on whether medium-

term technical regulation changes are needed to improve the spectacle of Formula 1, through alterations to the cars.

- 4** Establish a common vision from within the sport (agreed by all teams, the promoter and the regulator) on the technical and commercial direction F1 should follow in order to both cement its current audience and to expand it further.
- 5** Consider how best to implement a complete rebalancing of the commercial arrangements in Formula 1 once the current agreements run out in 2020. At this point, the sport's revenues should be redistributed on equal terms for each signed participant, but with variations accepted on prize money.

S BLOXHAM/LAT



Replacing windtunnels with CFD could save £40m

If you don't want to fundamentally change the nature of the sport (by removing the constructors' championship, for example) then you need to attract bigger budgets (through sponsors, manufacturers, or better commercial rights redistribution) or reduce costs massively to make it viable for an independent team to join and be competitive.

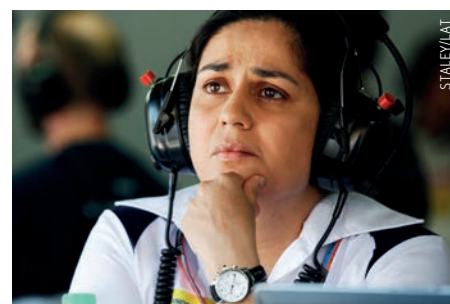
The lifeblood of F1 has always been independent teams. In other forms of motorsport, looking after the back of the grid is seen as the right way to go. As one team boss told AUTOSPORT, they "can't wait" until 2020 for F1's commercial inequality to be resolved.

## PROPOSAL

End the current system of individual commercial agreements for each team and draw up a single commercial contract (for TV rights and participation payments) that all teams must agree to.

Teams could still earn extra income on a meritocratic basis through prize money and by signing their own sponsorship agreements. In tandem, the promoter must allow the teams complete freedom to do their own promotional events using F1 branding, or organise and fund its own central promotional activities. ❧

## Q&A



STALEY/LAT

# MONISHA KALTENBORN

## SAUBER TEAM PRINCIPAL

**What are the biggest challenges you face competing in F1 as an independent and why is it so difficult to remain in the sport?**

The biggest challenge is simply to be competitive in the current regulatory and financial environment. If I go back 10-15 years we had an economic situation where everybody could live decently. You had teams with four or five times the budget that we had, yet through our own strength, we could get podiums. In 2001, we ended up fourth in the championship, all possible because of the economic and regulatory environment existing at that time. The difficulty has arisen when the sport has not been able to adjust to the changes around it. We have ended up with a situation where it's very difficult to find sponsors. It's not only a small team thing – if you look at some of the big teams and see how many sponsors they have got in, without business-to-business deals done in the past. In terms of real, true sponsors – it's not many.

**Does the sport change too often?**

The regulations have made the sport far more complex, and there is no stability and foreseeability. F1 is still a fantastic brand – for marketing purposes, for technological excellence and for exciting so many people. It has all the ingredients, but we are getting more and more competition from other sports, so we have to do something. Do we get together to do it? No, because at the end of the day, everything is being used by bigger teams to just get their technical wishes through.

**In the short term what can be done to make it more viable for independents?**

The quickest step is to redistribute the income.

Sauber faces a difficult struggle to survive in F1



HONE/LAT

Verstappen showed  
Red Bull the way  
at Sepang



# Toro Rosso turns the tables

**Toro Rosso is ahead of Red Bull in the constructors' championship with ambitions of finishing fifth. LAWRENCE BARRETTO explains the team's rise to prominence**



**T**he Malaysian Grand Prix marked something of a watershed moment for Toro Rosso as it was the first time since the Italian team became a fully-fledged constructor in 2010 that it had managed to get both cars to the chequered flag in the points ahead of two finishing Red Bulls.

The Faenza-based team was the fourth quickest on race pace, finishing seventh and eighth, behind world champion Mercedes, Ferrari

and Williams, to put it fifth in the constructors' championship, ahead of sister team Red Bull for the first time since the second race of 2009.

Red Bull struggled with brake issues at Sepang amid an unusually off-colour weekend. But, while the four-time world champion team continues to struggle, there's no reason why Toro Rosso can't keep the tables turned in its favour for a little longer. But how has a team, with its roots in the old Minardi

squad, and which started with a staff of around 85, transformed itself into a thorn in its big brother's side?

Toro Rosso made its debut in 2006 after Paul Stoddart sold Minardi to Red Bull magnate Dietrich Mateschitz, who formed a partnership with ex-F1 driver Gerhard Berger. Its purpose, using a modified version of Red Bull's chassis, was to provide a place for promising drivers from Red Bull's junior programme to develop their skills.

In 2008 Toro Rosso, led by team principal Franz Tost, started punching above its weight, with Sebastian Vettel claiming its first pole position at the Italian Grand Prix before following it up with a shock win in the Monza rain. But the team had to hit the reset button ahead of the 2010 season, with new rules stating that each squad must build its own cars.

And so the rebuild began.

The team increased the number of machines in the factory, began working in two shifts during the winter and recruited key personnel,



Team boss Tost is happy so far

Sainz: P8 in Malaysia for an STR double-points haul



## THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

Toro Rosso had its critics when it announced a rookie-driver line-up of Max Verstappen, 17, and Carlos Sainz Jr, 20, for 2015, with their combined age just two years older than Kimi Raikkonen's. But on the evidence of the first two races of the season – with Sainz scoring in both and Verstappen becoming the youngest points scorer in Malaysia – you could argue those critics have been answered.

"Max and Carlos have done a fantastic job without any mistakes," says team boss Franz Tost. "They are open-minded and they want to learn until late at night. They want to see what is going on, what's being changed on the car, and this understanding helps them perform

well. They are high-skilled drivers."

Crucial to that early success was the team's preparation, according to tech boss James Key.

"We did do a lot of laps in pre-season testing and that prepared them well both technically, so they can sit down and go through stuff with the engineers," says Key. "On the track, that put us a lot further ahead than this time last year."

And that has paid dividends, with Key praising the drivers' feedback and approach to racing. "They're both doing exactly what we want and the feedback in the race about the tyres is exactly what you want," he said. "It doesn't feel like they're rookies in many respects. There's no major drama, they just got on with the job."



Sainz (l) and Verstappen have impressed the team

XPB/IMAGES



STR has upgraded its facilities in recent years...



...which includes manufacturing capabilities

**"The team started development of its chassis earlier and worked hard on its relationship with Renault"**

designing a car in-house and thus Key came on board.

Toro Rosso quickly realised that to succeed in F1, it needed to get its house in order so upgraded its facilities. Rather than working across a variety of factory units on an industrial site in Faenza, a hangover from the Minardi days, the team bought the building across the street from its main HQ, which had become available, and put everything under one roof, tripling the size of its facility.

A wind-tunnel in Bicester was purchased, with the team working hard to improve communications between the two facilities. It designs all the parts demanded by the regulations, such as the

monocoque, bodywork, suspension and fuel tank, and at present is manufacturing 80 to 85 per cent of its carbon parts in-house.

Some links with Red Bull remain, with Toro Rosso carrying out work with Red Bull Technology in Milton Keynes, and there is some pooling of resources on areas such as engine installations as they share the same engine supplier in Renault. The team also uses Red Bull gearbox internals, but it manufactures its own casing, which allows Toro Rosso to have freedom over the suspension geometry.

Despite its relatively small budget – around £90 million compared with Red Bull's £240m – Toro Rosso has done the simple things

right. It started development of its 2015 chassis much earlier, worked hard on its relationship with Renault, after switching power units from Ferrari last year, and smartly did as much running as possible with rookie line-up Carlos Sainz Jr and Max Verstappen during pre-season testing – only Mercedes and Sauber completed more laps.

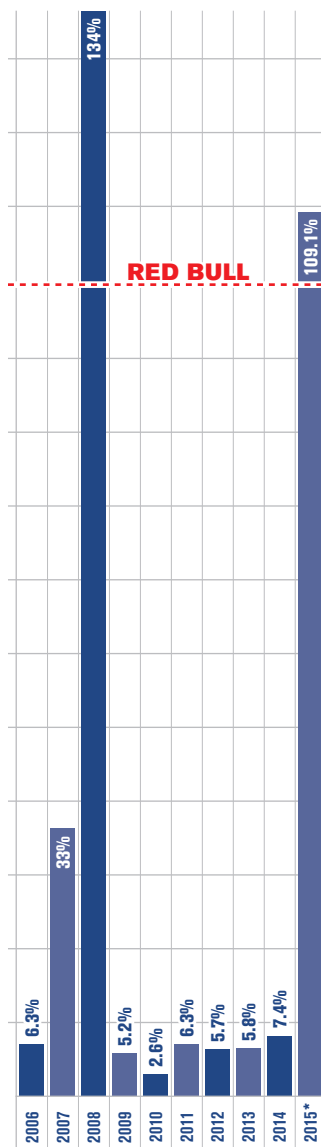
Now the rewards are coming with its good relationship with Renault clear in Malaysia as it outperformed Red Bull at Sepang. Tost maintained the team's target is "not to finish ahead of Red Bull" but to end the season fifth in the constructors' championship. That is a tough challenge, as Red Bull will surely improve, while McLaren-Honda will arguably be in the mix once the team gets its act together.

But with Renault understood to be to be keen on making Toro Rosso its works squad in the future, and the team starting 2015 well, the future looks bright for Toro Rosso – and for the next few races, it could find itself giving its big brother more of a headache. 🏆

### 2006-2015 STR v RED BULL

Toro Rosso's points over the past 10 years as a percentage of those scored by Red Bull.

\*After two races





24

# Is Blancpain Endurance the world's

As Europe's leading GT series gets under way with a packed grid at Monza, **GARY WATKINS** wonders if the

**B**y any standards, it is an amazing grid. There are 23 cars entered for the top Pro Cup class of this weekend's opening round of the Blancpain Endurance Series at Monza and they are packed full of top drivers. Which makes it difficult to argue against the statement that the BES is the most competitive GT championship in the world right now.

There are factory teams from Bentley with M-Sport and Lamborghini, which has entrusted its new Huracan GT3 to the Austrian Grasser squad, and Nissan with RJN Motorsport. Then, just as importantly, there are the swathes of factory drivers from

Audi and McLaren placed with customer teams.

And that's not even taking the other 33 full-season cars, entered across the Pro-Am and Am categories, into account.

Series boss Stephane Ratel has no doubts that this year's BES is the strongest GT series in the world. One of his staunchest supporters, WRT team boss Vincent Vosse, goes even further.

"If someone has proof that there is a stronger championship anywhere in the world, then I would like to see it," he says. "Maybe not all 23 cars have the potential to win, but at least 15 do. Show me another series where that is the case."

Vosse points out that the World Endurance Championship has only six regular cars — two each from Audi, Porsche and Toyota — battling it out at the front. The better comparison would be between the WEC's GTE Pro class and the Pro Cup class of the BES. So that's seven versus 23, 15 or whatever.

The BES clearly wins in terms of the quantity, but does it come out on top in the quality stakes? The WEC has three manufacturers in Ferrari, Porsche and Aston Martin represented by full-house factory teams, but the BES can meet it with its works squads from Bentley, Lamborghini and Nissan and then

raise it with the manufacturer-affiliated outfits from Audi and McLaren.

The big question is whether the racing is going to be as intense in the BES as in the WEC.

New McLaren factory driver Bruno Senna, a former member of Aston Martin Racing's WEC squad, has talked about a "more consistent fight in the Blancpain", but AMR boss John Gaw reckons the competition is purer in the world championship.

"Can you really find out who is the best when there are 60 cars going into the first corner?" argues Gaw. "With so many cars and such a range in the standard of driving standards, there are too many variables — it can be a bit of a lottery."

That is clearly always going to be part of the landscape of the series, but the BES has arguably crystallised into two championships in one for the new season: there is a top-notch professional series out front; and a home for the gentleman

**"Last year, the Pro Cup was clearly down on quality. Prize money must have contributed"**

STEPHANE RATEL







The BES starts with a competitive grid



Just 19 cars for the opener at Nogaro

VISIONSPORT AGENCY

## RATEL PERPLEXED BY REDUCED ENTRY FOR SPRINT SERIES

The growth of the BES hasn't been mirrored by the sprint series. Just 19 cars were on the entry for last weekend's series opener at Nogaro, and boss Stephane Ratel isn't entirely sure why.

"Last year, we started at 20 cars and went to 25 at Zolder [the penultimate round before the Baku invitational finale] with natural growth," he says. "I really thought we would start with around that number this year."

Ratel believes several factors are responsible for the low entry, including the departure of a couple of teams in circumstances that reflect positively on the championship. Grasser, for example, is racing in the BES after landing a Lamborghini factory deal as a result of its success in the BSS last year.

A clash between Nogaro and the opening round of the British GT Championship at Oulton Park is another reason. "We had a couple of British teams that were really interested, but if you can't do the

opening round, it doesn't really make sense," says Ratel.

The street race in Moscow might also be a factor, he suggests: "Maybe it makes the series seem a bit too complicated for people when we already have Baku."

He also points to the Ferrari 458 Italia – of which there are 17 in the BES – being an unfashionable choice of machinery for the BSS. "If we had five or six Ferraris, the picture would be different straightaway," he argues.

The series chief suspects that the offer of prize money in the BES, even with the stipulation that teams competing in the full Blancpain GT Series receive the full amount, could have been counterproductive: "Maybe it made the sprint series less special."

Ratel isn't too concerned, however, insisting that the BSS grid will grow in time for round two at Brands Hatch next month.

**P43 NOGARO RACE REPORT**

# best GT series?

thriving BES boasts the best grid in the world

driver further down the pack. The Pro class has more than doubled from the 11 cars that contested all five rounds last year, but just as significant is the quality of the driver combinations.

Take McLaren. Last year, it placed Alvaro Parente and Kevin Estre at its favoured team, ART Grand Prix, which combined them with a mixture of pros and pay drivers. This time Parente and Estre are joined by fellow factory drivers Senna, Rob Bell and Shane van Gisbergen across Von Ryan Racing's pair of 650S GT3s.

Ratel credits the introduction of prize money — the same €100,000 pot per round on offer in the Blancpain Sprint Series — for the subsequent increase in quality. The lack of top line crews in Pro Cup was something he admits he wanted to address.

"It was clearly down on quality," he says. "At the start of the season, it looked like only one Bentley and one McLaren could ever win. Prize money must have contributed."



Audi and McLaren run affiliated outfits

Ratel has had a long-held ambivalence to factory teams that dates back to the early years of the FIA GT Championship in 1997-98. But he draws a distinction between works teams that are an add-on to a true customer programme and overt factory participation. He suggests that Cadillac's assault with the new Pratt & Miller-built ATS-V.R in the

Pirelli World Challenge in the US, which has adopted the GT3 rulebook for its top division, as a danger to the category.

"I am sorry, I haven't seen a customer programme at Cadillac and selling used factory cars to customers next year, like they used to do with [Chevrolet] Corvettes in GT1 is not a customer programme,"

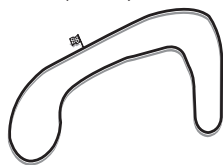
he says. "I believe that the homologation rules should demand a customer programme."

Ratel, who floated the idea of banning works teams a couple of seasons back, is happy with the level of factory participation in the BES right now. He knows that it gives the series the cachet that was missing in the past. ❧

# BTCC

Brands Hatch (GB)

April 5



Round 1/10

## RESULTS

**RACE 1** 24 laps, 28,990 miles

1	ROB COLLARD (GB)	WSR BMW 125i M Sport	19m52.332s
2	ARON SMITH (IRL)	BMR Volkswagen CC	+0.411s
3	JASON PLATO (GB)	BMR Volkswagen CC	+0.884s
4	JACK GOFF (GB)	MG (Triple Eight) MG6 (S)	+5.464s
5	COLIN TURKINGTON (GB)	BMR Volkswagen CC	+5.726s
6	GORDON SHEDDEN (GB)	Honda (Dynamics) Civic Type-R	+5.819s
7	ANDREW JORDAN (GB)	MG (Triple Eight) MG6	+7.127s
8	MATT NEAL (GB)	Honda (Dynamics) Civic Type-R	+8.668s
9	ANDY PRIAULX (GB)	WSR BMW 125i M Sport (S)	+9.974s
10	TOM INGRAM (GB)	Speedworks Toyota Avensis	+11.260s
11	ADAM MORGAN (GB)	Cicley Mercedes A-Class	+12.763s
12	AIDEN MOFFATT (GB)	Laser Tools Mercedes A-Class	+21.151s
13	JOSH COOK (GB)	Power Maxed Chevrolet Cruze	+23.396s
14	ROB AUSTIN (GB)	Rob Austin Audi A4 (S)	+25.613s
15	SAM TORDOFF (GB)	WSR BMW 125i M Sport (S)	+27.329s

Winner's average speed: 87.53mph. Fastest lap: Plato, 48.756s, 89.19mph. Pole: Priaulx, 48.411s, 89.82mph. (S) = soft tyres used in this race.

**RACE 2** 24 laps, 28,990 miles

1	SHEDDEN	Honda	19m57.832s
2	PRIAULX	BMW	+0.040s
3	TURKINGTON	Volkswagen	+1.131s
4	MORGAN	Mercedes	+4.646s
5	JORDAN	MG	+5.229s
6	INGRAM	Toyota	+5.566s
7	TORDOFF	BMW	+8.365s
8	NEAL	Honda	+9.176s
9	GOFF	MG	+9.653s
10	AUSTIN	Audi	+12.826s
11	HUNTER ABBOTT (GB)	Rob Austin Audi A4	+13.275s
12	SMITH	Volkswagen	+13.733s
13	MOFFATT	Mercedes	+13.886s
14	COOK	Chevrolet	+17.025s
15	DAVE NEWSHAM (GB)	Power Maxed Chevrolet Cruze	+21.380s

Winner's average speed: 87.12mph. Fastest lap: Plato, 48.763s, 89.17mph. Pole: Plato.

**RACE 3** 27 laps, 32,613 miles

1	NEAL	Honda (S)	25m10.270s
2	GOFF	MG	+0.196s
3	SMITH	Volkswagen (S)	+1.706s
4	TORDOFF	BMW	+4.553s
5	AUSTIN	Audi	+4.719s
6	INGRAM	Toyota (S)	+5.662s
7	MORGAN	Mercedes (S)	+7.537s
8	PRIAULX	BMW	+8.825s
9	NEWSHAM	Chevrolet	+8.909s
10	ABBOTT	Audi	+9.157s
11	MIKE BUSHELL (GB)	AmD Ford Focus ST	+11.771s
12	TURKINGTON	Volkswagen (S)	+17.558s
13	MARTIN DEPPEP (GB)	Eurotech Honda Civic (S)	+21.188s
14	JEFF SMITH (GB)	Eurotech Honda Civic (S)	+21.847s
15	SIMON BELCHER (GB)	Handy Toyota Avensis	+24.415s

Winner's average speed: 77.74mph. Fastest lap: Shedden, 48.982s, 88.77mph. Pole: Austin.

## DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	NEAL	37	6	TURKINGTON	30
2	GOFF	37	7	MORGAN	27
3	SMITH	36	8	INGRAM	26
4	PRIAULX	34	9	TORDOFF	23
5	SHEDDEN	32	10	COLLARD	21



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# Hondas stun as BTCC fires into life

Two wins for Honda's brand new car made for an unpredictable start to the 2015 BTCC season at Brands Hatch, and some surprising names on top in the points. By **SCOTT MITCHELL**



THIS WAS A SEASON BEING BILLED FOR ITS unpredictability, a season set to be as wide open as any British Touring Car Championship campaign has ever been. Hyperbole or not, there was plenty of anticipation as the tin-top circus rolled in to Brands Hatch.

As it happens, such talk was spot on. A driver who has not raced in the championship since 2002 took pole position, there were three different winners on Sunday, and a man driving a brand-new car shares the championship lead with a youngster who has never won a BTCC race.

We may well spend most of this season raving about how difficult victories are to predict on a race-by-race basis, and the season could become cyclical. A good result one weekend may set up a driver for a tougher follow-up, especially if they carry more than 50kg of ballast into qualifying

and race one, struggle and are slow, and then start race two further down the field.

The new qualifying format for race two, based on fastest laps in the opener, certainly gave a fresh feel to this race, in which the beefed-up ballast for frontrunners hit hard, while the soft-compound Dunlops also caught out many and jumbled things up. Those two variables helped transform a processional opening race into two explosive encounters in the afternoon. And the stars of both were Honda drivers.

There were those who had their doubts, pointing to the niggling reliability issues the new Honda Civic Type-R suffered in its truncated pre-season as a reason to expect Matt Neal and Gordon Shedden might suffer at Brands.

Qualifying being as tight as it was, and with Team Dynamics not even managing a handful of

Neal beat  
Goff (right) and  
Smith in final race



pre-season test days with the new car, it was not surprising to see both men in the second half of the quarter-of-a-second margin that covered the top dozen drivers. "I was hoping to get top-six qualifying," admitted Neal, "but I wasn't down because I could feel the potential in the car."

That positivity was vindicated on Sunday and, come the races, Shedden led the charge. He moved forwards to finish sixth in the opening encounter, defeating the MG of Andrew Jordan in a straight fight and harrying Jack Goff (MG) and Colin Turkington's Team BMR Volkswagen CC.

In race two, once the dominating Jason Plato slid into the Paddock Hill gravel with a front-left puncture, Shedden was left to fight Andy Priaulx for the victory – which he managed by 0.040s after surviving a final-corner attack from WSR's triple world champion.

"It's just incredible," he enthused. "It never ceases to amaze me what Team Dynamics can do. "It's not quite where we need it yet, there's a bit of work to do at the minute. It's weekend number one and we were just trying to get the thing reliable. We're in there, and that's the main thing."

Unfortunately for the 2012 champion, race three was a demonstration of the new car's potential fragility, as a misfire forced him to pit under the safety car and led to a non-finish.

But as one door closes, another opens – this time Neal picked up the gauntlet, passing poleman Rob Austin in the final third of the reversed-grid race and holding off the impressive Goff to take victory, the 54th of his long BTCC career.

"I can't believe it really," Neal said. "I'm just over the moon. I never expected one car to be up there, so we were chuffed to bits when 'Flash' [won]. I was stood up there and thinking I wasn't going to be here this weekend. To get two out of three..."

In truth, the Civic was not the quickest car at Brands Hatch – but this was never Honda's aim. Picking up what points it could was key, as Neal's championship lead proves. For while on pace the WSR BMW 125i M Sports and Team BMR Volkswagens were on top, they came unstuck.

Nothing better illustrated the influence the championship's new ballast regulations, and the need to use the soft tyre, could have on the outcome of each race weekend than the changing fortunes of the WSR drivers.

Priaulx bagged a popular pole, his second in a row in the championship (having done so for the final round of the 2002 season!), and led in the early stages of the opening race, but cooked his soft tyres and eventually dropped to ninth.

Team-mate Collard picked up the baton and ran with it, earning a fine victory, but with 75kg and soft tyres for race two he dropped like a stone, finishing a point-less 16th.

Priaulx made little progress from ninth on the grid in the finale, ending up eighth, although that was as much down to the BMWs' poor straight-line speed, which was always bound to make overtaking tough. It was a similar story for Sam Tordoff, whose weekend was compromised by an incident in race one that left him on the fringes of the top 10. The ex-MG driver made incremental progress, but was not thrilled with his car's ballast – or the speed-trap figures that suggested the cars were at a significant disadvantage.

But while the BMW team could be disappointed not to have made more from such a promising start, it was the similarly acronymic BMR squad that probably had more of a case of 'what might have been'. Aron Smith sandwiched an incident-induced 12th with a second and third, and Plato and Turkington got their own maiden podium finishes for the team, but it should have been more.

No word other than 'robbed' is fit to describe what happened to Plato in race two, having built a commanding four-second lead despite carrying over 60kg of ballast. "We've done all our work on ballast," he explained. "It's been designed, our set-up, our strategy, around carrying weight. That's when we have the best balance and feeling."

Had he not suffered a front-left puncture it would have been one hell of a marker to the team's rivals. While the upshot of it is the 2001 and '10 champion lying 19 points off the lead, the team's progress is clear to see.

"My car was ace, exactly where I wanted it to be," Plato said after race two. "I've been quietly confident anyway. I know what the car did last year and I know the input we've made. We've turned it upside down and these are the results. There are still some improvements to be made and if we do that we'll be in good shape."

Shedden beat  
Priaulx by a nose  
to race-two win



Smith was  
top-scoring  
BMR driver



Austin clash ended  
a difficult weekend  
for Andrew Jordan

We were chuffed to bits when 'Flash' won. To get two out of three... I'm just over the moon

MATT NEAL

Turkington looked to be putting together a handy Sunday's work, but literally threw it away in race three when he spun on his own at Surtees – "It's our Achilles' heel, a snappy rear end" – and thus ended the finale 12th.

There's no escaping that Brands was a clear missed opportunity for some to begin their new eras with a win. Over at MG, the feel-good factor was as palpable on one side of the garage by the end of Sunday as it was absent on the other. For while Goff, supremely confident as he fought Neal for victory in race three, bagged a fourth, eighth and second to go joint top of the standings with the Honda veteran, team-mate Jordan struggled with his car's balance, and his weekend ended with him in a lapped 19th after tangling with Austin while fighting over third at Clearways.

The 2013 champion cut a disconsolate figure ▶

HAWKINS

Plato dominated race two until this puncture



► thereafter, having complained of understeer throughout the weekend, although the silver lining was a much more competitive race-three performance on the soft tyre. “We’ve learned what we need to do,” he noted, solemnly, in the Triple Eight truck at the end of the day.

Neal’s table-topping tally of 37 points would have had him sixth in the standings at the same stage last season, so those that suffered a poor opening weekend – such as Plato and Jordan – haven’t got as much ground to make up as they might in other seasons. It’s unlikely that what transpired at Brands will prove to be a one-off and, while it will be tougher to deliver big hauls of points as they play catch-up, it’s almost guaranteed that the early championship pacesetters will trip up and bring home a small total at one point or another.

But a strong start is never something to be sniffed at, and with some of the big guns failing to fire the opportunity for the less-fancied drivers to shine was firmly grasped. Goff looked genuinely more comfortable in the MG than Jordan, and his second place in the finale equalled his best BTCC result. Meanwhile, Smith is only one point off the top of the table – he qualified as top VW and led Plato and Turkington home in race one, so you have to acknowledge that’s on merit, not fortune.

There’s no reason we can’t be back here in however many months’ time fighting for the title

ARON SMITH

“The way I’d describe it is in qualifying I proved we had the pace, and in the races I proved we had the intelligence to stay at the front,” explained Smith. “Our whole package is so bloody quick. There’s no reason we can’t be coming back here in however many months’ time fighting for the title.

“That’s what this championship needs. They need it to be exciting. People need it to be unpredictable. I think this championship will be alive this year.”

Goff was more circumspect. Having targeted a podium pre-weekend and achieved that in race

three, the points lead was a welcome boost. While the 2012 Renault UK Clio Cup champion acknowledged that life at MG had started promisingly, he was not getting too carried away, with a nod to the new regulations.

“I wanted a podium, whether I thought it would happen I’m not too sure,” he admitted. “It’s nice to get it off our back straight away, so we’re on the front foot – but also the back foot. With the new [ballast] regulations it’s going to hurt us in race one and race two [at Donington]. It will mix it up a bit.”

Credit should also go to those on the fringes of the spotlight for making the most of the shake-up in the order and the yo-yoing performance of some teams and drivers.

Two drivers in particular were Adam Morgan and Tom Ingram, who are a point apart in seventh and eighth in the championship. Morgan’s peak of fourth in race two, once he had cleared Collard’s struggling BMW, showed his Ciceley Racing Mercedes A-Class is likely to continue its 2014 form as a podium challenger, even though the Lancastrian was disappointed to be outside the top 10 in qualifying after an encouraging pre-season.

Ingram, meanwhile, earned a trio of top-10 finishes in Speedworks Motorport’s Toyota Avensis, despite managing only three laps of pre-season testing. Christian Dick’s team has built what is basically a new car for 2015, one that’s 40kg lighter than last year, and the 2013 Ginetta Supercup champion looks set to build on a series of impressive performances in his rookie campaign last year.

Brands certainly offered a demonstration of the unpredictability that was so widely heralded in the build-up to the weekend. Although there aren’t many people genuinely thinking it will be anyone but the usual suspects duking it out for the championship when the series returns to Brands at the end of the year, it’s far too soon, and far too presumptuous, to suggest that others can’t have a say in the conclusion we’ll reach in October.

Even if the status quo is maintained in the end and the same old faces are brought into play, the journey to that point looks tantalising.

“I’m under no illusions,” Neal stressed. “It’s going to be a proper fight going forward.”



Ingram bagged three top-10s in Speedworks Toyota

## IN THE PADDOCK

SCOTT MITCHELL  
FEATURES EDITOR

@ScottMitchell189



AS SOMEONE WHO PINNED A LOT OF their pre-season writing on a theme of unpredictably, I have to confess to being relieved as much as anything that Brands Hatch provided three very different races and a championship order few, if anyone, would have guessed beforehand.

If you're trying to advertise the BTCC, that was pretty much a perfect start to the season. Some said the opener was dull, but it was actually just a pure race. There was no ballast in play, so this was performance-led, and fair play to Rob Collard for coming out on top after Andy Priaulx's soft tyres faded at mid-distance.

That opening encounter suggested that the WSR BMWs have not lost their pace from last year, although any advantage they have in traction out of corners was certainly negated in straight-line speed. But the raw-pace advantage, for the weekend as a whole, was surely in favour of Team BMR.

Aron Smith, who new team-mate Colin Turkington reckons is getting "the ultimate potential" out of the car thanks to his year's experience from 2014, overshadowed his two big-name stablemates at Brands. He's third in the points after podiums in race one and three, and would probably be leading

BMW's and VW's were quick at Brands Hatch



were it not for Jack Goff punting him off in race two (for which the MG driver received two penalty points on his licence).

Smith extracted the maximum from his VW when it was at its lightest, but what was probably more ominous was Jason Plato's race-two performance. In a season set to be dominated by who deals best with higher ballast amounts, the VW looks strongest.

"That's when we have the best balance and feeling. The weight helps with the rear; zero weight hinders it," Plato said having blitzed race two while carrying 57kg of ballast before retiring with a puncture.

There may well be critics who grow concerned with how up-and-down this year's race weekends pan out. Drivers may struggle in qualifying and race one with high weight, fight back from a poor grid slot in race two, but drop back in the finale.

But the VW has been run over the winter with carrying that weight in mind, proof that the disadvantage can be negated with the right preparation. The swing in performance should, as teams gain more experience in that trim, reduce as the season goes on. Only then can we judge if the series has gone too far with the variables at play.

Infiniti debut pleased Palmer



## One-car debut for new Infiniti

**DEREK PALMER JR BELIEVES THE** new Infiniti British Touring Car team will make big strides at the next round, after giving the Support our Paras Racing team its series debut at the weekend.

Palmer raced alone at Brands Hatch after a problem sidelined the team's second Q50, due to be driven by Richard Hawken.

The car ran encouragingly in practice despite only being shaken down on Wednesday at Mallory Park. Although Palmer qualified 25th of the 27 runners, he was only 2.1s slower than Andy Priaulx's pole-position time.

A power-steering issue forced him out of race one after just 14 laps but a 20th-place finish in race two and 18th in race three left Palmer optimistic for Donington Park.

"I'm really happy with the balance of the car," he said. "I'm surprised how good it is, and super proud of the job the guys have done. There are wee bits and bobs. A few small things make a big difference."

## Bushell takes early JST lead

### RENAULT UK CLIO CUP CHAMPION

Mike Bushell leads the Jack Sears Trophy after the opening three races.

This year the JST will be awarded to the series' top rookie, having previously been run for the leading S2000 car and then the driver completing the most overtakes.

Bushell is tied with Clio rival Josh Cook on five points and 17th overall, but leads by virtue of his 11th-place finish in race three. There are five other eligible drivers: Derek Palmer Jr, Richard Hawken, Andy Wilmot, Kieran Gallagher and Alex Martin.

## Drivers barred from grid draw

**DRIVERS WILL NO LONGER** be involved in the draw for the championship's reversed-grid races.

The grid for the final BTCC race at each meeting is decided by five balls – numbered 6 to 10 – being put into a pot, with one selected at random to determine how many of the top finishers from the second race will start in reverse order. Rob Austin admitted to deliberately drawing himself on pole position at Brands.

Series director Alan Gow said: "I have changed the draw procedure

with immediate effect so that no current drivers take part in it."

Later, Austin was redrawn on pole position by Gow and finished fifth.

Austin claimed that he looked into the pot because other drivers had done the same in the past. "I am truly and sincerely regretful for letting everyone down with my moment of stupidity, and I hope everyone will accept my most sincere apologies and not let my actions be a negative reflection on the championship, my sponsors or my team," he said.

Austin admitted to looking in to pot before the draw



BIG NUMBER

4579

Andy Priaulx took his second BTCC pole in a row by topping qualifying at Brands Hatch – although 4579 days had passed since his previous BTCC race, the 2002 season finale.

### COACH ON THE MENU

Double British Touring Car champion Alain Menu is driver-coaching Team BMR owner and driver Warren Scott. Menu, who had an unsuccessful stint with the team last season in the BTCC, will attend all 10 rounds to offer guidance to Scott. He is also seeking a partial race programme after missing out on a full-time seat.

### CROCKED PROTONS

Only 26 cars contested the season opener after both Protons were sidelined. A broken foot meant Dan Welch could not take part, while team-mate Andy Wilmot participated in practice and qualifying but an engine issue forced him out of the races. Other absentees from the season opener were Infiniti's Richard Hawken, Nicolas Hamilton and Motorbase drivers Mat Jackson and James Cole.

### OVERTAKING TROPHY

A new trophy provided by series tyre supplier Dunlop will be awarded to the driver who completes the most overtakes this season. The Dunlop Forever Forward trophy will be monitored on social media throughout the season, and has been implemented after the change in qualification for the Jack Sears Trophy, which will now be awarded to the best rookie in the series (see story, left).

MSA FORMULA BRANDS HATCH INDY, APRIL 4-5 RD 1/10

# Norris and Collard are first victors in MSA Formula

TWO WINS FOR LANDO NORRIS MEANT THAT THE former karter left Brands Hatch as the man to beat after some intriguing racing in the inaugural weekend of MSA Formula.

Norris grabbed the lead at the start of a disappointing first race, as pole man Daniel Baybutt ran wide. He never looked back as he claimed the opening win and even a safety car, caused by Louise Richardson spinning at Paddock Hill Bend, didn't faze him.

Jack Barlow was also in the wars as start-line contact with Richardson forced him out.

While the cars ran close together throughout, there was little overtaking of note except for Daniel Ticktum's move for second around the outside at Druids on Matheus Leist with two left.

Race two instantly dispelled fears over the Mygale FIA F4 spec cars being unable to overtake each other, with a plethora of passes occurring.

Ricky Collard stole the show with a blistering start to seize the lead from fourth on the grid. The son of British Touring Car Championship driver Rob was on top for the remainder, despite the best efforts of Fortec Motorsport's Ticktum.

"It was a Collard special at the start!" said the Arden racer. "I've learned a lot from my Dad. My car was like it was on rails and it's fantastic to take my first win."



It was a good Sunday for the Collards



Leist battles with victor Norris (31)

Collard took full advantage of an early safety car, caused by Sennan Fielding being spun by Baybutt, to catch his rivals napping. However, another caution when second-placed Rafael Martins' SWB machine's engine switched off, brought them closer.

In the end, JTR driver James Pull rounded out the podium, while Colton Herta stormed through from 12th on the grid to take fourth.

An interesting element of the race was how drivers fared when they weren't using fresh rubber. With new tyres limited and rapidly degrading, those on older rubber struggled. That explained why Leist and Norris could only manage ninth and 10th, respectively.

There are clearly a few teething problems with the new cars too. Enaam Ahmed was one to be caught out as he went straight into the barriers at Clearways when his throttle stuck open.

Pull was able to get the better getaway of the two front-row starters in the final race, as Norris had to settle for second in the early stages.

The safety car made another appearance when the hapless Gustavo Myasava, who spun on the

parade lap of the second race, went straight on at Druids.

It was only a few laps before the safety car returned when Jack Butel was forced off the track at Graham Hill Bend.

This time, Pull did not make such a good restart and lost out to Norris into Druids. While the Carlin driver scampered into the distance, Pull defended stoutly from Leist to take second.

"The start was awesome," said Pull, "but the safety car went off quite late and I couldn't accelerate. That delayed me and had a knock on effect around the lap."

● Stephen Lickorish

## RESULTS (all 23 laps)

**Race 1** 1 Lando Norris; 2 Daniel Ticktum +1.156s; 3 Matheus Leist; 4 Sennan Fielding; 5 Ricky Collard; 6 Rafael Martins.

**Fastest lap** Ticktum 46.448s (93.62mph). **Race 2** 1 Collard; 2 Ticktum +0.435s; 3 James Pull; 4 Colton Herta; 5 Josh Smith; 6 Sandy Mitchell. **FL** Ticktum 46.132s (94.26mph).

**Race 3** 1 Norris; 2 Pull +3.009s; 3 Leist; 4 Jack Barlow; 5 Ticktum; 6 Collard. **FL** Norris 46.483s (93.55mph). **Points** 1 Norris, 53; 2 Ticktum, 48; 3 Collard, 43; 4 Pull, 37; 5 Leist, 34; 6 Barlow, 18.

GINETTA JUNIORS BRANDS HATCH INDY, APRIL 4-5 RD 1/10

# Monger misses out on double win

A HUGE GRID OF GINETTA JUNIOR CARS AND A pair of typically eventful races launched the 2015 season in entertaining style, with wins for Billy Monger and Senna Proctor.

Dane Patrik Matthiesen led away in race one, but Monger passed him at the start of lap two. Monger stayed in front, to the noisy delight of his supporters afterwards, but Matthiesen, Proctor and Stuart Middleton finished on his tail. Less than 1.2s covered the quartet as they took the flag.

Sophia Floersch headed the pursuit a little way back in fifth place, narrowly beating Jonathan Hadfield and William Stacey. The most exciting action came in a bunch of up to a dozen cars contesting eighth place down.

This group was eventually headed home by Lewis Brown and included a disappointed winter champion Jamie Caroline.

First-lap incidents in a hectic second race forced a restart and eliminated Floersch. Monger continued where he left off the day before, leaving Proctor and Caroline to squabble over second after passing Matthiesen.

Caroline had the place with two laps to go, but a slight mistake at the final corner by Monger and a lunge by Caroline resulted in contact, letting Proctor through for an emotional first win. Caroline recovered to second, but Monger fell to 14th after returning to the track following his late off.

● Brian Phillips



Monger leads the field at the start

## RESULTS

**Race 1 (10 laps)** 1 Billy Monger; 2 Patrik Matthiesen +0.440s; 3 Senna Proctor; 4 Stuart Middleton; 5 Sophia Floersch; 6 Jonathan Hadfield. **FL** William Stacey 56.885s (76.44mph). **Race 2 (11 laps)** 1 Proctor; 2 Jamie Caroline +0.110s; 3 Matthiesen; 4 Lewis Brown; 5 Dan Zelos; 6 William Tregurtha. **FL** Matthiesen 56.990s (76.53mph). **Points** 1 Proctor, 61; 2 Matthiesen, 58; 3 Caroline, 42; 4 Monger, 42; 5 Brown, 36; 6 Zelos, 32.

**GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP BRANDS HATCH INDY, APRIL 4-5 RD 1/10**

## Orton breezes to top first two races

JAMIE ORTON MADE WINNING LOOK RELATIVELY easy while heading for a double victory in the first two rounds of the GT4 Supercup.

Team-mate Carl Breeze also had plenty to celebrate, earning his 100th Ginetta trophy, and the pair take a joint championship lead.

Orton secured pole for race one on a dampish track ahead of fellow HHC drivers Breeze and Will Burns. Michael Caine took a failed gamble on slicks and lined up 15th.

Orton nailed the start and Breeze passed Burns into second, and that remained the order until a last lap mistake by Burns at Paddock Hill Bend allowed Tom Oliphant to sneak through. Caine made rapid progress and finished seventh, close behind Reece Somerfield and Ollie Jackson.

In Sunday's second race, Orton, Breeze and Burns completed the HHC clean sweep they'd been hoping for. Somerfield found a narrow gap to grab third at the start, but yielded to pressure from Burns and Oliphant. Caine gave Somerfield



Orton took two narrow wins

a hard time, finishing just behind him in sixth, but was rewarded with pole for race three.

"HHC have done an amazing job, and after a start like this to the season I don't really care what happens in race three," said Orton. "There will be no silly b\*\*\*\*\* from sixth on the grid."

True to his word, Orton loitered well back before moving up to take fifth from Caine. At the front, Somerfield burst ahead at the start and kept Breeze at bay for his first win since joining the championship.

● Brian Phillips

### RESULTS

**Race 1 (15 laps) 1 Jamie Orton;** 2 Carl Breeze +0.330s; 3 Tom Oliphant; 4 William Burns; 5 Reece Somerfield; 6 Ollie Jackson. **CW** White. **FL** Oliphant 48.035s (90.52mph).

**Race 2 (23 laps) 1 Orton;** 2 Breeze +0.646s; 3 Burns; 4 Oliphant; 5 Somerfield; 6 Michael Caine. **CW** White. **FL** Burns 47.934s (90.72mph).

**Race 3 (23 laps) 1 Somerfield;** 2 Breeze +1.019s; 3 Burns; 4 Oliphant; 5 Orton; 6 Caine. **CW** White. **FL** Breeze 48.433s (89.78mph).

**Points 1 Orton, 91;** 2 Breeze, 91; 3 Burns, 75; 4 Somerfield, 75; 5 Oliphant 71; 6 Caine, 52.

**Sutton (I) and Whorton-Eales fight on last lap**



**CLIO CUP UK BRANDS HATCH INDY, APRIL 4-5 RD 1/9**

## Sutton victim of Ant's bite for lead

ANT WHORTON-EALES WON THE ONLY CLIO CUP race to be completed, forcing his way past Ashley Sutton at the final corner in a move which left the deposed leader disgruntled.

Polesitter Ash Hand was cautious at the start, allowing Sutton and Whorton-Eales to break clear in a race-long duel. Three laps from the end Whorton-Eales briefly headed his rival in a rehearsal for his winning move, but had to repeat it in robust fashion after Sutton regained the lead.

Hand defeated Jordan Stilp in another close contest, this time for third, but Paul Rivett lost his chance of joining in after a trip through the Clark Curve gravel trap.

The intended season opener on Saturday was abandoned without a result following a shunt first time through Graham Hill Bend, where collisions left the cars driven by Dan Holland, Mark Howard and Thomas Grundy in a sorry state. With the programme already running late and a further delay for Grundy to be removed from his car, the Clios returned to the paddock.

● Brian Phillips

### RESULTS

**Race 1** Abandoned. **Race 2 (19 laps) 1 Ant Whorton-Eales;** 2 Ashley Sutton +0.287s; 3 Ash Hand; 4 Jordan Stilp; 5 Charles Ladell; 6 Brett Smith. **FL** Hand 52.501s (82.82mph).

**Points 1 Whorton-Eales, 32;** 2 Sutton, 28; 3 Hand, 27; 4 Stilp, 22; 5 Ladell, 20; 6 Smith, 18.

**PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB BRANDS HATCH INDY, APRIL 4-5 RD 1/9**

## Cammish triumphs amid carnage

NEARLY 30 PORSCHEs AROUND THE COMPACT Brands Hatch Indy track was a recipe for incidents, and the season-opening two races did not disappoint. Six safety cars, three cars written off and a red flag meant there were no shortage of talking points, making up for the often lacklustre action of recent years.

Dan Cammish avoided the carnage, however, and claimed a brace of victories to follow his win in a one-off drive at the end of 2014.

The former British Formula Ford champion was just a tenth slower than series returnee Stephen Jelley after a tricky wet qualifying.

Cammish made a good start to the opener but Jelley refused to relent and the pair duked it out side-by-side for the first half lap. That was until Jelley ran wide at Graham Hill Bend, which allowed the Redline Racing driver pounced into Clearways.

From there Cammish had the measure of his Team Parker opponent to win, with Michael Meadows rounding out the podium.

Meadows profited from a mistake by former Redline team-mate Josh Webster, who was

handed a drive-through for being out of position at the start. This left the reigning champion a disappointing 14th.

The race was interrupted by several safety cars as first Ryan Cullen, then Rupert Martin and John McCullagh had incidents at Paddock Hill Bend. And it was later red-flagged when Peter Kyle-Henney, Peter Jennings and Chris Dockerill collided at Druids, writing off all three Porsches.

There was more contact at the start of race two as Dino Zamparelli and McCullagh touched at Paddock and Jordan Witt also spun. This brought out the safety car for the first of three further appearances.

Tautvydas Barstys spinning exiting Paddock caused the next caution, while the final pause occurred when Karl Leonard was punted off when avoiding Tom Sharp's pirouetting car.

At the front, Jelley and Cammish renewed their duel, with Cammish closing on the pole man in the final stages before making a move into Clearways. The pair touched and Jelley was forced onto the grass, thus losing out to Meadows and Webster.

A delighted Cammish said: "I had no answer to Jelley at the start but his tyres went away from him as my car got better and better.

"The safety cars gave me a break and a chance to plan my move. I thought 'I'm not going to lift off if you're not going to.'"

● Stephen Lickorish

### RESULTS

**Race 1 (29 laps) 1 Daniel Cammish;** 2 Stephen Jelley +1.266s; 3 Michael Meadows; 4 Nicholas Latifi; 5 Tom Sharp; 6 Jordan Witt. **CW** Witt; Iain Dockerill. **FL** Jelley 46.541s (93.43mph).

**Race 2 (33 laps) 1 Cammish;** 2 Meadows +0.654s; 3 Josh Webster; 4 Jelley; 5 Paul Rees; 6 Jayde Kruger. **CW** John McCullagh; Ignas Gelzinis. **FL** Jelley 46.859s (92.80mph).

**Points 1 Cammish, 40;** 2 Jelley, 36; 3 Meadows, 34; 4 Latifi, 23; 5 Webster, 18; 6 Kruger, 17.



Cammish was the star of the two Carrera Cup races

# Piquet rewrites family history with victory at Long Beach

A bold move at the first chicane helps Nelson Piquet Jr to his maiden Formula E victory – 35 years after his father won his first grand prix on the same circuit. By **GLENN FREEMAN**



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**NELSON PIQUET JR KNEW THE SIGNIFICANCE OF** Long Beach to his family before he arrived on the famous American streets last weekend. In 1980, it was the setting for his father's first grand prix win, and 35 years on it was the turn of Nelson Jr to take his first victory in Formula E.

Piquet didn't hide from that history – on Saturday morning he unveiled a helmet copying his father's design and colours to pay homage to that maiden F1 win – and after his commanding victory he was quick to point out the significance of more Long Beach glory for the Piquet name.

"It's great to get my first win here," he said. "There's a lot of history for my family here so it means a lot. It's where my father won his first Formula 1 race, so obviously that influences me."

Not that Nelson Sr had much useful advice for his son before the weekend.

"My father is a bit... different," Piquet said without trying to hide a smile. "When he heard we were racing here the only thing he told me was to go to the Queen Mary and take some pictures, and that I should try to stay in that hotel because 'it's pretty good and it's close to the track'. He talked about it for about 10 minutes, but I haven't made it over there."

By Formula E standards, Piquet's victory was straightforward. He catapulted from third on the grid into the lead at the start, braking so late that polesitter Daniel Abt moved out of the way because he didn't think Piquet was going to make the corner.

"It was strange," said Abt, "normally we all make pretty equal starts, so I was just focusing on Prost [starting second], thinking I was safe with that, then Nelson pops up in my mirror. I thought he was going to miss his braking point, so he did well there and we have to understand why."

Piquet picked up the story, claiming that he has made a breakthrough with the carbon brakes that several drivers have struggled to get to grips with.

"I braked really late – I was really confident," said the Brazilian. "We've found a way to get more confidence with these brakes, which is a big issue for all the drivers."

Piquet wasted little time in building a lead, and he repeated that trick after two early-race safety car periods – the first coming when Scott Speed crashed out of sixth place after jumping over the kerbs at the controversial first chicane, and the second when Charles Pic wiped out fellow former Formula 1 racer Jarno Trulli with a misjudged lunge on Loic Duval at the hairpin.

When Piquet and China Racing negotiated the pitstop phase cleanly – unlike in the Miami round last time out – it appeared to be plain sailing. But a radio miscommunication – Piquet misheard "more coasting" as "no coasting" – meant he was closer to the limit in terms of

looking after his battery than he should have been. Some frantic shouting of "maximum coast!" on the radio ensured that the misunderstanding was short-lived and didn't do much damage.

Piquet played safe, opting not to risk putting extra strain through his equipment by using his fanboost at all during the race. He was almost apologetic when explaining why, clearly feeling some guilt towards those that had voted for him. However, given the marginal temperatures he was dealing with, it was a wise decision – and you would imagine that the fans who voted were appeased by the fact that their man was on the top step of the podium at the end.

"I know I should have used it," he said. "And if Jean-Eric was pushing me I'm sure I would have used it, but I just made sure I kept the distance so that I didn't have to risk it."

With the leader controlling the race from start to finish, the real action was behind. Vergne shuffled his way past Abt for second after the







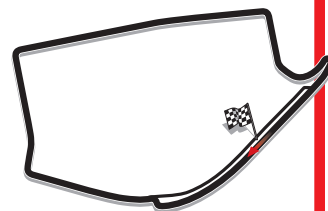
Vergne had a solid race to second place

# FORMULA E

## Long Beach (USA)



April 5



Round 6/10

### RESULTS

39 laps, 51.642 miles

<b>1 NELSON PIQUET JR (BR)</b> China Racing (Campos); Grid: 3rd-56.974s	<b>46m01.971s</b>
<b>2 JEAN-ERIC VERGNE (F)</b> Andretti Autosport; Grid: 5th-57.106s	<b>+1.705s</b>
<b>3 LUCAS DI GRASSI (BR)</b> Audi Sport ABT; Grid: 4th-57.083s	<b>+2.994s</b>
<b>4 SEBASTIEN BUEMI (CH)</b> Team e.dams Renault; Grid: 10th-57.288s	<b>+3.518s</b>
<b>5 BRUNO SENNA (BR)</b> Mahindra Racing (Carlin); Grid: 12th-57.347s	<b>+8.844s</b>
<b>6 JEROME D'AMBROSIO (B)</b> Dragon Racing; Grid: 8th-57.184s	<b>+13.460s</b>
<b>7 ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA (P)</b> Amlin Aguri; Grid: 6th-57.149s	<b>+16.171s</b>
<b>8 JAIME ALGUERSUARI (E)</b> Virgin Racing; Grid: 14th-57.449s	<b>+17.975s</b>
<b>9 LOIC DUVAL (F)</b> Dragon Racing; Grid: 17th-57.905s	<b>+18.436s</b>
<b>10 STEPHANE SARRAZIN (F)</b> Venturi (Signature); Grid: 9th-57.261s	<b>+20.418s</b>
<b>11 NICK HEIDFELD (D)</b> Venturi (Signature); Grid: 15th-57.508s	<b>+21.326s</b>
<b>12 KARUN CHANDHOK (IND)</b> Mahindra Racing (Carlin); Grid: 18th-57.921s	<b>+32.917s</b>
<b>13 VITANTONIO LIUZZI (I)</b> Trulli (Super Nova); Grid: 20th-1m12.813s	<b>+38.592s</b>
<b>14 NICOLAS PROST (F)</b> Team e.dams Renault; Grid: 2nd-56.944s	<b>+42.375s</b>
<b>15 DANIEL ABT (D)</b> Audi Sport ABT; Grid: 1st-56.937s	<b>+44.361s</b>
<b>16 CHARLES PIC (F)</b> China Racing (Campos); Grid: 16th-57.818s	<b>+58.125s</b>
<b>R SALVADOR DURAN (MEX)</b> Amlin Aguri; Grid: 19th-57.950s	27 laps - collision
<b>R SAM BIRD (GB)</b> Virgin Racing; Grid: 11th-57.304s	22 laps - battery pump
<b>R JARNO TRULLI (I)</b> Trulli (Super Nova); Grid: 13th-57.417s	7 laps - collision
<b>R SCOTT SPEED (USA)</b> Andretti Autosport; Grid: 7th-57.156s	3 laps - accident

Winner's average speed: 67.310mph. Fastest lap: Prost, 58.973s, 80.832mph. All drivers in Spark-Renault SRT\_01E.

### DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

<b>1 DI GRASSI</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>6 DA COSTA</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>2 PIQUET</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>7 D'AMBROSIO</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>3 PROST</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>8 VERGNE</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>4 BUEMI</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>9 ALGUERSUARI</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5 BIRD</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10 SENNA</b>	<b>28</b>

### TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP

<b>1 E.DAMS-RENAULT</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>4 ANDRETTI AUTOSPORT</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>2 AUDI SPORT ABT</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>5 CHINA RACING</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>3 VIRGIN RACING</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>6 DRAGON RACING</b>	<b>66</b>



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We found a way to get more confidence with these brakes, which is a big issue for all the drivers

NELSON PIQUET JR

German stopped a lap earlier than his rivals, and Abt then handed over a podium finish to team-mate Lucas di Grassi when he was given a drive-through penalty for using too much power.

Given that Abt's race was effectively over, it seemed a strange call from his team not to order him to wave di Grassi by immediately (di Grassi was certainly asking for some help), especially as his team-mate was under pressure from Sebastien Buemi. But Abt didn't like the idea of potentially letting several cars through as well, so he held station before releasing di Grassi when he took his penalty. From there, with Buemi and e.dams struggling with a lack of power, di Grassi's fourth podium finish in six races was assured.

It was a relief for di Grassi, who was thrown into panic after qualifying when he spotted his car on fire in parc ferme. Fortunately it was only the starter battery, which had been placed in his seat, and there was no major damage done.

While di Grassi assumed the championship lead thanks to his third place, the previous championship leader, Nicolas Prost, and his e.dams team left Long Beach feeling like defeat had been snatched from the jaws of victory. The other e.dams car of Buemi was relegated from pole position to 10th on the grid for exceeding the power limit in qualifying, and both drivers complained of a lack of power in the race. That would go some way to explaining why Prost plummeted through the field from his front row grid position, particularly after the restarts, and it made Buemi's recovery to fourth at the finish a job well done. Not that anyone felt like smiling at the Renault-backed team.

"With the first car I had no chance in traffic," said Prost. "As soon as there was any fighting everyone could overtake me. I was making time



Di Grassi gained from Abt's penalty

up in the corners so I could have held on without the safety cars, but I just had no power. I was losing so much on the straights. We need to understand what we did wrong today because we could have had a one-two but it didn't work out."

Prost's day went from bad to worse when he was given a drive-through penalty for punting Jerome d'Ambrosio at the final hairpin, which he put down to the Belgian braking "much, much earlier than the lap before". His only mission after that was to salvage some points with fastest lap, a task he described as "really easy" to achieve.

Buemi wasn't much happier, but he acknowledged the significance of a decent points haul from an eventful day.

"I had a problem with the battery, so I was losing a lot on the straights and I had some big cuts in power," he said. "So in the end to finish fourth - I don't think I could have done more. But it's a shame when you have the fastest car and you go home knowing you didn't score the points that you could have. It feels like we have a lot of missed opportunities, and so many points have been lost when we are competitive."

E.dams could find itself regretting the days where it has dropped points, as di Grassi's Abt entry remains a persistent threat up front. Piquet also warned after his victory that he believes he will be a firm fixture in the title battle as the inaugural Formula E season moves to Europe.

"We have been improving a lot, and I felt I could have won in Miami," said the winner. "Team China has made enormous progress this season, and they deserved this win. At the beginning of the year we didn't know where our place was, but now we've shown that we're in a very strong place. We're here to win the championship, and we are in contention for it now."





# TIME FOR PORSCHE TO SHINE

**After last year's toe-in-the-water exercise, Porsche is back with a revised car as the basis of an anticipated title challenge. GARY WATKINS previews the WEC season**

**A**n all-new car, and three of them for the Le Mans 24 Hours. A move into the highest megajoule class. And, perhaps most importantly of all, a season's worth of racing experience under its belt. There are good reasons for Porsche to be confident that it has made an across-the-board improvement as it embarks on its 2015 World Endurance Championship campaign at Silverstone this weekend.

Which begs the question, is this the year that the marque recaptures its past glories at the very pinnacle of sportscar racing?

Porsche doesn't seem so sure. Or at least that's what it is saying in public. The modest aspirations with which it made its return to the top of the sportscar tree last year have been upgraded, of course, but it is remaining humble in the face of opposition from established WEC players Toyota and Audi.

It balks at admitting that its intent this season is to add to its tally of 16 Le Mans victories with

the latest 919 Hybrid, or that it feels it is ready to bid for a first world title since 1986. What it does say is that it wants to be challenging for wins on a regular basis, while admitting that a run of wins would put it in the championship mix.

"We have to remain realistic," says Porsche LMP1 team principal Andreas Seidl. "We are racing against manufacturers who have been here for quite some years. Audi has been in endurance racing for more than 10 years, while Toyota is in its fourth season and before that was in Formula 1."

"The targets for 2015 are to get even more podiums under our belt than last year [it collected eight pieces of silverware in '14]. We also want to be, at least at the beginning of the races, in a position where we think we can challenge for the win. Last year, that was not the case."

The objectives for Le Mans appear even more low key. Seidl suggests that getting "at least two cars to the finish would be a major achievement". A podium in the double-points round of the WEC is the target to which it is admitting. "It would be naive to say that we could win Le Mans in year two," he adds. ▶

## ALL-NEW DESIGN

► This careful rhetoric from Porsche hides a real momentum to the 919 Hybrid programme. Not only did it finish last season with a victory at Interlagos, but it has redesigned the 919 concept from top to bottom. This was something that was always in the plan from the beginning of the project back in 2011.

Porsche LMP1 technical director Alex Hitzinger stresses that what he calls a “young team” couldn’t have been expected to optimise the design of the its first P1 contender in year one. There were also major issues with the original car to be addressed.

The 919 didn’t look after its Michelin rubber in the same way as the opposition, particularly Toyota and its TSO40 HYBRID, did last season. Its appetite for tyres, courtesy of major mid-corner understeer in slow-speed corners, was masked at the Brazilian finale by a new high-grip Interlagos surface that levelled the playing field and allowed Neel Jani, Romain Dumas and Marc Lieb to take Porsche’s first victory in a world championship endurance race since 1989.

“We think we have addressed our problems by changing the suspension and the structure of the monocoque,” says Hitzinger. “The monocoque is all-new and we have optimised the structure of the whole car front to rear.” He is open enough to admit that the mark-one version of the 919 “wasn’t stiff enough in certain areas”.

The second-generation 919 was an immediate improvement, reckons Jani. He was impressed right from the word go on his first run in the car at Yas Marina in January.

“You can tell a lot about a car after two laps, and the feeling in Abu Dhabi was good straight away,” says the Swiss driver. “It is definitely a big step forward.”

Porsche does admit, however, that it isn’t there yet. “The consistency is better,” reveals Hitzinger, “although there is still work to do over a long run.”



New monocoque has improved stiffness

**“Our hybrid system is the perfect scenario: more performance and less weight”** ALEX HITZINGER



Ex-F1 driver Webber stays for 2015

## HYBRID BOOST AND WEIGHT

Porsche has addressed the area in which it was weak in comparison to Toyota and Audi last season, but it has also taken major strides in two other departments.

Hitzinger and his team have achieved their target of moving up a hybrid class from six to eight megajoules with an evolution of its existing system. That means the 919 will be a step ahead of the latest version of the TSO40 and two up on this year’s R18 e-tron quattro from Audi.

The major gain, Hitzinger points out, has been made in terms of the car’s front-axle kinetic unit rather than the exhaust-driven secondary system. Porsche won’t put an exact number on the power deployed to the track through the front wheels, but will admit that it is “in the region of 400bhp”.

Hitzinger is confident that the new 919 will hit the 8MJ mark at Le Mans. What he isn’t sure is whether it will be regularly pushing out the allowable maximum on other circuits. The boosting level at the seven other tracks on the WEC is determined by dividing the track length by that of Le Mans and multiplying it by a factor of 1.55, which means that the recuperation

required per kilometre is significantly higher than at Le Mans.

“That’s a tough call,” he says. “But there is obviously a break-even point, and I am confident that we will be above that in terms of the performance gain.”

Increasing the power of the hybrid system could have led to an increase in its weight, but Hitzinger and his team have been able to achieve the move into the higher hybrid class while still bringing the car in under the 870kg weight limit. That is a significant achievement given that the original 919 Hybrid was 30kg overweight.

“If you go up in energy recuperation, it should mean more weight,” says Hitzinger. “We have been able to do that and overcompensate and take 30kg out of the car. Our hybrid system is lighter, in fact quite a bit lighter, than before. It is the perfect scenario: more performance and less weight.”

The increase in hybrid power and delivering the latest 919 at the weight limit are significant, as Hitzinger explains: “These are two factors where we have made a step where the others will have to gain somewhere else. We were overweight last year, so by stepping down that

# WHAT'S NEW FOR 2015?

The qualifying system that determines the grid by the average of two drivers' times has been tweaked. Only one lap from each driver now counts. In GTE Am, the bronze-ranked member of the line-up must be one of those drivers. Session time is cut to 20 minutes.

The weight of the driver is now taken into account when the LMP1 cars go on the scales. A car will have to carry ballast if the average weight of its drivers is under 80kg.

Each LMP1 entry is now allowed only four sets of slick tyres for free practice and six for qualifying and the race (with the exception of Shanghai and Bahrain, where eight are allowed, and the Le Mans 24 Hours for which there are no limits).

A range of cost-saving measures has been introduced in P1: the number of engines that can be used over the course of the season is limited to five (seven for a new manufacturer), testing is limited to 50 'car days' (60 for a new manufacturer), and the personnel that a two-car team can bring to the races after Le Mans is pegged at 66.

Tank capacity for LMP1 diesels has been reduced by 0.1 litres as a result of a change in the density of the fuel. The Equivalence of Technology between petrol and diesel remains set in stone up to and including Le Mans.



XPB IMAGES



**Team performance has also improved**

is performance in the pocket. And 30kg is quite a lot of laptime. The same goes for the move up in recuperation – it's time in your pocket because that is how the regulations are written."

## REVISED ENGINE

The Porsche's V4 direct-injection petrol powerplant has also been reworked. There is a new turbocharger that has improved engine response and cut lag, while a new crankshaft in the name of weight saving has resulted in an enlargement in capacity.

Hitzinger puts the increase at "30 to 40cc", while stating that the engine should still be regarded as a two litre. "It has gone from just below two litres to just above," he explains. "We were doing a new crank anyway, so we decided to increase the stroke, which has given us the new capacity."

## NEW AERO

A new nose profile distinguishes the latest 919 from the original, but this is not the most important development.

"In terms of aerodynamics, the changes you can see aren't particularly significant," explains Hitzinger. "The important changes are the little ones, the areas round the tyres, the zone between the front wing and the front floor. These are the significant areas, but they are ones no one sees."

The new Porsche has so far run in the aerodynamic configuration in which it will race in the first two WEC rounds at Silverstone and at Spa. The Le Mans aero has yet to be fully tested, while Hitzinger won't say if there will be another body spec for the final five WEC rounds. He does admit, however, that it will be starting the season with more downforce than its first season back, when it ran in Le Mans-spec at the opening races.

## IS IT RELIABLE?

There's a confidence at Porsche that it has a reliable car for the six-hour races after undertaking two 30-hour simulations at Motorland Aragon and at Paul Ricard. It is less sure about the car's reliability over 24 hours.

"We still have some small issues, and we would expect that," says Hitzinger. "For a clean 24-hour run, we still have some things to sort out, but nothing that is going to give us a major headache."

There are two more tests planned at undisclosed venues – one after Silverstone and one after Spa – for Porsche to hone the reliability of the car ahead of Le Mans in June.

## EXPANDED TEAM

Porsche procrastinated over whether to expand to three entries for Le Mans. Part of the reason, explains Seidl, was ensuring that it went to the 24 Hours with "three strong cars".

"We wanted to ensure that if we went with three cars that each would be on an equal level," he says. That explains why it has been rotating its three car crews through its pre-season testing programme. "We need to make sure," he continues, "that they are ready when they get to Le Mans."

## IS PORSCHE READY TO WIN?

Yes, and the proof was provided at Interlagos last November, reckons Seidl. "We were able to confirm," he says of that performance, "that we could handle the pressure."

"It was the first time that we saw from Friday onwards that we have been competitive, and the pressure was building up and it was good that the team responded. The team made the right decisions, and made pitstops that were even faster than the opposition at the end, and the drivers showed great performance. Operationally, we think we are ready to win."

## WILL SILVERSTONE REVEAL ALL?

Not according to Hitzinger. He returns to the theme of Porsche and its in-house squad being a young team and its inexperience in comparison with the opposition.

"We will still improve race by race as we did at the end of last season," he says. "We are still on a steep learning curve." ▶

ALL PICS: EBREY/LAT, XPB IMAGES



## PORSCHE TEAM

PORSCHE 919 HYBRID

### DRIVERS

#17	#18	#19*
Mark <b>Webber</b>	Neel <b>Jani</b>	Nico <b>Hulkenberg</b>
Timo <b>Bernhard</b>	Romain <b>Dumas</b>	Nick <b>Tandy</b>
Brendon <b>Hartley</b>	Marc <b>Lieb</b>	Earl <b>Bamber</b>

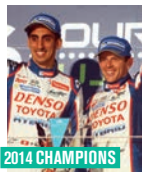
Porsche has upped its squad from two to three cars for Le Mans and the Spa round, by way of preparation for its second year back in the sportscar big time. It has combined star signing Hulkenberg with two graduates from its GT roster in Tandy and Bamber, who got the nod despite only gaining a factory contract at the end of last year. Porsche has worked hard to ensure that this 919 will go to the grid with the same chances as its sister cars, which means it shouldn't be regarded as a third car. The full-season line-up aboard its regular two cars is unchanged. Porsche is still playing down its chances despite what is an all-new version of the 919 Hybrid and a starring performance at last month's official WEC test at Paul Ricard. It was the only one of the three manufacturers present to undertake a simulated qualifying run, which goes some of the way to explaining a gap of approaching two seconds at the top of the timesheets.

\* Entered for Le Mans and Spa only



## TOYOTA RACING (TMG)

TOYOTA TS040 HYBRID



### DRIVERS

#1	#2
Anthony <b>Davidson</b>	Alex <b>Wurz</b>
Sebastien <b>Buemi</b>	Stephane <b>Sarrazin</b>
Kazuki <b>Nakajima</b>	Mike <b>Conway</b>

Reigning champion Toyota defends its drivers' and manufacturers' titles with a refinement of last year's TS040 described as 80 per cent new. Apart from the doors, no bodywork parts are carried over from the original and there is a return to the open-nose aero concept it ran in the first two races of 2014. There's been a focus on improving tyre wear, already the car's strong suit. Unlike its established rivals, the Japanese manufacturer hasn't moved up a hybrid class and remains at 6MJ. But the Toyota Motorsport GmbH squad does believe its upgraded front and rear-axle kinetic system will achieve the maximum discharge on a more regular basis than in 2014. Toyota opted to run through its own programme at the WEC test at Paul Ricard and didn't seem overly concerned about its cars ending up fifth and sixth in the times. Nakajima swaps cars to race in the full season (for the first time) with champions Davidson and Buemi, while Conway steps up from his test and reserve-driver role and remains in the seat he filled on three occasions last year alongside Wurz and Sarrazin.



## AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST

AUDI R18 E-TRON QUATTRO

### DRIVERS

#7	#8	#9*
Andre <b>Lotterer</b>	Loic <b>Duval</b>	Filipe <b>Albuquerque</b>
Marcel <b>Fassler</b>	Lucas <b>di Grassi</b>	Marco <b>Bonanomi</b>
Benoit <b>Treluyer</b>	Oliver <b>Jarvis</b>	Rene <b>Rast</b>

Outpaced over the title run-in last year, Audi has undertaken an extensive redesign of last year's Le Mans winner. So much so that the only carbon components carried over into the latest car to carry the R18 e-tron quattro monicker are the monocoque and gearbox casing. It has moved up as planned from the 2MJ to the 4MJ hybrid class with its single energy-retrieval system, while retaining a development of the same engine. It also believes it has addressed problems making its tyres work in cold conditions. There's an air of confidence in the Audi camp, particularly after some impressive long runs at the official WEC test at Paul Ricard last month, though with the admission that the new R18 may not be competitive at all the circuits on the second, post-Le Mans leg of the WEC. Jarvis moves up to a full-time prototype seat alongside Duval and di Grassi on the retirement of Tom Kristensen, while Audi GT stand-out Rast gets his prototype chance in the additional third car for the 24 Hours.

\* Entered for Le Mans and Spa only





## NISSAN MOTORSPORTS

NISSAN GT-R LM NISMO

### DRIVERS

#21*	#22	#23
Tsugio <b>Matsuda</b>	Olivier <b>Pla</b>	Marc <b>Gene</b>
Lucas <b>Ordonez</b>	Harry <b>Tincknell</b>	Jann <b>Mardenborough</b>
Alex <b>Buncombe</b>	Michael <b>Krumm**</b>	Max <b>Chilton</b>

Nissan skips the season opener at Silverstone with its radical front-engined, front-wheel-drive GT-R LM after failing to homologate the car in time. It has also opted to miss Spa as well, in favour of more testing in advance of its primary focus in year one of its return to top-line sportscar racing, the 24 Hours at Le Mans. It will race the GT-R LM in the 2MJ class after deciding not to deploy power regenerated at the front to the narrow rear wheels, as called for by the original concept of the car. That means all the power now has to go through the front tyres. Nissan and its US-based team are behind the eightball in developing what is a complex car, but they are still promising to qualify in among their factory rivals when they get to Le Mans in June. The driver line-up mixes youth – drawn from its GT Academy scheme (Mardenborough and Ordonez) and its P2 engine programme (Pla and Tincknell) – with experience in Gene and Krumm and an F1 signing in Chilton.

\* Entered for Le Mans only  
\*\* Krumm only confirmed for Le Mans



## TEAM BYKOLLES

CLM-AER P1/01

### DRIVERS

#4
Simon <b>Trummer</b>
Vitantonio <b>Liuzzi</b>
Pierre <b>Kaffer*</b>



\* Kaffer not present for Silverstone

The German team formerly known as Lotus LMP returns with a heavily-revised version of the CLM that raced in the final five WEC rounds last year. There's revised suspension and aerodynamics and an Xtrac gearbox for its attempt to challenge Rebellion as top LMP1 privateer. The 2015-spec CLM didn't run until the WEC test two weeks ago, but it did rack up the miles over the two days. Ex-GP2 racer Trummer is confirmed for the full season, while Liuzzi, Kaffer and others will drive on a revolving basis through the year.



## REBELLION RACING

REBELLION-AER R-ONE

### DRIVERS

#12	#13
Nick <b>Heidfeld</b>	Daniel <b>Abt</b>
Nicolas <b>Prost</b>	Alex <b>Imperatori</b>
Mathias <b>Beche</b>	Dominik <b>Kraihamer</b>



Rebellion, the top privateer in each of the first three seasons of the revived WEC, misses Silverstone after a late decision on engine for the 2015 season. It plumped for the same AER V6 used by ByKolles, which has meant a redesign of the rear end of its ORECA-built R-One to accommodate the twin-turbo in place of the normally aspirated Toyota V8. The successful trio of Heidfeld, Prost and Beche remain together in the lead car, while Abt and Imperatori have come in to join Kraihamer in the second entry.

## CALENDAR



SILVERSTONE

April 12	Silverstone
May 2	Spa-Francorchamps
June 13/14	Le Mans 24 Hours
August 30	Nurburgring
September 19	Austin
October 11	Fuji
November 1	Shanghai
November 21	Bahrain



# LMP2



## G-DRIVE RACING (OAK)

LIGIER-NISSAN JSP2

**DRIVERS**

- #26  
Sam Bird  
Roman Rusinov  
Julien Canal



- #28  
Pipo Derani  
Gustavo Yacaman  
Ricardo Gonzalez

Last year's P2 runners-up return with an expanded two-car effort and an ultra-strong line-up – both in terms of the pros and the ams on board its pair of Ligiers, the fastest cars over the second half of last season. Bird comes in to replace Nissan-bound Olivier Pla, while Canal is among the best silver-rated drivers in this pro-am class.

## EXTREME SPEED MOTORSPORT

HPD-HONDA ARX-03B & LIGIER-HONDA JSP2

**DRIVERS**

- #30  
Scott Sharp  
Ryan Dalziel  
David Heinemeier Hansson



The US team tested the WEC waters last year, but its first full campaign was dealt a blow when it was forced to abandon the new HPD ARX-04b coupe. That has resulted in a reversion to its open-top ARX-03b for Silverstone and, an aggressive build schedule permitting, a switch to Ligiers for Spa. The team reckons its chances at Silverstone rest on some rain.

- #31  
Johannes van Overbeek  
Ed Brown  
Jon Fogarty



## SIGNATECH ALPINE

ORECA-NISSAN 03R

**DRIVERS**

- #36  
Nelson Panciatici  
Paul-Loup Chatin  
Vincent Capillaire



The winner of the past two ELMS titles graduates to the WEC with team regulars Panciatici and Chatin and former Sebastien Loeb Racing driver Capillaire. It has retained its open-top ORECA, at least for the races up to and including Le Mans, in the belief that a proven package with which it is familiar could give it an edge over the new coupes.

## TEAM SARD MORAND

MORGAN-SARD EVO

**DRIVERS**

- |  |   |                            |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| #39<br>Christian Klien<br>Koki Saga<br>Zoel Amberg | #43*<br>Oliver Webb<br>Pierre Ragues<br>Tristan Vautier | * = Silverstone & Spa only |
|--|---|----------------------------|

The Morand team has entered into a joint-venture with the Japanese SARD operation, a regular at Le Mans in the 1990s, to move up from the ELMS with two cars. It again runs Onroak's Morgan, now updated with more downforce in 2015 EVO spec, and Judd BMW V8s badged as SARDs, and is looking to continue the improvement that made it a winner in the ELMS last year.



## STRAKKA RACING

STRAKKA DOME-NISSAN S103

**DRIVERS**

- #42  
Danny Watts  
Jonny Kane  
Nick Leventis



The Anglo-Japanese Strakka-Dome finally makes its race debut following a year of delays that kept it out of last year's WEC. The team believes it is now ready to challenge the P2 establishment after the S103 underwent a rear-end design over the summer and then an extensive test programme. Strakka, uniquely among the WEC P2 regulars, runs on Michelin tyres.





## OAK RACING

LIGIER-NISSAN & LIGIER-HONDA JSP2

### DRIVERS

- #34\***  
Laurens **Vanthoor**  
Kevin **Estre**  
Chris **Cumming**
- #35**  
Jacques **Nicolet**  
Jean-Marc **Merlin**  
Erik **Maris**
- \* Will only race at Le Mans

Nicolet, boss of the OAK team and the chassis-building Onroak arm, returns to full-time racing to drive his new baby. The 59-year-old shares a Nissan-powered car with fellow French amateurs Merlin and Maris, but OAK has put together a super-strong line-up for its additional car for Le Mans with GT stars Vanthoor and Estre.

## KCMG

ORECA-NISSAN 05

### DRIVERS

- #47**  
Richard **Bradley**  
Matt **Howson**  
Nick **Tandy**  
Nicolas **Lapierre\***
- \* Lapierre drives at Spa & Le Mans



The Chinese entrant returns to the WEC with the first of ORECA's new coupes after winning P2 on three occasions last year. The new-for-2015 design looks like a step forward, particularly in the way it looks after its tyres. Porsche driver Tandy has been placed with the team for six of the eight races, including Silverstone.



# GTE AM



## LARBRE COMPETITION

CHEVROLET CORVETTE C7.R

### DRIVERS

- #50**  
Paolo **Ruberti**  
Gianluca **Roda**  
Kristian **Poulsen**



The veteran team, GTE Am winner back in 2012, returns to the category after a season way with the latest C7.R Corvette.



## SMP RACING (AF)

FERRARI 458 ITALIA

### DRIVERS

- #72**  
Andrea **Bertolini**  
Viktor **Shaitar**  
Aleksy **Basov**



Russian entrant SMP continues in the WEC with a Ferrari run by AF and focuses on the ELMS with its new LMP2 coupe.



## DEMPSEY-PROTON RACING

PORSCHE 911 RSR

### DRIVERS

- #77**  
Patrick **Long**  
Patrick **Dempsey**  
Marco **Seefried**



US actor Patrick Dempsey has opted for a full WEC assault with Proton after two Le Mans campaigns with the team.

## AF CORSE

FERRARI 458 ITALIA

### DRIVERS

- #83**  
Emmanuel **Collard**  
Francois **Perrodo**  
Rui **Aguas**



AF runs just one car under its own flag, with Frenchmen Perrodo and Collard swapping over from the ProSpeed Porsche team.



## ABU DHABI-PROTON RACING

PORSCHE 911 RSR

### DRIVERS

- #88**  
Klaus **Bachler**  
Christian **Ried**  
Khaled **Al Qubaisi**



Series stalwart Proton runs its own car with an unchanged driver line-up from 2014.



## ASTON MARTIN (PRODRIVE)

ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE GTE

### DRIVERS

- #96**  
Stuart **Hall**  
Roald **Goethe**  
Francesco **Castellacci**



- #98**  
Pedro **Lamy**  
Paul **Dalla Lana**  
Mathias **Lauda**
- The dominant force in GTE Am last year is back with two cars to defend its drivers' and teams' titles.



# GTE PRO



## AF CORSE

FERRARI 458 ITALIA

### DRIVERS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>#51</b><br>Gianmaria <b>Bruni</b><br>Toni <b>Vilander</b> | <b>#71</b><br>James <b>Calado</b><br>Davide <b>Rigon</b> |
|--|--|

Ferrari's factory representative in the WEC returns with an unchanged line-up: Bruni and Vilander are seeking to retain the GT drivers' title they claimed last year, while Calado and Rigon are looking to continue the progress they made at the end of the season. There's a minor aerodynamic update for the 458, based around the aero spec that it was allowed to run at Le Mans in 2014, but Balance of Performance regulations have resulted in a 10kg increase in minimum weight.

## PORSCHE TEAM MANTHEY

PORSCHE 911 RSR

### DRIVERS

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>#91</b><br>Richard <b>Lietz</b><br>Michael<br><b>Christensen</b><br>Jorg <b>Bergmeister*</b> | <b>#92</b><br>Patrick <b>Pilet</b><br>Frederic<br><b>Makowiecki</b><br>Wolf <b>Henzler*</b> | * Bergmeister and Henzler drive at Le Mans only |
|---|---|---|

An update of the 991-shape RSR, aerodynamics included, is an attempt to hone the car into a more consistent contender – over a stint, at a variety of circuits and in all conditions. Whether it is enough remains to be seen; the suspicion that the rear-engined machine will struggle in hot conditions remains. Christensen moves over from the US programme to team up with Lietz, while Pilet and Makowiecki remain together.



## ASTON MARTIN (PRODRIVE)

ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE GTE

### DRIVERS

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>#95</b><br>Nicki <b>Thiim</b><br>Marco <b>Sorensen</b><br>Christoffer <b>Nygaard</b> | <b>#97</b><br>Darren <b>Turner</b><br>Stefan <b>Mucke</b><br>Rob <b>Bell*</b> | <b>#99</b><br>Fernando <b>Rees</b><br>Alex <b>MacDowall</b><br>Richie <b>Stanaway</b> |
|---|---|---|

\* Bell drives at Spa and Le Mans only

Aston Martin expands its Pro assault to three cars with the graduation of its GTE Am title-winning, Danish-funded entry to the higher class with a line-up that includes GP2 driver and sportscar newcomer Sorensen. The Vantage was a frontrunner last year, with Turner and Mucke winning the Interlagos finale, but Aston hasn't upgraded its GTE contender after last season's specification freeze and has also been given a 2.5 per cent cut in air-restrictor diameter.

# ELMS GETS BACK UNDERWAY

There's a healthy LMP2 field, a control tyre for the GT categories, a new prototype class in the form of LMP3 and a driver on the grid whose sporting successes have made him a household name. There's a lot going on in the European Le Mans Series in 2015, which gets back under way in support of WEC at Silverstone on Saturday.

A total of 11 P2s are on the entry list for this weekend's Silverstone opener. ELMS race winners Jota Sport, Murphy Prototypes, Greaves Motorsport and TDS Racing are all returning to the series, to be joined by non-European additions in Krohn Racing from the US and Eurasia from the Far East.



Jota is back with the same line-up that came within four points of the title last year, fielding late returnee Harry Tincknell, Filipe Albuquerque and Simon Dolan behind the wheel of its Gibson (nee Zytek), while former ELMS champion TDS returns with last year's Silverstone-winning trio of Tristan Gommendy, Pierre Thiriet and Ludovic Badey at the wheel of a new ORECA 05 coupe. The line-up in Murphy's ORECA includes GP2 racer Nathanael Berthon.

The SMP Racing team's all-new BRE BR01 misses Silverstone while the team continues to test. Instead, its six drivers race the open-top ORECA5 – entered for this weekend under the AF Corse banner for contractual reasons – that it fielded in last year's World Endurance Championship.

Dunlop supplies the control rubber for both the GT divisions – GTE and GTC (for GT3 machinery) – in a move designed to reduce costs.

Five of Ginetta's new Nissan-engined LMP3s are entered for Silverstone, including two fielded by the works LNT team. Their roster of drivers includes record-breaking Olympic cyclist Sir Chris Hoy, who is stepping up to the prototype ranks after a year in the British GT Championship with the goal of competing in the Le Mans 24 Hours.

## SILVERSTONE TIMETABLE



### FRIDAY, APRIL 10

- |                  |                           |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>0900-0940</b> | European F3 Free practice |
| <b>0945-1025</b> | European F3 Free practice |
| <b>1035-1135</b> | ELMS Free practice        |
| <b>1155-1325</b> | WEC Free practice         |
| <b>1340-1400</b> | European F3 Qualifying 1  |
| <b>1410-1540</b> | ELMS Free practice        |
| <b>1555-1725</b> | WEC Free practice         |
| <b>1740-1800</b> | European F3 Qualifying 2  |

### SATURDAY, APRIL 11

- |                  |                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>0900-1000</b> | WEC Free practice               |
| <b>1020</b>      | European F3 Race 1 – 35 minutes |
| <b>1105-1150</b> | ELMS Qualifying                 |
| <b>1200-1250</b> | WEC Qualifying                  |
| <b>1310</b>      | European F3 Race 2 – 35 minutes |
| <b>1430</b>      | ELMS Race – 4 hours             |

### SUNDAY, APRIL 12

- |             |                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>0915</b> | European F3 Race 3 – 35 minutes |
| <b>1200</b> | WEC Race – 6 Hours              |

Martin and Muller paired up to win



BLANCPAIN SPRINT SERIES NOGARO (F), APRIL 5-6 RD 1/7

# BMW Brasil's Blancpain breakthrough

**ANTONIO HERMANN'S BMW TEAM** Brasil project's wait for a Blancpain Sprint Series victory ended in the 2015 opener at Nogaro, as on-loan factory drivers Dirk Muller and Maxime Martin resisted the WRT Audi of Stephane Ortelli and Stephane Richelmi in an ultra-close championship race finish.

That result turned the tables after a similarly tight qualifying race in which it had been Richelmi resisting Martin to the flag.

But WRT's Monegasque duo still fared best in title-race terms, with Muller's and Martin's presence only likely to be a one-off while the #77 BMW's regular drivers Valdeno Brito and Atila Abreu were busy in Brazilian Stock Cars.

Ortelli and Richelmi also benefited from the absence of WRT team-mates Laurens Vanthoor and Robin Frijns. The reigning Blancpain GT champion and his high-profile ex-Formula 1 test driver team-mate were ruled out when Frijns crashed in Q1 and damaged their Audi's chassis. Vanthoor — who had



Cheque mates: race-two podium

ironically tweeted an April Fool about a leg injury sidelining him prior to the race weekend — was left ruling the series' ban on spare cars.

With the pre-race favourites spectating, it was Ortelli/Richelmi versus Martin/Muller for the rest of the event. The Audi dominated the first half of Sunday's race in Ortelli's hands, but strong out-laps by Martin coupled with a slow pitstop getaway by Richelmi set up a tight finish, made even closer by a safety car with a quarter of an hour to go.

Richelmi was able to hang on to win that one, but in the championship race on Monday Martin successfully pounced on him on the first lap and pulled away, before this time it became the Audi hunting down the BMW in the second stint. Once again they were nose to tail into the final lap, but again there was no change despite the second-placed car's best efforts, as this time the BMW took the flag.

Another factor in the Brasil BMW's and WRT Audi's monopoly on the lead battle was a first-lap clash in the qualifying race that wrecked four podium contenders' weekends. Phoenix Audi driver Markus Winkelhock's attempted pass on the HTP Bentley of Maxi Buhk sent both spinning and collecting Craig Dolby's MRS Nissan and the second Bentley of Jules Szymkowiak too.

Buhk and Vincent Abril recovered best of those involved, making it up to eighth in the Sunday race and fourth by the end of the championship bout, although by that time the leaders were long gone. That meant WRT's #2 car of Enzo Ide and Christopher Mies took third in both races, having led briefly in the main event following an ultra-quick pitstop, though Muller and Ortelli were soon through.

DTM legend Bernd Schneider was one of the stars of the weekend, hustling the GT Russian Mercedes

through from the midfield to fifth in the qualifying race and challenging for a podium on Monday before the car dropped back with team-mate Alexey Karachev.

Marco Seefried's and Norbert Siedler's Rinaldi Ferrari ended up fifth, having been fourth on Sunday, ahead of WRT's other car, which was on for a qualifying-race podium before a puncture delayed Frank Stippler and James Nash.

The new Attempto McLaren of Rob Bell and Kevin Estre lost most of its front bodywork in the Sunday first-lap clash, yet still made it through the field from 14th to third before wilting with a battery problem and then struggling for pace on Monday.

## RESULTS

- 1 Maxime Martin/Dirk Muller (BMW Z4 GT3)**, 41 laps in 1h01m09.932s; 2 Stephane Richelmi/Stephane Ortelli (Audi R8 LMS ultra), +0.368s; 3 Christopher Mies/Enzo Ide (Audi); 4 Vincent Abril/Maxi Buhk (Bentley Continental GT3); 5 Marco Seefried/Norbert Siedler (Ferrari 458 Italia GT3); 6 James Nash/Frank Stippler (Audi); 7 Marco Bonanomi/Filip Salaquarda (Audi); 8 Nikolaus Mayr-Meinhof/Markus Winkelhock (Audi); 9 Alexey Vasiliev/Christophe Bouchut (Mercedes SLS AMG GT3); 10 Ricardo Speraico/Rodrigo Speraico (BMW).
- Qualifying race 1 Richelmi/Ortelli**, 39 laps in 1h00m19.164s; 2 Martin/Muller, +0.522s; 3 Mies/Ide; 4 Seefried/Siedler; 5 Bernd Schneider/Alexey Karachev (Mercedes); 6 Bonanomi/Salaquarda.
- Points 1 Martin/Muller**, 31; 2 Richelmi/Ortelli, 26; 3 Mies/Ide 19; 4 Seefried/Siedler, 13; 5 Abril/Buhk, 12; 6 Nash/Stippler, 8.



Schneider starred, IMG but co-driver didn't

ALL PICS: VISIONSPORT AGENCY

Breen moved into  
ERC points lead



EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP CIRCUIT OF IRELAND (GB), APRIL 2-4 RD 3/10

## The Emerald Isle of green and Breen

**TITANIC: ADJECTIVE; GIGANTIC,** colossal. Titanic Quarter: Belfast's home of the Circuit of Ireland Rally. The name fits. The fight for last week's third round of the European Rally Championship was gigantic, colossal and more.

And, much to the joy of the huge local support, it was won by Craig Breen – home success for the first time since the return of the Circuit's ERC status.

The ERC's tagline of 'serious competition ahead' looked wide of the mark on the eve of the event; Breen's biggest rivals were the Ford Fiesta R5 trio of Robert Barrable, Alastair Fisher and Kajetan Kajetanowicz. Barrable was badly missing seat time; Fisher had never driven an R5 car and Kajetanowicz had never previously set foot on the island of Ireland. Breen was the clear favourite. He'd won the previous round and enjoyed a solid test close to home in Waterford.

A problem with the pop-off valve – the FIA's rudimentary attempt to stop R5 cars overboosting by dumping the pressure from the turbo each time this happens – slowed Breen in qualifying. Irritating as it was, a change of blower would fix the fault overnight. Wouldn't it?

No. For the second year in succession, Barrable was quickest in qualifying and he carried that form into the first stage proper on Friday morning, splashing his way through the lanes to lead from the front by 7.2s after SS1.

Breen pulled the time back, moved into the lead on Hamilton's Folly and stayed there for the remainder of the day – but he was never able to build the lead he hoped. The turbo problem persisted and that, allied to a spirited charge from Barrable, contained the Peugeot's lead to just 1.5s overnight.

Fisher didn't even see lunchtime service. Third after the opener, he

rolled out on SS3.

With less overnight rain on Friday, first service on Saturday was all about tyre choice. A softer cover would offer more traction, but would it last through the 16 miles of McGaffin's Corner, the rally's longest test?

Barrable stopped looking at the leaden skies long enough to go conservative. Bolting on Pirelli's nine compound, he used his better grip beautifully on the opener, moving into an eight-second lead. But when the Pirellis started moving around halfway through the longer stage, he was forced to back off. His lead was slashed to half a second. One more and it was gone. But Barrable refused to give in and hit back to lead the cars into the Hillsborough Castle regroup.

The sun finally emerged for the final loop, making tyre choice much more straightforward. And Peugeot had made yet another tweak to the turbo on Breen's car, which hadn't been pulling as cleanly as it might at low revs. Early afternoon, there was nothing to split the top two, who traded tenths – right up until Barrable lost the Fiesta braking for a slippery left-hander. The CA1 Sport-run car skipped up and over the bank. Barrable was out. A heroic effort ended, the Dubliner's dream done with just two stages remaining.

Breen was handed a 19.8s lead over Kajetanowicz, comfortably the biggest cushion the leader had enjoyed for the duration of the event. The Pole had driven a sensational event on his Irish debut,



Kajetanowicz was  
second on Irish debut

coming to terms with some of the world's trickiest asphalt stages at their most beguiling. But surely the race was run... Not quite. A first-corner spin from Breen slashed the gap to five seconds with one stage remaining. Breen held on, despite an overshoot in the finale.

"I certainly made it tough for myself!" said Breen. "But it doesn't matter – my name is on that trophy alongside my heroes!"

Moffett brothers Josh and Sam were third and fourth in their Fiesta RRCs, while Opel driver Emil Bergkvist won a hugely competitive Junior battle to take 10th overall.

● David Evans

### RESULTS

**1 Craig Breen/Scott Martin (Peugeot 208 T16)**, 2h04m04.5s; **2 Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Jaroslaw Baran (Ford Fiesta R5)**, +6.4s; **3 Josh Moffett/John Rowan (Ford Fiesta RRC)**; **4 Sam Moffett/Karl Atkinson (Fiesta RRC)**; **5 Charles Martin/Thierry Salva (Peugeot)**; **6 Alexey Lukyanuk/Evgen Chervonenko (Fiesta R5)**.  
**Points 1 Breen**, 78; **2 Kajetanowicz**, 75; **3 Lukyanuk**, 43; **4 Robert Consani**, 40; **5 Siim Plangi**, 28; **6 Jaromir Tarabus**, 26.

Barrable battled  
Breen before crash



**SUPER GT OKAYAMA (J),  
APRIL 5 RD 1/8**

## Caldarelli, Hirakawa start in style

THE TOM'S LEXUS TEAM'S ITALIAN ace Andrea Caldarelli followed up his season-closing 2014 victory with a win in the '15 opener, this time partnered by up-and-coming local talent Ryo Hirakawa, who took his maiden Super GT success.

In damp conditions the majority of the field took the start on medium-compound rain tyres, with Caldarelli sprinting clear at the front. Rising through the field was his compatriot Ronnie Quintarelli, who surged the NISMO Nissan into the lead on the 17th lap, only for brake failure to force him into an early pitstop.

As the track dried the Honda NSXs came to the fore, with Takashi Kogure in the Drago machine moving into the lead and Naoki Yamamoto with the Team Kunimitsu car taking second, but then the rain started again.

The Hondas had harder rain tyres fitted at the pitstops and began to struggle to match their earlier pace. Takuya Izawa, who had taken over



Caldarelli welcomes home Hirakawa

from Yamamoto, was in first place, but Hirakawa charged onto his tail and the Lexus made the winning pass with 11 laps remaining.

Heikki Kovalainen drove the second stint on his Japanese racing debut to take fifth in his SARD Lexus with Kohei Hirate. He was one place ahead of Oliver Turvey, the Brit, like Izawa, handicapped on his harder wets after taking over the formerly

leading Honda from Kogure. James Rossiter, sharing the other TOM'S Lexus with Daisuke Ito, battled with enormous understeer before engine failure put paid to their hopes.

● Jiro Takahashi

### RESULTS

**1** Andrea Caldarelli/Ryo Hirakawa (Lexus RC F), 82 laps in 2h12m00.419s; 2 Takuya Izawa/Naoki Yamamoto (Honda NSX Concept), +42.663s; 3

Yuji Tachikawa/Hiroaki Ishiura (Lexus); 4 Kosuke Matsuura/Tomoki Nojiri (Honda); 5 Heikki Kovalainen/Kohei Hirate (Lexus); 6 Takashi Kogure/Oliver Turvey (Honda); 7 Joao Paulo de Oliveira/Hironobu Yasuda (Nissan GT-R); 8 Satoshi Motoyama/Masataka Yanagida (Nissan); 9 Kazuya Oshima/Yuji Kunimoto (Lexus); 10 Juichi Wakisaka/Yuhi Sekiguchi (Lexus). **Points 1** Caldarelli/Hirakawa, 20; 2 Yamamoto/Izawa, 15; 3 Tachikawa/Ishiura, 11; 4 Matsuura/Nojiri, 8; 5 Hirate/Kovalainen, 6; 6 Kogure/Turvey, 5.

**V8 STOCK CARS RIBEIRAO PRETO (BR), APRIL 5 RD 2/12**

## Bueno ends his drought – in the wet

**MULTIPLE CHAMPION CACA BUENO** ended a 23-month win drought by taking the honours in the first of two chaotic races on the short and narrow streets of Ribeirao Preto.

On a damp track, Max Wilson scurried away from the field to build a lead of more than five seconds in his Eurofarma-RC Chevrolet, but as the track dried his full-wet set-up became a handicap. The tyre pressures rose, and Wilson lost the lead to Bueno's Mattheis-run Red Bull Chevy at two-thirds distance.

Marcos Gomes came through to take second from Julio Campos,

Ricardo Mauricio, Thiago Camilo and Wilson. But both Mauricio and Wilson (along with 12th-placed Valdeno Brito) were excluded for switching to new slick tyres in parc ferme in the interval before the second race of the day.

Much wiser were the teams of Sergio Jimenez, Tuka Rocha and Atila Abreu, who brought their men in for slicks before the end of the first race. Much of the field dived into the pits for slicks as the second race started, and those who had stayed out were soon gobbled up by the trio who'd started on

dry-weather tyres.

As they negotiated the stricken wet-shod machinery, Rocha performed a daring move on Jimenez to move into a lead he would hold to the finish, with Jimenez and Abreu completing the podium.

Reigning champion Rubens Barrichello found himself down in 24th place at the end of the opening lap, but stormed through to take sixth place behind fellow ex-Formula 1 driver Luciano Burti.

Tenth place for Gomes initially allowed him to take the championship lead, but he was later excluded for a parc-ferme infringement, meaning that Bueno, despite a non-finish, is at the head of the table after two events.

● Lito Cavalcanti

### RESULTS

**Race 1** 1 Caca Bueno (Chevrolet Sonic), 38 laps in 49m43.932s; 2 Marcos Gomes (Peugeot 408), +1.477s; 3 Julio Campos (Peugeot); 4 Thiago Camilo (Chevy); 5 Galid Osman (Chevy); 6 Rubens Barrichello (Chevy). **Race 2** 1 Tuka Rocha (Peugeot), 22 laps in 30m22.214s; 2 Sergio Jimenez (Chevy), +1.223s; 3 Atila Abreu (Chevy); 4 Denis Navarro (Chevy); 5 Luciano Burti (Chevy); 6 Barrichello. **Points 1** Bueno, 33; 2 Gomes, 31; 3 Campos, 29; 4 Allam Khodair, 27; 5 Jimenez, 26; 6 Camilo, 25.

### DESERT CHALLENGE

A sandstorm forced officials to neutralise the final stage of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge and it meant that Qatar's Nasser Saleh Al-Attiyah sealed a 19m47s victory in the six-day FIA World Cup round. But he was excluded for a suspension-travel irregularity in his Mini All4 Racing and the victory was awarded to reigning champion Vladimir Vasilyev. Erik van Loon and British rookie Harry Hunt finished second and third in two other Minis.

### JAPANESE FORMULA 4

Tadasuke Makino made history as the winner of Japan's first FIA F4 race as 28 Dome-TOM'S cars took the grid at Okayama. For good measure, Makino then won the second too in his RN-Sport car, with Sho Tsuboi following him home both times. Ex-Formula Abarth European champion Nicolas Costa of Brazil took fourth in race one with Vincenzo Sospiri Racing, with reigning Formula Masters China champ, Kiwi James Munro, taking the same spot in the second race.

### EUROPEAN GT4

Dutch crews dominated at Nogaro, with Duncan Huisman in the Chevrolet Camaro started by Luc Braams passing the sister car of Jelle Beelen (started by Marcel Nooren) in the late stages to win race one. Nooren took the flag in the second race, but a driving-infringement penalty dropped him to second behind Braams.

Bueno fends them off in the rain



CARSTEN HORST

# Astons at the double after Ferrari pitlane controversy

Motorbase and Beechdean opened their accounts by sharing the spoils at Oulton Park. By **ALEX KALINAUCKAS**



46

**MOTORBASE AND BEECHDEAN SHARED THE VICTORY** spoils as the British GT championship burst back into action at Oulton Park last weekend, but the opening race was decided off-track.

The pleasant 'back to school' atmosphere in the paddock during qualifying on Saturday, as the series adapted to the departure of Nissan, Bentley, Audi and Porsche from GT3 and other squads switched to new machinery, changed come race day on Easter Monday as a number of high-profile teams were caught up in accidents in a spectacular first race.

FF Corse's Adam Carroll won on the road for the Ferrari team after taking the lead of the race during the pitstop phase, which occurred under a safety car, but he was later judged by the stewards to have blocked the Motorbase Aston of Rory Butcher and Liam Griffin.

He and team-mate Gary Eastwood were subsequently relegated to second, which was at least some reward for Carroll's fine efforts in holding off the charge of Motorbase's Rory Butcher and Joe Osborne in the Triple Eight Racing BMW Z4. The BMW had been running 11th before the safety car interlude.

Griffin had led the first half of the race after making a smooth getaway from pole position, managing an early safety car period as three cars, including the Von Ryan Racing McLaren of Salih Yoluc, ended up in the Cascades gravel trap on lap one. McLaren junior Andrew Watson, in the other VRR-run 650S, had made a rapid rise up from fifth up to second in the early stages of the race but crashed out at Island Bend as he tried to close down Griffin's leading Aston Martin.

Griffin came under severe pressure from

Eastwood and the top 10 was covered by just 4.4s after 10 laps. That made some form of contact almost inevitable.

Shortly after that the GT3 fight was severely disrupted by the recovering Yoluc as he repeatedly ignored blue flag orders to let the leaders through. Griffin felt aggrieved, claiming that the time it took to pass Yoluc cost him and Butcher the race, since it allowed Eastwood to get closer when they came in to make their mandatory pitstops.

It wasn't long before the safety car was required again, being despatched after major accidents took out several GT3 frontrunners. Andrew Howard was the first casualty as the Beachdean Vantage spun attempting to lap Yoluc and was hit by Ahmad Al Harthy. Then TF Sport's Derek Johnston and Ram Racing's Alistair Mackinnon clashed as they fought through Cascades on lap 13, an incident



**Champion Attard bagged a podium at Oulton Park**



**British GT Champion Carroll and Eastwood lost their victory**

BRITISH GT4 OULTON PARK INTERNATIONAL (GB), APRIL 6

## Ginetta duo bags GT4 podium brace



The FF Corse Ferrari 'won' the first race



Kershaw and Yusuf won in race two

ISSY RACING'S OZ YUSUF AND GAVAN KERSHAW were left aggrieved with the timing of the second safety car in race one, which cost them the lead of a race eventually won by Ginetta duo Graham Johnson and Mike Robinson.

Yusuf had been leading by a significant margin before he pitted just as the safety car came out, and Lotus team-mate Kershaw was stuck behind the pace car when he emerged, losing a lap.

Despite the high number of incidents among the GT3 field, Robinson duly brought the Ginetta G55 home safely to win the GT4 class in race one. He was challenged by the Astons of Ross Gunn and Mike Hart, but escaped as they fought each other.

"God knows what happened but it looked like something had exploded on the circuit," said Robinson. "Then after that it was just a case of trying to keep my head down, just trying to push and build a gap."

The Issy pair bounced back from race-one

heartache to take a comfortable win in the denouement. Yusuf beat Jamie Chadwick's Aston Martin in race two, although Johnson and Robinson were later promoted to second when the runners-up were excluded for a driving infringement.

## RESULTS

**Race 1 (30 laps) 1 Graham Johnson/Mike Robinson (Ginetta G55) 1h01m27.435s;** 2 Jamie Chadwick/Ross Gunn (Aston Martin V8 Vantage) +4.727s; 3 Terry Langley/Mike Hart (Aston); 4 Graham Coomes/Shawn Hollamby (Porsche 911); 5 Aleksander Schjerpen/James Birch (G55); 6 Oz Yusuf/Gavan Kershaw (Lotus Evora). **FL** Luke Davenport (G55) 1m43.674s (93.47mph).

**Race 2 (31 laps) 1 Yusuf/Kershaw 1h02m01.790s;** 2 Johnson/Robinson, +26.160s; 3 Paul McNeilly/Jamie Stanley (G55); 4 David Pattison/Luke Davenport (G55); 5 Langley/Hart; 6 Adrian Barwick/Bradley Ellis (Ginetta). **FL** Kershaw 1m44.689s (92.57mph).

**Points 1 Johnson/Robinson, 43;** 2 Yusuf/Kershaw, 33; 3 Langley/Hart, 25; 4 Pattison/Davenport & Chadwick/Gunn, 18; 6 McNeilly/Stanley, 15.



Beechdean Aston hit back with race-two win

that also took out Barwell's Jon Mishaw, who had been left with nowhere to go in the carnage and rear-ended the sister car of Marco Attard.

After a lengthy safety-car period Carroll resisted the pressure from Butcher and Osborne to claim victory. Osborne had looked to have second secure but Butcher made a brave move past the BMW driver as he was baulked by a backmarker in the final moments of the race.

Late drama also hit race two, as Beachdean's Howard survived a late stop-go penalty to hold on for victory in his rebuilt Vantage.

Howard's team-mate Jonny Adam had fought Carroll for much of the first half of the race as the Beachdean Aston led away from pole position. The safety car made a brief appearance at the start of the race as Tom Oliphant and Shaun Hollamby spun in separate incidents, though

both eventually got going again.

Adam, Carroll and Phil Keen in the Barwell BMW Z4 pulled clear at the front of the field before Carroll claimed the lead through Old Hall at the start of lap 10 after getting a better run through Deer Leap.

However, the Ferrari dropped out of the lead when Carroll handed over to Eastwood and served their 15-second success penalty in the pits as a consequence of "winning" race one. That looked to hand Howard a clear run to victory for Beachdean but he, Griffin and Triple Eight's Lee Mowle, who had been running in second and third, were among those given penalties for their pitstops being outside the allotted timeframe.

While Griffin and Mowle slipped to fourth and fifth, Howard had enough time in hand to emerge from his pitlane visit still in the lead and hold on



Triple Eight BMW had a strong showing

for the win from the Team LNT Ginetta of Steve Tandy/Mike Simpson, with Attard third after fine work from BMW team-mate Alexander Sims.

## RESULTS

**Race 1 (31 laps) 1 Liam Griffin/Rory Butcher (Aston Martin Vantage) 1h01m10.908s (81.84mph);** 2 Gary Eastwood/Adam Carroll (Ferrari 458 Italia), +0.911s; 3 Lee Mowle/Joe Osborne (BMW Z4); 4 Phil Dryburgh/Mat Jackson (Motorbase Aston); 5 Hector Lester/Benny Simonsen (Ferrari); 6 Marco Attard/Alexander Sims (BMW). **Fastest lap** Carroll 1m35.549s (101.42mph).

**Race 2 (36 laps) 1 Andrew Howard/Jonny Adam (Aston) 1h01m03.228s (95.24mph);** 2 Steve Tandy/Mike Simpson (Ginetta G55) +12.829s; 3 Attard/Sims; 4 Griffin/Butcher (Aston); 5 Mowle/Osborne; 6 Eastwood/Carroll. **FL** Adam 1m35.870s (101.08mph). **Points 1 Griffin/Butcher, 37;** 2 Eastwood/Carroll, 26; 3= Howard/Adam & Mowle/Osborne, 25; 5 Tandy/Simpson, 24; 6 Attard/Sims, 23.

# RUNNERS AND RIDERS

A BUMPER ENTRY FOR THE FORMULA 3 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP TAKES ITS BOW THIS WEEKEND AT SILVERSTONE. MARCUS SIMMONS ASSESSES THE FIELD



## PREMA POWERTEAM

### CAR DALLARA-MERCEDES

The Italian team has run the past four Euro F3 champions, and with Mercedes-backed category veteran Rosenqvist transferring from Mücke Motorsport there's every chance of a fifth. For the fourth year running, Prema fields a Ferrari Driver Academy youngster, this time in the form of Stroll. Maisano is very much a protege of the Stroll family and, had he been eligible for the overall Italian F4 title (he was too old), he would have narrowly beaten the Canadian. Racing Steps-backed Dennis also has a point to prove – he's a strong racer and if he qualifies well he'll be in there pitching.

### DRIVERS

#### FELIX ROSENQVIST (S)

2014 8th in Euro F3; Macau GP winner

#### JAKE DENNIS (GB)

2014 9th in Euro F3

#### BRANDON MAISANO (F)

2014 1st in Italian F4 Trophy class

#### LANCE STROLL (CAN)

2014 1st in Italian F4

## CARLIN

### CAR DALLARA-VOLKSWAGEN

There are two guys at this team Prema will be getting nervous about. One is Giovinazzi: the Italian flew once he got a new chassis in mid-2014, and he was mighty in the two-day Valencia test last month. The other is rapid rookie Russell, who Prema nearly ran in Formula Renault last season and is held in high regard throughout Europe. These two should lead the Carlin attack, while Menezes is capable of running at the front on his day. Red Bull newboy Iloft has a lot to learn on his leap from karting but has been quick in testing. Calderon made great progress last year at Mücke, and if she feels support around her will get good points. Tveter doesn't have a great FRenault record, but has made decent progress in testing for one with such low experience (he never raced in karts).



### DRIVERS

#### ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI (I)

2014 6th in Euro F3

#### GUSTAVO MENEZES (USA)

2014 11th in Euro F3

#### TATIANA CALDERON (CO)

2014 15th in Euro F3

#### GEORGE RUSSELL (GB)

2014 1st in BRDC F4; 4th in FRenault ALPS

#### RYAN TVETER (USA)

2014 9th in FRenault NEC; 23rd in FRenault Eurocup

#### CALLUM ILOTT (GB)

2014 karting

### DRIVERS

#### SANTINO FERRUCCI (USA)

2014 19th in Euro F3

#### MICHELE BERETTA (I)

2014 no points in Euro F3

#### MIKKEL JENSEN (DK)

2014 1st in ADAC FMasters



#### MAXIMILIAN GUNTHER (D)

2014 2nd in ADAC FMasters

#### KANG LING (PRC)

2014 selected GP3, F3, FRenault races

## MUCKE MOTORSPORT

### CAR DALLARA-MERCEDES

The Berlin team starts the year with very little experience in the driver line-up, although there is some promise there. Jensen was a target of Van Amersfoort Racing, but has ended up partnering his old FMasters rival Gunther, who has been umbilically linked to Mücke since the start of his career in cars. Both should be good for podiums by mid-season. Ferrucci started last season late as he wasn't 16 until after the first few rounds, and thereafter proved quick on occasion – hopefully a consistent off-season will have



added polish. Beretta struggled last year, but seems to be going much better in the build-up to his second campaign. For Ling, making progress must be the main target.



## VAN AMERSFOORT RACING

### CAR DALLARA-VOLKSWAGEN

There should be no post-Max Verstappen hangover for the Dutch team, which has three strong, young talents, with a combined total of two seasons under their belt in cars. Leclerc is looking the real deal at the moment – expect him to fight with Russell for rookie honours, and perhaps the overall title. Lorandi has made a Verstappen-style vault from karting but has to ignore comparisons with his Dutch predecessor and find his

### DRIVERS

#### CHARLES LECLERC (MC)

2014 2nd in FRenault ALPS

#### ALESSIO LORANDI (I)

2014 karting

#### ARJUN MAINI (IND)

2014 2nd in BRDC F4

own way. Maini gave Russell hassle in F4 last year and should be good, but F3 will be a bigger challenge as he lacks the more-relevant experience of FRenault.





**DRIVERS**

**PIETRO FITTIPALDI (BR)**  
2014 1st in FRenault BARC; 9th in ALPS

**MATT RAO (GB)**  
2014 2nd in British F3

**MARTIN CAO (PRC)**  
2014 1st in British F3

**PETER LI (PRC)**  
2014 5th in British F3

**FORTEC MOTORSPORT**

**CAR DALLARA-MERCEDES**

The Daventry F3 junkies start their 24th season in the category with a four-car line-up. The squad has regrouped after a terrible season in Europe last year, with ex-Paul Stewart Racing man Bruce Jenkins returning to F3 as team manager and ace engineer Russell Dixon looking after the promising Fittipaldi. Cao and Rao will find Europe a massive step up from British F3, but Fortec rates Rao's ability to learn very highly. Li trailed behind these two in BF3 last year and his main target has to be to outqualify a few people.



**DRIVERS**

**NICOLAS POHLER (D)**  
2014 12th in Euroformula Open

**MATT SOLOMON (PRC)**  
2014 2nd in FMasters China

**DOUBLE R RACING**

**CAR DALLARA-MERCEDES**

The Woking squad had a depressing time in Europe last season but bounces back with two cars for its 10th anniversary season. Well-connected Hong Kong driver Solomon is highly regarded in Asia and has shown well in the wet so far in Formula 3 testing. Pohler has also performed better than his Euroformula Open record might have suggested.

**EUROINTERNATIONAL**

**CAR DALLARA-MERCEDES**

Enthusiastic team boss Antonio Ferrari pulled off something of a coup in getting Kirchhofer on board. It's believed that the German has the support of Merc, and he'll be quick, but will have to miss a few races as his GP3 programme takes priority. Beer was capable of beating Gunther in FMasters in 2013 so he should be quite handy, although he had a truncated 2014.

**DRIVERS**

**NICOLAS BEER (DK)**  
2014 20th in BRDC F4 (part season)

**MARVIN KIRCHHOFER (D)**  
2014 3rd in GP3



**DRIVERS**

**DORIAN BOCCOLACCI (F)**  
2014 2nd in French F4

**ALEXANDER ALBON (T)**  
2014 3rd in FRenault Eurocup

**SIGNATURE**

**CAR DALLARA-VOLKSWAGEN**

The French team used to be an F3 powerhouse, and its category comeback was stillborn in 2014 owing to the disaster with the ORECA/Renault engine. Now it has VW power, but two rookies mean this will be a year of learning. Albon and Boccolacci, both Lotus F1 juniors, have clocked up a fair amount of test mileage and each is highly rated, so points from the word go has to be the target. Boccolacci has the bigger step up, but at least can call on advice from his good pal, 2014 champ Esteban Ocon.



**DRIVERS**

**FABIAN SCHILLER (D)**  
2014 8th in ADAC FMasters

**RAOUL HYMAN (ZA)**  
2014 3rd in BRDC F4

**TEAM WEST-TEC**

**CAR DALLARA-MERCEDES**

The Corby-based team did a solid job in its first season in the series last year. Schiller hasn't pulled up any trees in his career so far, but he has shown a very strong turn of speed in the wet in an F3 car. Hyman is playing catch-up with his late deal, although he did take the fight to Russell and Maini in F4.

**T-SPORT**

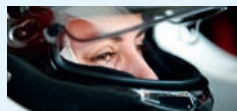
**CAR DALLARA-NBE**

Despite Nick Cassidy's Macau GP podium, the Brackley team has struggled to even get on the grid this year. T-Sport only does F3 – and takes great pride in doing it properly – and just can't match some of the bargain deals on offer elsewhere in the paddock. If the team gets Ecuadorean Moreno anywhere near the midfield, that'll be further proof of its quality.



**DRIVER**

**JULIO MORENO (EC)**  
2014 22nd in FRenault NEC



# WHO CAN EMULATE

# VERSTAPPEN AND

# OCON?



## THERE'S A VERY TASTY CROP OF ROOKIES IN EUROPEAN F3 THIS YEAR, BUT WHO'S THE BEST?

MARCUS SIMMONS  
GOT THE LOWDOWN

Let's be cruel for a minute: the organisers of the Formula 3 European Championship took the unofficial prize for 'most-pointless new concept of 2014' with their instigation of a separate rookie championship. With Esteban Ocon and Max Verstappen on fire, and Antonio Fuoco and Jake Dennis chasing hard, some suggested that it was the older guys who needed their own title to chase. By the end of the first race weekend at Silverstone, we'd already seen Ocon, Verstappen and Fuoco stand on the podium once as the overall top three, and then clamber up again as the rookie prizewinners.

This year could well be different. After all, with Felix Rosenqvist and Antonio Giovinazzi staying on in F3, it's going to be a tough ask for any of the newcomers to beat them over the 33-race season. If that's the case, the rookie chase take its share of the limelight in 2015. Organisers: you are vindicated, for now...!

This is going to be a great year for F3. Simultaneously, a wave of talent has moved into the category from the disparate junior series around Europe, including two who are emulating Verstappen in making the step straight from karts. But how are they shaping up?

We downloaded 1990s F3 veteran Warren Hughes, who as one of the leading driver coaches in the business has been working with Fortec Motorsport and was on hand at the two-day Valencia test in March. Hughes has a shrewd eye, and his own F3 driving experience from two decades ago is still relevant, as the cars remain very similar in concept, with relatively low power-to-grip ratios meaning that keeping up momentum in corners is critical.



F3 veteran Hughes has been scouting

## THIS YEAR'S ROOKIES

### LANCE STROLL

A NEW... GILLES VILLENEUVE?

He's from Quebec and has the support of Ferrari

AGE 16

Everything about Stroll's career has been worked out meticulously so far. The Ferrari Driver Academy hope cruised to the Italian Formula 4 title last year and also warmed up nicely for 2015 with the Toyota Racing Series crown, although he never managed to plant his car on pole position in New Zealand. He clocked up a healthy amount of mileage before the end of last year in his Prema Powerteam F3 car. As usual, the team has kept below the radar in testing: some say Prema sandbags; the team claims it's just working on its programme.

**HUGHES SAYS** "I was expecting probably a bit more. Prema as a whole had a very low-key test at Valencia. I can't put my finger on it, but none of the Prema cars stood out as being on the move. Maybe he's a slow-burner and it'll take him time to find his feet. With the infrastructure of Prema I'm sure he'll come on as the year progresses."



### GEORGE RUSSELL

A NEW... JENSON BUTTON?

Karting prodigy who won McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award after first season in cars

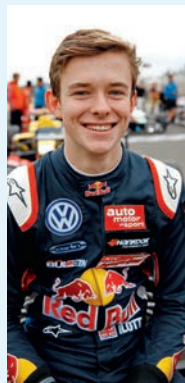
AGE 17

The initial plan was Formula Renault Eurocup for 2015, but a win as a wildcard in that series at the back end of last season – plus a superb transition to F3 on an exploratory test – switched the focus. And that was before he scooped the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award. Carlin won a tug of love with Mücke Motorsport to capture him for 2015, and he's a driver to be feared by rivals.

**HUGHES SAYS** "He was one of the standout rookies at Valencia. I'd seen a bit of him in Formula 4 so he was on my radar, and I'd heard some good things. But Russell really looked super-quick – very committed through Turn 1. He's really confident and the car looked alive. He's perhaps two or three tenths shy of the ultimate pace but he'll be up there from early on. Remember though that Carlin and Van Amersfoort Racing had an extra day at Valencia before the official test, so that meant a head start."



S. BLOXHAM/LAT



### CALLUM ILOFT

A NEW... ALEX LYNN?

Picked up by Red Bull and given a seat at Carlin

AGE 16

Straight from karting to F3 as a Red Bull junior, the pressure will be on Iloft from the start. He racked up decent mileage – and the occasional shunt – in testing last autumn. What will have helped hugely is his trip to New Zealand for the Toyota Racing Series, where he gained in speed and consistency through the five-week duration.

**HUGHES SAYS** "Probably not as much a standout as Russell. He showed flashes of speed but it seemed more of an effort, but he's lacking that year in cars that George has. He seems good when conditions are changeable. He's got a step to make to be consistently up there, but he'll have his day."



### ALESSIO LORANDI

A NEW... MAX VERSTAPPEN?

Straight from karts to cars with Van Amersfoort

AGE 16

Verstappen told his friends at Van Amersfoort Racing that, if they wanted the next hot karter, then Italian Lorandi was the one. He had an unconvincing first F3 test, but went away to learn in an FRenault and then returned to the cockpit of a Dallara with great panache. Definitely an



exciting talent, although he missed half of the only dry day of testing at Valencia with a gearbox failure, possibly explaining Hughes's impressions.



**HUGHES SAYS** "He didn't look as controlled and on it as Leclerc did. He didn't really figure on my radar, but then a whole load didn't. A low-key start, but who knows his potential? He's got two good yardsticks [Leclerc and Maini] and a good team."

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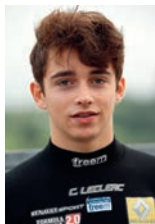
# THIS YEAR'S ROOKIES CONTINUED

## CHARLES LECLERC

**A NEW... JULES BIANCHI?**  
Latest talented protege of Nicolas Todt to reach this level  
**AGE 17**

In his rookie season in cars last year, the Monegasque became one of the few to beat Nyck de Vries in Formula Renault ALPS, and also looked superb on wildcard Eurocup outings. He tested for a fair few teams before plumping for Van Amersfoort Racing, where he has been very impressive in testing. It's fair to say that he even has a chance of the overall title.

**HUGHES SAYS** "The absolute standout for me of all the rookies is Leclerc. When you're at a test and you're not familiar with everybody, you're looking for cars that catch your eye – he was the first. He carries huge momentum – not out of control but consistent. In all conditions he was right there, and got a time out of slicks in the damp before anyone else. Super-impressive I would say."



## ALEXANDER ALBON

**A NEW... TOM BLOMQUIST?**  
Sort of British, sort of foreign, and an ex-Red Bull junior  
**AGE 18**

Both Lotus F1 juniors had their 2015 season sorted very early, and pounded around pre-Christmas as the returning Signature team sought to gather data. London-born Thai Albon is highly rated by those who have worked with him, while Boccocacci is said to be much better suited to higher-grip cars than



## DORIAN BOCCOLACCI

**A NEW... ESTEBAN OCON?**  
The latest French recruit to the Gravity/Lotus F1 junior set-up  
**AGE 16**

the French F4 machinery he drove last year.  
**HUGHES SAYS** "They looked reasonably quick but not startlingly so. Neither was a real standout, so they're not ready to set the world alight. They were a little bit under the radar – although not as much as the Prema cars – and didn't catch my attention."



## ARJUN MAINI

**A NEW... NARAIN KARTHIKEYAN?**  
Great turn of speed – when he keeps it all together  
**AGE 17**

The unheralded Indian very nearly beat Russell to last year's BRDC Formula 4 title and was another sought-after driver among the F3 teams for 2015, before joining Van Amersfoort Racing. Maini was strong in the Toyota Racing Series; he outperformed all but Sam MacLeod on qualifying average, but lost out on some hotly contested and controversial post-race stewards' decisions.

**HUGHES SAYS** "He looks very good. Not probably at the level of Leclerc, and a little bit more lairy. He's still finding where his limits are. He's got quite a loose style and he seems quite comfortable with that, but whether that's how he likes it or whether he needs to get the car working with him I'm not sure."



## PIETRO FITTIPALDI

**A NEW... EMERSON FITTIPALDI!**  
Like his double world champion grandfather, he's initially made his name in the UK  
**AGE 18**

The Brazilian-American trounced the field in the fading Formula Renault BARC series last year, and tellingly looked impressive in Renault ALPS outings later in the year when up against de Vries, Russell and Leclerc. Fortec Motorsport – and coach Hughes – will look to him to lead the team's attack this year.

**HUGHES SAYS** "He had a troubled test that didn't do him justice, but I really rate him. He's got a real hunger for it – he's seriously committed for somebody so young. He's got a lot of very raw natural ability, and given a bit of time his style seems naturally suited to F3."



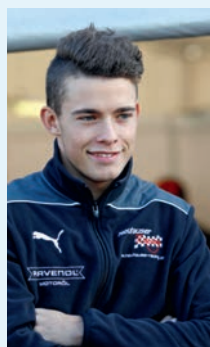
Both these Mücke Motorsport drivers have spent two seasons in ADAC Formel Masters in Germany, with Jensen beating Günther to the 2014 title. Both ran well in testing pre-Christmas. Mücke had a bad start to last season with the new engines and electronics, but the team was as strong as any by the end, so there are no question marks over the equipment.

**HUGHES SAYS** "I would rate both of them and they seem pretty closely matched. Günther was one of the top Mercedes runners so, as a Mercedes team, Fortec was able to see his data. It looks very good; a good template for our guys. They look reasonably quick most of the time, so they'll probably be in the mix."



## MAXIMILIAN GÜNTHER

**A NEW... SEBASTIAN VETTEL?**  
A young German rising through the ranks with Mücke Motorsport  
**AGE 17**



## MIKKEL JENSEN

**A NEW... TOM KRISTENSEN?**  
Impressive Dane who's remained largely under the radar  
**AGE 20**

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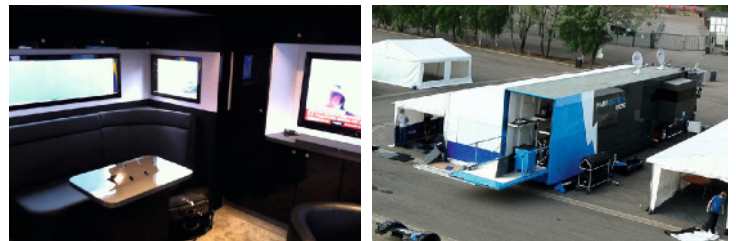
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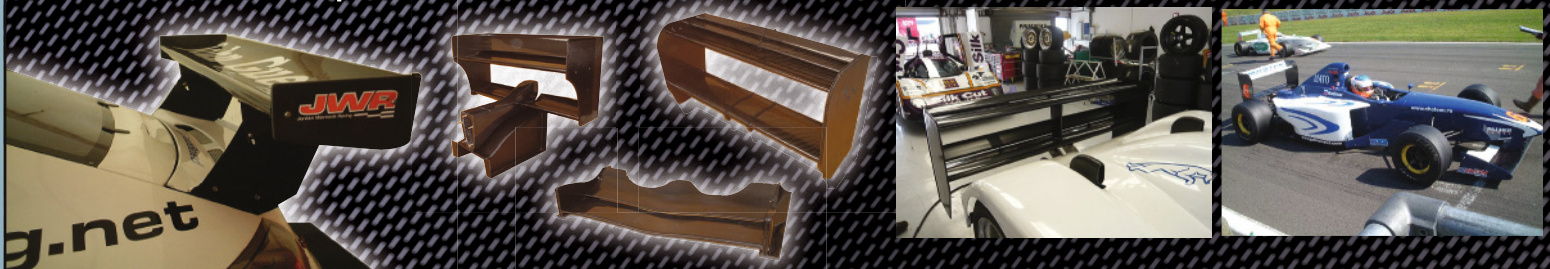
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Norris, and the series, off to a flyer



## MSA Formula kicks off new era

Teams judge the series' debut a success, despite mechanical issues

**LEADING MSA FORMULA** figures believe the new category is off to an encouraging start following its curtain raiser at Brands Hatch last weekend.

The relaunched Formula Ford series runs to FIA F4 specification and attracted a strong 20-car entry for its opening round. With a lower age limit of 15, compared to its main rival the BRDC Formula 4, a number of young karting graduates were among the participants.

Carlin's former Ginetta Junior racer Lando Norris took two of the three wins, while the other went to Arden's Ricky Collard, one of the few drivers to have any prior single-seater racing experience.

### HOW DID THE CARS RUN?

Even with extensive pre-season testing there were still a few teething troubles with the Mygale, which affected the frontrunners in separate races.

The engine on Rafael Martins' SWB machine switched itself off while he was running second in race two, while the throttle on Enaam Ahmed's Arden repeatedly stuck open over the weekend, culminating in him ploughing into the Clearways barriers in the second encounter.

But beyond those issues, team bosses were impressed. "Every new racer is going to have its little issues,

but considering the cost of the car, it's incredible," said Carlin boss Trevor Carlin. "It seems to be very reliable."

The car also passed its first real safety test, as Alexandra Marinescu escaped serious injury after a hefty crash during testing on Friday.

### HOW GOOD WAS THE RACING?

The opener was a dull affair, save for a terrific move from Dan Ticktum to take second place. Race two was more action-packed, indicating that the cars can not only follow each other closely, but also overtake. Carlin's Colton Herta gave the best demonstration of this as he surged through the field to fourth place from 12th on the race two grid.

Fortec Motorsports chief Richard Dutton said: "The driving standards have been fantastic, and if you can have good racing on the Brands Indy layout, you're going to have great racing throughout the season."

A major factor appears to be the condition of the new Hankook tyres. Despite it being a cold weekend in Kent, they still degraded quickly. With new tyres restricted, some drivers didn't feature when they were on worn rubber.

"We saved our best tyres for this race," said Norris after race three. "We struggled in the second one, but it paid off in the last race."

### WAS IT COMPETITIVE?

The array of different teams occupying the podium places and setting quick laps shows that the racing was competitive at Brands Hatch. But, despite Dutton's optimism, the short Indy circuit makes it harder to make a true comparison.

Even some of the smaller outfits like SWB were in the mix and able to fight against junior formulae giants like Fortec — all of which bodes well for the year ahead.

Carlin suggested this "demonstrates that the racing is equal". However, he does have concerns with the sporting regulations. "I don't agree with full points being awarded for reversed grid races," he said.

This does help to mix up the grid, and coupled with the tyre situation, should make for unpredictable races.

### TOP 10 FASTEST RACE LAPS

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Daniel Ticktum (Fortec)	46.132s
2	Colton Herta (Carlin)	+0.060s
3	Ricky Collard (Arden)	+0.144s
4	James Pull (JTR)	+0.295s
5	Lando Norris (Carlin)	+0.351s
6	Jack Barlow (MBM)	+0.441s
7	Daniel Baybutt (JTR)	+0.460s
8	Matheus Leist (Double R)	+0.485s
9	Rafael Martins (SWB)	+0.509s
10	Sandy Mitchell (Arden)	+0.556s

### SCOTT MITCHELL FEATURES EDITOR

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### LIKE MANY AT BRANDS HATCH

on Saturday afternoon, I was an interested spectator for the inaugural MSA Formula race. Having spent last season covering the British Formula Ford and BRDC Formula 4 title battles for AUTOSPORT, it was refreshing to watch a junior single-seater race without scribbling observations in a notebook.

Last weekend, that honour fell to Stephen Lickorish and Motorsport News deputy racing editor Russell Hayes. And while they scoured the paddock to provide the analysis of the opening weekend featured as our lead story, I was free to collect my thoughts having witnessed the opener from the commentary tower.

It's always risky to judge a series on one weekend, particularly when it's on the Brands Hatch Indy circuit. While the spread was not that big at Brands, it's a murky picture because the track is so short. Looking at the top 10 fastest race laps, the gap from quickest to 10th is roughly the same as BRDC Formula 4's debut two years ago — but that was on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit.

What encouraged me was witnessing the fantastic move by Dan Ticktum to take second place at Druids. Key to the pass was Ticktum carrying a lot of speed through Paddock while tucked up close behind the Double R car of Matheus Leist, suggesting the cars can follow closely without losing too much grip.

This is nothing to do with 'the show', but I hope this will be a series in which drivers hone their racecraft and learn to drive properly, not just circulate in giant Scalextric cars with too much grip and not enough power. That's not what a junior formula needs.





RSF wants to add to its roster

Racing Steps Foundation

# RSF shootout revived to find new talent

**THE RACING STEPS FOUNDATION**

is reviving its shootout this season as it looks to add new drivers to the scheme.

Three MSA Formula drivers will be chosen to take part in the selection process, which is likely to feature seven or eight drivers in total at the first stage.

That will then be pared down for an on-track evaluation which will decide if RSF will add any drivers to its roster.

While the RSF has entered into an official partnership with MSA Formula, the fund's Derek Walters insisted it would not be limiting its search.

"Although three drivers from MSA Formula will be selected, there is the possibility of other talented youngsters, even from karting," he stressed.

"We will consider any other young British drivers out there who are

showing promise and competitiveness.

"We've not done this for a while but a decision of this magnitude, to invest so heavily in an individual from year one, needs to be fully evaluated."

The trio of MSA Formula drivers may not be the top three in the standings. Walters added that a comprehensive research process would ensure drivers are not picked on face value.

"We're looking for all-round talent," he said. "We always talk with the British Racing Drivers' Club and [president] Derek Warwick, the MSA and its Academy, and will work with them as well as the media to gain a full picture of the drivers."

"If no driver shines at the end of the process, we won't take any. This is about finding the next top British talent."

Clio Cup UK

## Opening Clio Cup race canned after heavy smash

**THE OPENING ROUND OF THIS**

year's Renault UK Clio Cup at Brands Hatch last weekend was abandoned after a first-lap accident that required debutant Tom Grundy to be extracted from his car.

The JamSport racer collided with team-mate Dan Holland while attempting to avoid 20Ten Racing's Mark Howard as the trio exited Graham Hill Bend. The front of Holland's Mk4 Clio was badly damaged but immediate medical attention was sought for Grundy, and the race was suspended for long enough that it was canned from the schedule.

Grundy said: "There is no way that it could [have] been avoided. A split-second decision had to be made and it was either into my team-mate George Jackson or on to the grass and go around

Dan Holland, which I tried to do.

"I would like to thank all the medical staff and marshals on track for their professionalism and support."

The race will be rescheduled, with bosses eyeing a slot on the Saturday at next weekend's round at Donington Park.



Grundy was involved in first-lap crash

Ginetta GT4 Supercup

## Former KX Academy kid Pittard out of full-time drive



Pittard won't return to Supercup

**GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP RACE**

winner David Pittard will be forced onto the sidelines this year after failing to secure the budget for a return.

Pittard, 23, finished second in last year's points with the SV Racing squad, scoring five wins. He will now focus on his attempts to compete in GT3 machinery in the Blancpain Sprint and Endurance Series.

"I would have run with [Supercup race winner] Rob Boston and I could have made up the numbers for a

couple of rounds," Pittard said.

"But having finished second last year, there would have been no progress and I don't want to ruin the reputation that I gained.

"This is the best decision in the long term. Getting experience under my belt in GT Cup and the 24 Hour Series is my priority."

Pittard has been hindered by the KX Academy not running at this stage. It is understood that the programme may yet return in the future.

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TOCA

# Racing for Heroes misses TOCA opener at Brands

**NONE OF THE RACING FOR** Heroes-supported cars contested the British Touring Car Championship support races at Brands Hatch last weekend.

The initiative was set up over the winter to support under-funded drivers as well as operating as a fundraising partner of the Help for Heroes charity.

Josh Cook participated in the British

Touring Car Championship in his Power Maxed Racing-run Chevrolet Cruze, but all the other drivers were absent.

It was originally supposed to enter Josh Files in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB with Team Parker Racing, Tom Butler in the Renault UK Clio Cup and Jessica Hawkins in MSA Formula (both with Team Pyro). Zac Chapman was another driver to miss out, and instead of racing in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup he drove the series' medical car.

A statement from Racing for Heroes on behalf of founder Peter Thorpe suggested it lacked the finances to participate in the opening rounds while it concentrated on Cook's BTCC effort.

"With funding in the pipeline we are aiming to roll out the team into launching in other categories as the season progresses," Thorpe said.



Cook is only RfH driver racing

BRDC Formula 4

# Mectech out of 2015 F4

**BRDC FORMULA 4 SQUAD**

Mectech Motorsport will not compete in this year's series owing to Connor Jupp's inability to race in a full season because of time commitments.

Mectech entered the single-seater series at last year's F4 Winter Series with Jupp scoring his first podium at Brands Hatch.

The Essex-based family team has sold one of its two F4 cars to new outfit 23 Racing. The other one is now up for sale and the team will instead

focus its attentions on reigning Radical European Masters champion Bradley Smith's Ginetta GT4 Supercup campaign.

"The F4 venture certainly won't go away, particularly as we have two of the new BRDC F4 cars on order," said boss Mike Smith.

"The team approaches its racing with the mindset of either doing it properly or not at all. There was little time to evaluate new drivers before last weekend's opening rounds."



Jupp raced for Mectech last year

Lotus Cup UK

# Woodhead joins Lotus Cup

**FORMER GINETTA JUNIOR**

champion Harry Woodhead will return to racing in this year's Lotus Cup UK.

The 17-year-old, who won the 2013 title, began last season in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup before breaking his leg in a mountain bike accident. He will now pilot a Lotus Exige S2 with the Rob Boston Racing squad.

"My dad bought the car last year while we were at the stage of thinking about when to return to the Supercup," Woodhead said. "But there would be nothing to fight for by that stage so we opted to prepare for this year as well as having to finish my education."

Woodhead said he does not view the move as a step back from GT4 racing.

"I want enjoyable, fast racing which isn't as full on as the Supercup," he added. "There's a possibility of one-off Supercup appearances this year to show that my ability is still there."



Woodhead raced in Supercup in 2014

# HUMBLE PYE

## The voice of club racing



White was rapid in fresh Osella

# "YOUNG DRIVERS SHOWING PROMISE IN HISTORIC RACES"

The competitor demographic at historic racing events may inevitably be weighted towards the older generations, who can better afford the cars of their dreams, but it's always great to see a vein of young talent emerging, particularly in the single-seater classes. Former HSCC FF1600 champion Michael Lyons' 125mph laps in a Hesketh 308E at Thruxton's season-opener over the weekend not only thrilled spectators, but the Derek Bell Trophy invitee – who is fortunate to have a family fleet of cars at his disposal – will have provided inspiration for the younger set who may aspire to similar heights, if not the pinnacle of professional motorsport.

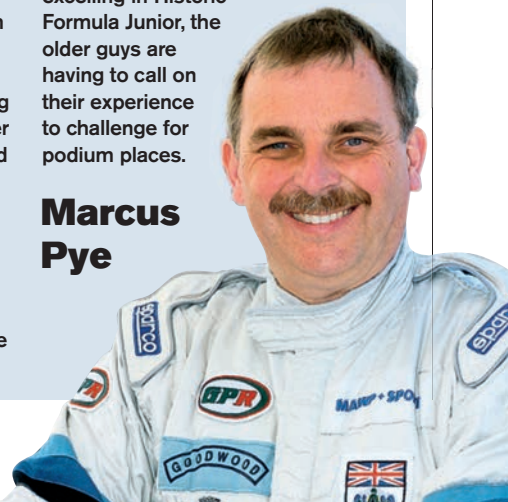
I love the endeavour behind some of the historic efforts, typical of which was that of Historic FF2000 returnee Tom White and his father, who finished building their rare 1976 Osella FAF at 0230 on Saturday morning – in Wigan, 200 miles from the Hampshire circuit. Without the time to set the chassis up they headed south in the hope of putting some miles on the Italian car, rather than a result. In fact, the 18-year old won Class B and scythed five seconds from its lap record for openers, adding it to three set with his previous Crossle 33F last season. That John Poxon – who raced a similar car here in '77 – turned up to watch was icing on the cake. Alas a wing endplate sent

White off into the barrier at the Complex in Sunday's race.

The startling pace of novice Richard Mitchell in the Historic FF1600 set marked the 22-year-old Devonian out as a potential champion in his rookie season. Having made his debut (unusually with no karting background) at last year's Walter Hayes Trophy, Mitchell made full use of a very strong engine to qualify Mike O'Brien's SpeedSport Merlyn Mk20 second on Britain's fastest circuit. Undeterred by a spin in Saturday's race, Richard picked himself up rapidly to finish fifth and regrouped to go again. Far from overawed by the company of Tiff Needell in the sequel, he ran with a tight chasing pack and outjostled the 1980 Ensign F1 racer to grab a brilliant second.

With Historic FF2000 race winners Callum Grant and Tom Smith among the younger set, and others excelling in Historic Formula Junior, the older guys are having to call on their experience to challenge for podium places.

## Marcus Pye



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LAT

Super Touring

# Volvo's race return confirmed

**A VOLVO S40 AND AN AUDI A4 Quattro** have been confirmed as part of this year's HSCC Super Touring Trophy. The 1998 ex-Gianni Morbidelli BTCC Volvo will be driven by historic racer Jason Minshaw, while his brother and British GT frontrunner Jon will compete in an ex-Hans Stuck 1995 Audi. Former GT racer Chris Beighton will also contest selected events in an

ex-Gabriele Tarquini 1997 Honda Accord. Two 1996 MSD Accords will be raced by Tom Gladdis and Paul Whight. The opening Super Touring rounds will be at the Donington Park Historic Festival on May 2-4, with 22 cars entered, and organiser Jonny Westbrook believes the Volvo and 1997 Honda are capable of challenging for wins. "Without a doubt the S40 can take on

the Hondas," he added. "It's one of the best Super Tourers ever built. I also think that if Chris can get his head around the '97 Accord, it can be up there too. It has the same sort of Neil Brown engine as [2014 champion] James Dodd's Accord." The four-event series has support from tyre supplier Hoosier for 2015, which will produce 17-, 18- and 19-inch rubber for the Group A and Super Touring cars.



## In brief

### F4 for Sedgwick

Last year's Ginetta Junior scholar Alex Sedgwick will race in the French F4 Championship this year. The 2014 scholarship winner, who finished tenth in last year's Junior standings with a best finish of fifth, says his long-term ambition remains sports cars. Despite the move to single-seaters, he has targeted a future in the Le Mans 24 Hours.

### Testing roll for Fallas

Hernan Fallas rolled his MGR car in BRDC Formula 4 testing at Oulton Park last week, giving his team a 36-hour rebuilding job in order to make the first race of the season. The accident damaged the suspension and rear wing, though the chassis remained intact.

### Lane avoids injury

A serious accident involving Classic Clubmans racer Mike Lane curtailed the HSCC's Easter Revival meeting at Thruxton on Sunday. His Mallock Mk20B left the circuit on the outside before Church Corner and hit the retaining bank. Trapped by his feet in the remains of the chassis, Lane was conscious and talking to doctors and rescuers as he was being cut out from the wreckage. He was taken to the circuit's medical centre, but fortunately escaped serious injury.

### Epps returns in VWs

Sometime Formula Renault racer Michael Epps made his tin-top debut last weekend with a last-minute deal to contest the Volkswagen Racing Cup opener at Oulton Park. He finished 20th, 14th and 11th in the three races. Epps was 13th in FR BARC in 2012 before switching to the United States-based USF2000 series, in which he placed 12th. His last appearance was a one-off in last year's FR BARC finale.



Mercedes is back at Goodwood

HAWKINS/LAT

Festival of Speed

# FoS line-up takes shape

**A SELECTION OF SIGNIFICANT** cars of Le Mans star Derek Bell will be among the highlights at this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed as the 40th anniversary of his first victory at La Sarthe is commemorated. The theme for this year's event is 'Flat out and Fearless' and seven of the eight surviving Mercedes 300 SLRs – one of which Stirling Moss drove to win the 1955 Mille Miglia – will also be on display in Sussex.

The top five Formula 1 teams will have a presence, with cars from Mercedes, Red Bull, Williams, Ferrari and McLaren forming part of an expanded F1 paddock. There will be a strong American contingent headed by NASCAR legend Richard Petty and the world of bikes will also be represented, with MotoGP ace Casey Stoner among the attendees at the event, which takes place from June 25-28.

Classic Sports Car Club

# Record entry for CSCC opener

**THE OPENING CLASSIC SPORTS** Car Club round of 2015 will feature more than 300 entries, with "a ridiculous amount of people" on the waiting list. Chairman Hugo Holder said 331 entries had been received for the Snetterton meeting; the fourth year in a row it has attracted over 300 cars to its opening event, thanks to the addition of the New Millennium series.

One of its rising categories, the Modern Classics, has grown to 37 entries. This can be accommodated at Snetterton, but will be oversubscribed at places like Brands Hatch.

"We'd love to split the grids, but we haven't got the time. You can't just magic time out of nowhere," said Holder.

The CSCC is also evaluating ways to pay tribute to late Marcos co-founder and club president Jem Marsh.



FVee Festival is out for 2015

CHESTER

Formula Vee

# FVee Festival canned over lack of entries

**IRISH FORMULA VEE BOSSES** have been forced to cancel its blue riband Festival at Mondello Park due to a lack of entries. The Festival, which was due to have taken place on the weekend of July 11-12, has been staged for the past

three seasons, but bosses said increased competitor entry fees will prevent this year's event from taking place. "It just wasn't feasible to run the Festival this year," said Formula Vee Association chairman Ivan Casey. "I'm hopeful that it will return next season

though and wish Mondello Park well. "Formula Vee has become hugely popular in Ireland over the last three years and entries are up massively compared to this time last year. "It's become the most exciting single-seater formula in Ireland."



DEREK BELL TROPHY THRUXTON, APRIL 4-5 HSCC

# Record-breaking Lyons sets stunning Hesketh pace

68

**MICHAEL LYONS' SCINTILLATING** 1m07.648s (125mph) lap in his Formula 1 Hesketh 308E will long be embedded in the memories of spectators at the third HSCC Thrupton Easter Revival.

That the European Le Mans Series LMP2 and Blancpain Endurance Series GT racer annihilated all comers in the Derek Bell Trophy as an invitee mattered not a jot. The shrill wail of a Cosworth DFV engine, on full throttle, reminded hardened fans of the circuit's Aurora AFX British F1 races and the 1985



Ashley spun and recovered to fourth

European Formula 3000 round, testing times for which were similar.

"It's a bit of fun round here – quite fast," said Lyons after his awesome Saturday display. "It's

pretty much flat round the back, but not quite. You forget how much G-force these things make, and for such a long time, when you don't normally get to race them here. I was bracing my knee into the steering rack to keep it wedged, and drew blood from splitting a knuckle on the inside of the bodywork."

Sunday's result was the same, although times were slower with the track a little more slippery.

Lyons' pursuers were equally heroic, runner-up Richard Evans wringing a 1m11.862s (118.02mph)

from his Formula Atlantic March 79B, despite its 1600cc BDA engine suffering fuel starvation on the sweepers. Third-place man Mark Charteris' 1m13.858s (114.83mph) best in a 1700cc Ford pushrod-engined Mallock was perhaps more remarkable, although the weather was kinder than last year's, when the combo dominated in the wet.

Ian Ashley, a Formula 5000 winner here in 1974 driving a Lola T330, had a huge spin into the chicane in his earlier, lower-downforce, T300, but thundered

## Gardiner's strong starting stint secures Guards spoils

Having quadruple HRSR Historic Touring Car champion Dan Cox up his sleeve as co-driver looked like Mike Gardiner's Guards Trophy trump card, but the TVR Griffith owner



Gardiner leads from Tooms

sowed the seeds of victory in a spectacular scrap with John Spiers' similar car, Robert Bremner's AC Cobra and Paul Tooms' Lotus Elan.

First-lap leader Tooms and Spiers fell by the wayside, but Gardiner and Bremner battled to the stops. Bremner was a few seconds behind Cox when he blasted back into the fray but reeled in the twitchy bolide to finish right on its tail.

Tooms was struck by a misfire, which allowed David Tomlin's Elan to pounce for a class-winning

third, while new Goodwood Historic lap record holder Nick Padmore clawed Ian Bankhurst's ex-Gerry Marshall example back to sixth.

In Sunday's Sport Racing split, Thrupton CEO Bill Coombs broke a year's sabbatical for a workout in invitee Chris Drake's McLaren M1B and relayed him to victory.

"That's a proper hero car," grinned Coombs, having watched top record producer George Tizzard – who had shaded Drake for pole by 0.001s – scream father Stuart's

1600cc Lenham Spider back to within 28 seconds at the flag.

"My start was bad, our pitstop 15 seconds too long," rued Tizzard Sr. But for a mistake at the chicane, which sapped the Lotus twin-cam engine car's momentum, George – who had picked off the Chevron B8s of Hugh Colman (started impressively by son Mark), Ross Kaiser and James Schryver in rapid succession – would have been closer to the writhing V8 beast.

# Smith and Grant split Ford wins

Tom Smith and Callum Grant (who lost his wing on Saturday) won a **Historic FF2000** race apiece as Royale, Delta and Reynard chassis showed their strengths with podium finishes. Tom White's Osella and Scott Temple's Crossle increased the marque diversity, topping Class B.

**Historic FF1600** returnee Ben Mitchell's breaks from pole proved decisive, but the battling behind him was sensational. Max Bartell outfoxed Tiff Needell for Saturday's silver, but Richard Mitchell (no relation) drove brilliantly to beat them on Sunday.

In his second meeting the Exeter man, who has no karting experience, recovered to fifth after spinning on day one, then demonstrated professional racecraft in calmly outbraking ex-F1 driver Needell and Bartell to wrest second on Sunday.

Andrew Hibberd had the **Formula Junior** opener won when his steed went lame on the final lap, benefiting the closing Pete Morton. Surprise poleman Sam Smeeth recovered from a



Smith heads Park and Grant in FF2000

spin at Campbell to finish sixth.

After spinning his Lotus Europa at the chicane on lap one, Jim Dean caught and passed Charles Barter's Datsun 240Z, then Peter Shaw's TVR Tuscan for 70s Road Sports victory. Rookie Will Leverett led the chase in his Porsche 911SC.

Ian Pearson claimed both **Classic F3/URS FF2000** races from the Pinto set, although a missed gear at Sunday's start triggered an incident that eliminated four rivals. The equation was well-balanced, race two's early chequer robbing Ralt RT3 debutant Gaius Ghinn of a shot at Pearson as Paul Dibden (Argo JM6) cut fastest lap.

On new-regulation tyres, 2012-13 **Classic Racing Cars** champion Ian Jones was pushed harder than before by Andy Jarvis, but the Kiwi's Lotus prevailed. Peter Thompson, class of the 1000cc F3 class, finished third.

Gunning for a third straight

**Historic Touring Car** title, Tim Davies and his torquey two-litre Lotus Cortina were uncatchable. Peter Hallford dusted down his faithful Mustang to lead the chase, but had Jonathan Lewis's Mini for company until it broke.

Saturday's race was curtailed when Nigel Cox rolled his Lotus Cortina at Goodwood corner, the fast right-hander before Village at which Dan Wray's similar car flipped during qualifying. Neither driver was injured.

Mark Charteris was clear in **Classic Clubmans** when Mike Lane, in third, crashed heavily approaching Church, bringing out reds. Runner-up Michael Mallock had been off at the Chicane, while Clive Wood hared from the back to FF1600-engined honours, having finished his U2's winter rebuild in the assembly area!

● Marcus Pye

## RESULTS

**DEREK BELL TROPHY (18 LAPS)** 1 Michael Lyons (Hesketh-DV 308E) 20m45.555s (121.69mph); 2 Richard Evans (March-BDA 79B) +1m02.703s; 3 Mark Charteris (Mallock-Ford U2 Mk20/21); 4 Ian Ashley (Lola-Chevrolet T300); 5 Jon Finch (Chevron-BDA B34); 6 James King (March-BDA 712M). **Class winners** Evans; Charteris; Ashley; King; Stefano Rosina (Leda-Chevrolet LT25). **Fastest lap** Lyons 1m07.648s (125.37mph) **Record.** Pole M. Lyons 1m 08.392s (124.01mph). **Starters** 15. **RACE 2 (18 LAPS)** 1 M. Lyons 20m59.067s (121.25mph); 2 Evans +49.902s; 3 Charteris; 4 Ashley; 5 Paul Campfield (Chevron-Chevrolet B24); 6 King. **CW** Evans; Charteris; Ashley; King; Chris Atkinson (Surtees-Chevrolet TS8). **FL** Lyons 1m08.122s (124.50mph). **P. M.** Lyons. S 15.

**GUARDS TROPHY GT (26 LAPS)** 1 Mike Gardiner/Dan Cox (TVR Griffith) 40m34.730s (90.57mph); 2 Robert Bremner (AC Cobra) +0.421s; 3 David Tomlin (Lotus Elan); 4 Jamie Boot (TVR Griffith); 5 Andrew Smith (Marcos 1800GT); 6 Ian Bankhurst/Nick Padmore (Lotus Elan). **CW** Tomlin; Grahame Bull/Dave Coyne (Jaguar E-type); Allan Ross-Jones (Triumph TR4). **FL** Bremner 1m28.671s (95.65mph). **P** Gardiner/Cox 1m30.046s (94.19mph). S 29.

**GUARDS TROPHY SPORTS RACING (26 LAPS)** 1 Bill Coombs/Chris Drake (McLaren-Chevrolet M1B) 38m04.700s (96.52mph); 2 Stuart & George Tizzard (Lenham-t/c Spider) +27.862s; 3 James Schryver (Chevron-BMW B8); 4 Ross Kaiser (Chevron-BMW B8); 5 Mark & Hugh Colman (Chevron-BMW B8); 6 Nick Thompson/Shawn McClurg (Chevron-BMW B6). **CW** Tizzard/Tizzard; Schryver; Michael & Andrew Hibberd (Lotus-t/c 23B). **FL** George Tizzard 1m22.360s (102.98mph). **P** Tizzard/Tizzard 1m21.912s (103.54mph). S 14.



Pearson prevailed over the F3 cars

**HISTORIC FF2000 (15 LAPS)** 1 Tom Smith (Royale RP27) 21m17.674s (99.57mph); 2 Ben Tusting (Reynard SF79) +7.529s; 3 Andrew Park (Reynard SF81); 4 Callum Grant (Delta T78); 5 Andrew Storer (Royale RP27); 6 Colin Wright (Reynard SF79). **CW** Tom White (Osella FAF). **P** Grant 1m19.968s (106.06mph). **FL** Grant 1m19.158s (107.14mph) **Record.** S 23.

**RACE TWO (16 LAPS)** 1 Grant 21m15.153s (106.42mph); 2 Smith +2.739s; 3 Park; 4 Tusting; 5 Storer; 6 Wright. **CW** Scott Temple (Crossle 33F). **FL** Smith 1m18.612s (107.89mph) **Record.** P Smith. S 21.

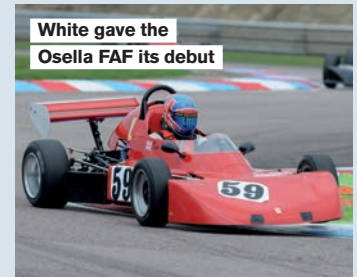
**HISTORIC FORMULA FORD 1600 (15 LAPS)** 1 Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20) 21m20.483s (99.35mph); 2 Maxim Bartell (Merlyn Mk20A) +2.068s; 3 Tiff Needell (Lotus 69); 4 Simon Toyne (Lola T200); 5 Richard Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20); 6 James Buckton (Elden Mk8). **FL** Bartell 1m23.577s (101.48mph). **P** Mitchell 1m 24.394s (100.50mph). S 28. **RACE TWO (15 LAPS)** 1 Ben Mitchell 21m14.410s (99.83mph); 2 Richard Mitchell +5.669s; 3 Bartell; 4 Needell; 5 Toyne; 6 Buckton. **FL** Buckton 1m23.658s (101.38mph). **P** Mitchell. S 24.

**FORMULA JUNIOR (14 LAPS)** 1 Pete Morton (Lightning Envoyette) 20m25.343s (96.90mph); 2 Andrew Hibberd (Lotus 22) +15.501s; 3 Steve Jones (Cooper T67); 4 Andrew Wilkinson (Lynx T3); 5 Chris Drake (Elva 300); 6 Sam Smeeth (Lotus 22). **CW** Jones; Wilkinson; Robert Barrie (Lotus 18); Andrew Tart (Bond FJ). **FL** Morton 1m24.397s (100.49mph). **P** Smeeth 1m27.894s (96.49mph). S 23.

**70S ROAD SPORTS (13 LAPS)** 1 James Dean (Lotus Europa) 20m22.672s (90.18mph); 2 Peter Shaw (TVR Tuscan) +1.364s; 3 Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z); 4 Will Leverett (Porsche 911SC); 5 Mark Leverett (Lotus Elan); 6 Brian Jarvis (Porsche 924). **CW** Shaw; Jarvis. **FL** Dean 1m31.482s (92.71mph). **P** Shaw 1m32.691s (91.50mph). S 15.

**CLASSIC CLUBMANS (8 LAPS)** 1 Mark Charteris (Mallock Mk20/21) 10m02.864s (112.55mph); 2 Michael Mallock (Mallock Mk18) +20.651s; 3 Mike Lane (Mallock Mk20B); 4 Alan Cook (Mallock Mk20); 5 Malcolm Jackson (Mallock Mk21); 6 Clive Wood (Mallock Mk20B). **CW** Wood. **FL** Charteris 1m13.980s (114.64mph). **P** Charteris 1m14.028s (114.57mph). S 13.

**CLASSIC F3/URS FF2000 (10 LAPS)** 1 Ian Pearson (Van Diemen RF83) 13m 14.630s (106.73mph); 2 Paul Dibden (Argo JM3) +9.427s; 3 Anthony Hancock (Van Diemen RF82);



White gave the Osella FAF its debut

4 Gaius Ghinn (Ralt RT3); 5 Jon Finch (Van Diemen RF82); 6 Chris Levy (Van Diemen RF83). **CW** Dibden. **FL** Pearson 1m18.262s (108.37mph). **P** Pearson 1m19.223s (107.06mph). S 22. **RACE TWO (14 LAPS)** 1 Pearson 18m32.468s (106.73mph); 2 Ghinn +0.468s; 3 Dibden; 4 Finch; 5 Levy; 6 Paul Burt (Van Diemen RF82). **CW** Ghinn. **FL** Dibden 1m17.515s (109.41mph). **P** Pearson. S 14.

**CLASSIC RACING CARS (15 LAPS)** 1 Ian Jones (Lotus-t/c 59) 21m15.664s (99.73mph); 2 Andy Jarvis (Palliser-t/c WDB2) +10.762s; 3 Peter Thompson (Brabham-MAE BT21); 4 Westie Mitchell (Merlyn-Ford Mk20); 5 Chris Holland (Brabham-MAE BT21); 6 Mark Linstone (Brabham-MAE BT21). **CW** Thompson; Mitchell; Anthony Goddard (Cooper-Alfa Romeo T56). **FL** Jones 1m23.776s (101.24mph). **P** Jones 1m22.410s (102.92mph). S 13.

**HSR HISTORIC TOURING CARS (10 LAPS)** 1 Tim Davies (Ford Lotus Cortina) 15m 49.578s (89.32mph); 2 Peter Hallford (Ford Mustang) +1.776s; 3 David Tomlin (Ford Lotus Cortina); 4 Jonathan Lewis (Austin Cooper S); 5 Thomas Jones (Ford Lotus Cortina); 6 Jon Milicevic (Morris Cooper S). **CW** Hallford; Tomlin; Lewis; Roger Cope (BMW 1800); Simon Benoy (Hillman Imp); Bob Bullen (Ford Anglia 105E). **FL** Hallford 1m 33.548s (90.66mph). **P** Davies 1m33.648s (90.56mph). S 24. **RACE TWO (13 LAPS)** 1 Davies 20m25.457s (89.97mph); 2 Hallford +8.553s; 3 Tomlin; 4 Cope; 5 Bob Bullen (Ford Anglia 105E); 6 Jimmy Fuller (Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint). **CW** Hallford; Tomlin; Bullen. **FL** Davies 1m32.922s (91.27mph). **P** Davies. S 15.



King invoked the spirit of Rindt

back to fourth, ahead of champion Jon Finch (FAtlantic Chevron B34) on Saturday and Paul Campfield (F5000 Chevron B24) on Sunday.

For a while, Finch and Andy Huxtable in a sister B34 bookended a Sunday train that included Frank Lyons's F5000 Eagle FA74, Campfield and American James King, who received the Jochen Rindt Trophy for best-placed F2 car with his March-BDA 712M.

"I'm very honoured," said the 70-year-old. "I couldn't hold Rindt's helmet bag, let alone dream of matching his achievements here."

Two early F5000s were out too, honours being shared by the bold Stefano Rosina debuting his Leda LT25 and Chris Atkinson (in an ex-Mike Hailwood Surtees TS8) who found Alan Cook's Mallock good company on Sunday after the Italian's brute snaked off the grid with a seized front brake.

● Marcus Pye



BRDC FORMULA 4 OULTON PARK, APRIL 4-6

# Palmer leads as Oulton wins are shared

Palmer tops F4 points

WILL PALMER EMERGED AS THE championship leader after the first weekend of the BRDC Formula 4 season as three different drivers chalked up victories at Oulton Park.

Palmer drew first blood in a battle with Harrison Newey that looks set to last the season. The two HHC team-mates had been the class of the field in qualifying as they locked out the front row, with Palmer coming out on top. He then converted that advantage into victory in race one and took a podium in the second race where Newey struggled to come through the pack.

"I got a good getaway and then after that I got my head down and managed to build up a good early lead," explained Palmer after race one. "I was just managing the gap after that."

Chris Mealin and Jordan Albert scored their first BRDC F4 victories in the second and third races, with Mealin's win coming on his debut weekend. That triumph suggests Lanan Racing, the team that



Mealin and Haggerty did battle in race two

produced the first two BRDC F4 champions, will lead the fightback to HHC's early season success.

In race one Palmer held on to the lead from pole position while Newey was slow away from second place and lost out to Hillspeed's Sebastian Lanzetti as the pack charged into Old Hall on the opening lap. By the time Newey was able to fight his way back past Lanzetti with a brave move at Hislop, Palmer was already almost four seconds clear at the front, in what was an otherwise uneventful opening race.

However, there was drama before race two even got going as Sisa Ngebulana, in pole position for the reverse-grid contest, spun on the parade lap. "I was just trying to warm up my tyres too much," he admitted afterwards.

Mealin inherited pole and pulled away from the grid with Ciaran Haggerty giving close pursuit.

Their battle lasted all race long but Mealin held on for the win, with Ecurie Ecosse-backed young driver Haggerty's second place delighting his mentor Dario Franchitti in parc ferme. Starting in P8, Palmer had played a blinding first lap, leaping up to fourth, and he later passed Tom Jackson to claim the final podium spot.

SWR driver Albert came in at the start and spent the rest of the race chasing the fastest lap to secure pole for race three, which he achieved to line up ahead of Newey as both drivers eyed a maiden series win. Albert led away from the start of the finale but came under pressure from Newey as the pack approached Shell.

The ensuing moves left Newey pointing the wrong way and furious, labeling it "a very dirty manoeuvre and should never have been done", while Albert insisted there had been no contact.

Haggerty gave a spirited chase of Albert but the Scot spun through Deer Leap towards the end of the race, gifting second to Mealin. He then dropped his car on the grass at Cascades on the final lap, promoting Mealin's Lanan team-mate Rodrigo Fonseca to the podium, and tumbled to seventh.

Palmer claimed a muted fifth, behind Tom Jackson, and holds a slender five-point advantage over Lanan's Mealin.

The consistent Jackson, fourth in race one and fifth in race two, is third but all three will have to watch for a resurgent Newey looking to make up for points lost this time out.

● Alex Kalinauckas

## RESULTS

**RACE 1** 1 Will Palmer, 12 laps in 19m21.509s; 2 Harrison Newey, +4.815s; 3 Sebastian Lanzetti; 4 Tom Jackson; 5 Jack Bartholomew; 6 Ciaran Haggerty. **RACE 2** 1 Chris Mealin, 12 laps in 19m21.321s; 2 Haggerty, +0.592s; 3 Palmer; 4 Bartholomew; 5 Jackson; 6 Newey. **RACE 3** 1 Jordan Albert, 12 laps in 19m23.875s; 2 Mealin, +7.882s; 3 Rodrigo Fonseca; 4 Jackson; 5 Palmer; 6 Bartholomew. **POINTS** 1 Palmer, 74; 2 Mealin, 69; 3 Jackson, 58; 4 Newey, 56; 5 Haggerty, 54; 6 Bartholomew, 54.



Newey bagged a podium



Smart Albert won finale

GT5 CHALLENGE OULTON PARK BRSCC

# Graduate Kellett is top dog

JAMES KELLETT MADE IT TWO WINS out of three at the opening round of the championship, after Ollie Chadwick had taken a twice-red-flagged race one victory.

The first stop came when Alexis Taylor, Glen Broster and Brian Ellory collided at Old Hall on the opening lap. Chadwick got ahead on the second lap of the restart, as Kellett dropped to third behind Stuart Linn. He reclaimed second from Linn but with Mohammed Elshimy and Ian Robinson clashing on lap three, the race was red



Kellett won twice on GT5 debut

flagged again. Kellett was out too and not classified, allowing Callum Pointon to join Chadwick and Linn on the podium. Russ Simpson, Luca Hirst and Nick Zapolski completed the top six.

It was a race-long duel between Kellett and Linn in race two after Chadwick and Pointon had both spun on the opening lap.

Kellett's defence just held until the closing laps, when Linn briefly nosed ahead, but within a lap

Kellett was back in front to take his win by 0.165s.

Zapolski made a third-lap slip that allowed both Simpson and Hirst to go by. They continued their duel with Hirst taking the final podium place on lap six, while Zapolski reclaimed fourth when Simpson retired on the last lap, leaving Charles Plumley and Elshimy to round off the first six.

After being slow away from pole in race three Kellett dropped

behind Linn and Hirst, completing the opening lap right on their tails.

He soon picked off second place and reeled in Linn too, but it took until lap seven before he made the telling move. The winning margin grew to almost five seconds.

Hirst was set for third but a last lap challenge put him down to fifth as Pointon grabbed third and Chadwick made it into fourth from last on the grid.

● Peter Scherer



Kellett topped race-three podium

OULTON PARK APRIL 4-6 BRSCC

# Sutton storms to early VW advantage

DAVID SUTTON WAS THE MAN TO beat in the VW Racing Cup. In a restarted race one his Scirocco got away early on with Aaron Mason a secure second.

Howard Fuller's Golf lost an early third to Lucas Orrock at Shell, but stayed close and got it back around the outside of Cascades on the last lap. Joe McMillan was fifth with defending Champion Joe Fulbrook a late sixth.

McMillan started the second

race from the front row, but within a lap Sutton was into second and challenging. Fulbrook slipped back from an early third which left Mason and Fuller duelling.

Sutton pushed hard but couldn't unseat McMillan, while Fuller clinched third at Old Hall with a lap to go. Fulbrook held on to sixth from Jack Walker-Tully.

Sutton returned to winning ways in the third race but Fuller closed towards the end from a race-long second. Orrock was a lonely third

and Mason eased clear in fourth after taking Phil House on lap four.

There were three different leaders in the first **Super Series FF1600** race, with Douglas Crosbie ousting Jonny McMullan's Van Diemen into Old Hall on lap three. David Dussault's Ray was wheel to wheel with Crosbie, but a touch at Knickerbrook sent Crosbie's Van Diemen into the barriers. Dussault was excluded from the win, which was handed to McMullan, with Martin Short a distant third.

McMullan picked up win number two after a late escape when both Crosbie and Dussault slipped up, handing second to Martin Short.

Henry Chart was a lights to flag winner in the first **F3 Cup** race, with Aaron Steele a solid second after Louis Hamilton-Smith pitted after eight laps.

Although Steele similarly led race two, a jump-start penalty dropped him a position and handed Chart a second win.

● Peter Scherer



Sutton bagged a double



NATIONAL FF1600 SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL, APRIL 4-5 BRSCC

# Foster takes brace as rivals scrap behind

WALKER

**TRIPLE WALTER HAYES TROPHY** winner Joey Foster showed his class with a double victory in the National FF1600 season opener at Silverstone.

Having secured his international racing return with a European Le Mans Series drive for the coming weekend, Foster arrived for the International circuit debut of contemporary FF1600 having missed free practice. Nevertheless, he claimed pole by half-a-second. "It is so important to get a tow around here," he said.

The Cornish driver, aboard Don Hardman's Ray GR10, eased clear in

the opener as the pack jostled behind. Cliff Dempsey Racing driver Patrick Dussault was second for much of the race, although fellow Ray man Luke Williams got ahead for a couple of corners at the end of lap two.

Having chased down the Canadian, Jake Byrne took second at the exit of Club on lap 13 but was almost immediately delayed by a tailender and dropped back to fourth. That put Jonny McMullan – who had not picked up a slipstream in qualifying, and thus started seventh – into the podium positions, behind Dussault.



The cars head towards Abbey

WALKER

Once the yellow flags, caused by George McDonald's three-wheeled Swift, were removed from the final complex, Byrne launched a last-lap

attack for third around the outside into Vale and emerged from Club ahead of McMullan. However, officials deemed that the pass had

## Impressive rookie de la Roche seals win on last lap

**DEBUTANT PETE DE LA ROCHE** sensationally won the opening **500 Owners' Association F3** round, climbing from row three to defeat the experienced campaigner Nigel Ashman.

Seventeen-year-old de la Roche had seven years of karting under his belt, and a couple of hillclimbs in the Cooper MkV,

prior to Silverstone, where he qualified fifth after clutch issues. Motivated by the sight of cars ahead of him, de la Roche found 4s per lap as he chased Ashman in the Cooper MkXI. After a few exchanges, the newcomer sealed victory with a move at Abbey on the final lap. By contrast, he eased to race two victory by 30s.

The **HRDC Touring Greats** race bubbled up after a safety car period, but the destruction of Alistair Dyson's Zephyr, which rolled at Club while running second, was a high price to pay.

Under caution, Matthew Moore (Austin A40) pitted a lap later than his rivals, and was therefore left playing catch-up. Peter Burton's Jaguar Mk1 led the pack, but Tom Shephard's Alfa Giulietta

was close behind.

Burton was delayed by traffic at Abbey at two-thirds distance, giving Shephard the chance to pounce for the lead at Village. Burton powered back ahead along Hangar Straight before Shephard outraked himself into the lead at Stowe. By then, Moore had caught up, and took the lead at Village on the next tour.

Andy Newall (MGB) started strongly in the **HRDC Allstars**, but John Young (AC Cobra) took the lead at the Link on lap two and did not look back. Mike Whitaker's Mustang took second after Newall went wide at Stowe on lap three.

The JPR Isla Motorsport car of MX-5 champion Tom Roche and Travis drummer Neil Primrose convincingly won the **Fun Cup**

opener. After a tight first half-hour, Roche took the lead at a restart. Soon only two other cars remained on the lead lap, the Geometric car of Guy and Zoe Wenham and Stephen Johansen, and the Marcus Clutton/Peter Belshaw entry, which faded with a misfire near the end, promoting Race Logic to third.

Bryan Shrubbs' 33 led from the start of the opening **Alfa** race, but the extra power of Graham Seager's GTV soon told and he eased ahead on lap four. Shrubbs fought back twice, before Seager settled it at Abbey, with Shrubbs subsequently mired in traffic.

Seager wasn't headed later, with Chris Snowdon's 33 taking second from Shrubbs at Village.

● Ian Sowman



Travis's Primrose won the Fun Cup

WALKER





Foster was class of FFord field

been completed off the circuit, and Byrne was subsequently given a 2s penalty, which put him behind Williams and the class-winning Luke Cooper (Swift SC92) down in sixth place.

Foster did not have things all his own way in the second race because, from row two, Williams swept around him to lead at the first corner.

Two laps later, Foster drove around the outside at Abbey to retrieve the lead, and when Dussault spun down the order at Club on lap four following contact with Williams, a big gap emerged behind the double Festival winner.

Motorsport Ireland protege McMullan appeared in second after that incident, with Williams providing a buffer between him and Byrne having grabbed third at Club.

The group vying for the runner-up spot increased to five cars, and it looked like Byrne had sealed it when he hurled his Ray around the outside of McMullan's Van Diemen at Stowe with two laps left.

Cooper brilliantly took fourth at Village on the penultimate lap, driving around the outside of Williams, but that led to him clashing with McMullan when Byrne made a mistake ahead of them both at Club.

Nevertheless, McMullan had the run down the pit straight to take second back at Abbey. He finished with a quarter of the field in his wake, headed by Byrne, with Williams, Cooper (who again topped his class) and Jay Bridger's Mygale SJ01 just behind.

● Ian Sowman

Short won the first Mk1 MX-5 race



MICK WALKER

## Short and Baldwin beat the Mazda masses in top races

**A MAMMOTH ENTRY OF 54 MAZDA MX-5s** headlined Easter weekend racing on the Silverstone National track, with a split into two separate grids encouraging thrilling races.

The format featured groups split between the 15 fastest cars in qualifying and the rest for the first two races, 1A and 1B.

There was a further twist for the second pair of races, with the bottom five of race A moving into B, and the top five of B moving into A.

It meant the morning races were nail-bitingly close from the off. Ben Short won the first A race, holding off the challenge of Alex Baldwin on the final corner.

Race B produced a much more comfortable result as William Stephenson saw off the early charge of Paul Bateman to take victory.

The step up in quality in the headlining 2A race was all too clear as Stephenson finished 22nd in what proved to be possibly the most exciting race of the weekend.

The top five all battled nose-to-tail throughout, swapping places regularly before Simon Baldwin went one better to take victory ahead of Darron Lewis. In the 2B race Simon Woods took the win.

The **Mazda MX-5 Supercup**, featuring more modern variations of Mazda's roadster, also had its fair share of excitement. The first was easily won by Alan Henderson,

but in the second race, he was battled at Luffield and Becketts on every lap by eventual winner Jonathan Clements.

**Formula Jedi** was another category in strong form, producing two enthralling races. Michael Watton won the first, but had to overcome an early safety car period for a multi-car pile-up on the opening lap that took out championship favourite Lee Morgan.

The second race featured a seven-car battle at the front before Dan Clowes and Benjamin Hingeley fell off the pace, leaving Morgan to claim the victory.

In the **Fiesta Championship**, Simon Horrobin eased to the win in both races in a dominant display defined by a knack for strong getaways.

The **Junior Fiestas** had Aaron Thompson control proceedings with pole and two race wins.

The **OSS Championship** started brightly with a close finish as comfortable early leader Tim Gray's Spire was reeled in and passed by Duncan Williams, who secured a late win. Gray's engine had to be replaced and it led to an early retirement in race two as Williams's Juno took a more assured win from Simon Tilling's Ligier.

● Tom Errington

Watton topped a close Jedi race



WALKER



Mortimer leads on his way to victory

SCOTTISH MINIS KNOCKHILL, APRIL 5 SMRC

## Mortimer returns to the front with brace

DESPITE HAVING MANY SALOON CAR titles to his name, Oliver Mortimer hasn't been able to consistently challenge the dominance of Ken Thirlwall since his return to full-time racing. However, there were signs last weekend that the tide has turned. Mortimer won the last race of 2014 and began this season speaking confidently about the bigger picture of a title challenge. He backed that up with two wins in the season opener.

Qualifying was cancelled due to heavy fog, so the grid lined up based on last year's championship order. Mortimer, therefore, was left to follow fellow champion Thirlwall in the early laps with Joe Tanner in hot pursuit.

Tanner made it past to take up the chase but suffered a problem with a solid brake pedal on the approach to the hairpin and made contact with the leader. This dropped Thirlwall down the field and an apologetic Tanner was later

demoted to seventh. Former SEAT Cupra Cup driver Lewis Carter then joined the battle for the lead and made it three abreast at the hairpin on lap five. Ultimately, Mortimer did enough to keep the win.

Mortimer led from lights to flag in race two and it was Carter who hounded him all the way to finish less than two tenths adrift in a thrilling drag race to the line. Thirlwall recovered from his race one misfortune to finish third, but reported some inconsistencies in the car's race pace.

In the final, Thirlwall boldly took the lead from reversed grid polesitter Chris Reid on lap four. Mortimer took up the chase, but couldn't deny Thirlwall from taking his first win of the year. Ominously, Thirlwall has promised to "get it going properly for next time." Reid recovered from his moment at Scotsman to snatch third place on the penultimate lap.

● Jonathan Crawford



Things went wrong for William Blake...

## Talented teens shine in FFord after the fog clears

JORDAN GRONKOWSKI HAS been a front-runner in **Scottish Formula Ford 1600** for the last four years. In his efforts to finally seal the title, Gronkowski has traded in his trusty 25-year-old Van Diemen for a newer JL012K model. But at the end of the first lap of race one, Adam MacKay made it past him on the straight and took the win.

Following the recent success of teenager Ciaran Haggerty, newcomer Neil MacLennan attracted much of the media attention. The fog-abandoned qualifying meant he started at the back of the grid, but the former karter sliced through the field to finish third.

Gronkowski got the jump away from the grid in race two and was at the front of the three-car battle for the win until lap five, when MacKay passed him on the straight. MacLennan hounded his more experienced rival until the last lap when he bravely went around the outside of Duffus to take second.

Reigning **Scottish Legends** champion John Paterson was the class of the field once again. After two dominant displays in the heats, Paterson fought his way from the back in the final. On the last lap, he made two overtaking moves in two corners to deny David Newall a win.

The **Scottish BMW Compact Cup** has continued to thrive with 34 cars entered for its first meeting



Thirlwall won final race



...who took a tumble in the third Mini race



Gore was a dominant winner

MSVR SNETTERTON, APRIL 4

# No one keeps up with the Adams

REIGNING PRODUCTION

champion Adam Gore took a brilliant outright victory on his debut in the **Lotus Cup UK**, comprehensively defeating the defending champion Adam Knight in the process.

Adam Balon tried to keep up with the two leaders but was forced into a recovery drive after an early spin. He raced up the order until finding too much resistance from fourth-placed Alex Reed.

The consistent Ken Savage split the four leading Exiges with his 2-Eleven to secure third, while newcomer Harry Woodhead won his class.

The Production victory went to Daniel Rowbottom with Antony Dunn denying John LeMaster second in category in the final minutes.

An exciting opening lap left Luigi Valentino Mazza in charge of the first **Lotus Elise Trophy** race, but he slipped up at Murrays – as had early leaders James Little and Craig Denham – to allow Daniel Rowbottom a spell in the lead.

But Mazza retook top spot with a similar manoeuvre to his first into the Esses complex to seal victory.



James won the Allcomers race two

Little was in charge of race two until the flying Ryan Savage stole by into Agostini to lead. Little challenged at the same corner a lap later before making his move stick into Brundle, however a missed gear on the final lap at Agostini gifted Savage victory. Rowbottom's chase of third placed Jason McNulty paid off when his rival dropped a wheel off at the exit of the Bomb Hole.

Fast-starting Martin James was unable to hold back Tom Eden in the first **Allcomers** race, while John Gray's quest for second was hampered by slick tyres on a greasy surface. Gray held off a persistent James in race two until he spun at Montreal, allowing James to take victory. Gray recovered to second after ousting Richard Green.

● Lewis Beales



Mazza sealed a win in the Elise Trophy



MacLennan finished third on his debut

of the year. As a result, the class is now grouped with each driver racing twice in the weekend. Steven Dailly continued his strong form of last year with two wins. Carol Brown admitted she was suffering some niggling car problems, but built a lead and then controlled race two.

Ian Donaldson was unbeatable in the **Sports and Saloons** outings, while Harry Simpson's Ginetta was a double winner in the **Classic** contest. Wayne MacAuley began his **Fiesta** title challenge with two wins.

● Jonathan Crawford



**Driver of the Day**  
Hoad dominated

**CASTLE COMBE APRIL 6**

## Hoad breaks his Combe FFord duck

**COUNTLESS HOURS OF WINTER TOIL** honing his ex-works/Michael Vergers Duckhams Van Diemen RF90 to perfection were rewarded when Jonathan Hoad scorched to his maiden **Castle Combe Formula F1600** victory before a huge audience on a gloriously warm and sunny Easter Monday.

The WDK Motorsport mechanic started from pole on the three-quarters resurfaced circuit and took advantage of Josh Fisher's start from row three to second which, allied to brother Felix's poor one, allowed him to break free.

Hoad opened a three-second lead when Nathan Ward, then Roger Orgee, moved into second.

Having erased Marcus Allen's

five-year-old Class B lap record (and threatened Josh Fisher's outright target), Hoad turned up his pace when Orgee began to chase him down. His consummate display earned him Driver of the Day.

The National Mini slipstreamers thrilled spectators, especially the opening **Sezen** encounter in which defending champion Andrew Deviny drafted through from the back, following a spark plug failure in qualifying, to finish 0.033s behind poleman Darren Thomas.

Not to be outshone, reigning **Mini Miglia** champ Rupert Deeth beat Mark Cowan by 0.055s when they hit the track.

Paul Spark topped the 1000cc pack by three tenths from Max

Hunter and Jabez Dyer, while Kane Astin and Dan Wheeler, who led, having passed Astin and Deeth brilliantly into Bobbies, shaded Sam Summerhayes among the 1300s.

Second on the road, Deeth was penalised 10s for jumping the start, while Cowan went from pole to last by Quarry in Peter Baldwin's car, then sprinted to fourth.

Tony Hutchings' reliveried Audi TT won the **Combe Saloon** race as Gary Prebble's brakeless SEAT hit diff dramas having pushed the lap record into the 1m14s bracket. Rover stalwart James Keepin's class win was particularly meritorious, while Vauxhall men Mark Wyatt and Russell Poynter-Brown doubled-up for Interceptor Racing.

As **Sports GT V8** hares Ian Hall's Darrian Wildcat and Perry Wadhams' TVR-Chevrolet wilted, Oliver Bull swept past them for an unexpected debut win in uncle Jeremy Irwin's newly built Vauxhall Tigra Silhouette.

Ligier-mounted Simon Tilling netted two more **Sports Racing** wins, but Josh Smith (Radical PR6) made him sweat both times. His father Darcy had a mixed day in an SR8, but finished a strong third.

As so often before Paul Sibley trounced Spridget rivals, while Keith White's BMW Z4 clone and Martin Davies' 4wd Ford Sierra shared **WRDA** honours, the latter winning a restarted two-lap finale.

● Marcus Pye

**BRITISH RALLYCROSS LYDDEN HILL, APRIL 6**

## Scott wins after late Lydden drama

**PEUGEOT 208 DRIVER ANDY** Scott grabbed a last-minute victory at the second round of the British Rallycross Championship at Lydden Hill, as leader Julian Godfrey succumbed to suspension damage in the closing stages of the A Final.

Multiple champion Godfrey looked on to make up for a troublesome opening round of the series at Croft last month by setting fastest time of the day in the heats, qualifying on pole position and leading the final until the closing stages.

He made the best start in the final, leading into Chessens Drift with Scott hot on his heels. Andy Grant ran third in his Ford Focus while Steve Harris, Steve Mundy and Kevin Procter headed directly for the joker lap immediately.

Grant was next to take the extra route, just losing third place to Harris. Scott took a trouble free joker on lap three, while Godfrey took his on the final lap and re-took the lead, only to run wide at the Devils Elbow with his right rear wheel broken, gifting Scott the lead with less than half a lap to go.



**Scott bagged his second win in a row**

Godfrey finished second, Harris third. Grant and Mundy both had good events to finish fourth and fifth, while Pat Doran fought back from a slow start to finish sixth.

"To be honest, going into the last lap I was thinking that second was a good result," said Scott. "I had

broken power steering, so the car was really hard to drive."

After the disappointment a philosophical Godfrey reflected: "We have had a much better event [than at Croft], though. We're back in the championship."

● Hal Ridge

# RESULTS ROUND-UP

## OULTON PARK

APRIL 4-6, MSVR



**GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE (3 LAPS)** 1 Ollie Chadwick 5m50.886s (82.85mph); 2 Stewart Linn +0.247s; 3 Callum Pointon; 4 Russ Simpson; 5 Luca Hirst; 6 Nick Zapolski; 7 Malcolm Jones; 8 Rob Keogh; 9 Dan O'Brien; 10 John Wall. **FL** Kellett 1m54.278s (84.80mph). **Class winner** Keogh. **Pole** James Kellett. **Starters** 20. **RACE 2 (8 LAPS)** 1 Kellett 15m19.883s (84.28mph); 2 Linn +0.165s; 3 Hirst; 4 Zapolski; 5 Charles Plumley; 6 Mohammed Elshimy; 7 Ian Robinson; 8 O'Brien; 9 Jack Minshaw; 10 Keogh. **FL** Linn 1m52.988s (85.77mph). **CW** Keogh. **P** Kellett. **S** 20. **RACE 3 (11 LAPS)** 1 Kellett 21m05.826s (84.21mph); 2 Linn +4.958s; 3 Pointon; 4 Chadwick; 5 Hirst; 6 Zapolski; 7 Robinson; 8 O'Brien; 9 Plumley; 10 Minshaw. **FL** Pointon 1m52.684s (86.00mph). **CW** Keogh. **P** Kellett. **S** 19. **VW RACING CUP (8 LAPS)** 1 David Sutton (Scirocco) 15m05.260s (85.64mph); 2 Aaron Mason (Scirocco) +2.290s; 3 Howard Fuller (Golf); 4 Lucas Orrock (Scirocco); 5 Joe McMillan (Scirocco); 6 Joe Fulbrook (Golf). **FL** Sutton 1m52.111s (86.44mph). **P** Fulbrook. **S** 26. **RACE 2 (11 LAPS)** 1 McMillan 20m52.766s (85.09mph); 2 Sutton +0.718s; 3 Fuller; 4 Mason; 5 Fulbrook; 6 Walker-Tully. **FL** Mason 1m51.418s (86.98mph). **P** Fulbrook. **S** 24. **RACE 3 (11 LAPS)** 1 Sutton 20m39.466s (86.00mph); Fuller +0.731s; 3 Orrock; 4 Mason; 5 House; 6 Fulbrook. **FL** Fuller 1m51.662s (86.79mph). **P** Sutton. **S** 25.

**SUPERSERIES FORMULA FORD 1600 (9 LAPS)** 1 Jonny McMullan (Van Diemen RF1) 16m27.189s (88.35mph); 2 Martin Short (Van Diemen JL012K) +1; 3 David Franklin (Reynard SF); 4 Ian Parkington (Royale); 5 Steve Roberts (Van Diemen RF91); no other finishers. **FL** McMullan 1m48.047s (89.69mph). **P** McMullan. **S** 10. **RACE 2 (9 LAPS)** 1 McMullan 16m32.589s (87.87mph); 2 Short +6.658s; 3 Douglas Crosbie (Van Diemen); 4 Patrick Dussault (Ray GR13/14); 5 Jamie Jardine (Reynard); 6 Ian Parkington (Royale). **FL** Dussault 1m48.150s (89.60mph). **P** McMullan. **S** 9. **F3 CUP (13 LAPS)** 1 Henry Chart (Dallara F305) 20m00.563s (104.93mph); 2 Aaron Steele (Dallara F307) +12.852s; 3 Stuart Wiltshire (Dallara F308); 4 Jacopo Sebastiani (Dallara F311); 5 Daniel Tapinos (Dallara F311); 6 Adrian Holey (Dallara F300). **FL** Steele 1m31.244s (106.21mph). **CW** Holey. **S** 8. **RACE 2 (13 LAPS)** 1 Chart 20m08.534s (104.24mph); 2 Steele +3.122s; 3 Sebastiani; 4 Wiltshire; 5 Holey; 6 Tapinos. **FL** Chart 1m31.185s (106.28mph). **CW** Holey. **P** Steele. **S** 8.

## SNETTERTON

APRIL 4, MSVR



**LOTUS CUP UK (28 LAPS)** 1 Adam Gore (Exige V6) 1h00m55.227s (81.87mph); 2 Adam Knight (Exige V6) +8.680s; 3 Ken Savage (2-Eleven); 4 Alex Reed (Exige Cup R); 5 Adam Balon (Exige Cup R); 6 Harry Woodhead (Exige Honda). **CW** Savage, Woodhead, Rowbottom. **FL** Gore 2m02.485s (87.26mph). **P** Gore. **S** 25. **LOTUS ELISE TROPHY (BOTH 9 LAPS)** 1 Luigi Valentino Mazza (Elise S1) 21m48.193s (73.53mph); 2 Daniel Rowbottom (Elise S1) +0.396s; 3 Ryan Savage (Elise S1); 4 George White (Elise Cup R); 5 James McNulty (Elise 111R); 6 David Ellesley (Elise S1). **FL** Rowbottom 2m11.964s (80.99mph). **P** James Little (Elise Cup R). **S** 25. **RACE 2** 1 Savage 20m10.218s (79.48mph); 2 Little +1.207s; 3 Rowbottom; 4 McNulty; 5 White; 6 Ellesley. **FL** Savage 2m12.051s (80.93mph). **P** Little. **S** 25. **ALLCOMERS (8 LAPS)** 1 Tom Eden (Caterham CRS) 17m05.144s (83.40mph); 2 Martin James (Atom Cup) +13.917s; 3 John Gray (Jade); 4 Rick de Blaby (Croselle SS); 5 Richard Green (Caterham 7); 6 Peter Hargroves (Caterham R400). **CW** James, Stephen Pearson (BMW M3). **FL** Eden 2m06.259s (84.65mph). **P** James. **S** 18. **RACE 2 (7 LAPS)** 1 James 15m02.181s (82.92mph); 2 Gray +15.825s; 3 Green; 4 Hargroves; 5 de Blaby; 6 Pearson. **CW** Green, Pearson. **FL** Eden 2m05.411s (85.22mph). **P** Eden. **S** 16.



Mazda won first Elise stanza

## KNOCKHILL

APRIL 5, SMRC



**SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CUP (ALL 7 LAPS)** 1 Oliver Mortimer 7m29.892s (70.96mph); 2 Lewis Carter +0.723s; 3 Shane Stoney; 4 Ian Munro; 5 Chris Reid; 6 Kenneth Thirlwall. **FL** Mortimer 1m02.919s (72.49mph). **P** Thirlwall. **S** 21. **RACE 2** 1 Mortimer 7m28.486s (71.19mph); 2 Carter +0.169s; 3 Thirlwall; 4 Joe Tanner; 5 Reid; 6 Stoney. **FL** Carter 1m03.107s (72.27mph). **P** Mortimer. **S** 21. **RACE 3** 1 Thirlwall 7m35.630s (70.07mph); 2 Mortimer +0.291s; 3 Reid; 4 Stoney; 5 Callum Dryburgh; 6 Scott Forbes. **FL** Tanner 1m03.679s (71.62mph). **P** Reid. **S** 21. **SCOTTISH FORMULA FORD 1600 (BOTH 10 LAPS)** 1 Adam MacKay (Ray GR14) 9m21.148s (81.28mph); 2 Jordan Gronkowski (Van Diemen JL012K) +0.193s; 3 Neil McLennan (Ray GR09); 4 Matthew Chisholm (Van Diemen RF92); 5 Neil Broome (Swift SC93C); 6 Jamie Thorburn (GR15). **FL** McLennan 55.069s (82.82mph). **P** Gronkowski. **S** 13. **RACE 2** 1 MacKay 9m22.631s (81.06mph); 2 McLennan +0.302s; 3 Gronkowski; 4 Chisholm; 5 Thorburn; 6 Sebastian Melrose (Ray GR14). **FL** McLennan 55.415s (82.30mph). **P** MacKay. **S** 13. **SCOTTISH LEGENDS (6 LAPS)** 1 John Paterson 6m11.279s (73.71mph); 2 David Hunter +2.057s; 3 Ross Marshall; 4 Steven McGill; 5 Ivor Greenwood; 6 Euan McKay. **FL** Paterson 1m00.205s (75.76mph). **P** Greenwood. **S** 15. **HEAT 2 (6 LAPS)** 1 Paterson 6m08.350s (74.29mph); 2 Hunter +2.141s; 3 McKay; 4 Greenwood; 5 McGill; 6 David Newall. **FL** Paterson 1m00.016s (75.99mph). **P** Newall. **S** 15. **FINAL (8 LAPS)** 1 Paterson 12m22.623s (61.42mph); 2 Marshall +0.977s; 3 Newall; 4 Hunter; 5 McKay; 6 Pino Pallazo. **FL** Paterson 59.716s (76.74mph). **P** John Bushby. **S** 14. **SCOTTISH BMW COMPACT CUP CLASSES A&B (ALL 10 LAPS)** 1 Steven Dailly 10m46.048s (70.60mph); 2 Cliff Harper +2.400s; 3 Gary Clark; 4 Brogan Kinsella; 5 Jonathan Sinclair; 6 Nick Runcie. **FL** Kinsella 1m03.527s (71.79mph). **P** Dailly. **S** 23. **GROUP B&C** 1 Carol Brown 10m52.488s (69.89mph); 2 Shaun Forsyth +1.669s; 3 David McNaughton; 4 Sinclair; 5 Michael Courts; 6 Stephen Russell. **FL** Sinclair 1m04.054s (71.20mph). **P** Nick Runcie. **S** 22. **GROUP A&C** 1 Dailly 10m36.555s (71.65mph); 2 Harper +6.840s; 3 Clark; 4 Brown; 5 Kinsella; 6 Russell. **FL** Dailly 1m03.276s (72.08mph). **P** Brown. **S** 24.

**SCOTTISH SALOONS AND SPORTSCARS (BOTH 10 LAPS)** 1 Ian Donaldson (Mitsubishi Evo) 9m18.476s (81.67mph); 2 Roddie Paterson (Caterham) +0.409s; 3 Andrew Morrison (SEAT Leon Cupra); 4 Finlay Crocker (SEAT Cupra); 5 Paul Brydon (BMW M3); 6 Phil Dryburgh (Ginetta G50). **CW** Paterson; Morrison; Andrew Mackie (Mitsubishi Evo); Oly Ross (Mazda MX5). **FL** Paterson 53.164s (85.79mph). **P** Morrison. **S** 18. **RACE 2** 1 Donaldson 9m00.412s (84.40mph); 2 Paterson +9.249s; 3 Brydon; 4 Dryburgh; 5 Morrison; 6 Crocker. **CW** Paterson; Brydon; Mark Dawson (VW Corrado); Ross. **FL** Paterson 52.980s (86.09mph). **P** Donaldson. **S** 18. **SCOTTISH CLASSIC SPORTS AND SALOONS (BOTH 10 LAPS)** 1 Harry Simpson (Ginetta G4) 10m13.916s (74.29mph); 2 Jimmy Crow (Ford Escort) +24.099s; 3 Alasdair Coates (Mustang); 4 Grant Allan (Porsche 911); 5 Tim Reid (Lola Sports Mk1); 6 Ian Baines (Morris Mini). **CW** Crow; Coates; Allan; Reid; Howard Gordon (MG Midget). **FL** Simpson 59.965s (76.06mph). **P** Raymond Boyd (Datsun 1200). **S** 10. **RACE 2** 1 Simpson 10m11.640s (74.57mph); 2 Crow +26.575s; 3 Coates; 4 Allan; 5 Baines; 6 Gordon. **CW** Crow; Coates; Allan; Baines; Gordon. **FL** Simpson 1m00.258 (75.69mph). **P** Simpson. **S** 10. **SCOTTISH FIESTAS (BOTH 10 LAPS)** 1 Wayne MacAulay (ST) 10m29.153s (72.49mph); 2 Kevin Whyte (ST) +8.412s; 3 George Orr (ST); 4 Peter Cruickshank (ST); 5 Chris Milford (ST); 6 John Balfour (ST). **CW** Jim Deans (XR2). **FL** MacAulay 1m02.067s (73.48mph). **P** MacAulay. **S** 13. **RACE 2** 1 MacAulay 10m29.603s (72.44mph); 2 Orr +1.968s; 3 Whyte; 4 Cruickshank; 5 Milford; 6 George Runcie (Fiesta ST). **CW** Deans. **FL** MacAulay 1m02.081s (73.47mph). **P** MacAulay. **S** 13.

## SILVERSTONE

APRIL 4-5, BRSCC



**NATIONAL FF1600S (BOTH 17 LAPS)** 1 Joey Foster (Ray GR10) 20m42.062s (91.19mph); 2 Patrick Dussault (Ray GR13/14) +2.816s; 3 Jonny McMullan (Van Diemen LA10); 4 Luke Williams (Ray GR13); 5 Luke Cooper (Swift SC92); 6 Jake Byrne (Ray GR13). **CW** Cooper; Matt Cowley (Reynard 88FF). **FL** Byrne 1m11.854s (92.73mph). **P** Foster. **S** 20. **RACE 2** 1 Foster 20m39.294s (91.40mph); 2 McMullan +12.905s; 3 Byrne; 4 Williams; 5 Cooper; 6 Jay Bridger (Mygale S101). **CW** Cooper; Jamie Jardine (Reynard 84FF); Cowley. **FL** Cooper 1m11.908s (92.66mph). **P** Cooper. **S** 19. **HRDC TOURING GREATS (27 LAPS)** 1 Matthew Moore (Austin A40) 46m28.767s (64.51mph); 2 Peter Burton (Jaguar Mk1) +5.878s; 3 Tom Shepherd (Alfa Romeo

Giulietta); 4 Geoff Gordon (Alfa Romeo Giulietta); 5 Paul Clayton (Austin A35); 6 Ding Boston (Riley 1.5). **CW** Burton; Shepherd; John Polson (Riley 1.5); David Lillywhite (Austin A35); Paul Alcock (Morris Minor). **FL** Moore 1m28.398s (75.37mph). **P** Shepherd. **S** 20.

**HRDC ALLSTARS (22 LAPS)** 1 John Young (AC Cobra) 30m04.537s (81.23mph); 2 Mike Whitaker (Ford Mustang) +31.555s; 3 Andy Newall (MGB Roadster); 4 Maria-Gisella Garbagnati Ketvel (Jaguar E-Type); 5 Bill Watt (Lotus Elan); 6 Nicholas King (Ford Mustang). **CW** Whitaker; Newall; Brian Small (Ashley Midget); Mark Thomas (Ford Anglia). **FL** Young 1m20.790s (82.47mph). **P** Whitaker. **S** 21.

**FUN CUP (173 LAPS)** 1 Neil Primrose/Tom Roche (JPR - Isla Motorsport) 4h00m52.147s (79.76mph); 2 Guy Wenham/Zoe Wenham/Stephen Johansen (Geometric) +37.665s; 3 Julian Thomas/Nigel Greensall/Jon Tomlinson (Race Logic); 4 Chris Hart/Henry Dawes (Track Torque Racing); 5 Andy Holden/Rod Barrett/Martin Gibson/Jay Shepherd (Holden Hawthorns Racing); 6 Rob Thomas/Simon Bonham/Martin Harris (Rob Thomas). **FL** Roche 1m19.868s (83.42mph). **P** Christopher Earp/Paul Turner/Philip Marsh (Christopher Earp). **S** 26.

**500CC FORMULA 3 (BOTH 10 LAPS)** 1 Peter de la Roche (Cooper MKV) 15m28.861s (71.73mph); 2 Nigel Ashman (Cooper Mk XI) +0.743s; 3 Mike Fowler (Cooper MKV); 4 Ian Phillips (Cooper MKX); 5 Stuart Wright (Cooper Mk XI); 6 Nigel Challis (Petty No 1). **CW** Ashman. **FL** de la Roche 1m20.054s (73.99mph). **P** Ashman. **S** 12.

**RACE 2** 1 de la Roche 14m59.685s (74.06mph); 2 Ashman +30.390s; 3 Phillips; 4 Roy Hunt (Martin F3); 5 Challis; 6 Roy Wright (Flash Special). **CW** Ashman. **FL** de la Roche 1m29.145s (74.74mph). **P** de la Roche. **S** 10. **ALFA ROMEOs (BOTH 16 LAPS)** 1 Graham Seager (GTV) 20m52.682s (85.10mph); 2 Bryan Shrubbs (33) +1.055s; 3 Chris Snowden (33); 4 Ray Foley (156); 5 James Bishop (156); 6 Tom Hill (156). **CW** Foley; Bishop. **FL** Seager 1m14.753s (89.13mph). **P** Seager. **S** 19. **RACE 2** 1 Seager 20m46.470s (85.53mph); 2 Snowden +9.049s; 3 Shrubbs; 4 Foley; 5 Bishop; 6 Hill. **CW** Foley; Bishop. **FL** Seager 1m16.145s (87.50mph). **P** Seager. **S** 17.

## SILVERSTONE

APRIL 4-5, BRSCC



**MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP B (ALL 17 LAPS)** 1 Ben Short 20m27.633s (81.78mph); 2 Simon Baldwin +0.262s; 3 Brian Chandler; 4 Darron Lewis; 5 Sam Smith; 6 Ben Tuck. **FL** Baldwin 1m11.269s (82.86mph). **P** Lewis. **S** 28. **RACE 2** 1 Simon Woods 21m07.963s (79.17mph); 2 Kevin Brent +0.375s; 3 Graham Colby; 4 Euan Milne; 5 Simon Ricketts; 6 David Staples. **FL** Milnes 1m13.124s (80.66mph). **P** Matthew Tasker. **S** 26. **GROUP A** 1 Baldwin 20m29.113s (81.68mph); 2 Lewis +0.312s; 3 Short; 4 Smith; 5 Tuck; 6 Martin Tolley. **FL** Baldwin 1m11.591s (82.49mph). **P** Short. **S** 28. **RACE 2** 1 William Stephenson 20m58.071s (79.80mph); 2 Paul Bateman +1.230s; 3 Danny Green; 4 David Birrell; 5 John Cockburn-Evans; 6 Woods. **FL** Green 1m13.058s (80.83mph). **P** Bateman. **S** 28. **MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP (BOTH 18 LAPS)** 1 Alan Henderson 21m01.188s (84.28mph); 2 Simon Goddard +9.992s; 3 Johnathan Clements; 4 Liam Murphy; 5 John Davies; 6 James Aspinall. **FL** George Line 1m09.403s (85.09mph). **P** Henderson. **S** 31. **RACE 2** 1 Henderson 20m57.768s (84.51mph); 2 Henderson +0.134s; 3 Line; 4 Goddard; 5 Murphy; 6 Adam Brindley. **FL** Goddard 1m09.097s. **P** Henderson. **S** 29. **FORMULA JEDI CHAMPIONSHIP (18 LAPS)** 1 Michael Watton 20m55.182s (84.69mph); 2 Ryan Harper-Ellam +2.139s; 3 Dan Clowes; 4 Andrew Dunn; 5 Alexander Carrano; 6 Scott Stevens. **FL** Lee Morgan 55.132s (107.11mph). **P** Morgan. **S** 18. **RACE 2 (22 LAPS)** 1 Morgan 20m42.314s (104.58mph); 2 Dunn +1.287s; 3 Watton; 4 Matthew Ryder; 5 Clowes; 6 Robert Sayell. **FL** Morgan 55.465s (106.47mph). **P** Morgan. **S** 17.

**FORD FIESTA CHAMPIONSHIP (BOTH 18 LAPS)** 1 Simon Horrobin (Fiesta ST) 21m09.079s (83.76mph); 2 Scott Robertson (ST) +2.938s; 3 Gareth Broadbent (ST); 4 Samuel Watkins (ST); 5 Joshua Watkins (ST); 6 Ian Wilson (ST). **CW** David Nye (S); Peter Dendy-Sadler (S); Stuart Robbins (Zetec) **FL** James Ross 1m09.337s (85.17mph). **P** Horrobin. **S** 33. **RACE 2** 1 Horrobin 20m59.565s (84.39mph); 2 Robertson +1.852s; 3 Jamie Going (ST); 4 James Ross (ST); 5 Samuel Priest (ST); 6 Broadbent. **CW** Nye, James Styles (S); Robbins. **FL** Ross 1m09.287s (85.23mph). **P** Horrobin. **S** 30. **FIESTA JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP (BOTH 17 LAPS)** 1 Aaron Thompson 20m19.912s (82.29mph); 2 Michael Higgs +3.494s; 3 Connor Grady; 4 Nathan Edwards; 5 Ronan Quinn; 6 Carlito Miracola. **FL** Thompson 1m11.120 (83.03mph). **P** Thompson. **S** 10. **RACE 2** 1 Thompson 20m17.573s (82.45mph); 2 Grady +6.238s; 3 Higgs; 4 Edwards; 5 Sikandar Hussain; 6 Quinn. **FL** Thompson 1m10.726s (83.50mph). **P** Thompson. **S** 10.

## Seager led both Alfa races



**OSS CHAMPIONSHIP (22 LAPS)** 1 Duncan Williams (Juno Sportsarc) 20m03.035s (107.99mph); 2 Tim Gray (Spire GT-3) +1.739s; 3 Mike Jenvey (Jenvey-Gunn T86); 4 Josh Smith (Radical PR6); 5 Jonathan Hair (Nemesis); 6 Richard Fearn (Radical SR8) **CW** Smith, Fearn, Alastair Smart (Radical Clubsport), Kevin Suenson (Aquila Synergy). **FL** Williams 53.382s (110.63mph). **P** Gray. **S** 18. **RACE 2 (16 LAPS)** 1 Williams 13m42.75s; 2 Simon Tilling (Ligier J849T) +13.317s; 3 Jenvey; 4 Hair; 5 Smith; 6 Darcy Smith (Radical SR3) **CW** Tilling, J. Smith; Smart; S. Tilling. **FL** Williams 53.338s (110.72mph). **P** Gray. **S** 17.

## CASTLE COMBE

APRIL 6, CCRG



**CCRC FF1600 (15 LAPS)** 1 Jonathan Hoad (Van Diemen RF90) 17m15.5325s (93.08mph); 2 Roger Orgee (Van Diemen RF00) +2.3366s; 3 Nathan Ward (Spectrum 011c); 4 Josh Fisher (Reynard 89FF); 5 Adam Higgins (Van Diemen JL12K); 6 Felix Fisher (Van Diemen RF02). **CW** Orgee; Josh Fisher. **FL** Hoad 1m10.559s (94.38mph) **CLASS RECORD**. **P** Hoad. **S** 26. **MINI SE7EN (10 LAPS)** 1 Darren Thomas 15m 43.572s (70.58mph); 2 Andrew Deviny +0.033s; 3 Paul Spark; 4 Graeme Davis; 5 Jabez Dyer; 6 Max Hunter. **CW** Ian Deviny. **FL** Andrew Deviny 1m25.002s (78.32mph). **P** Thomas. **S** 25. **RACE 2 (10 LAPS)** 1 Spark 16m 28.111s (67.40mph); 2 Hunter +0.306s; 4 Gareth Hunt; 5 Kieren McDonaldi; 6 Steve Trench. **CW** Ian Deviny. **FL** Dyer 1m24.002s (79.28mph). **P** Thomas. **S** 24. **MINI MIGLIA (10 LAPS)** 1 Rupert Deeth 13m 23.471s (82.89mph); 2 Mark Cowan +0.055s; 3 Kane Astin; 4 Sam Summerhayes; 5 Dan Wheeler; 6 Colin Peacock. **CW** Steve Jones. **FL** Summerhayes 1m18.728s (84.59mph). **P** Deeth. **S** 14. **RACE 2 (10 LAPS)** 1 Astin 13m 23.167s (82.92mph); 2 Wheeler +0.682s; 3 Summerhayes; 4 Cowan; 5 David Drew; 6 Phil Dale. **CW** Jones. **FL** Cowan 1m18.007s (85.37mph). **P** Astin. **S** 13. **CCRC SALOONS (15 LAPS)** 1 Tony Hutchings (Audi TT) 19m 02.336s (87.45mph); 2 Gary Prebble (Seat Leon Cupra 20V) +4.587s; 3 Dave Scaramanga (VW Scirocco); 4 Charles Hyde-Andrews-Bird (Renault Megane); 5 Bill Brockbank (Seat Ibiza Cupra); 6 Mark Wyatt (Vauxhall Astra). **CW** Wyatt; James Keepin (MG ZR160); Russell Poynter-Brown (Vauxhall Corsa). **FL** Prebble 1m14.944s (88.68mph) **RECORD**. **P** Hutchings. **S** 31.

**CCRC SPORTS & GT (15 LAPS)** 1 Oliver Buld (Vauxhall Tigra Silhouette) 18m 28.752s (90.10mph); 2 Dylan Popovic (Avatar One) +22.465s; 3 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon Cupra); 4 Michael Timberlake (BMW E46 M3); 5 Kevin Mears (Seat Leon); 5 Peter Arber (Sylva Phoenix); **CW** Popovic; Cox; Marcus Bicknell (Ford Mustang Mach 1). **FL** Bull 1m11.274s (93.44mph). **P** Ian Hall (Darrin Wildcat T98 GTR). **S** 14. **CCRC SPORTS RACING (17 LAPS)** 1 Simon Tilling (Ligier Turbo) 20m 26.953s (92.27mph); 2 Josh Smith (Radical PR6) +2.121s; 3 Chris Child (Nemesis RME98); 4 Norman Lackford (Radical PR6); 5 Nick Jones (Radical SR3 RSX); 6 Chris Vinnal (Radical SR3 RS). **CW** Smith. **FL** Smith 1m04.281s (103.60mph). **P** Tilling. **S** 14. **RACE 2 (15 LAPS)** 1 Tilling 16m 11.202s (102.86mph); 2 Smith +1.492s; 3 Darcy Smith (Radical SR8); 4 Vinnal; 5 Steve Bracegirdle (Nemesis RME98); 6 Robert Gillman (Radical Prospert). **CW** Josh Smith. **FL** Tilling 1m03.205s (105.37mph). **P** Tilling. **S** 11. **MGCC MIDGET & SPRITE CHALLENGE (16 LAPS)** 1 Paul Sibley 20m 34.387s (86.32mph); 2 James Dunkley +31.347s; 3 Edward Reeve; 4 Sam Healey; 5 Andy Southcott; 6 Carl Chadwick. **CW** Southcott. **FL** Sibley 1m15.962s (87.67mph). **P** Sibley. **S** 19.

**WRDC SPORTS & SALOONS (12 LAPS)** 1 Keith White (BMW M3 Silhouette) 16m 01.775s (83.09mph); 2 Martin Davies (Ford Sierra Sapphire Cosworth) +6.763s; 3 Keith Butcher (Audi); 4 Sam Summerhayes (Citroen Saxo); 5 Dave Scaramanga (VW Tente VR6); 6 Fabio Luffarelli (Mini Silhouette). **CW** Davies; Summerhayes; Matthew Howell (Austin Mini); Craig Wright (Peugeot 306); Mike Edgell (Rover Mini). **FL** White 1m13.493s (90.62mph) **RECORD**. **P** White. **S** 27. **RACE 2 (2 LAPS)** 1 Davies 2m 28.587s (89.64mph); 2 White +0.439s; 3 Butcher; 4 Scaramanga; 5 Luffarelli; 6 Summerhayes. **CW** White; Summerhayes; Wright; Chris Morris (Suzuki Ignis). **FL** White 1m12.903s (91.35mph) **RECORD**. **P** White. **S** 24.

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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



## Is it too much, too young?

To Franz Tost: a lot of the 'stupid' criticism about having Max Verstappen in Formula 1 is not performance-related, but about the advisability of putting a 17-year-old in such a highly competitive environment.

Sport and entertainment are full of examples of precocious talents who shone brightly only to end up having

a difficult time in life for missing out on things like friends, school and family in their formative years.

I can only hope that the people around Verstappen will have the common sense to support him and back off if necessary in order to spare him this dire course.

**Michele Robecchi, by email**

**My wife and I have just returned** from an organised tour of Silverstone, and I must say what an enjoyable and informative experience it was.

The history behind this circuit is wonderful. We were taken all around this great venue – the pits, garages, the new wing, the podium, media centre, the control room – and I want to say if you are into your motorsport, take advantage of this great tour.

The logistics and expenditure required to host a racing event is remarkable, especially when you find out the British Grand Prix makes this circuit no profit over the race weekend (thanks, Bernie).

We as fans need to support this circuit, or as France, Germany and if rumours are true Italy have found, we could lose our British GP, and that would be a national disgrace.

**Kevin Friday**  
By email

**I can't believe McLaren has** shot itself in the foot again after the dog it produced last year. I thought Ron had come back in to sort things out! My lawnmower has more power than the Honda engine.

Why didn't they stick with Merc until Honda had done proper testing? Alonso must be gutted – last year Ferrari was terrible, he leaves and Vettel wins second time out. If I were him I would take a year off and let Magnussen mess around at the back with Jensen all year.

**Steve Marr**  
By email

**I have noticed that you don't** feature the drivers' individual numbers anywhere in your grand prix reports, even on the driver ratings pages.

As the numbers are supposed to help fans to identify the drivers, could you please show the numbers in future (as you have done in previous years) so that we know who is in which car?

**Nicholas Bateman**  
Guildford, Surrey

*Fair point. Watch this space – ed*

**Must admit my first reaction to** a German driver winning in a Ferrari was Pavlovian – and not in a good way. Too much of my youth spent listening to *that* mix of national anthems... But Vettel is a very different man from Schumacher. And someone's got to keep Lewis sharp.

**Frances Stewart**  
London SE13

## BIG NUMBER

# 331

Number of entries as we went to press for this weekend's CSCC meeting at Snetterton, with 13 races scheduled.

## MILESTONE

IndyCar makes its first racing visit to NOLA Motorsports Park, just outside New Orleans, this weekend.



## WHAT'S ON TRACK IN THE UK

**EVENT OF THE WEEK**



Big-hitters will do battle at Brands

### BRANDS HATCH BARC

**April 11-12**

The BTRA Truck Racing Championship is the headline event at Brands Hatch this weekend, but the supporting cast of car championships is

set to provide more than enough entertainment for a crowd lured by five races for the 1000bhp big beasts. A mix of 2CVs, Legends, Caterhams (from the Graduates series) and Pick-Ups guarantees

very close racing on the Indy circuit, and there's a lot to love about the incongruity of a bill that has some of UK motorsport's tiniest machines sharing paddock space with five-tonne MANs and the like.

### SILVERSTONE WEC

**April 10-12**

An all-international line-up at Silverstone, with the WEC backed up by ELMS (which takes place on Saturday) and European F3 (two races on Saturday, plus one on Sunday).

### SNETTERTON CSCC

**April 11-12**

It's all about classic cars in Norfolk: 1980s and '90s-based series on Saturday, before cult '60s/'70s favourites take precedence for the second day.

### ROCKINGHAM

**April 11-12**

A jam-packed weekend of mostly saloon-based BARC championships includes the Michelin Clio Cup, Kumbo BMWs, Nippon Challenge and Tricolore Trophy.



BARC



WEC

XPB/LAT

## WHAT'S ON TRACK AROUND THE WORLD

### CHINESE GRAND PRIX

**Formula 1 World Championship**  
Rd 3/19  
Shanghai, China  
April 12  
[f1.com](http://f1.com)



INDYCAR SERIES

### TCR INTERNATIONAL

**Rd 2/11**  
Shanghai, China  
April 11-12  
[tcr-series.com](http://tcr-series.com)



BLANCPAIN



XPB IMAGES

### INDYCAR SERIES

**Rd 2/15**  
NOLA Motorsports Park,  
Louisiana, USA  
April 12  
[indycar.com](http://indycar.com)



COATES/LAT

Can Ferrari take fight to Merc again in China?

### BLANCPAIN ENDURANCE SERIES

**Rd 1/5**  
Monza, Italy  
April 12  
[blancpain-gt-series.com](http://blancpain-gt-series.com)

### NASCAR SPRINT CUP

**Rd 7/36**  
Texas Motor Speedway,  
USA  
April 11  
[nascar.com](http://nascar.com)

### EUROFORMULA OPEN

**Rd 1/8**  
Jerez, Spain  
April 11-12  
[euroformulaopen.net](http://euroformulaopen.net)

# FROM THE SOFA

## WHAT'S ON TELEVISION



Legard with the BBC Sport team in 2009

COATES/LAT

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## Why Jonathan Legard isn't bitter

**FEW PEOPLE CAN OFFER A** more insightful analysis of the art of sports commentary and presenting than Jonathan Legard. Yes, that's the same Jonathan Legard who was on the receiving end of much criticism – most of it unjustified – when he worked as the BBC's lead Formula 1 commentator in 2009-10.

From 1997-2004, Legard was regarded as one of the best in the business as BBC Radio 5 Live's F1 correspondent.

After spending four seasons as the radio station's lead football correspondent, he returned to F1 in the TV role in 2009. But even with that experience, his comeback in British motorsport broadcasting's highest-profile and highest-pressure job was a big ask.

"There is a recalibration because TV is a very different medium," says Legard. "Although it's still about motorsport, on radio you can't see anything, but on TV it's about adding value and explaining. It's a completely different skill."

"Look at [BBC Sport legend] Desmond Lynam, who was a brilliant presenter. After his first year, he was all set to jack it in because he hated it. But he carried on and he cracked it, so even for some of the best practitioners it can take time.

"In my circumstances, I wasn't helped by the fact I had been out of the sport for four years. Things move so fast, I was running to catch up. Had I gone from radio straight to TV, it might have been different because I'd have been in the groove. But even so, it was great to be asked to do it and I thoroughly enjoyed my two years."

Don't mistake Legard's comments for bitterness, as he still talks about F1 with tremendous enthusiasm. After two seasons in the hot seat, he was replaced by Martin Brundle, who moved over to lead comms, with David Coulthard joining him as analyst. It's fair to say that this combination didn't work perfectly, although the subsequent

**"It's too easy to use social media to vent your spleen"**



Legard's first F1 stint was in radio

MASON/GETTY

alliances of Ben Edwards and Coulthard on BBC, and David Croft and Brundle on Sky Sports F1, have proved superbly balanced.

The one area where you can still detect a tinge of frustration was the barrage of abuse to which Legard was subjected via social media.

"It's a relatively new phenomenon," he says. "If Twitter had been around when Murray Walker was in his pomp, I wonder how much criticism he would have got, even though he is recognised as the best... Before, you could just turn it off, but social media gives people a platform to sound off."

"Initially, I was knocked sideways by it, because it seemed so unreasonable. Especially when people were saying, 'Who is this bloke and what does he know about F1' – well, I did 5 Live for eight years! But when I stopped, the positive comments by far outnumbered the negative. It's too easy to use social media to vent your spleen."

Today, Legard's voice still crops up regularly on all manner of sporting output, including voicing coverage of Red Bull Air Race events. And his time in F1 remains fondly-remembered.

"F1 is a cracking job," he concludes. "You get to travel the world and, as a journalist, it has every angle you could ever have wanted."

Edd Straw

## TV pick of

Edited by Dom D'Angelillo



MEDHURST/LAT

### CHINESE GRAND PRIX FULL UK LISTINGS

**Sky Sports F1 - LIVE**

**Practice 1:** Friday 0245-0450

**Practice 2:** Friday 0645-0900

**Practice 3:** Saturday 0445-0600

**Qualifying:** Saturday 0700-0945

**Race:** Sunday 0630-0930

### BBC1

**Qualifying highlights:** Saturday 1300-1415

**Race highlights:** Sunday 1400-1555

### Radio 5 Live

**Race:** Sunday 0630-0900



XPB IMAGES

### BLANCPAIN GT - MONZA

**Motors TV**

**Sunday 1830-2130**

The WEC clash means Blancpain's own webstream is the place to catch the Endurance Series opener live, but Motors TV is showing it 'as live' two hours after the chequered flag – if you can avoid hearing the results first.

While the Sprint Series had the not-very-evocative Nogarò for its curtain raiser, the BES gets a racetrack as iconic as the marques packing its grid. This time last year, the now-absent ART Grand Prix team took its maiden win with a McLaren. The formidable WRT Audi squad will be the team to beat in 2015.



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## ONLINE



**MATT BEER**  
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**WHILE THE CHINESE GRAND** Prix is eagerly awaited, after events in Malaysia raised hopes of a season-long Mercedes versus Ferrari fight rather than a year of watching a silver steamroller, for many readers a three-way dice closer to home will be just as – if not more – intriguing this weekend.

Website click statistics offer a revealing window into when series or genres catch the imagination beyond their hardcore fanbase, and there has been no stopping the World Endurance Championship's growth in

recent years. Some converts were no doubt intrigued by names with F1 relevance such as Mark Webber, others lured by the level of technical innovation. But for many neutrals, seeing that Audi could be beaten has been the clincher. With Toyota winning last year's WEC title and Porsche triumphing in the 2014 finale, LMP1's dominant force starts on the back foot.

That sets up a tantalising opener at Silverstone, which you can follow as it happens on AUTOSPORT Live – along with F1, IndyCar, MotoGP and Blancpain Endurance – this weekend.

# the week



## SILVERSTONE WEC - LIVE

**Motors TV**  
**Sunday 1130-1830**

Toyota begins its World Endurance Championship defence at the venue where it opened 2014 with a hard-fought win. Rivals include Porsche, who ended last year with a breakthrough victory, and an Audi team not accustomed to being defeated, as sportscar racing's premier series goes from strength to strength.

With 17 British drivers on the grid and the Tourist Trophy up for grabs, Silverstone is a fine location to kick off. Eurosport captures the final shootout live but it's Motors you want for the entire distance.



## EUROPEAN F3 - LIVE

**Motors TV**  
**Saturday 1010-1110/1300-1400**  
**Sunday 0905-1005**

Six months ago, Max Verstappen was winning in European Formula 3. Now he's a Formula 1 points-scorer.

The Toro Rosso youngster's rise has inevitably triggered a surge of interest in European F3, which starts the season with a packed 36-car grid full of young hopefuls determined to emulate him – while the men who beat the Dutchman find themselves in GP3 and the DTM. Expect Motors TV's F3 ratings to rise too.



## BRDC F4 HIGHLIGHTS

**ITV4**  
**Saturday 1420-1525**

With last year's top five drivers moving onto pastures new (mostly European Formula 3), the 2015 BRDC Formula 4 season is wide open. Will Palmer is the highest-placed 2014 returnee, but he had plenty of tough opposition when this year's title chase began at Oulton Park over the Easter weekend.

ITV4's highlights package wraps up action from all three races at the 2.8-mile Cheshire circuit, where the contenders look to emulate George Russell's rise towards both the F4 title and McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award glory.



## BRANDS BTCC HIGHLIGHTS

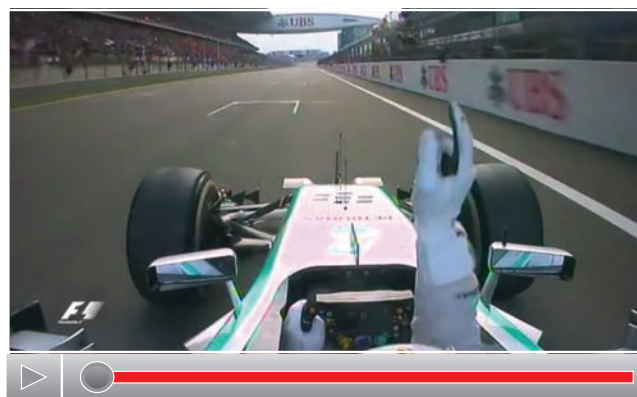
**ITV4**  
**Saturday 1525-1700**

If you couldn't set aside your entire Easter Sunday to watch the British Touring Car Championship's 2015 season opener either in person or on ITV4 (or you did but you want to relive it), the 95-minute compressed version will be worth a look.

With a huge reshuffle among the leading teams and drivers, plus a sporting-regulations shake-up to match, it proved to be one of the most action-packed and open starts to a BTCC season in recent memory – and they've rarely been dull or predictable.

## HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

**YouTube** LEWIS CLOSES THE POINTS GAP TO NICÓ AT SHANGHAI



**SEARCH FOR:** 2014 FORMULA 1 UBS CHINESE GRAND PRIX

F1's YouTube channel has been up and running for a few weeks now (tellingly, with comments disabled, depriving 'haterz' of a chance to vent). So as we look forward to the Chinese GP, here's a chance to enjoy a snappy summary of last year's race.

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# INTRODUCING

# Chris Ingram

The European Rally Championship rising star has caught Peugeot's eye



EBREY/LAT

## CV

**Born** July 7 1994  
**From** Manchester



**2015** European Rally Championship (Junior) in Peugeot UK 208; MSA Team UK Elite driver

**2014** Colin McRae 'Flat Out' Trophy winner; Rally GB R2 class victory

**2013** European programme; Rally GB R2 class victory

**2012** Renaultsport R2 UK Trophy winner; MSA Young Driver of the Year winner

**2011** British Junior F1000 Champion

**2010** Rally debut: F1000 Championship



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**W**ere you out on the stages in last November's Rally GB WRC qualifier, it's pretty likely you'd have been cheering on UK stars Kris Meeke and Elfyn Evans in their factory machines. The more hardy among you may well have stuck around to support another 'works' driver, 20-year-old Mancunian Chris Ingram, who was flying the flag for Peugeot UK in the R2 class.

Ingram had a relatively conventional introduction to the sport, via his father, 1980s national-rally frontrunner Jon. After watching his dad return to the stages in 2004 after a lay-off to focus on his property business, Ingram Jr became hooked on the sport and was determined to get involved.

An initial foray into rallying involved the Formula 1000 Junior Championship. He won the series in 2011 with six wins from seven rounds in a Citroen C1, aged just 16.

## INTO THE BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP

With the freedom of turning 17 and acquiring a driving licence, Ingram embarked on the British Championship in a Renault Twingo R2, acquired after his dad sold his trusty Mk2 Escort to fund his son's move up.

More success followed, with Renaultsport R2 UK Trophy victory and an opportunity that "opened my eyes to proper rallying" in the shape of a prize drive in an R3

Renault Clio on the Rallye du Var.

Competing on tough European events was vital for Ingram's progression, which was boosted by his winning the MSA Young driver of the Year Award at the end of 2012. With momentum gathering, he competed in more continental events in 2013, still aboard his trusty Twingo.

"It was probably a bit naive to be doing it as a family team," he says, "but it was all we had. We must have been doing something right, though, because we caused a stir on Rally GB – my WRC debut. We won the R2 class, ahead of drivers like [future British champion] Dan McKenna."

## HEADING TO EUROPE

If Ingram and new French co-driver Gabin Moreau thought things were getting serious last season with an attack on the European Rally Championship as a Junior entry, they were in for a big surprise in the summer.

After impressing on the Circuit of Ireland – they ran eighth overall and best Junior until crashing out – Ingram became the youngest recipient of the Colin McRae 'Flat Out' Award, which was handed over to him by Meeke. "Kris has been really supportive of me," says Ingram.

Two podium finishes followed for the little Twingo, before the money ran out and the car was sold. "Suddenly," recalls Ingram, "it all looked as if it was over, but then came the call from Peugeot UK. Turns out that Jean-Pierre Nicolas and Bruno Famin [the famed Peugeot Sport head honchos] had been watching me, probably because I was troubling their 208s in my 'stupid little Twingo!' They wanted me in one of their cars, so for the Barum Rally I was a works driver."

Another Rally GB R2 class win followed in the Peugeot 208 and for 2015 Ingram is tackling the European series once more, but the pressure's on. It's not easy being one of only three drivers in a factory programme. Just ask Meeke and Evans. "If I can get some wins this year, Peugeot will run me in an R5 car on Rally GB," he says. "That would be amazing!"

Henry Hope-Frost



Ingram took class win on 2014 Rally GB

McKENNA/PE

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