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BAHRAIN GP

HAMILTON WINS AGAIN

But Kimi *almost* steals Brit's third victory of 2015

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Turkington and Plato triumph at Donington





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Cover image: Mason/Getty; Ebrey/LAT

POLE POSITION

Ferrari must now turn the technical screw

FOUR RACES INTO THE 2015 SEASON, IT'S CLEAR THAT Ferrari is close enough to Mercedes to give it something to think about. Had the Bahrain Grand Prix been a couple of laps longer, there's every chance Kimi Raikkonen would have won. Yes, Mercedes hit brake trouble, but the point is Ferrari was in range.

Mercedes still has the strongest hand. That means that the onus is on Ferrari to outdevelop the Silver Arrows if it's to make a serious fight of it over the course of the season.

Both teams will throw around words such as 'aggressive' to describe their strategy, but Ferrari does have one potential trump card thanks to the winter reinterpretation of the rules allowing engine-upgrade tokens to be carried into the season – a loophole Ferrari was central to finding.

Ferrari has three more tokens to spend than Mercedes does. While that doesn't sound like much, there's a lot that can be done with three. So by definition, Ferrari has more scope for improvement than Mercedes.

It might be Germany 3-1 Italy so far, but for that reason it's still very much game on. F1 needs a two-team title scrap.

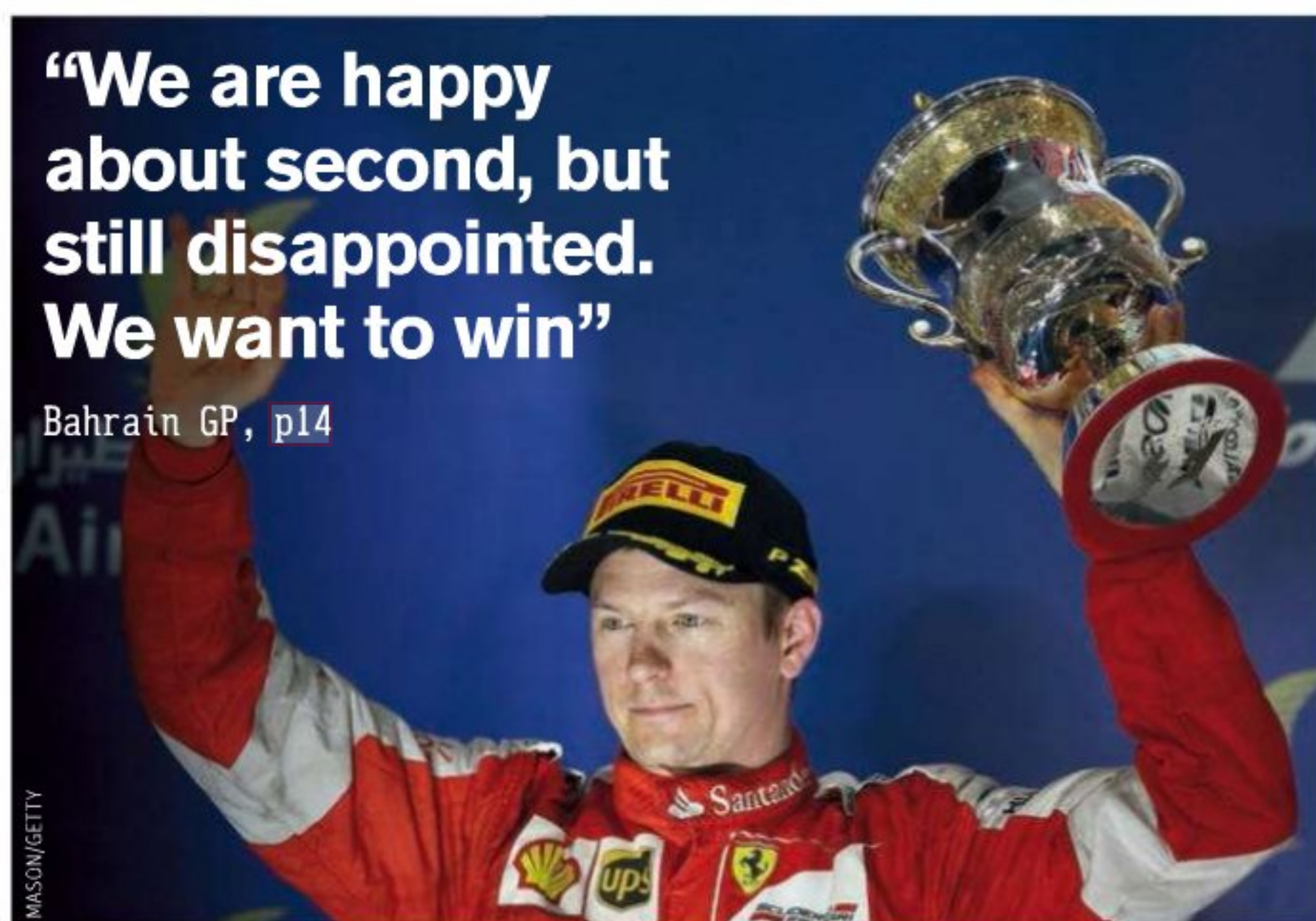


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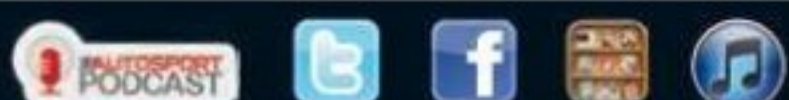
COVER STORY

"We are happy about second, but still disappointed. We want to win"

Bahrain GP, p14



FIND US ON



PIT & PADDOCK

- 6 THIS WEEK IN F1
- 9 IN THE PADDOCK: LAWRENCE BARRETTO
- 10 THIS WEEK IN MOTORSPORT
- 13 KARUN CHANDHOK: RACER'S EYE

FEATURES



- 14 BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX REPORT
- 32 IS HAMILTON UNSTOPPABLE?
- 34 NEW SKODA FOR WRC2
- 36 VANDOOERNE ACES GP2 OPENER
- 40 BMR VOLKSWAGENS STAR IN BTCC
- 44 DONINGTON BTCC SUPPORT ACTION
- 46 LONG BEACH INDYCAR: DIXON'S DAY
- 49 WTCC MOROCCO: CITROEN ON TOP



- 52 FORMULA RENAULT 3.5 PREVIEW
- 60 SUPER FORMULA, NASCAR, USC

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 75 BRITCAR 24 HOURS SECURE
- 76 BRITISH GT EYES CITY-CENTRE DEMOS
- 79 MSA FORMULA TECH INQUEST
- 80 NATIONAL RACING REPORTS

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

78 GET AUTOSPORT DELIVERED TO YOU

THE BACK STRAIGHT

- 86 THIS WEEK
- 88 FROM THE SOFA
- 90 RALLY OF MY LIFE: FRED GALLAGHER

THE BIG PICTURE

The IndyCar field threads its way round the historic Long Beach street circuit in California during last weekend's third round of the series – won by Ganassi's Scott Dixon

Photographer Levitt/LAT





This week in F1

F1 RAMPS UP ITS 1000BHP ENGINE PUSH

Formula 1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone is making a fresh push for engine rules to be overhauled for 2017 in a bid to make the sport more spectacular.

Although his preferred route of bringing back V8 engines – but upgraded to deliver 1000bhp – has no support among teams, there is a concerted effort to increase the power of the current V6 turbos.

Speaking to media at the Bahrain Grand Prix, Ecclestone said he would accept such a move, but only if costs for customer teams are reduced.

“The two things that have to happen are whoever supplies the engines to the teams has to supply the same engines as they currently use [for the ‘works’ teams],” he said.

“If it’s going to be the current engine and upgrade to 1000bhp

then good. They need to supply that to the teams at a price they can afford. We need to make the cars more difficult to drive.”

Teams met with F1 race director Charlie Whiting in Bahrain to continue discussions about how best to hit the 1000bhp target, which will most likely be done through increasing the fuel-flow rate.



XPBIMAGES

6



Bernie confident on Azerbaijan

Bernie Ecclestone has said that he has no doubts that the new grand prix in Azerbaijan will go ahead next year.

On the back of concerns expressed by Human Rights Watch about the former Soviet republic, Ecclestone told media that F1 bosses had checked the situation out. “I think everybody seems to be happy,” he said. “There doesn’t seem to be any big problem there.

“There’s no question of it not being on the calendar. It’ll be another good race.”



COATES/JAT

FERRARI SAYS RAIKKONEN DESERVES NEW DEAL

Kimi Raikkonen is edging closer a deal that will keep him at Ferrari next year – but he will need to keep performing to get a contract.

The Finn produced his best performance of the season in the Bahrain Grand Prix to finish a few seconds behind winner Lewis Hamilton.

With Ferrari having an option on Raikkonen for 2016, team boss Maurizio Arrivabene has suggested that he will commit to retaining the 2007 world champion when he is convinced he will hit regular top form.

“I’m happy with the drivers we

have,” claimed Arrivabene. “This doesn’t mean I am going to sign tomorrow with Kimi.

“I said to Kimi, ‘It depends on your performance.’ He has demonstrated he is a great driver. If you’re asking me if he deserves to renew the option now, I’m going to say yes.

“But if I’m going to say yes, I do not want the driver to fall asleep. This is a psychological approach. The paper at the moment is white.

“Sometimes you have to take the pen and take it away, and then Kimi is going to the podium...”

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Monza in doubt

Fears that the Italian Grand Prix could be lost from the calendar are growing after Bernie Ecclestone suggested there had been no progress in sorting out a deal.

Monza's contract runs out after this year's race, and Ecclestone has said that if the circuit bosses do not pay what he wants then the event will be dropped.

Speaking in Bahrain about the situation, Ecclestone said: "We will have to wait and see. They don't have an agreement. A bit like Germany."

When it was suggested to him that it would be unthinkable for F1 to drop Monza, Ecclestone appeared unsympathetic to those suggesting classic races should be saved.

"I tell you something," he said. "I was told that when we didn't have a race in France actually. And Germany now."



BOTTAS PAIN-FREE AT LAST

Valtteri Bottas said that the Bahrain Grand Prix weekend was the first event of the year where his back has been pain-free.

The Williams driver had to sit out the season opener in Australia because of back pain. Although his condition has improved since then, he revealed he was still troubled by it in Malaysia and China.

"I don't feel anything now while driving – this is really the first weekend that I feel nothing," said Bottas. "The new driving position I have is a really good step forward. I'm not worried [that it could happen again]."



Loving the sparks from the cars

Jenson Button might have endured a torrid weekend in Bahrain as he failed to make the start, but his live Tweeting showed he was a fan of the new titanium skid blocks

REMEMBER WHEN

2009



Kimi Raikkonen's runner-up slot in the Bahrain Grand Prix was the first time he had stood on a podium in Ferrari colours since the 2009 Italian GP.

New Manor after summer break

Manor expects its bespoke 2015 car to be ready for the second half of the season.

The revamped Marussia team has been using an updated 2014 challenger – modified to pass new crash test and nose regulations – so far this season.

With Will Stevens and Roberto Merhi showing the car has the pace to qualify, the team is eager to switch focus onto getting its new car ready.

Team boss John Booth said: "For the 2015 car, our aim has always been for the August break. As with arriving in Australia, it's a very aggressive target and will take a lot of achieving.

"But when we get back from these first four flyaway races we just really need to sit down and see if we can bring all the areas together to achieve that in that timeframe."



BIG NUMBER

10,148

The number of kilometres that Lewis Hamilton has led in his F1 career after the Bahrain GP, where he broke the landmark 10,000km figure.





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Lawrence Barretto

From the paddock

Reverting to V8 engines may deliver a short-term boost to noise and spectacle, but it could come at a serious cost to the sport

They say you should never go back because you'll always be disappointed. But that's exactly what Bernie Ecclestone has suggested Formula 1 does by ditching the new and more-efficient 1.6-litre V6 turbo engines, which manufacturers have spent years working on at great expense, and returning to V8 power units that are revised to produce 1000bhp.

Part of Ecclestone's argument makes sense. "We need to go back to engines whose costs are more reasonable," he said. He's not wrong. The power units and their associated new technologies are expensive. And with costs running as high as £18 million for some customer teams, that can equate to as much as a quarter of some of the smaller squads' budgets.

In an era when many are struggling for survival – just ask the recently defunct Caterham team, or Manor, which only received a last-ditch finance package to ensure it made the grid in time for this season – that kind of cost can cripple a team.

But reverting to V8s wouldn't be as simple as the teams returning to their factories, dusting off the old units, sticking them in the back of the car and going racing again. As well as having to revise their facilities, which they spent millions reworking to cope with the latest engine change introduced in 2014, it would involve a significant expense to tweak the power units to meet the current regulations while also adjusting them to produce 1000bhp.

disillusioned with the sport and lost interest, and that this has subsequently contributed to the fall in global TV audiences as well as the number of fans paying to attend a grand prix.

But the 1000bhp power units should make the cars harder to drive, providing more of a challenge for the driver and hopefully delivering far more exciting racing. The drivers are excited by the prospect, too, with Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo suggesting it would separate drivers who have "a bit more commitment". It sounds like a no-brainer, doesn't it?

The key, of course, is cost. Some crucial components will need to be redesigned and developed, but that would arguably be cheaper, more forward-looking and relevant to the car industry than ditching this new technology and returning to the V8s.

"As a customer team for engines, for us the most important factor in this debate is what the cost will be," said Sauber team boss Monisha Kaltenborn, "The engines have unfortunately returned back to where they used to be and that's not a sensible thing. We wanted to get away from there."

The other option would be to stick with what we've got and let the development run its course. Gradually over time, the V6 power units will mature and, while the early development will be fundamentally expensive, after a few years manufacturers will start to recoup their costs on R&D. We could even get to a stage where

"We could get to a stage where development is frozen – as was the case with the V8s in 2007"

Although Mercedes and Ferrari preferred to stick with the V8s when the idea of the new engine formula was first mooted, Merc has gone on to dominate in F1, while Ferrari has this season produced an engine that can seriously challenge. Why would they want to change now and suffer yet more expense?

In Bahrain, Mercedes' Toto Wolff said that plans are currently based around the current V6 hybrid power units, and suggested that all four engine manufacturers are "pretty clear that the current engine architecture with the hybrid component needs to stay in place".

Better still, Wolff said that it would be relatively straightforward to increase the horsepower to 1000bhp, since they are already on schedule to hit 950bhp by 2017 anyway – and, crucially, boost the sound of the power units. This is something Ecclestone said he would accept providing costs could be controlled.

The F1 chief is also concerned that the move to hybrid engines has meant some of the sport's fans have become

development is frozen – as was the case with the V8s in 2007, when engines were cheaper.

Then the onus is on the manufacturers to play their part. They should be able to afford – or rather should be required by the regulations – to offer their engines for a set maximum price per year. That way, customer teams can afford and budget for them accordingly without threatening their survival.

"We fully understand that the manufacturers need to showcase their core technology but it should be at an affordable level," added Kaltenborn. "I don't think we should be used to finance their R&D because they will produce that engine anyway. You will never see a Mercedes using a Ferrari or the other way round."

It's now up to the sport's bosses, teams and manufacturers to forget about the past and look to the future – or they could risk not only losing teams, but also the fans and TV audience Ecclestone is so desperately trying to preserve. ❧

This week in motorsport

S. BLOXHAM/LAT



GP2 EYES BID TO BECOME NEW FIA FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP

GP2 organisers will evaluate the possibility of submitting a tender to become the new FIA Formula 2 Championship when the category's proposed parameters are laid out.

FIA Single Seater Commission president Stefano Domenicali

plans to have finalised the basic concept for the new series within the next two months. GP2 boss Bruno Michel has confirmed that, once that information is available, he will evaluate a possible bid.

"Depending on the details of the tender, we might look at it and could

be interested," said Michel. "We need to see exactly what would be the tender regulations and the way it would work, but it's definitely something we would look at."

Michel is sceptical about whether an F2 series using a hybrid engine that follows the path used in F1

would be cost-effective. But Domenicali has stated that such a move is under consideration.

"Turbo is the future, hybrid technology is the future – now we need to go back to see the level of cost that the system is able to accept," said Domenicali.

10

Wittmann on top in DTM test

Reigning champion Marco Wittmann topped the DTM's final pre-season test as BMW led two of the three days of running at Oschersleben.

Wittmann (below) set the fastest time on the opening day. His BMW stablemate, rookie Tom Blomqvist, led day two ahead of fellow Brit Gary Paffett in the ART Grand Prix-run Mercedes.

Final-day honours, and the second-fastest time overall, went to Mercedes F1 reserve Pascal Wehrlein.

Audi had a quiet test, Mattias Ekstrom's third on day two its best position and Adrien Tambay setting the marque's overall best time on the final day.



NISSAN RACKS UP MILEAGE

Nissan's new GT-R LM NISMO completed another 1200 miles of testing in the USA last week.

The World Endurance Championship contender ran for four days at the Chevrolet test facility at Bowling Green in Kentucky, racking up the equivalent of 50 per cent of its previous accumulated distance. The test, which was focused on endurance running,

was held in mostly wet conditions.

Harry Tincknell, who did the majority of the running, said: "We have learned a lot about the Michelin wets, especially our bespoke rear tyre, so it has been very useful."

Audi's testing schedule continued at Paul Ricard, where its Le Mans-spec R18 e-tron quattro completed a 30-hour race simulation.

Zeta to skip FR3.5 opener

Formula Renault 3.5 race-winning team Zeta Corse is set to miss this weekend's opening round at Motorland Aragon.

A source close to the team, with which Roberto Merhi starred last season, told AUTOSPORT that Zeta is working to return from the Monaco round on May 24.

Zeta had announced that former GP3 runner-up Facu Regalia (below) would race for the team in 2015, and the Argentinian participated in pre-season testing. Regalia has been linked to a possible move to Norfolk team Comtec for Motorland.



VAN DER LAAN/LAT



For all the breaking news, visit AUTOSPORT.COM

Kubica skips Rally Argentina

Robert Kubica has withdrawn from this weekend's Rally Argentina to restructure his RK World Rally Team operation.

The ex-Formula 1 driver created his own squad, with assistance from A-Style, on the eve of the season after splitting from M-Sport. Although Kubica has taken six stage wins on the opening three rallies, he has been hampered by technical problems.



TRIPLE EIGHT'S 500TH START

British Touring Car Championship powerhouse Triple Eight celebrated its 500th start in the series at Donington Park last weekend, and a cake was cut



by team principal Ian Harrison to commemorate the occasion. Since its inception in 1997 as the factory Vauxhall squad, the now works MG team has run 30 drivers in the BTCC. Here are the six tin-top legends who have started most BTCC races for Triple 8:

DRIVER	STARTS
1 Yvan Muller	176
2 Jason Plato	140
3 Fabrizio Giovanardi	122
4 James Thompson	96
5 Matt Neal	80
6 John Cleland	74

In brief



RYDELL'S FEVER

Swedish touring car hero Rickard Rydell was forced to skip last weekend's WTCC round at Marrakech due to illness. Rydell was suffering from a fever brought on by a virus, and is working on a return to his Nika Racing Honda Civic (above) for the next round at the Hungaroring.

NEW CITROEN AERO

The factory Citroen DS3 WRCs will run a revised aerodynamic set-up on Rally Argentina this week. This is part two of a three-step evolution of the car driven by Kris Meeke and Mads Ostberg, with the final change coming to the suspension and geometry in the middle of the year.

FERRARI STARS IN ASIA

Ferrari GT heavyweights Gianmaria Bruni, Toni Vilander and James Calado have been drafted in for GT Asia duty this season with Clearwater Racing. Calado will join three-time champion Mok Weng Sun for round one at Yeongam, before Bruni joins Mok for the Okayama round and Vilander steps in at Fuji. Matt Griffin joins Richie Wee in the sister car for the bulk of the season.

NEWMAN PENALTY CUT

NASCAR star Ryan Newman's points penalty for tyre-tampering at Fontana has been reduced from 75 to 50, although the six-race bans for some Richard Childress Racing staff remain.

MACLEOD IN GT OPEN

Callum MacLeod, the 2007 British Formula Ford champion, will contest this weekend's International GT Open round at Paul Ricard with Team Parker Racing's Audi R8 LMS ultra (below). MacLeod will be partnered by Ian Loggie, Parker's regular driver in the Blancpain Endurance Series.



INTERNATIONAL STATUS FOR BRC REVIVAL

A leaked document has revealed plans for a seven-round international-status British Rally Championship for its revival next season.

This year's BRC was canned, giving the MSA a year to regenerate the ailing

series. A 2016 calendar – filled with events running to a higher profile than last season – will be issued in June.

Potential events are currently in discussion with the MSA about securing a calendar slot. As expected the BRC will

run for cars that have been homologated in the past five years. RGT cars will also be welcome.

The document also confirms that a National Rally Championship, open to all cars, will be run alongside the BRC.

Servia, Mann and Bell in at Indy

The grid for next month's Indianapolis 500 continues to take shape, with three teams confirming additions to the regular field.

Spaniard Oriol Servia (right) will return in a second Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing entry in what will be his third appearance at the 500 with the team, following on from starts in 2009 and '14.

Pippa Mann also renews a relationship from last year, the Brit signing on to return to the Brickyard with Dale Coyne Racing.

Meanwhile, Indy specialist Townsend



Bell has been confirmed to make his ninth appearance at the 500 after securing a ride with Dreyer & Reinbold/Kingdom Racing.

They'll look at it. I'll be amazed if nothing is done about it – I'll have to change the way I race if they don't.



Andrew Jordan on why Matt Neal's Donington BTCC win is provisional after a clash between them. Report: [p40](#)

VIPER FOR LE MANS

The Dodge Viper will return to the Le Mans 24 Hours for 2015 after the Riley Motorsports squad was promoted from first reserve on the entry list.

Riley's Dodge SRT Viper GTS-R gained a full entry after the Team SARD Morand LMP2 squad withdrew one of its pair of Morgan-Judd/BMW EVOs. The GTE Am-class Viper will be driven by team regulars Jeroen Bleekemolen and Ben Keating plus Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge graduate Marc Miller.

Morand, which missed the Silverstone World Endurance Championship opener, has a solo Morgan entered for round two at Spa.



Mini for Hockenheim WRX debut

The JRM team's Mini rallycross project – taken over from Prodrive – will make its competition debut in next week's Hockenheim round. Americans Dave Mirra and Danny Way will drive the two cars



Podium place at Silverstone for University LMP3



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Trackside with motorsport students

Students win praise from top racing driver for their professional contribution to a winning team in the first LMP3 race of the season.

In a thrilling Silverstone LMP3 debut, the University's Centre for Advanced Performance Engineering team secured a podium place, finishing only behind the Ginetta LNT teams.

Raced by the University's partner racing team, RLR Msport, drivers Rob Garofall and Jens Petersen drove some of the fastest laps in LMP3 over the race weekend.

Fuel pickup problems in the race itself meant an additional pitstop and hampered the team's chances of finishing further up the podium, but a third place finish was a tremendous achievement on the opening weekend.

Rob Garofall and Ginetta's racedriver Mike

Simpson, who finished second, were both present at the University's open day last month for a panel discussion. Several current Motorsport students attended the race day and assisted the RLR Msport team trackside.

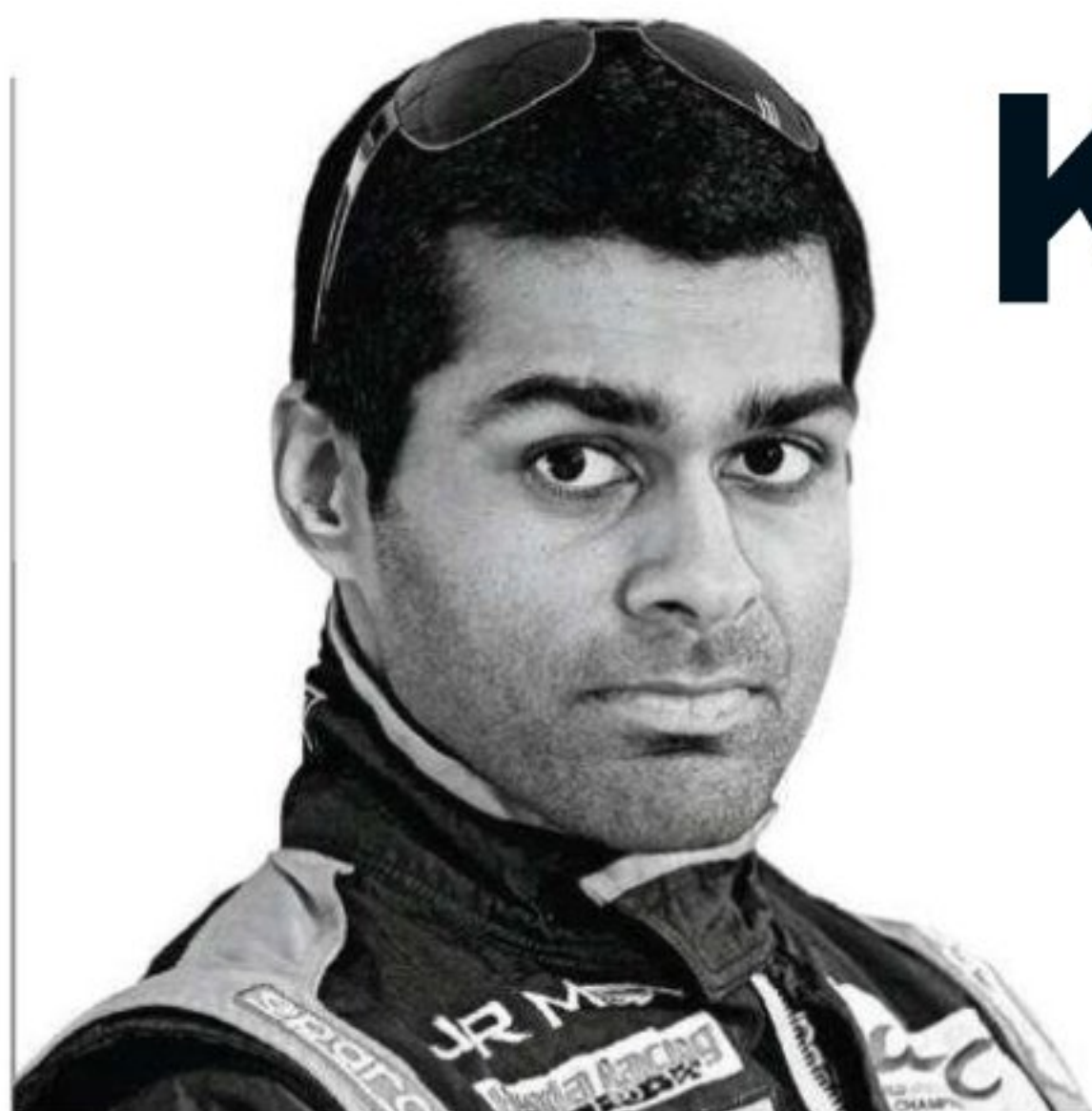
'What an amazing weekend,' said Rob. 'The students should be so proud of themselves for working so hard, overcoming all the problems we had with the new car. It was a fantastic team effort, I have had so many messages of congratulations for the team and the University, one of them saying how great it is for the University to be putting Bolton, a town with a motorsport history, back on the map in international competition.'

The team will next compete at Imola in Italy on May 16-17 before travelling to Red Bull Ring (Austria), Le Castellet (France) and Estoril (Portugal) over the next six months.

Karun Chandhok

The racer's eye

Last weekend's Bahrain Grand Prix was a textbook example of how changing track conditions favour the drivers with the best feel



With the Bahrain Grand Prix becoming a night race last year, the whole approach to the weekend has changed for the teams and drivers. Track conditions play a huge part in the race and it's something that we often hear drivers and commentators talking about – but in real terms what does that actually mean?

Simply speaking, there are three main things that we need to think about – temperature, track-surface grip and the wind. On a race weekend like we had in Bahrain, all three of these factors play a big role in how you drive. Being a night race, the temperature of the asphalt changes a huge amount, which is why we saw very little meaningful running in the hotter sessions of FP1 and FP3.

Tyres used in racing are very sensitive to temperatures and even a five-degree shift makes a big difference, let alone a twenty-degree swing. This is something we experience a lot in the 24-hour sportscar races at places like Le Mans where the track temperature can vary a great deal during the race itself. Unlike in F1, where it changes between sessions, in a 24-hour race you can't adjust the car setup but instead have to counter it with your driving.

As it's in the middle of a desert, the track surface grip is also bigger issue in Bahrain than most other places. Most races you go to, the weekend normally starts off on what we call a "green track" which is a reference to the surface being still quite low on grip. As the weekend progresses, we get more rubber on the racing line and also the dust from the line gets blown away. This evolution doesn't



Flag on Bahrain's tower helps to gauge wind

Rosberg recently that they didn't expect the track grip levels to be so high, and therefore didn't attack enough in qualifying. Getting the qualifying lap right is a tricky balance of pushing the level of grip to the limit, but not going beyond it and making a mistake. You hear pundits talk about the drivers who have "great feel" for grip and guys like Lewis and Sebastian Vettel are great examples.

In a sense, there's a degree of 'calculated guesstimating' that has to happen. Has the track got enough grip now so I can brake 5 metres later? Or can I carry 3-4kmh more through the apex of a fast corner – is the lateral grip going to be there for me to keep up the momentum? This knowledge is built up through years of experience of how much a track evolves and how temperature affects the surface. For example, we all know that in Jerez, if you

“This knowledge is built up through years of experience of how much a track evolves”

really follow a linear curve and you especially see the track gain grip when the drivers use the stickier, softer rubber, which allows them to put more energy into the tyres and therefore deposit more rubber on the racing lines. This is something that's changed during the Bridgestone to Pirelli swap, and we see less rubber laid down nowadays than we used to pre-2011.

The wind can also play a big part in determining chassis balance, gear ratios and the way you drive. It's easily forgotten, because you can't see it like track evolution, or feel it as you can when you're in the garage as the temperature changes. In Bahrain I would always look at the big flag on top of the royal family's hospitality tower near Turn 1 to see the wind direction. It's always visible from the start-finish straight, and because it's a big and heavy flag, you know that if it's really fluttering then the wind is very strong.

So how does all this affect the guys in the cockpit? We heard from Kimi Raikkonen this weekend and also Nico

want to do a super-quick time, you go out between 9 and 9.30 in the morning when the track surface is cooler, and that a light drizzle in Sepang, though rare, will actually make the track faster for the first lap because it just cools the surface and evaporates very quickly.

The wind is a trickier one because it can be gusting and therefore give you much less of a consistent feeling from lap to lap. Places like Silverstone and Barcelona are tricky with the high-speed, or long-radius corners. You need to know in which direction the wind is blowing and the range of the gusts, as it affects your approach to a corner.

A headwind will mean you can brake later or carry more speed through, since the wind is effectively keeping you inside the track. Conversely, a tailwind could potentially result in instability under braking, or when you turn into the corner. Wind also makes a big difference in a race because a headwind has a much bigger effect when you're slipstreaming someone.

All in all, a hidden but powerful factor! ❄️

BAHRAIN GP

ICEMAN PUTS THE HEAT ON MERCEDES

Lewis Hamilton took his third win of the year from pole, but a reinvigorated Kimi Raikkonen played a tactical blinder for Ferrari to run the world champion close. **BEN ANDERSON** reports







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Tussle between Rosberg and Vettel left the door open for Raikkonen

THE RACE 18:00, 19.04.2015

➤ Kimi Raikkonen's Formula 1 career has been in something of a tailspin since he rejoined Ferrari. Last year was easily his least impressive since he first arrived at motorsport's pinnacle in 2001: he struggled with the handling characteristics of the F14-T, he was usually nowhere near team-mate Fernando Alonso, and he looked lost and unhappy.

But things are different this year. The Ferrari team has been through a substantial makeover, the SF15-T is a far more accomplished package than its predecessor, and Raikkonen is suddenly looking a much happier man.

Up until the Bahrain Grand Prix that happiness hadn't quite translated into results. Raikkonen is undoubtedly driving better than at any time since he returned to Maranello, but he's still struggled to put it together in qualifying (he's 0-4 against team-mate Sebastian Vettel so far on Saturdays), and his first two races of 2015 were both compromised in an all-too-familiar way: contact on the first lap and thus always on the comeback trail.

But signs that Raikkonen was getting back to his best were evident in China a fortnight ago. He recovered from qualifying a disappointing fifth with a feisty (and clean) first lap to get back up to fourth, and was closing down Vettel for the final podium spot before a safety-car finish halted his charge.

Raikkonen's ace in the hole since he returned to Formula 1 from a brief stint in the World Rally

Championship has been his supreme ability to carefully manage the delicate Pirelli tyres. That was in evidence in China, as he ran a longer middle stint than his fellow frontrunners in the hope of a payoff at the end of the race, which very nearly came.

In Bahrain there was no late-race safety car (which meant this race was far tamer than the thriller seen in Sakhir 12 months ago), and no pesky Williams drivers between Raikkonen, his team-mate and the silver Mercedes. He started fourth, but was up to third within two turns of the start after going round the outside of Nico Rosberg.

Ferrari's long-run pace during Friday practice was better than Mercedes', which left everyone wondering whether that meant the Scuderia could be a genuine contender for victory here. With both red cars tracking Lewis Hamilton through the opening laps those expectations were raised. But Mercedes still has fundamentally the fastest car in the field, and 'corrections' were made to the set-up of the W06 after practice to improve its performance over longer stints (following a discovery that the bulk and surface temperatures of the rear tyres were going in opposite directions), ▶



Brake-locking Rosberg makes early repass on Raikkonen



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Ginetta congratulate Team LNT and their drivers, Sir Chris Hoy and Charlie Robertson on making history in the Ginetta-Nissan LMP3 car during the opening round of the 2015 European Le Mans Series at Silverstone on April 11th. The #2 Team LNT car of Simpson/Paletou also took a podium position with second in class.

A huge Ginetta thank you goes to our customers who committed early to the Ginetta-Nissan LMP3 project, and provided vital support to a very exciting LMP future for Ginetta.

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Hamilton controlled the race from the front



THOMPSON/GETTY

Raikkonen: "I think we did a very good job. On the medium tyre it was quite easy to keep up with them and catch them"

► so this race was always Hamilton's (and Mercedes') to lose. The fastest car in the field starting on pole should be a shoo-in, and in reality neither Ferrari looked a genuine contender after the early stages. When Rosberg breezed back past Raikkonen using DRS into Turn 1 on lap four, and then pulled a similar move on Vettel at the start of lap nine to grab second, Ferrari's chances of challenging Mercedes looked over. This was going to be China all over again...

Ferrari's only hope of coming back at Mercedes was to be aggressive on strategy. Pirelli estimated the soft tyre needed to do 18-20 laps for a two-stop race, but Ferrari pitted Vettel on lap 13 (his tyres were 16 laps old, including his Saturday qualifying run) in an attempt to force its rival's hand. Mercedes reacted, pitting Rosberg and Hamilton consecutively on the next two laps, which led to a momentary thrill as the three converged at Turn 1 when Hamilton rejoined – the result of the significant performance boost both Vettel

and Rosberg received from bolting on a new set of softs. Hamilton held firm, while Rosberg had used his DRS at the start of the lap to forge back ahead of Vettel.

Meanwhile, Raikkonen briefly assumed the lead before making his own first stop on lap 17. It was at this point that Raikkonen's race came alive. Ferrari opted to put him on an alternative strategy, fitting his car with a set of medium-compound tyres. This looked a strange move initially, for Pirelli's practice data suggested the medium rubber was almost two seconds per lap slower than the soft, with a degradation advantage of only 0.2s per lap. Yes, Raikkonen would get the payback of the quicker tyre at the end of the race (on lower fuel), but surely he would lose far too much time driving around on the slower tyre for it to matter... There was no hint from the first stint that this would prove the masterstroke it was. Pastor Maldonado's Lotus started the race on the mediums, but was buried in traffic and pitted to get off them after just 10 laps. The others who chose mediums at their first stops (Fernando Alonso's McLaren and the two Toro Rossos) were all chancers, with nothing to lose and nothing really to gain. Their initial pace looked reasonable compared with those extending stints on used softs, but nothing particularly special.

Raikkonen rejoined with a 14s deficit to Hamilton's Mercedes but, instead of growing, that gap stabilised between 12 and 14s for the next 14

laps, before Hamilton made his second (and final) stop on lap 33. Raikkonen could match Hamilton's pace on a theoretically slower compound of tyre, and this meant he was simultaneously catching Vettel and Rosberg in third and second. The Iceman's race was starting to shape up nicely.

PACE COMPARISON: KIMI vs LEWIS

RAIKKONEN	LAP	HAMILTON
1m38.403s	19	1m39.284s
1m38.688s	20	1m39.364s
1m39.193s	21	1m38.819s
1m39.013s	22	1m39.023s
1m38.986s	23	1m39.085s
1m39.017s	24	1m39.161s
1m39.101s	25	1m38.919s
1m39.171s	26	1m39.185s
1m39.398s	27	1m39.408s
1m39.389s	28	1m39.365s
1m39.606s	29	1m39.453s
1m39.733s	30	1m39.533s
1m39.995s	31	1m39.451s
1m39.565s	32	1m39.551s

"I think we had a few different approaches of how to run the race and obviously this was one of them and it depended where we were," explained Raikkonen. "I think we did a very good job out of it. On the medium tyre it was quite easy to keep up with them and catch them." ►



Hamilton emerged just in front of Rosberg/Vettel scrap



Vettel struggled for rhythm during the race



Raikkonen gets softs on for sprint to the finish

► Raikkonen's speed at this point in the race certainly caught the eye of Mercedes, and team chief Toto Wolff suggested Raikkonen probably "surprised himself" with his pace on the medium. "We could see that the prime wasn't any slower at all, if not quicker," he said. "If you compared it to qualifying, where the prime [medium] was two seconds slower than the option [soft], it was quite an interesting result.

"We were monitoring his pace and it was a flat curve – his times weren't getting any worse, so I think from his point of view it was an aggressive strategy, and it worked for them."

While Raikkonen was turning heads on the pitwall, Vettel again forged ahead of Rosberg by pitting earlier (on lap 32), but understeered off at

the final corner on lap 35 (Rosberg's out-lap) and damaged his front wing. This necessitated an unscheduled third stop on the next lap and ended any hope of a fourth consecutive podium finish since he became a Ferrari driver.

Meanwhile, Hamilton (armed with a fresh set of mediums) closed down Raikkonen at a rate of almost two seconds per lap, breezing past at Turn 1 on lap 40. Ferrari promptly pitted its man at the end of that lap, giving Raikkonen 17 laps to make some magic happen on the soft tyre.

"Some felt Kimi should have gone on mediums [at his final stop], but it was getting colder and the working range comes into play," explained Pirelli motorsport boss Paul Hembery. "We could see there were signs of graining that we hadn't

seen in practice. We attributed that to the temperatures going below 30C.

"He had the choice, but I figured if he stuck with the soft and eased them in... It was quite a longish stint to be going that quickly and we thought he might have a big deg at the end of it, but he didn't."

Raikkonen rejoined with a 23.641s deficit to leader Hamilton at the end of his out-lap, and immediately began lapping two seconds quicker. By the end of lap 45 the gap was down to 15.180s. By the end of lap 48 it was 11.7s. By now Raikkonen was pegging back Hamilton at roughly one second per lap. With nine to go this was going to be tight.

But Hamilton reacted, arresting the slide a little with a couple of low 1m38s laps. With seven laps to go Raikkonen was 10.6s adrift, so Hamilton could afford to be 1s per lap slower. This was not to be a heroic triumph against the odds for Ferrari.

Or so we thought. Hamilton had the extra protection of team-mate Rosberg between himself and Raikkonen, but Nico's brake temperatures had run out of control – a legacy of those 'corrections' Mercedes made to improve its race pace after Friday. By the end of lap 54 – with three to go – Raikkonen was just 1.1s behind Rosberg, and on the penultimate lap the Mercedes' brake-by-wire system failed, causing Rosberg to run off the track at Turn 1 and hand second place to Raikkonen. On the final lap Hamilton's BBW also failed. Entering that final lap he led Raikkonen by 6.2s. Across the line



Bottas dug deep to keep Vettel behind

QUALIFYING



Just after Lewis Hamilton won his second world title in Abu Dhabi last November, he vowed to go away and work out how to be stronger in qualifying in 2015.

The relentless pursuit of perfection is necessary for success in Formula 1, and Hamilton knew he made his own life harder last season by too often allowing team-mate Nico Rosberg to outperform him on Saturdays.

Four races into 2015 and it remains a clean sweep of pole positions for Hamilton thus far. The world champion and his W06 are currently peerless in qualifying, and last year's pole position trophy winner Rosberg looks a little lost.

His qualifying advantage has evaporated, he has started to second-guess his tactics, and in Bahrain he got things so wrong that Sebastian Vettel and the resurgent Ferrari team were able to deny Mercedes a front-row lockout for the second time in the past three races.

Rosberg's session "went pear-shaped" in Q2, when he mistakenly thought he would get two goes on new tyres in Q3. The top cars only needed a single run in Q2 to make the top 10, and Rosberg chose to take it easy in order to protect a set of tyres he knew he would need again for Sunday's race.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the garage, Hamilton decided he would go a different way, pushing hard in Q2 in order to "get a good feel" for the grip before the crucial final segment. He blitzed the field with a 1m32.669s lap in Q2, almost a second clear of anyone else...

Those who made it through to the top-10 shootout (with the exception of Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo) eventually decided to make only one new-tyre run in Q3, to save rubber for the race. When Hamilton made this move, Rosberg decided he had to follow suit, to ensure he wouldn't start the race with a tyre disadvantage.

An unexpectedly poor run on used tyres at the start of Q3 (0.3s slower than Hamilton managed) knocked Rosberg off his stride, and when it came to the crucial final run he floundered. He lost huge chunks of time in the first and third sectors of the lap, ended up 0.558s adrift of his team-mate (who found another tenth compared with his Q2 effort), and – more importantly – was 0.147s slower than Vettel's Ferrari.

"It was just badly managed on my behalf and I threw myself out of my rhythm," admitted Rosberg, who wished with hindsight that he'd opted for two new-tyre runs in Q3. "I wasn't well enough prepared. That is something I need to do better next time."

Sadly for Rosberg, these qualifying regrets are starting to become a regular occurrence.



As Raikkonen's mediums wilt, Hamilton repasses



Wolff: "We knew the changes we made on the car were compromising the brake temperatures a little bit"

the gap was just 3.380s. Looking at the pace Rosberg had on the final lap (after adjusting to his problem), if the race had been just two laps longer, Raikkonen would very likely have won the Bahrain GP.

"We saw very hot brakes on Nico's car in traffic following Kimi, Sebastian first, and then lots of fighting and hard braking, so we monitored that, but at the end with lapping backmarkers those brake temperatures went through the roof and we had brake-by-wire failures on both cars at the same corner," explained Wolff. "When that happens the brake-by-wire switches into the conventional system and then you are without weapons to defend."

"We knew the changes we made on the car were compromising the brake temperatures a little bit, but then it was a hard race with lots of overtaking – especially on Nico's side – and both cars struggled to make it through some of the backmarkers at the end. And when you follow another car, or a couple of cars, the air stream collapses and this is what made the brakes go."

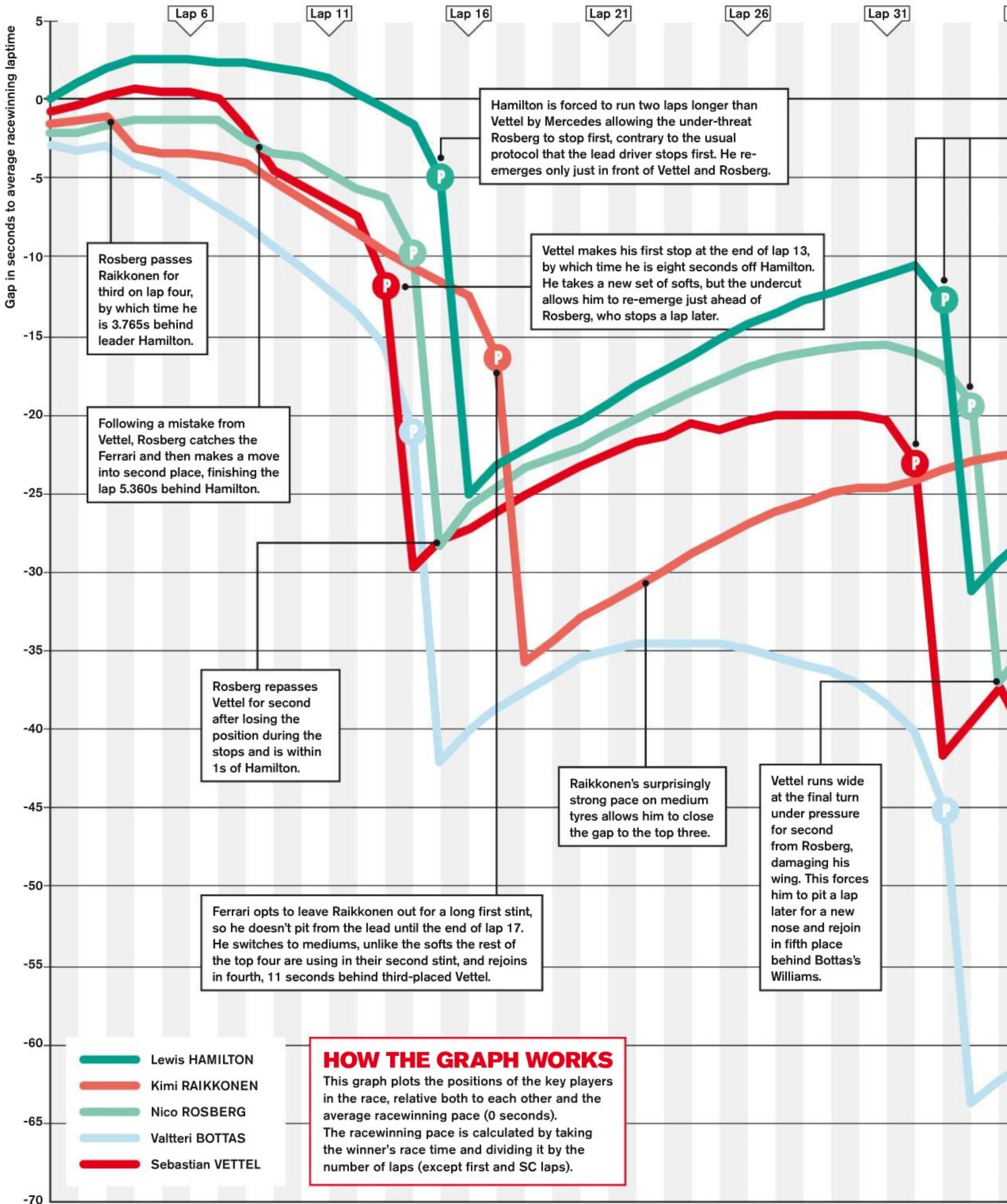
"In hindsight, knowing that this [set-up change] caused the problem and nearly lost us the race, and lost us P2, we will probably look to do things differently in the future."

Hamilton survived the scare to top the podium, and rightly received plaudits for chalking up his third victory in four races (and extending his championship lead to 33 points over team-mate Rosberg), but Raikkonen's performance really stood out. Ferrari team principal Maurizio Arrivabene came on the radio at the end of the race to say: "Hey Iceman! I'm proud of you". But Raikkonen's first podium since the 2013 Korean GP characteristically failed to impress the man himself.

"Obviously it's much nicer than being out of it [the podium], but to come second, quite close to Mercedes, it's a bit disappointing," he said. "I'd rather take this one than something else, but you cannot feel happy. We are still disappointed. We want to win."

In Bahrain he almost did. Mercedes still has the fastest car in Formula 1, but it's now under serious pressure from behind, and is having to push the W06 to breaking point to keep the emerging red tide at bay. Big upgrades are expected ahead of the next round in Spain. If Ferrari can outdevelop Mercedes, we could be set for a very interesting season indeed. And in those circumstances, Kimi Raikkonen's second Ferrari career could be set for a glorious upturn in fortune. ☘

HOW THE RACE WAS WON



Lap 36 Lap 41 Lap 46 Lap 51 Lap 56

Heading into the second round of pitstops, Hamilton has a lead of almost five seconds on Rosberg, and nine over Vettel. The Ferrari driver stops first on lap 32, followed by Hamilton a lap later, then Rosberg on lap 34. Vettel again jumps Rosberg.

Hamilton suffers a brake-by-wire problem on the last lap, but hangs on to win by 3.380s from Raikkonen.

Although Raikkonen's pace advantage gradually reduces, he catches Rosberg late on. Rosberg, suffering a brake-by-wire problem, runs wide at Turn 1 on the penultimate lap and is subsequently passed.

Raikkonen makes his final stop from the lead on lap 40. He rejoins 23.641s behind Hamilton and within 20 seconds of Rosberg. Immediately, he starts closing the gap by two seconds per lap.

Bottas has a lonely race behind the Mercedes and Ferrari drivers, and comfortably ahead of the rest, until Vettel's extra pitstop for a new nose drops the Ferrari behind the Williams. The unflappable Finn holds him off with ease.

TRACKSIDE VIEW

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Irregular drivers jumping into Formula 1 cars for the first free practice session of a grand prix weekend has become a regular sight. It also provides such drivers with a serious shop window – a chance to prove to a very insular paddock that they deserve a regular place within it.

That is Jolyon Palmer's mission in 2015. He has a limited (but undefined) number of sessions in Romain Grosjean's Lotus to prove he should be racing in F1 in 2016. To do that, he needs to at least match (and probably better) the pace of the car on the other side of the garage.

So far he has completed two of these sessions and, although he has trailed Pastor Maldonado on headline laptime in both, the reality is slightly different.

'So far the comparison with Maldonado reflects well on Palmer'

In Bahrain he wound up 0.441s shy – a 0.191s improvement compared with his previous effort in China. On best sector times, Palmer trailed Maldonado by 0.465s in sector one, but lost "half a second" when electrical energy from his ERS failed on the main straight. In sector two Maldonado was just 0.017s faster than Palmer, who was only 0.007s shy in sector three, which means overall it was pretty much neck-and-neck.

Watching both of them drive from the outside of the tricky downhill double-left at Turns 9 and 10, their respective styles were quite different, Palmer leaning more gently on the front tyres to keep the rear in check, while Maldonado was more aggressive, requiring constant corrections at the wheel.

Palmer is not here to do glory runs. Lotus is putting him on similar programmes to Maldonado, so we have a direct comparison. So far, that direct comparison reflects well on last year's GP2 champion.



Anderson compared Maldonado and Palmer at T9-10 lefthanders

PHOTO:XPBIMAGES

STORIES OF THE RACE

Vettel puts Bahrain result down to lack of confidence

Sebastian Vettel blamed a lack of rhythm and an ill-handling rear end on his Ferrari for the errors that cost him a possible podium in Bahrain.

The Ferrari driver was Mercedes' main threat in the early stages, but incurred several costly off-track excursions. His hopes of a top-three finish were dashed by a trip across the gravel on the exit of the final corner while under pressure from Nico Rosberg's Mercedes. Vettel damaged his front wing and had to pit for a replacement.

After finishing fifth, Vettel admitted that he never felt fully comfortable in his car.

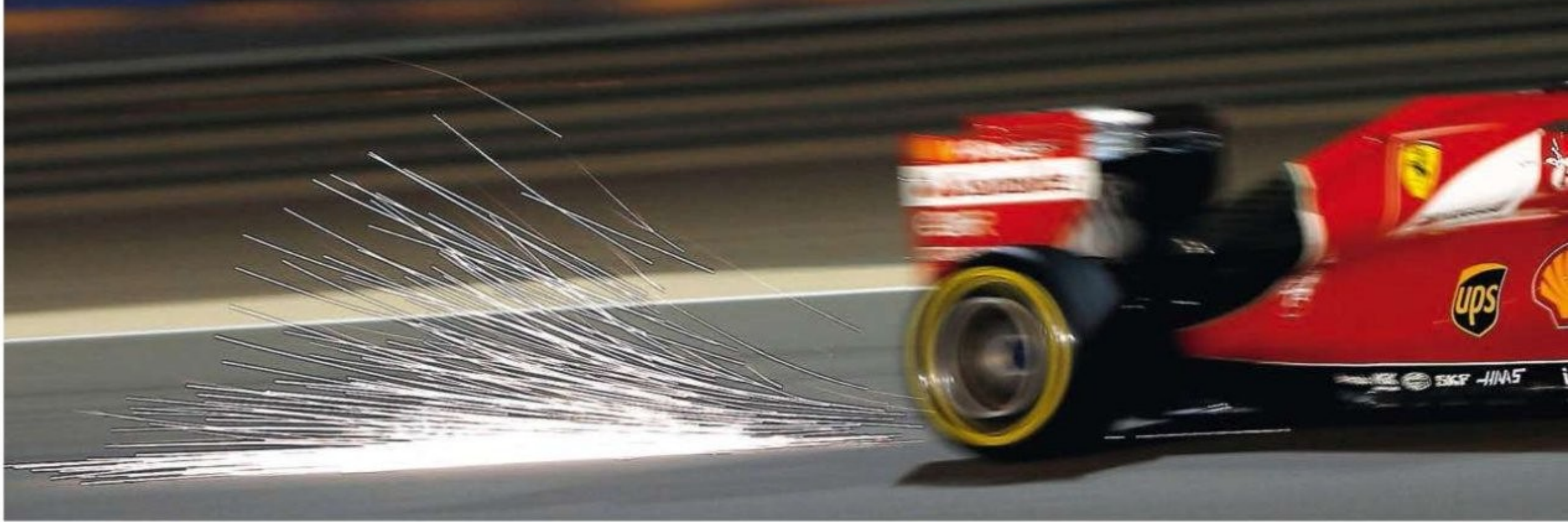
"I was probably pushing very hard and did some mistakes," he said. "I think all in all, not a perfect race. Obviously, I did not get into the rhythm and lost positions when it [was important] not to lose positions.

"That lost us some time and in the end with the damage on the front wing we had to go again [in the pits] and lost a lot of track time."

Vettel said lack of confidence was then a big problem in trying to get back past Valtteri Bottas.

"In general I was struggling a bit with the rear end," he admitted. "Corner exits is where you need to make it stick and I was very vulnerable for Nico to get a good exit. Then I wasn't very good in getting a good exit compared to Valtteri.

"Once I was in DRS it was always too late to do something. He [Bottas] did a good job defending and not doing any mistakes."



24



Maldonado blamed for Massa struggles

Williams driver Felipe Massa reckoned a punt from the Lotus of Pastor Maldonado prevented him from finishing higher in the Bahrain Grand Prix.

A sensor problem prevented the Brazilian, who qualified sixth, from firing up his machine and pulling away for the formation lap. The team managed to resolve the issue in time for Massa to start the race from the pitlane, and he rose to 16th place within three laps of the start. But after Massa passed Maldonado on lap four, the Lotus driver hit the back of Massa at Turn 4, causing what Williams performance chief Rob Smedley described as "quite extensive" damage to the diffuser.

The Brazilian struggled thereafter and could only recover to 10th.

"I was using tyres quickly," explained Massa. "I had no stability on the rear so degradation was massive."

Smedley added: "From one lap to the next the balance switched from understeer to oversteer. That pretty much put to bed anything he was going to do."



Williams makes tyre breakthrough

Williams took a small step forward in form at the Bahrain Grand Prix, and performance chief Rob Smedley said better understanding of how to use the soft tyre helped it get closer to Ferrari and Mercedes.

Felipe Massa and Valtteri Bottas had finished a distant fifth and sixth at the Chinese GP, after being forced to run two stints on medium tyres while Mercedes and Ferrari used softs. But Williams was able to replicate the strategies used by Ferrari and Mercedes in Bahrain, and ran two stints on the softer tyre on both cars. Massa's race was compromised, but Bottas beat

Sebastian Vettel to fourth after the German made an extra pitstop to replace his damaged front wing, and Williams finished several seconds closer to Mercedes than it did in China.

"We set out a programme of how we wanted to run in practice," said Smedley. "We decided the best approach would be to run the cars on the option [soft] tyre on two different set-ups to see what the thermal management is like.

"We learned a lot from that – enough that we had confidence to run the soft for the race. That's probably been our biggest step forward since the last race."

HOW VETTEL'S RACE UNRAVELLED

- LAP 8** Runs wide at Turn 1, allowing Rosberg to attack for second place.
- LAP 16** Loses second to Rosberg again as they converge with Hamilton following the first round of stops.
- LAPS 17-31** Falls away from Rosberg at a rate of 0.2s per lap before his second stop, including running wide at the end of the back straight.
- LAP 35** Runs off the track at Turn 14 under pressure from Rosberg, damages his front wing and has to pit for a replacement.
- LAP 43** Closes up to within DRS range of Bottas.
- LAPS 44-57** Struggles for traction and cannot find a way past the Williams, almost rear-ending it at Turn 1.



Button suffers reliability nightmare

Jenson Button failed to start the Bahrain Grand Prix after the McLaren-Honda team discovered an electrical fault with his car's energy-recovery system while warming up the engine in the garage.

The 2009 world champion stopped on track in both Friday practice sessions and the start of qualifying, and was unable to leave the garage to take to the grid for the race. But McLaren racing director Eric Boullier is confident these troubles are not indicative of a fundamental problem.

"Yes, we missed qualifying and we could not race because the car couldn't be ready, so this in itself is dramatic, but there is no dramatic reason behind it," Boullier told AUTOSPORT. "I think it was related to the fact that we started with mileage on some

components and we suffered some glitches here and there. But it's nothing serious, just small problems that forced us to stop the car."

Honda motorsport chief Yasuhisa Arai admitted he was not certain of the root cause of the problem that prevented Button from racing.

"We don't know what happened with Jenson's car, but it was an electrical issue," said Arai. "I don't know if it is the same situation or not as in P1 [free practice one], but suddenly the electrical power shut down."

"After the warm-up in the garage before the grid, we had some fluctuating data on the electronic control unit and we finally decided we could not race."



Button had several car shutdowns



Alonso display boosts McLaren

Fernando Alonso came within four seconds of making the top 10 when he finished 11th in the Bahrain Grand Prix, his best result since rejoining McLaren. He started 14th – McLaren-Honda's best qualifying result of the season so far – and managed to forge ahead of Nico Hulkenberg's Force India and the two Saubers of Marcus Ericsson and Felipe Nasr (which both encountered problems) in the race.

McLaren racing director Eric Boullier said Alonso's competitive performance in the midfield was an encouraging sign of progress for the team.

"It looks like our relative race performance is better than our qualifying performance," he said. "There is some progress and the same engine has finished another race in a row, which is rewarding the reliability package introduced [last time out] in China."

Q&A

FERNANDO ALONSO

FINISHED JUST OUTSIDE POINTS



You finished just out of the points - was that a good result for the team?

It is good for us to get more experience and to finish the race with one car. Sadly with Jenson we could not get him to start the race, but it was important for us to do as many laps as possible and get the experience. Now we have three weeks at home to prepare and increase the performance and the reliability, because we know it's not good enough and we proved this weekend there is a lot of hard work to be done.

You're now getting into Q2, were top 10 in Q1, competitive on race pace... How different is the atmosphere in the team now?

It [performance] is going up and all the team is united. It is easy to panic in these tough moments and stress, but it's the opposite: it's creating a huge motivation in everybody. Hopefully we can use it in a good manner and in Barcelona see the first step. Also, the power effect is low in Monaco so we could have a good race there, so I think the next two to three races are going to be interesting for us.

Is the car feeling better each weekend?

It is feeling better. In this race we were competitive. We finished ahead of Sauber; we were fighting with Toro Rosso, with Red Bull. Definitely a step forward.

STORIES OF THE RACE



Ricciardo reaches seasonal engine limit

Daniel Ricciardo will have to use his fourth and final allocated engine in Spain next month, following his last-gasp failure in the Bahrain Grand Prix.

The Australian's engine blew as he was heading towards the chequered flag, but while it did not cost him his sixth-place finish, it means he will have to use his fourth internal combustion engine at Barcelona.

Ricciardo lost one V6 engine in Friday practice in Australia and swapped to his third as a precaution in China. Red Bull team principal Christian Horner confirmed Ricciardo will move onto the fourth in Spain.

"It failed 200 metres before the finish, but thankfully we had enough momentum to coast over the line," Horner said. "I think that engine will be a coffee table in the future – that's three out of four now for Daniel. He'll be on engine four in Barcelona."

Horner also said he was not too worried, provided the failure wasn't the result of a new weakness. Ricciardo's engine situation will be improved when the agreement to allow each driver to have a fifth engine is officially rubber-stamped. Even with a fifth V6, though, Red Bull will almost inevitably face penalties later in the year.

All the [post-race] fireworks went off and the engine obviously wanted to join in...



Red Bull boss Christian Horner

26



Perez stars with eighth-place finish

Sergio Perez produced a fine drive to finish eighth in the Bahrain Grand Prix, allowing Force India to close to within a point of Toro Rosso and stay within range of Lotus in the lower echelons of the constructors' championship.

Perez started 11th, but benefited from difficulties for Felipe Massa's Williams, Carlos Sainz Jr's Toro Rosso, and his Force India team-mate Nico Hulkenberg to climb into the top eight. He was quick enough and kind enough on his tyres to remain out of reach of Daniil Kvyat's Red Bull.

"It was a good solid performance from Checo," said deputy team principal Bob Fernley. "It helps us heading into the European season. Four races in and we're still in very good shape.

"If you'd offered me this before Australia I'd have snapped your hand off!"

Toro Rosso drivers rue double retirement

Both Toro Rosso drivers failed to finish the Bahrain Grand Prix, meaning the team's record stands at just 50 per cent over the first four races of 2015.

Max Verstappen retired to the pits on lap 35 after struggling with a suspected electrical problem that forced him to run his Renault engine in "safe mode", while team-mate Carlos Sainz Jr had to stop his car on-track shortly after his second pitstop on lap 29.

The result means STR has now slipped to seventh in the constructors' table, level on points with Lotus and just one point clear of Force India.

"It looks like at the pitstop the front left was not attached, so I had to stop," explained Sainz, who

also earned a five-second penalty for taking too long to reach the grid while attempting to save fuel.

"Very disappointing. We are losing a lot of time on the straights with the lack of power we have, and we didn't find the right balance for the race, which is a surprise. In the race we should be a bit better, but it never came together and we were just not quick enough. We need to analyse why."

Verstappen said his problems meant he was a "sitting duck" before being forced to retire.

"I couldn't find the right balance for me in the car, but already from the beginning I was having to save everything and had no power," he explained.



DRAWING BOARD

by Craig Scarborough



RED BULL MAKES TINY WING TWEAK

Red Bull continued to run its China-spec front wing – with its more outswep design – but the wing’s endplates gained a small flick to further refine the airflow as it passes outboard of the front tyres.

TORO ROSSO GOES BIG ON COOLING

Teams have a number of bodywork configurations to suit different climates. To cope with the heat of Bahrain and to aid the reliability of the Renault power unit, Toro Rosso ran the biggest sidepod outlets at its disposal. These take the form of large additional outlets flanking

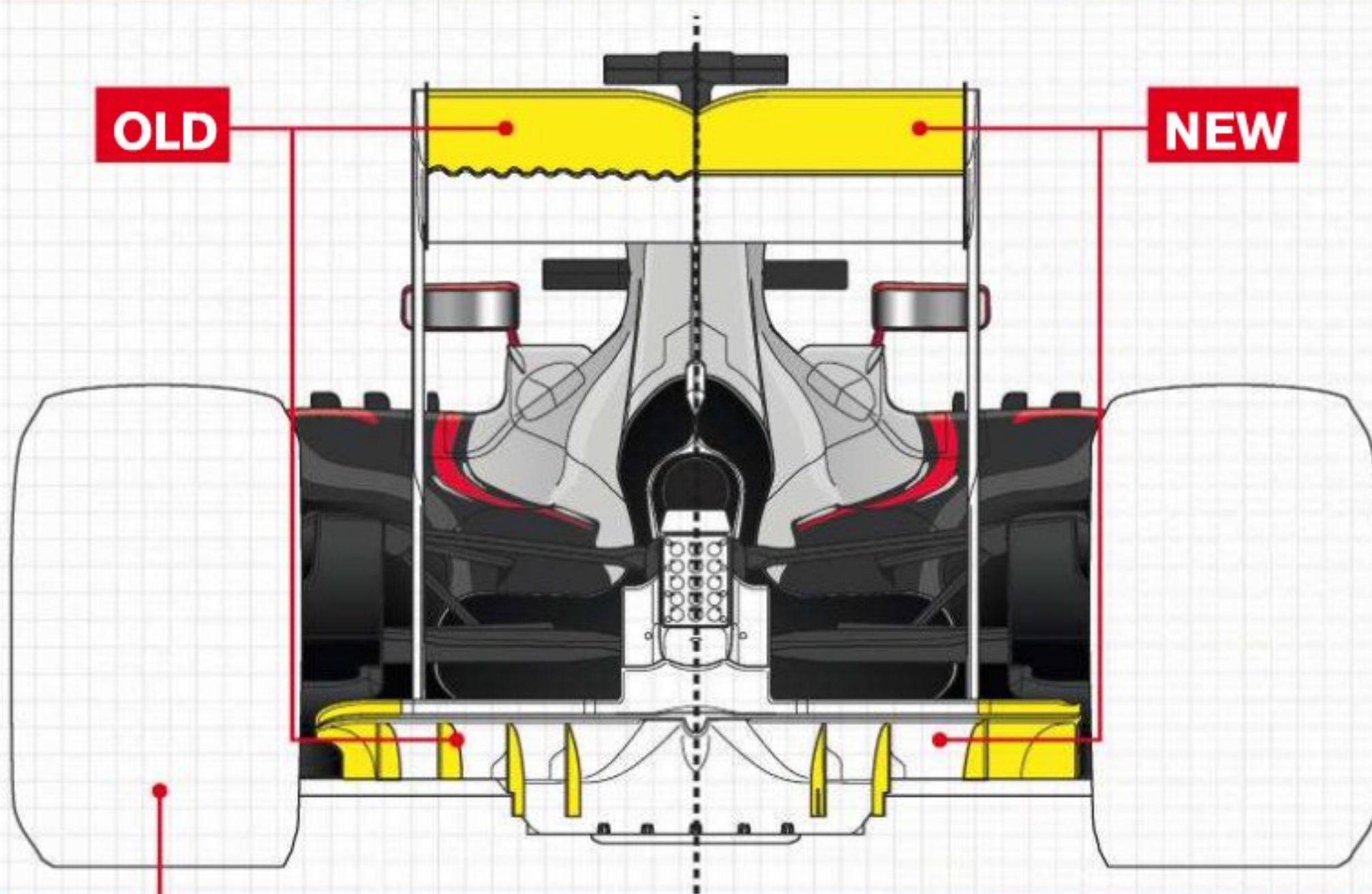
the sidepods and ending before the rear suspension. To increase the cooling area without compromising airflow to the rear of the car, the outlets are tall and narrow, forming a figure-of-eight profile. The panel is pinched in the middle and curls neatly into the old sidepod shape.



XPB IMAGES

OLD

NEW



VETTEL'S FRONT WING PROBLEM EXPLAINED

Sebastian Vettel's race was compromised when he was required to make an extra pitstop to replace a broken front wing. At the pitstop the front-left wing flap had flattened to near-horizontal, probably because the front wing flap mounting was broken. The white wing flaps are mounted by two pivots at their leading edge, and by the wing adjustment mechanism on its trailing edge. It's this adjuster mechanism that appears to have failed. Either the threaded adjuster or its joint to the flap broke, allowing the flap to fall down, causing a massive loss of downforce.

McLAREN CONTINUES AERO PUSH

McLaren continue to push as hard with chassis development, alongside ongoing engine work.

In Bahrain there was new rear wing, and the team continued to use a new diffuser that was introduced in China.

In Germany last year, McLaren added an innovative rear wing with a wavy edge to the flap element. This was intended to improve the speed of the reattachment of the airflow after DRS is used, giving the drivers more confidence the downforce will be generated before they start braking. McLaren has now dropped this for a more conventional design. The rear wing now has a simple straight edge to the flap and main plane. It would appear that McLaren has found a way to make the airflow reattach without

resorting to the complex shaping used before.

Beneath the wing, the team has an alternative diffuser, first run on Button's car in China. Already the MP4-30's diffuser was an aggressive outwash design, where the diffuser expands laterally as well as upwards to increase its expansion ratio to accelerate more air under the car for more downforce.

Whereas the old diffuser had a rounded cutout where the diffuser exits sideways behind the rear tyre, the new setup makes the diffuser turn sideways, maximising the potential space available for expansion.

In creating this new outer shape, the number of fences inside the diffuser has been reduced to just three.



XPB IMAGES


DRIVER RATINGS

MERCEDES



NICO ROSBERG 
Studied video of his 2014 loss here in an effort to avenge defeat, but it's his qualifying performances that need work. Looked decent in practice, but "mismanaged" qualifying strategy and ended up third on the grid. Forged ahead of both Ferraris after slipping to fourth on lap one, but lost second to Raikkonen when his brake-by-wire system failed with a lap to go.



LEWIS HAMILTON 
Nothing seems capable of derailing Hamilton's locomotive at present. Crushed the field again in qualifying, taking pole by over four tenths of a second. From there the race was his to control and he did so with his customary aplomb. Brake-by-wire failure on the final lap was a scare, but he had already done enough to keep Raikkonen out of reach.

RED BULL




DANIEL RICCIARDO 
Admitted Red Bull has been struggling to set the RB11 up correctly, but fortunes improved here. Should have outqualified Massa's Williams, but overdid things at Turn 6 on his second run in Q3 and ended up pipped into seventh. Drove a quiet but fine race to sixth – probably the maximum. Another engine failure as he crossed the line was his unwelcome reward.



DANIIL KVIAT 
His disappointing start to life at Red Bull continued in Bahrain. Looked a step behind Ricciardo on Friday and lost most of FP3 by beaching his car in the gravel at Turn 4. Problems with his energy store contributed to the first Q1 exit of his F1 career, but he recovered well with a charge up to ninth on Sunday. Desperately needs a clean weekend.

WILLIAMS




FELIPE MASSA 
Williams thinks Massa is driving at his best since his narrow title defeat to Lewis Hamilton in 2008, but he wasn't quite at that level here. Not happy with the balance of his FW37 on Friday, but recovered and should have qualified just behind Bottas but for a crucial error on his final Q3 lap. Did well to score a point with a damaged car after a sensor problem forced a pitlane start.




VALTTERI BOTTAS 
The team made significant progress in understanding how to work the soft tyre, which made Williams more competitive here. Bottas was also finally free of back pain, which helped. He was mighty in the final sector as he came within 0.154s of outqualifying a Ferrari. Managed to finish ahead of one in the race thanks to Vettel's woes. A fine weekend's work.

McLAREN

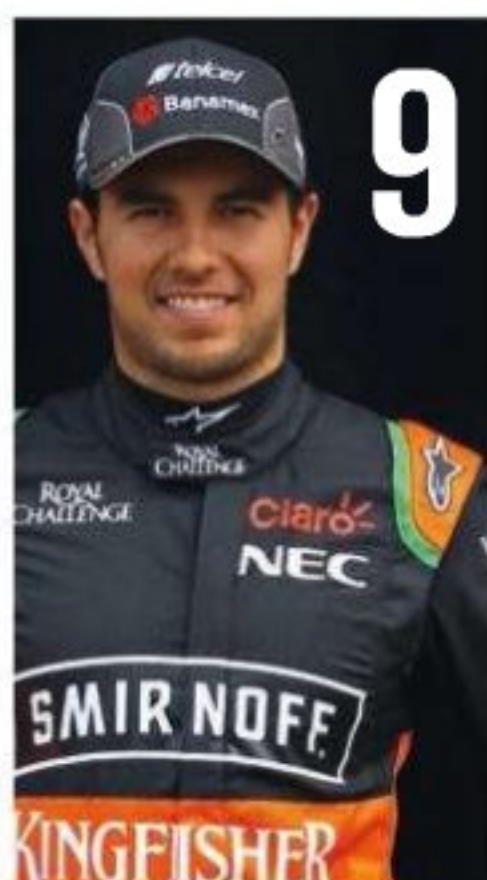



FERNANDO ALONSO 
Alonso's record at the Sakhir circuit is superb and he looked in excellent form through a trouble-free build-up. Made it to Q2 for the first time this year by going an excellent ninth fastest in Q1, and but for a slightly off-song engine he would have made Q3. Came within four seconds of scoring McLaren's first point of the season. Couldn't have done much more, really.



JENSON BUTTON 
Suffered the brunt of McLaren's reliability problems, as separate electrical problems (with a fuse, a sensor and a wiring loom) caused his car to shut down three times in four sessions, including at the start of qualifying. More electrical problems were discovered in the garage before the start, meaning the team had to withdraw Button. Therefore we've not graded him.

FORCE INDIA

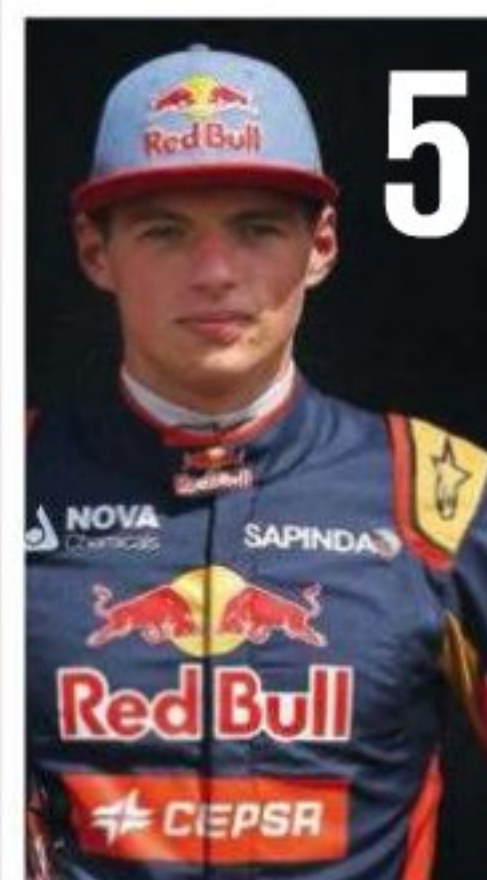



SERGIO PEREZ 
Was involved in a collision with Vettel in practice, but the stewards reprimanded neither driver. Did well to be faster than Hulkenberg in Q1 but just missed out on making the top-10 shootout, as Force India had its most competitive Saturday so far in 2015. Drove a superb race, passing incisively and managing his tyres effectively to score the best result possible.

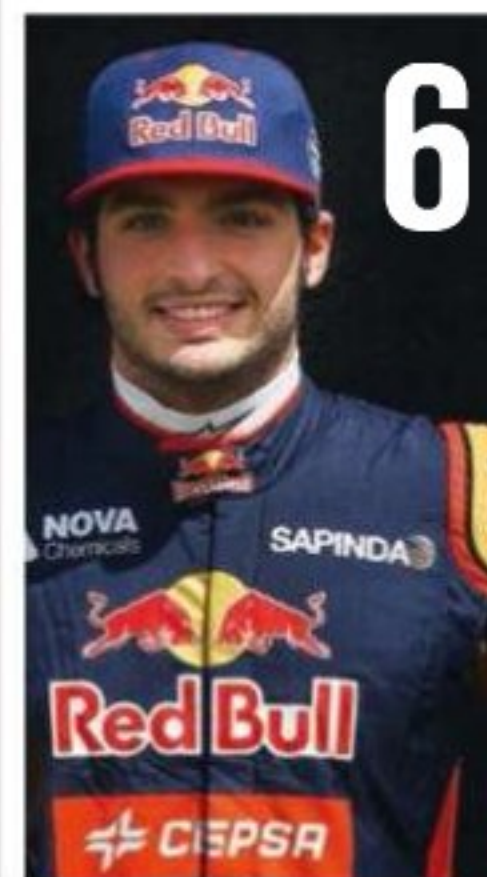



NICO HULKENBERG 
Reckons Force India is simply in survival mode until the B-spec VJM08 arrives, but the current car looked markedly more competitive at this circuit than at any other point so far this season. Qualified a heroic eighth with a mighty performance on Saturday, but fell away in the race as he struggled for grip, and to make his tyres last. Team suspects the car was not quite right.

TORO ROSSO



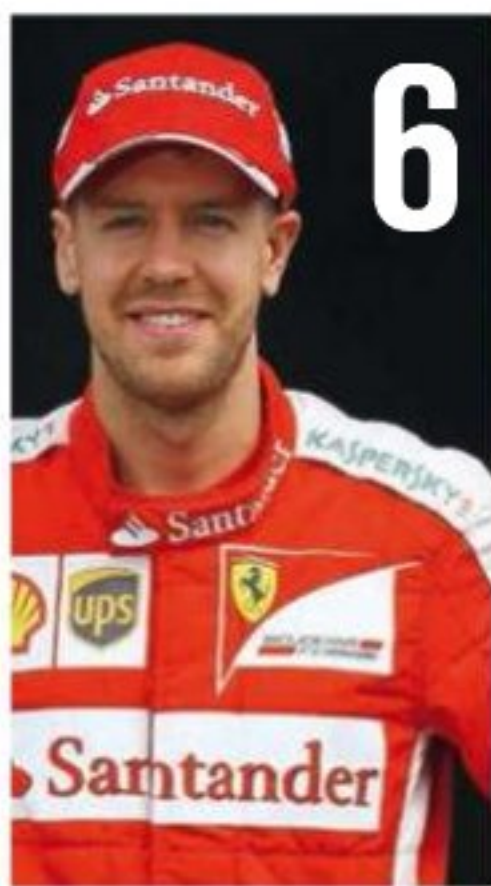
MAX VERSTAPPEN 
Didn't cope nearly as well with the understeer required to get the Toro Rosso working at this circuit and ended up a disappointing 15th in qualifying, almost half a second adrift of his team-mate in Q2. Couldn't make progress in the race, as suspected electrical problems forced him to run with reduced power. Had to stop for fear of losing the engine.



CARLOS SAINZ JR 
Both Toro Rosso drivers struggled here, but Sainz adapted better to the understeer dialled in to the STR10 for qualifying. His confidence grew through the sessions and he did superbly to make the top 10. Should still have been one place higher on the grid but for a small mistake at Turn 11. Was bafflingly uncompetitive in the race until a loose wheel forced him out.

BEN ANDERSON reviews and rates each driver's grand prix weekend performance out of 10

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL Expected Ferrari to be closer to Mercedes than in China and was proved correct. Rosberg's underperformance in qualifying allowed Vettel to split the Mercs, the 0.4s gap to Hamilton about the most you can expect from a Ferrari at the moment. Couldn't find his rhythm in the race and broke his front wing by going off battling Rosberg, which meant an extra stop.



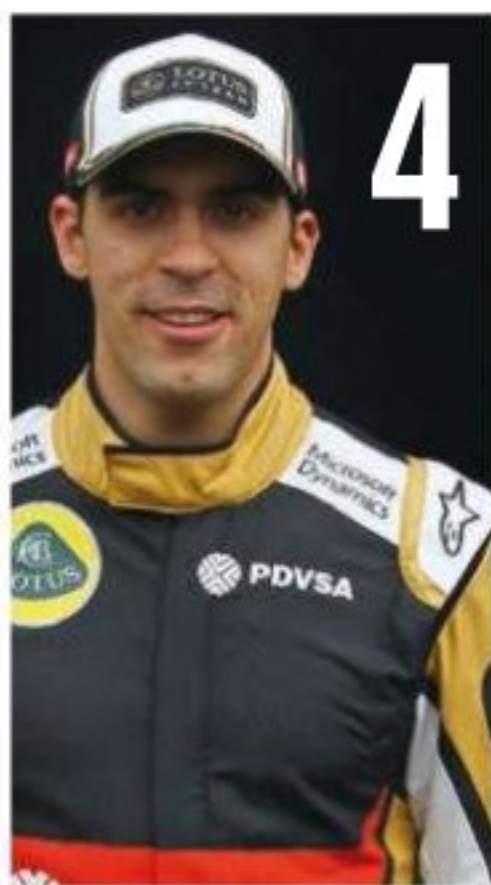
KIMI RAIKKONEN Was pleased to execute his first "clean" race of 2015 in China and followed that up with a brilliant effort in Bahrain. Below par in qualifying, admitting he "could have pushed more". From his best grid slot since the 2013 German GP, he scored his first podium since returning to Ferrari. A tyre-management masterclass that almost netted victory.



LOTUS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN Missed FP1 so Jolyon Palmer could drive, and wasn't entirely happy with the balance of his car thereafter. Was seventh fastest in Q2, but disappointingly lost time in Q3 and wound up slowest of the top-10 shootout runners. Made up for that with an excellent start to the race. Struggled a bit with the rear tyres, but seventh was about the best result possible.

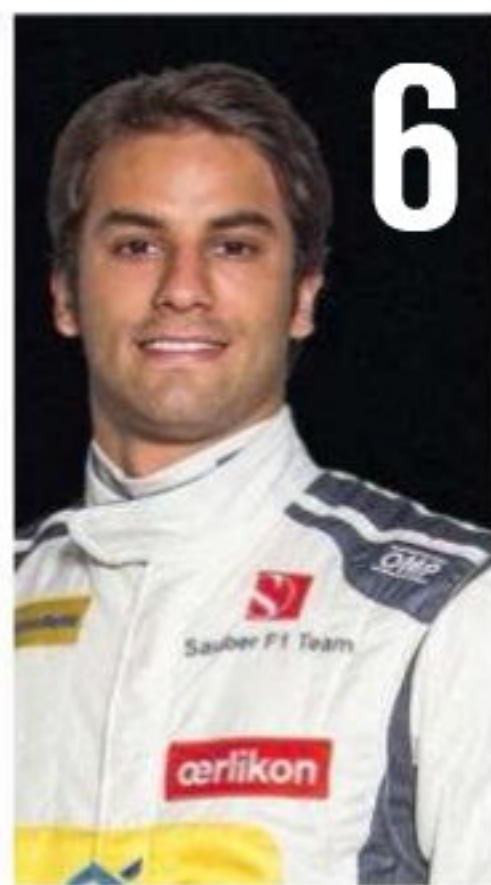


PASTOR MALDONADO Maldonado looked strong again here initially. Then a problem with the car's ERS deployment ruined qualifying and from 16th on the grid he had a poor race, running off-track twice on lap one and making contact with Massa's Williams shortly afterwards. Accidentally switched off his engine at his final visit to the pits, compounding his own misery.

SAUBER



MARCUS ERICSSON Wasn't quite at his team-mate's level through Friday and Saturday, and made a mistake on his fastest qualifying lap so was lucky not to get eclipsed by Alonso's McLaren. Started the race strongly, and was running comfortably in the top 10 until a problem changing the left-front wheel at his second stop. Without that delay he would probably have finished in the points.

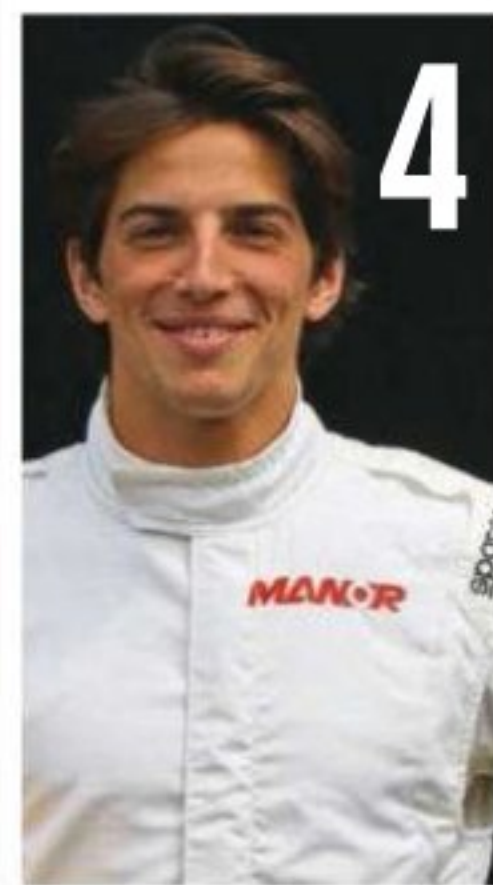


FELIPE NASR Reckons cooler conditions suit Sauber so expected the C34 to get stronger as the race progressed. The car wasn't as competitive in qualifying trim as at recent races, and 12th on the grid was about the maximum given Force India's improved form. Lost ground at Turn 1 after the start and couldn't recover, also losing power temporarily during the race.

MANOR



WILL STEVENS Was again significantly faster than his highly rated team-mate throughout the weekend and qualified over a second clear. Fell behind Merhi at the start but managed to forge back ahead before the end of lap six. From there he was in a race of his own near the back, finishing a lonely 16th. Hard to judge where he's at given Merhi's half-a-second weight disadvantage.



ROBERTO MERHI His driving was spectacular but slow on Friday and he continues to suffer a puzzlingly large deficit to his team-mate, which the team calculates is partly down to a weight disadvantage and partly down to him. Admitted to messing up in qualifying, which exaggerated the difference, but got ahead of Stevens at the start of the race. That was as good as it got.

RESULTS



PRACTICE 1: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	RAIKKONEN	1m37.827s
2	VETTEL	1m38.029s
3	BOTTAS	1m38.390s
4	SAINZ	1m38.447s
5	RICCIARDO	1m38.455s
6	VERSTAPPEN	1m38.504s
7	ALONSO	1m38.598s
8	NASR	1m38.628s
9	KVYAT	1m38.661s
10	MASSA	1m38.790s
11	PEREZ	1m38.793s
12	MALDONADO	1m38.842s
13	HULKENBERG	1m39.187s
14	PALMER	1m39.283s
15	ROSBERG	1m39.293s
16	HAMILTON	1m39.532s
17	ERICSSON	1m39.534s
18	STEVENS	1m42.973s
19	MERHI	1m44.265s
20	BUTTON	no time

Weather: 35C, sunny



PRACTICE 2: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ROSBERG	1m34.647s
2	HAMILTON	1m34.762s
3	RAIKKONEN	1m35.174s
4	VETTEL	1m35.277s
5	BOTTAS	1m35.280s
6	RICCIARDO	1m35.449s
7	MALDONADO	1m35.474s
8	NASR	1m35.793s
9	KVYAT	1m35.883s
10	MASSA	1m35.884s
11	ERICSSON	1m36.148s
12	ALONSO	1m36.191s
13	GROSJEAN	1m36.334s
14	SAINZ	1m36.471s
15	HULKENBERG	1m36.805s
16	VERSTAPPEN	1m36.917s
17	PEREZ	1m37.062s
18	STEVENS	1m39.131s
19	BUTTON	1m39.209s
20	MERHI	1m40.592s

Weather: 30C, clear



PRACTICE 3: Saturday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	HAMILTON	1m34.599s
2	VETTEL	1m34.668s
3	ROSBERG	1m34.968s
4	RAIKKONEN	1m35.141s
5	BOTTAS	1m35.393s
6	MASSA	1m35.471s
7	MALDONADO	1m36.307s
8	RICCIARDO	1m36.335s
9	HULKENBERG	1m36.421s
10	NASR	1m36.429s
11	BUTTON	1m36.488s
12	KVYAT	1m36.548s
13	ERICSSON	1m36.612s
14	VERSTAPPEN	1m36.684s
15	PEREZ	1m36.727s
16	ALONSO	1m36.899s
17	SAINZ	1m36.979s
18	GROSJEAN	1m37.151s
19	STEVENS	1m39.745s
20	MERHI	1m40.541s

Weather: 28C, sunny



FRIDAY TESTERS

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	PALMER	1m39.283s



QUALIFYING TIMES

POS	DRIVER	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2	QUALIFYING 3
1	HAMILTON	1m33.928s (1)	1m32.669s (1)	1m32.571s
2	VETTEL	1m34.919s (7)	1m33.623s (4)	1m32.982s
3	ROSBERG	1m34.398s (3)	1m33.878s (5)	1m33.129s
4	RAIKKONEN	1m34.568s (5)	1m33.540s (2)	1m33.227s
5	BOTTAS	1m34.161s (2)	1m33.897s (6)	1m33.381s
6	MASSA	1m34.488s (4)	1m33.551s (3)	1m33.744s
7	RICCIARDO	1m34.691s (6)	1m34.403s (8)	1m33.832s
8	HULKENBERG	1m35.653s (15)	1m34.613s (9)	1m34.450s
9	SAINZ	1m35.371s (11)	1m34.641s (10)	1m34.462s
10	GROSJEAN	1m35.007s (8)	1m34.123s (7)	1m34.484s
11	PEREZ	1m35.451s (13)	1m34.704s	-
12	NASR	1m35.310s (10)	1m34.737s	-
13	ERICSSON	1m35.438s (12)	1m35.034s	-
14	ALONSO	1m35.205s (9)	1m35.039s	-
15	VERSTAPPEN	1m35.611s (14)	1m35.103s	-
16	MALDONADO	1m35.677s	-	-
17	KVYAT	1m35.800s	-	-
18	STEVENS	1m38.713s	-	-
19	MERHI	1m39.722s	-	-
20	BUTTON	-	-	-

Weather: 25C, clear

QUALIFYING STATISTICS

	HEAD TO HEAD	
ROSBERG	0	4 HAMILTON
RICCIARDO	4	0 KVYAT
MASSA	3	1 BOTTAS
VETTEL	4	0 RAIKKONEN
ALONSO/MAGNUSSEN	0	3 BUTTON
PEREZ	1	3 HULKENBERG
SAINZ	2	2 VERSTAPPEN
GROSJEAN	4	0 MALDONADO
ERICSSON	1	3 NASR
STEVENS	2	0 MERHI



Leave Seb alone; he knows what he's doing

POLE POSITION TROPHY

HAMILTON	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	TOTAL
				4	4



RACE: 57 LAPS - 191.530 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	LAPS	TOTAL TIME	FASTEST LAP	PITSTOPS	TIME IN PITS	GRID
1	LEWIS HAMILTON	MERCEDES	57	1h35m05.809s	1m37.857s	2	50.319s	1
2	KIMI RAIKKONEN	FERRARI	57	+3.380s	1m36.311s	2	49.320s	4
3	NICO ROSBERG	MERCEDES	57	+6.033s	1m37.326s	2	50.729s	3
4	VALTTERI BOTTAS	WILLIAMS-MERCEDES	57	+42.957s	1m38.095s	2	49.916s	5
5	SEBASTIAN VETTEL	FERRARI	57	+43.989s	1m36.624s	3	1m22.879s	2
6	DANIEL RICCIARDO	RED BULL-RENAULT	57	+1m01.751s	1m38.948s	2	50.666s	7
7	ROMAIN GROSJEAN	LOTUS-MERCEDES	57	+1m24.763s	1m39.161s	2	49.994s	10
8	SERGIO PEREZ	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	56	-1 lap	1m38.338s	2	50.861s	11
9	DANIIL KVYAT	RED BULL-RENAULT	56	-1 lap	1m38.725s	2	50.113s	17
10	FELIPE MASSA	WILLIAMS-MERCEDES	56	-1 lap	1m39.094s	2	49.911s	6
11	FERNANDO ALONSO	MCLAREN-HONDA	56	-1 lap	1m38.992s	2	50.248s	14
12	FELIPE NASR	SAUBER-FERRARI	56	-1 lap	1m38.216s	3	1m17.567s	12
13	NICO HULKENBERG	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	56	-1 lap	1m38.653s	3	1m16.310s	8
14	MARCUS ERICSSON	SAUBER-FERRARI	56	-1 lap	1m38.422s	3	1m41.249s	13
15	PASTOR MALDONADO	LOTUS-MERCEDES	56	-1 lap	1m37.665s	3	2m42.130s	16
16	WILL STEVENS	MARUSSIA-FERRARI	55	-2 laps	1m41.759s	2	52.582s	18
17	ROBERTO MERHI	MARUSSIA-FERRARI	54	-3 laps	1m42.033s	2	53.407s	19
R	MAX VERSTAPPEN	TORO ROSSO-RENAULT	34	electrical	1m39.607s	2	1m06.563s	15
R	CARLOS SAINZ	TORO ROSSO-RENAULT	29	wheel	1m40.651s	1	59.240s	9
NS	JENSON BUTTON	MCLAREN-HONDA	0	electrical	-	-	-	20

Weather: 26C, clear. Winner's average speed: 120.843mph. Fastest lap: Raikkonen 1m36.311s (125.700mph) on lap 42. Lap leader: 1-15 Hamilton, 16-17 Raikkonen, 18-33 Hamilton, 34 Rosberg, 35-39 Raikkonen, 40-57 Hamilton.

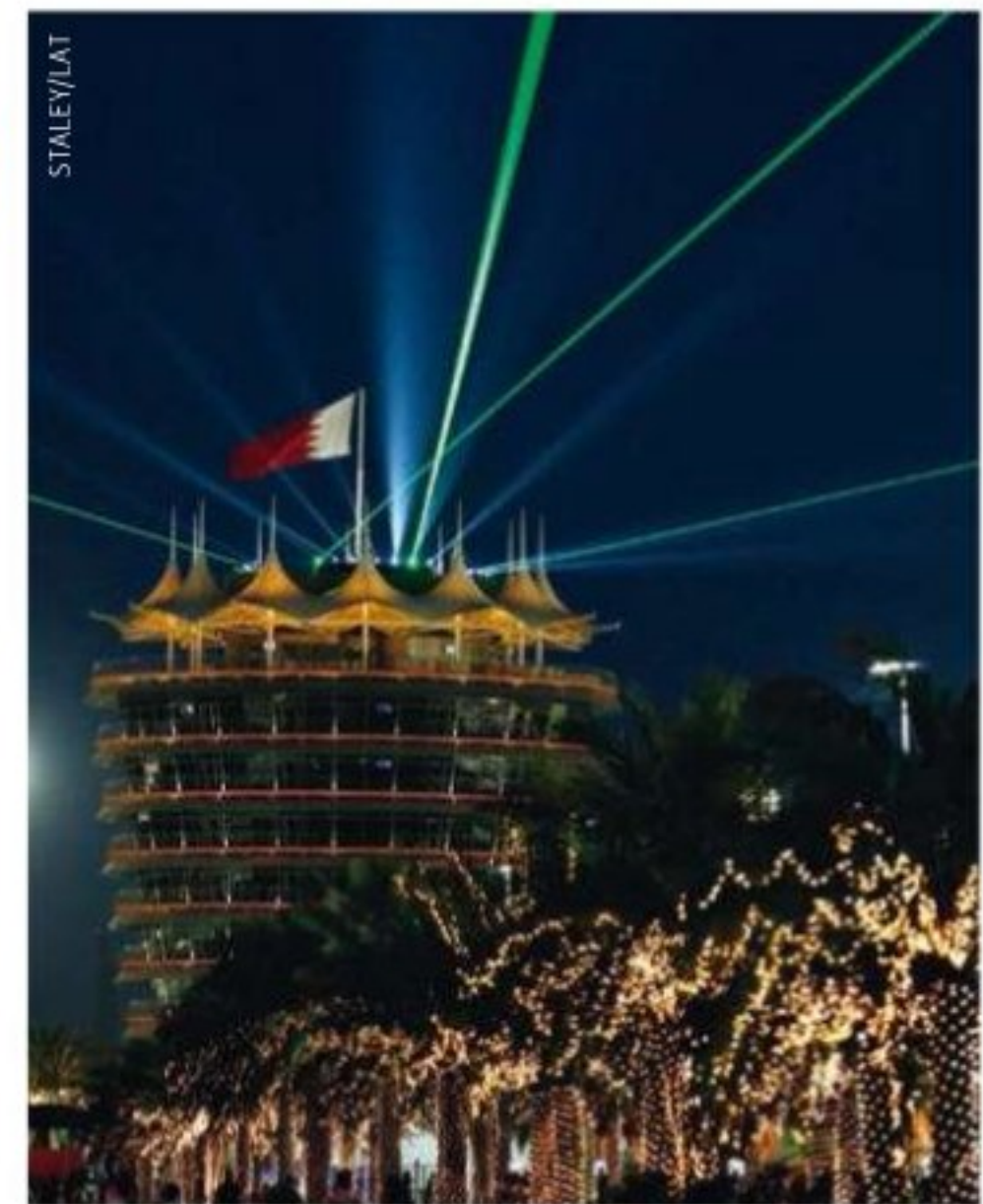
TYRE CHOICE

STINT 1	STINT 2	STINT 3	STINT 4
Soft U	Soft N	Medium N	
Soft U	Medium N	Soft N	
Soft U	Soft N	Medium N	
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Soft U	Soft N	Medium N	
Soft U	Soft N	Medium N	
Soft U	Medium N	Soft N	
Soft U	Soft N	Soft U	Medium N
Soft U	Soft U	Medium N	Medium N
Soft U	Soft N	Soft U	Medium N
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Soft N	Soft N	Medium N	
Soft N	Medium N	Soft U	
Soft U	Medium N		

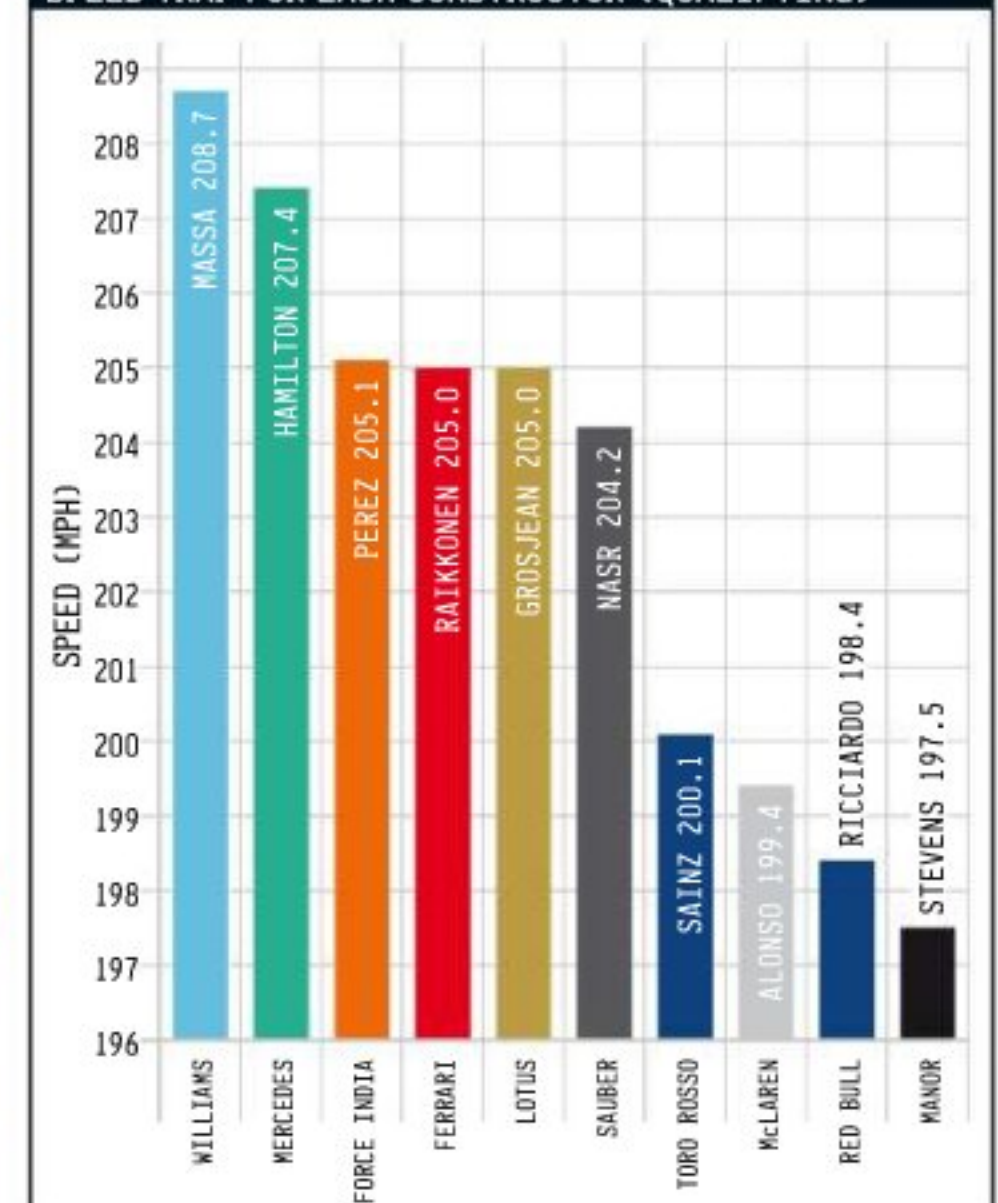
N - new; U - used

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	I	SGP	J	RUS	USA	MEX	BR	UAE	
1	HAMILTON	93	1st	2nd	1st	1st	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	ROSBERG	66	2nd	3rd	2nd	3rd	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	VETTEL	65	3rd	1st	3rd	5th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	RAIKKONEN	42	ret	4th	4th	2nd	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	MASSA	31	4th	6th	5th	10th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	BOTTAS	30	NS	5th	6th	4th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	RICCIARDO	19	6th	10th	9th	6th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	NASR	14	5th	12th	8th	12th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	GROSJEAN	12	ret	11th	7th	7th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	HULKENBERG	6	7th	14th	ret	13th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	VERSTAPPEN	6	ret	7th	17th	ret	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	SAINZ	6	9th	8th	13th	ret	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	PEREZ	5	10th	13th	11th	8th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	ERICSSON	5	8th	ret	10th	14th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	KVYAT	4	NS	9th	ret	9th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	ALONSO	0	-	ret	12th	11th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	BUTTON	0	11th	ret	14th	NS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	MERHI	0	NS	15th	16th	17th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	STEVENS	0	NS	NS	15th	16th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	MALDONADO	0	ret	ret	ret	15th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	MAGNUSSEN	0	NS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



SPEED TRAP FOR EACH CONSTRUCTOR (QUALIFYING)



Drivers are expected to respect anthems



Merc garage was an attention magnet

CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	I	SGP	J	RUS	USA	MEX	BR	UAE	
1	MERCEDES	159	43	33	43	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	FERRARI	107	15	37	27	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	WILLIAMS	61	12	18	18	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	RED BULL	23	8	3	2	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	SAUBER	19	14	0	5	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	LOTUS	12	0	0	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	TORO ROSSO	12	2	10	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	FORCE INDIA	11	7	0	0	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	MCLAREN	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	MARUSSIA	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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Can anyone stop Hamilton?

Lewis Hamilton has enjoyed the most successful run of his grand prix career during the past eight months. **LAWRENCE BARRETTO** examines how the world champion has hit top form



32

Lewis Hamilton declared that Mercedes' performance proved it is "still the best" after he won the Bahrain Grand Prix. But it was his own performance on-track in Bahrain, one that extends a phenomenal run of wins to nine in the past 11 races, that will have made a big impact on the mindset of his rivals.

The reigning world champion was in complete control throughout the race and calmly nursed the car home in the final two laps when brake problems struck. He now heads into the three-week break before the start of the European season with more than a race victory's worth of points over team-mate Nico Rosberg, his closest challenger.

It could not be any more different to this point last season, when Hamilton spent the Malaysian, Bahrain and Chinese GPs scrambling to recover the 25 points lost to Rosberg in the season opener after an engine problem put him out in Melbourne. This year, everything has been much more comfortable, the Briton seemingly benefiting from the confidence of finally winning his second title.

"I think he won the first championship [in 2008] as a boy and

this second championship as a man," says ex-Formula 1 driver-turned-TV commentator Martin Brundle. "I think it now means a lot more to him; he understands it. I think he just expected to win titles in the beginning; now he understands what it really means. That second title helps a lot; he needed it because he had a couple of near misses."

Hamilton has made no secret of the fact that Ayrton Senna is his idol, so matching the Brazilian's tally of three titles remains a target. But equally, Hamilton will not want to hang around in F1 forever as he has an eye on building his brand outside the sport – possibly pursuing a career in music – having previously worked with Simon Fuller, the man behind the success of footballer David Beckham's global 'Brand Beckham'. He wants to get on with it, especially while he has a car that is the class of the field.

One area in which Hamilton has improved significantly this year is in qualifying. In 2014, the Briton struggled to get a lap together on a consistent basis, while this year he has nailed it every time to take pole. Across the four qualifying sessions so far, he has been on average 0.415s quicker than his team-mate.



Hamilton made it three from four in 2015 with Bahrain GP victory

Pole position has allowed him to dictate the race, secure the better strategy compared with Rosberg and thus become very difficult to beat. Even in Malaysia, when Mercedes did not have the pace to win, Hamilton was able to secure second place, crucially ahead of Rosberg.

In China, when Mercedes was concerned about tyre life following the defeat in Malaysia, Hamilton used his position at the head of the field to manage his tyres and the pace, pushing only when he needed to, while Rosberg found himself under threat from the chasing

Ferrari of Sebastian Vettel.

That kind of form has proved particularly damaging to Rosberg, Hamilton's closest title rival for now, who is becoming increasingly frustrated with his failure to get on level terms with Hamilton in either qualifying or the race, while also having the hassle of Ferrari drivers Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen sticking their heads into the mix.

As a result, Hamilton is already carving himself out as Mercedes' best shot at the world title. With Rosberg's form having dipped and



THOMPSON/GETTY



COATES/LAT

HAMILTON VERSUS ROSBERG

In the races since the infamous collision with Nico Rosberg in last August's Belgian Grand Prix, Lewis Hamilton has been close to unbeatable. So how dominant has he been?

POINTS

Hamilton has won nine of the past 11 grands prix, finishing second in the other two. That means he has scored 286 out of a theoretical maximum of 300 points. By contrast, Rosberg has scored just 163.

MAX POINTS 300

HAM 286



ROS 163



QUALIFYING

Last year, qualifying was a relative weakness for Hamilton. Rosberg outqualified him 12 times, but the form has reversed this year. Hamilton has claimed all four pole positions in 2015. Only once has Hamilton been genuinely pushed by his team-mate in Q3, which happened in China when the gap was just 0.042s. Overall, the average gap has been 0.415s.

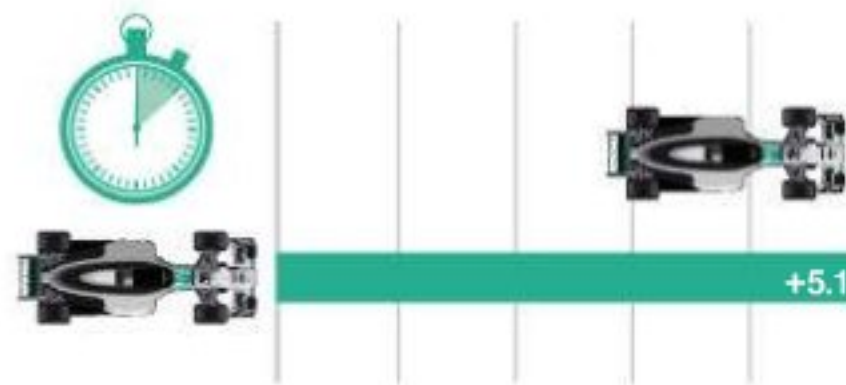
2014

2015



RACES

On average, Hamilton has beaten Rosberg by 5.1s in each grand prix this year. But that figure is skewed by the safety-car finish in the Chinese GP.



RECORDS

During the years of dominance by Sebastian Vettel, Hamilton was frustrated by not having the machinery to match his rival's success rate. But his recent run means that he has 36 grand prix wins, just four fewer than Vettel. In terms of pole positions, Hamilton now has 42, only three fewer than Vettel.



WINS
36
42
POLES

WINS
40
45
POLES



“Like always in life, it needs to be a win-win situation and at the moment it is”

MERCEDES BOSS TOTO WOLFF



XPB IMAGES

the Ferrari threat increasing, as well as a chance that there may be a seat free at Ferrari next season as the Scuderia has yet to take up an option on Raikkonen (see page 6), the reigning world champion's bargaining power is increasing.

“Of course, Lewis is a factor and an exceptional guy in the car,” said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff when asked if keeping Hamilton at Mercedes is critical. “I think like always in life it needs to be a win-win situation, and at the moment it is a win-win situation.”

“We have a very quick guy in the car and we have a very quick car. We have a solid foundation in the team; we have built an organisation which can be successful on a sustainable basis long-term. With Ferrari bouncing back very strongly, it's a win-win.”

Hamilton is in the form of his life, oozing confidence, has the psychological advantage over his team-mate and closest rivals and is seemingly in control of his own destiny with regards to where he chooses to race.

Admittedly, there are still 15 races to go in this title fight, but as it stands the Briton has very few chinks in his armour to exploit. ❧

Skoda keeps its hopes in

The dramatic new Fabia R5 brings Skoda into the fight against rival marques Ford, Peugeot and Citroen in WRC2 but, as **DAVID EVANS** explains, the team isn't getting carried away



The team takes the wraps off the all-new R5-spec Fabia

This was a difficult balance to strike. With typical Eastern European humility, Skoda-shirted folk talked conservatively about their new car. Trouble is, they were doing so while standing in front of one of the most purposeful and quickest-looking motors in rallying history – the Fabia R5.

Esapekka Lappi, the Czech marque's reigning European Rally champion, grinned in the car's direction. "It looks really fast standing still," he said. "Maybe I cannot be fast enough for this car!"

It is this car that M-Sport, Peugeot and Citroen have been waiting for. Eighteen months in development and more than two years in planning, the Fabia is set and ready to give their Fiesta, 208 and DS3 a run for their money.

This is world rallying's second tier, but the R5 category has an ever-increasing relevance, as well as a rapidly developing market around the world. M-Sport is now above 110 in terms of Fiesta R5s built and ordered, and demand for the Peugeot and Citroen is gathering pace in the FIA's regional series.

But the real test for Skoda's all-new Fabia R5 will come in WRC2. Lappi begins his programme at next month's Rally of Portugal and he will contest every one of the remaining European rounds of the World Rally Championship this year. A second car will come from the Mlada Boleslav factory, which will be shared by Jan Kopecky and Pontus Tidemand.

There is no denying the importance of this car to Skoda. It might not be a World Rally Car, but it will certainly spread the word around the globe.

EUROPE DONE, TIME FOR THE WORLD

One of the biggest surprises at the Fabia's launch just north of Prague last week was the team's schedule for the remainder of 2015. Eschewing the European Rally Championship – a Skoda benefit for the past three years – the priority is WRC2, the Czech Republic and Asia-Pacific.

Motorsport director Michal Hrabanek says the programme has been selected in terms of global geographical spread as well as for fronting up to the competition.

"We had to decide what to do," he says. "We will have good competition in WRC2. We think our competitors have an advantage because they have experience from the rallies, but going to the WRC rounds is good for us to gain experience with the car.

"There's also the commercial factor: Portugal, Germany, UK, Italy, Poland and so on – these are good markets for us. Add to that the Czech championship, of course we compete at home, and Asia-Pacific, which is another good market. China, for example, is talked about in terms of returning to the world championship, but I don't expect that in the next couple of years. But



European champ Lappi is excited by car's prospects

Czech



“Going to the WRC rounds is good to gain experience with the car. We will have good competition in WRC2” MICHAL HRABANEK

our investment in APRC means we can show our car in China [at the China Longyou Rally]. It's a smart decision for us, reasonable investment and we can achieve quite nice success in marketing.”

China is expected to be the debut event for the Fabia R5 in APRC, where it will be driven by Tidemand and series regular Gaurav Gill.

WHAT ABOUT A WORLD RALLY CAR?
No chance. According to Hrabanek, rivalry between Volkswagen Group brands within the same series is frowned upon by the top brass, with the exception of Porsche taking on Audi in the World Endurance Championship.

“Competition is more or less not allowed within the group,” says Hrabanek. “You can see in WEC it's possible, but that's a demonstration of two [different] technologies, so it makes sense for Audi and Porsche.

“We are far away from the WRC situation. We have the brand new R5 and we hope to compete over the next few years with this. We know that Volkswagen has confirmed its participation in WRC for the next couple of years. Changes can come unexpectedly, but I don't expect this.”

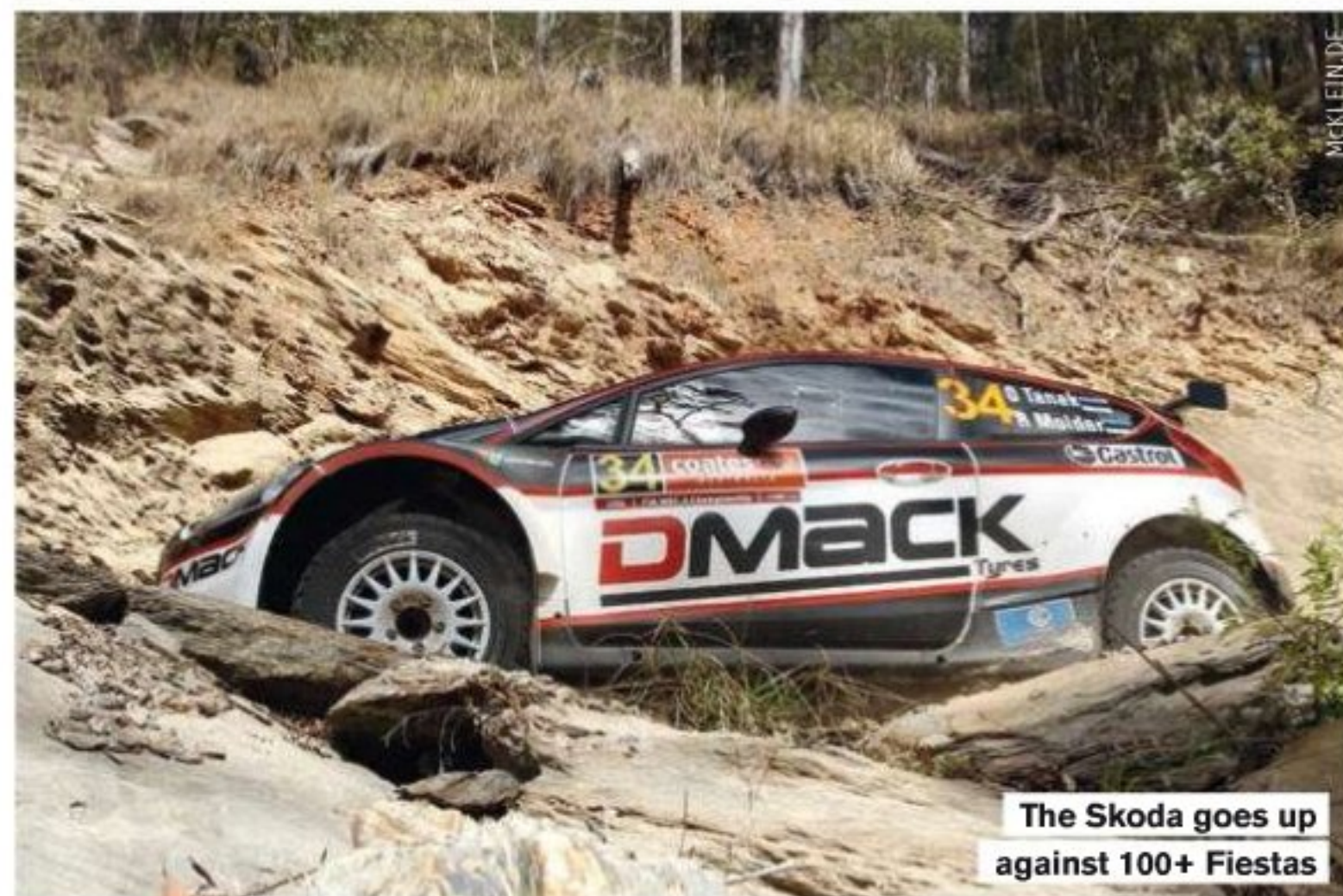


HOW GOOD WILL THE R5 BE?

The R5's predecessor was the benchmark in Super 2000 rallying and there is no reason to believe that this one will not be the same in the R5 class. Skoda has pumped massive research-and-development investment into the car, running more than 6000 miles in testing during the past year.

Lappi is convinced of the car's potential. “It's a good car, why not fight for the title?” says the Finn. “It's definitely better on gravel than on asphalt, but our last car – the S2000 – was so good on Tarmac. This is because we have to use cheaper [standard] parts with the R5 regulations and that affects the car more on Tarmac. But it's a fantastic car. We have been waiting, testing for a year and a half and now we're here. It's time to go.”

Despite no end of back-to-back



tests against the Fabia S2000 and, more than likely, other R5 machinery from competitors, nobody is willing to stick their neck out and give us a prediction.

“I think it will be competitive,” is as out there as Hrabanek is willing to go. “Last year we were surprised there were a lot of customers who preferred to hold the older S2000 from Skoda. This is because they had reliability of the parts and the ability of Skoda to deliver spare parts – they knew they would come to the finish. This is very important to us now – it's a big investment and a lot of money to stop in the first or second stage. That's not good business for the privateer.”

SEEN IN PRIVATE

Skoda makes no bones about the fact that it remains a factory team with a customer programme to

complement it on the side. Chasing the kind of breathtaking numbers M-Sport has achieved with the Fiesta would, it understands, be folly. Instead, it will service an expanding number of domestic importers and loyal customers. Ten orders have been accepted, but only because Skoda does not want to commit itself yet to delivery dates beyond the autumn. Raimund Baumschlager and Freddy Loix are the first expected to take delivery of their cars, with Loix scheduled to run his car on his home event, the ERC-counting Ypres Rally in June.

Fortunately, we will not have to wait long to see how quick the new car is going to be, as Kopecky gives the R5 its competitive debut on this weekend's Rally Sumava Klatovy round of the Czech Rally Championship. ❧

GP2

Bahrain

April 18-19

Round 1/11



Vandoorne kicks off title push

Claiming championship victory is about much more than winning from the front.

EDD STRAW saw Stoffel Vandoorne run through a full repertoire of quality driving

WHEN GP2 TITLE FAVOURITE STOFFEL VANDOORNE, who was happily leading the opening race of the season in Bahrain, saw the safety car boards being shown on the fifth lap, he knew that he had been thrown a curveball. The McLaren protege has been told that he doesn't just have to win GP2 this year, but boss it, and this would be a real test of his credentials.

Having started on the medium-compound Pirellis, Vandoorne knew he must stay out while those who started on the less-durable softs capitalised on the 'free' pitstop. You wouldn't blame the 23-year-old ART Grand Prix driver for cursing Arden International's Norman Nato, who

had triggered the pile-up (which also eliminated Raffaele Marciello, Arthur Pic and Pierre Gasly) that was responsible for the situation.

"There was one window where it was the worst to get the safety car and that was the window we got," said Vandoorne. "To win the race was a huge achievement as, although in the end it proved to be the right strategy, things had to go smoothly and I had to push. I had situations last year when I would already think the race was over, but now every lap I push for the victory. I know every tenth is important."

The safety car split the race in two. The majority started on mediums so stayed out but,

with the shunt eliminating the drivers occupying third through to sixth places, there were some less-familiar names up front on track. Vandoorne led from Campos Racing's Rio Haryanto, with Carlin driver Julian Leal in third. But down in 13th place was the other race, with Racing Engineering man Alexander Rossi the 'virtual' leader having jumped Alex Lynn in the pits. These two races were on a collision course.

Vandoorne's job was simple: pull out as big a lead as possible over the Rossi group. For those who had stopped, it was a question of losing as little time as possible clearing the midfield. After repulsing Haryanto's bid for the lead at Turn 1 at the restart, the Belgian had 12 laps of running to extend his advantage. Last year, it might have been enough, but not in 2015. Why? Because of the introduction of the DRS. This, combined with Rossi's fresher rubber, allowed the American driver to minimise the time lost clearing traffic. Rossi's job was to climb the order quickly – and keep Lynn and Mitch Evans behind him. That he succeeded in doing, assisted by Lynn tapping the rear of his car in traffic at Turn 1 shortly after the restart. This led to damage that, counter-intuitively, cost Lynn rear downforce and condemned him to plummeting to the rear with accelerated tyre degradation.

By the time Vandoorne pitted with 10 laps remaining, Rossi was third and was just 10.5 seconds off the lead. When Vandoorne rejoined,

Leal holds off Evans at sprint-race start

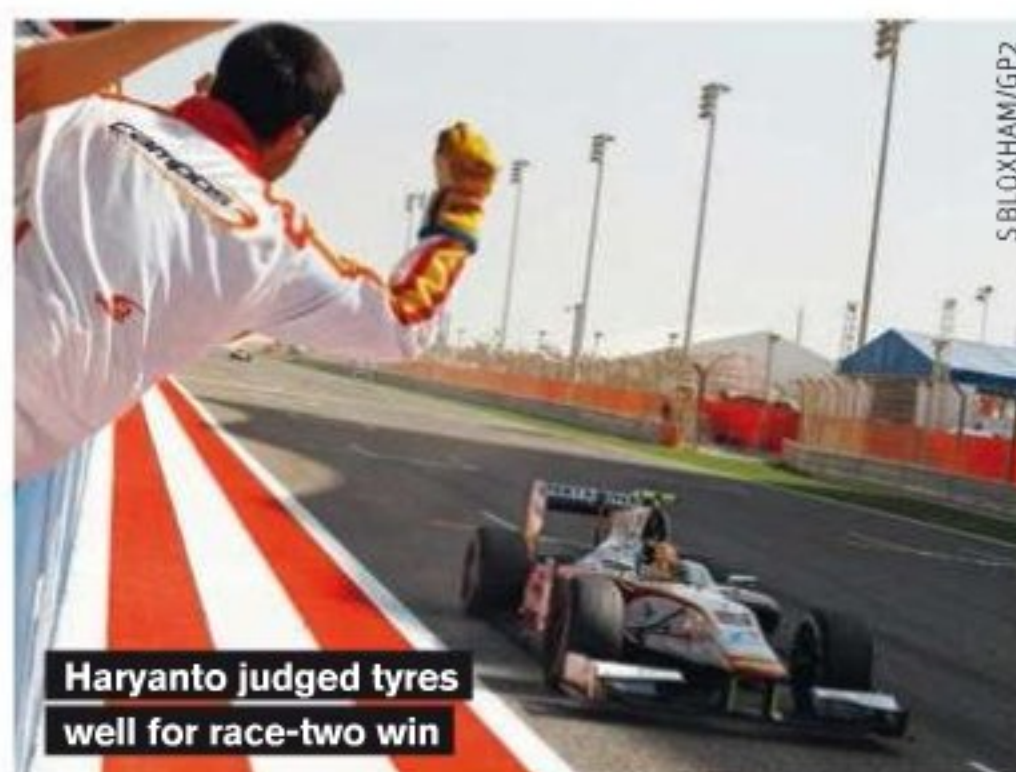




Vandoorne led initial phase of race one



Vandoorne knows he has to 'boss' GP2 this season



Haryanto judged tyres well for race-two win



Alex Lynn (2) qualified third on GP2 debut

“At the end I had to push to overtake, but also make sure that my tyres didn't fall off a cliff”

STOFFEL VANDOORNE

he was 10th and with a deficit of 22.5 seconds to make up. But such was the soft-tyre advantage that Vandoorne made rapid progress. His first flying lap was almost five seconds faster than new leader Rossi, who was battling ageing mediums, and he dispatched traffic with relative ease. With four laps to go, Vandoorne was up to second ahead of impressive rookie Jordan King, whose race had been compromised by having to queue up behind team-mate Rossi during the pitstop.

“I was catching some guys at four-to-five seconds a lap,” said Vandoorne. “At the end, I had to push to overtake, but also make sure that my tyres didn't fall off a cliff. Overtaking looked pretty easy for me, but I still had to fight for it, and when I got into second place Rossi was about

10 seconds ahead. I couldn't even see him and thought that was the maximum possible. But then we caught him at four seconds a lap.”

On the penultimate lap, he passed Rossi through the left-hander at the end of the back straight. His eventual winning margin was five seconds, proving Rossi could have done nothing to keep him behind. But the former leader still had a problem in the shape of Haryanto, who had emulated Vandoorne's climb up the order on his fresh softs and caught him on the final lap. On the run to the final corner, Haryanto managed to get past Rossi.

“I knew that when the prime runners pitted, I had to save the tyres but I also needed to be quick,” said Rossi. “It's a shame to finish third when you are leading in the last two laps. When Lynn was right behind me I was very aware that I needed to get through the traffic quickly so that he didn't have the chance to overtake, so in that period of the race I probably took a bit more out of the tyres than I would have liked to, but it was important to have track position. In hindsight, I should have backed off a little more knowing his tyres would have gone off, but I couldn't know that at the time. Going through the traffic took its toll. I think we could have had second.”

If anything, it was Vandoorne's performance in the sprint race that really impressed. With the whole field on mediums and tyre degradation sure to be a problem, he drove a patient, intelligent

race. While others – including team-mate and Honda protege Nobuharu Matsushita, who climbed to second before fading to sixth – overdid it, Vandoorne took his time. But by the time he had passed Matsushita for second at Turn 1 with seven laps remaining, Haryanto was over three seconds up the road and proved uncatchable thanks to his own canny tyre management as he extended his lead over an often-frenetic battle for second.

Rossi, among the group of drivers with aspirations of emerging as Vandoorne's main title rival, again suffered late disappointment when Nathanael Berthon, who had dropped down the order after a dire start from the front row, but made a late surge to grab third on the last lap.

“We were matching our pace to Vandoorne,” said the frustrated Rossi. “But what we didn't take into consideration was someone else going even slower at the beginning and then coming at the end...”

You could see that as a warning to Vandoorne after his flying start to the season. But based on the way he handled the pressure situation of race one, then rose above the tyre-degradation madness to take second in the sprint race, there might be nobody able to take him by surprise this year. ▶

FOR FULL RESULTS, PAGE 50

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ALEXANDER ROSSI SUMMED UP DRS well. "I love it and hate it because it helped me and it hurt me," he said after being the victim of a late overtaking manoeuvre for the second race in succession. His ambivalence towards the DRS is unusual given that it is usually a Marmite topic.

Some argue that GP2 has no need to spice up the show, given its deserved reputation for dramatic racing. But that's not the reason it has been introduced. GP2 is a category developing drivers for F1 and it's logical that it should seek to train drivers in the skills and technology that they will encounter there.

In the case of the DRS, activating it by pulling a steering-wheel-mounted paddle is not difficult, but drivers are gaining vast experience of how it influences race strategy. As in F1, the chasing driver has to



ROSSI KEEPS THE
DRS OPEN IN BAHRAIN

be within one second at the DRS detection point, so these drivers are now learning how to factor that into their race strategies.

The feature race, influenced so heavily by tyres, was inconclusive. But race two suggested that, with relative tyre parity, using the DRS does make overtaking significantly easier, with a speed advantage

in the vicinity of 12mph. But it will require a few more races on a wider range of circuits before its full impact can be assessed.

Whether it's a good thing depends on your perspective. The tyre degradation and DRS-influenced racing isn't to everyone's taste, but it closely reflects F1. And when you're asking drivers to find seven-figure

sums to contest the championship, there's a need to be as closely aligned with grand prix racing as possible.

Provided, of course, the genuinely fast drivers still prevail. And with the reversed-grid format for race two, the DRS might just make it easier for the quickest to come through on Sundays.

Hilmer sits out opening weekend of season

THE HILMER MOTORSPORT team aims to return to GP2 for the next round at Barcelona in May after missing the Bahrain weekend.

Its absence was a result of failing to find drivers with enough backing to fund a full campaign, having run Sergio

Canamasas (who subsequently joined MP Motorsport), Nick Yelloly and Nigel Melker during pre-season testing.

"There are currently no drivers available that bring a sufficient budget," said team boss Franz Hilmer. "We have been in negotiation with many drivers before the

season, but with none of them were we able to reach an agreement that would have provided our team an adequate budget.

"We are still negotiating with several drivers and we hope that we will start with two cars at the next event."



HILMER AIMS TO
RETURN AT BARCELONA

BIG NUMBER

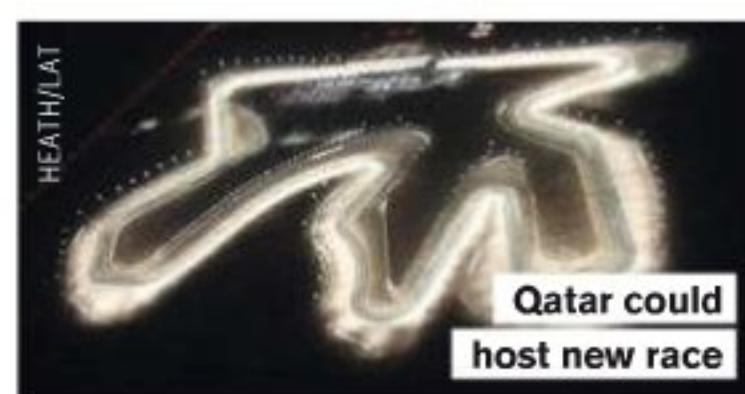
70

Rio Haryanto's maiden victory came in his 70th start, a GP2 record.

GP2 planning extra round

GP2 AND GP3 ORGANISERS PLAN to add an extra round to both series following the recent cancellation of the German Grand Prix.

Series boss Bruno Michel told team principals in Bahrain that he plans to have the replacement round in place in time to inform them at the Barcelona round on May 9-10. AUTOSPORT understands that Qatar, which could run a standalone event before the Abu Dhabi season finale, is the leading contender. But this would be contingent on a deal being struck to cover



QATAR COULD
HOST NEW RACE

freight costs. Michel would not comment on the potential location.

"It's not definite yet because we have several possibilities, but it's very likely we will put on another round," Michel told AUTOSPORT. "It's a question of logistics and costs."

A standalone event in Europe earlier in the season is also possible.

CANAMASAS TO MP

Sergio Canamasas agreed a late deal to race for MP Motorsport alongside Daniel de Jong in the days leading up to the race. The 26-year-old Spaniard had also tested for Hilmer Motorsport pre-season.

NATO DISARMED

Arden driver Norman Nato earned a three-place grid penalty for the Bahrain sprint race for causing an accident that eliminated Raffaele Marciello, Pierre Gasly and Arthur Pic from race one. Nato turned in on Marciello as the pair battled over fourth place at Turn 8, making contact with the Italian at the same time as rear-ending Pic. Gasly then collected the spinning Pic.

MATSUSHITA PENALTY

Nobuharu Matsushita lost sixth place on his GP2 debut after being hit with a five-second post-race penalty for "driving erratically", relegating him to 10th in the feature race. The Japanese F3 champion started in qualifying with second on the grid alongside ART team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne, but bogged down at the start, and ran second in the sprint before dropping to sixth as he battled tyre degradation.

KING'S WILD FRONTIER

Jordan King was the leading rookie in Bahrain, finishing fourth in the opening race and then ninth in the sprint race. The Formula 3 graduate showed good pace relative to team-mate Alexander Rossi, although a clash with Sergio Canamasas, which earned the Spaniard a three-place grid penalty for Barcelona, compromised his second race.



40

Volkswagen stars come to the fore

Jason Plato and Colin Turkington took their first wins for Team BMR but consistency proved to be the biggest challenge at Donington Park. By **SCOTT MITCHELL**

BTCC

Donington (GB)

April 19

Round 2/10

THERE ARE NOT MANY OCCASIONS WHEN AN 11th-place finish contributes to a “brilliant” weekend for a title protagonist, but such is the nature of the 2015 British Touring Car Championship that reigning champion Colin Turkington was pleased to survive a chaotic final encounter at Donington Park with just something to show for it.

That wasn’t the case last year, when Turkington only finished outside the top six twice before clinching the title. But the pattern emerging after two rounds this season suggests three strong results on Sunday will be an unlikely achievement. It’s always been difficult, but it’s got trickier.

“It’s hard to feel good about finishing 11th but

your expectations have to change,” Turkington noted. “It’s very hard to score well three times.”

In fairness, Turkington’s score of 43 points from Donington – for a third, a win and 11th – was much closer to a traditional top haul than the ones we saw at Brands. It was matched by MG’s Andrew Jordan, much happier in the East Midlands and the first driver this year to bank a consistent trio of strong results (fourth, fourth, second), while Jason Plato picked up 40 points after following up his race-one win with fifth and eighth. That may fly in the face of the earlier point, but these would be ballpark, not benchmark, numbers in recent seasons. Nobody is expecting a complete weekend anymore.

ALL PICS: EBBREV/LAT

Coming through: Plato quickly passed Shedden and Turkington (leading) in opener



That said, Team BMR gave it a good go, and should have emerged with a clean sweep of victories spread across three drivers. Having switched to the Volkswagen CC squad over the winter, along with Plato, much had been made of Turkington's ability to win without a WSR-prepared BMW – or at least how long it would take, for nobody really doubted the double champion's class. Pre-season Plato did most of the bullish talking, and it seemed at Brands Hatch that Turkington would have to wait a little longer than his new team-mate to get off the mark.

He did, but barely. The CCs were the class of the field at Donington, topping practice, qualifying and



Race-two winner Turkington struggled on softs with ballast

winning two races. Plato overturned Turkington's pole advantage in race one before the Northern Irishman turned the tables in the sequel. Aron Smith should have made it three for the team, but a clash with Josh Cook at the Craner Curves while fighting for the lead led to a high-speed off and a wild, gut-wrenching return to the track that mercifully ended with everyone pointing the right way and a catastrophic crash avoided. It dropped Cook, excellent in the Power Maxed Racing Chevrolet Cruze as the new team and Clio Cup graduate continue to find their feet in the series, to fifth and Smith to seventh.

But enough about the missed opportunity. BMR only won two races across the whole of 2014, and both were reversed-grid victories. It doubled its tally in one day at Donington, where triumphs in the opening two races firmly set out the team's stall.

Plato was frustrated at qualifying third for the opening race having dominated practice. Come the first race he swiftly moved ahead of Honda's Gordon Shedden at the start, and by the end of the opening lap was ahead of Turkington too. An 89th series victory was never in doubt thereafter.

A less-successful start consigned him to a race two spent in the thick of the battle behind the leaders, though despite carrying 75kg Plato still managed fifth. Ninth in the weekend denouement, on the fast-deteriorating soft tyres, capped a good weekend's work. "We're in great shape," he said. "We have made a step forward, evolving the balance all the time. I'm happier [than before] with no ballast but it's still not right; I'm happier [in general] with about 45kg."

The Volkswagen is a more stable car with weight, and Turkington's race-two win with 57kg was a testament to that. Again a CC beat Shedden's Civic Type-R into Redgate, and Turkington survived a tap from the Honda one lap later to gather it together and ease to a clear victory as Shedden plummeted (on soft tyres), and the other Honda of Matt Neal, aided by a mid-race safety car, gradually rose to second from 16th on the grid.



Morgan bagged podium in Merc

We've got a better car and I have a better understanding of it. We made a good step forward

COLIN TURKINGTON

"We've come here with a better car and I have a better understanding of it," Turkington said. "Brands was the biggest learning curve for me. And I'd been round the houses in free practice here. We knew it would be difficult to get the perfect car, but we made a good step forward."

They weren't the only team to do that, though. In matching Turkington's haul, Jordan put his own Brands ghosts to rest, while Neal continues to lead the points after an almost identical score as the first round, which even included repeating his reversed-grid victory trick.

For all of BMR's improvements over the winter, the manufacturer teams have not stood still. On Saturday Plato was quick to point out the laptime set by Shedden in qualifying – within a tenth of Turkington's pole time with 39kg of ballast, six more than the VW.

New the Civic Type-R may be, but with the bank of data Team Dynamics has (allied to it having a lot of fundamentally similar principles), it is no great surprise that the car has come out of the box flying. What was probably more significant was Shedden outqualifying Plato and being so close to Turkington despite carrying that weight, with team-mate Neal seventh despite having 66kg on board. That, given how close the field was – with 0.35s covering Adam Morgan (standing ▶



Jordan secured his first MG rostrum



Goff/Tordoff tangle ended in the barriers

► out with a fine run) in fourth and Jack Goff (also with 66kg of ballast) in 13th – offered a better indication of the potential in the Honda.

Shedden kept the Volkswagens honest in the opening race, but team-mate Neal chose to run the softs and dropped like a stone when the cold temperatures caused his Dunlops to expire long before the race's end. He finished 16th.

Their fortunes were reversed next time out, as Shedden took up the role of fitting the softs and plummeted down the order. But Neal rose from seventh to second, ahead of Morgan, who was much happier here in the Ciceley Racing Mercedes A-Class than at Brands, and then followed that up with a second race-three win in as many meetings to hold a two-point lead over Turkington. The new car is on the money, but the three-time champion looks revitalised this season too.

Shedden, though, says Dynamics still “needs to find a bit”, despite charging from 14th to third in a wild finale. “It’s a little bit like a stallion; it’s trying to buck me off at every opportunity but it’s quick.”

It may need to be refined, but the Type-R has performed better than most expected in the early stages, with Shedden just eight points behind Neal and third in the standings. Conversely, Jordan’s time with MG started slowly at Brands and, although team-mate Goff briefly held the joint lead of the points, it was clear that a winter of change held Triple Eight back two weeks ago.

After flattering to deceive on his MG debut, Jordan looked much more like his usual self on race day at Donington. Despite qualifying fifth he was not happy on Saturday, complaining of high-speed oversteer and admitting he underestimated the impact the change would have this season – himself adapting to a new team, and the team adapting to two new drivers and engineers. Set-up changes for Sunday paid dividends: “We got the car in the ballpark and made huge gains.”

“We need to find a bit. It’s a little bit like a stallion. It’s trying to buck me off but it’s quick.”

GORDON SHEDDEN

The 2013 champion was a solid fourth in the opener, Triple Eight’s 500th race in the BTCC, before matching that result with a battling drive on soft tyres in race two. He may yet win the finale, in which he finished second on the road to Neal, but by the evening was appealing a decision from the officials not to demote the on-track winner for an incident between the two at McLeans, where Neal turfed Jordan into the gravel early on.

Goff made it five top-10 finishes in five with a strong run to seventh with 66kg of ballast in race one, and a feisty eighth in race two despite being on the soft tyres, but the final race ended with his MG in the barriers on the exit of the chicane having tangled with WSR’s Sam Tordoff. That put paid to a strategy centred on staying out of trouble.

Ballast is expected to be the key variable of 2015. Last year, in most cases, 45kg for the winner made the difference, but it wasn’t a gamechanger. This year you get more than that for fourth, and it is making a difference, although it was the soft-compound Dunlops that hurt most at Donington.

Plato said it was a “worst-case scenario” for the softs this weekend, with cold weather and low track temperatures leading to graining. While

Jordan managed fourth, comfortably the best anyone managed on the rubber, the Hondas ran the softs when both drivers had to carry an additional 66kg. Under such circumstances races can be ruined. Whether that leads to championship challenges going the same way remains to be seen.

It is, after all, the same for everybody and tyre issues hurt most at some point over the weekend, but they don’t account for the difficulties that hit the WSR BMWs.

Having taken pole at Brands Hatch, three-time world champion Andy Priaulx experienced a much tougher time at Donington. Electrical issues meant he stopped on track in qualifying and wound up 23rd, but he battled to 10th in the second race.

Progress was always going to be difficult in the WSR BMW 125i M Sport, which toiled through the speed traps all weekend. Rob Collard was most successful and managed to claim eighth, sixth and fourth with a trio of battling performances. Tordoff started strongly, qualifying an impressive eighth (aided by a tow) and finishing the first race fifth, but dropped to ninth next time and retired from the finale after the clash with Goff.

The issue for the team centred on straightline speed. The cars have received a 10bhp boost for 2015 but have lost time on the straights. One theory is the draggy 125i M Sport has lost a key aero component on the rear over the winter.

Collard fought gamely, and was a genuine factor for the reversed-grid victory after leading initially, fighting Cook and briefly nipping back ahead when Cook and Smith went off at the Craner Curves. He fell to fourth, and that was as good as it got.

Donington has not traditionally been the strongest track for the BMW, and a perfect storm put it back into the huge pack that’s snapping at the heels of the top five. Morgan was the star of that group with his race-two rostrum, although he threw away fourth in the opener, and Cook looked comfortable at the front of the reversed-grid finale having qualified sixth on Saturday.

Another breakthrough came via Aiden Moffat, who bagged a best-ever BTCC result of fifth in his Ciceley-built Merc and took fastest lap.

But flashes of excellence from the less-fancied runners were always expected to be a feature of the 2015 season. The usual suspects are now coming to the fore, despite the greater variation in results.

The good news for the championship is they will have their work cut out staying there. ❧



Smith and Cook clashed for the lead

FOR FULL RESULTS, PAGE 50

IN THE PADDOCK

SCOTT MITCHELL
FEATURES EDITOR

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UNPREDICTABILITY MAKES FOR captivating sport, and the BTCC had it in abundance last weekend.

It is still too soon to draw a firm conclusion as to whether the new ballast regulations, allied to the continued use of the soft-compound Dunlops and reversed-grid finales, are a bit too much combined. The question is doing the rounds, though.

There was some superb driving on show last weekend, and the racing was close and extremely hard-fought. But it crossed the line of chaos once or twice – when two cars fly off onto the grass down the Craner Curves they shouldn't be rejoining, throttle pinned, in the middle of a group of four cars. It was a lucky escape.

Jason Plato won the opening race and took fifth with 75kg of ballast in race two. That was an example of the new rule working well. But the soft tyres caught a lot of people out, especially when they were being run with a large chunk of ballast.

"The difference was enormous, like having two different races," said Gordon Shedden, who dropped from second to 14th on softs with 66kg.

I'm not set in my ways. Motorsport, to me, isn't confined to the purists' view. And the BTCC has always benefited from putting the trackside fan and TV viewer first.

But there comes a point when the line is crossed. The BTCC isn't there yet, but race three at Donington was more frenzied, for me, than it was entertaining. Plato thinks softs/ballast combined might be too much.

"I was going as slow as I could," he said of race three. "I'm not racing. That doesn't sit well with me. I don't think it's doing what it should be doing [the soft tyre]. I'm wondering if we've gone too far."

His team-mate Smith disagrees, saying about the frenetic finale: "This is what this is about. It is bonkers, but that's touring cars. I want more of the same."

Dunlop is understood to be willing to evaluate a number of options for 2016, including changing the compounds on offer, but only if it determines that the current tyres can't work with more ballast.

If it is implemented, it's a solution that you wouldn't get immediately – if there is a problem that needs solving at all.



Final race was wild

WSR perplexed by speed issue

WSR DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HAS caused its trio of BMWs to struggle for straightline speed at the opening two rounds of the season.

Despite gaining an extra 10bhp since the end of last season, the 125i M Sports, driven by Andy Priaulx, Sam Tordoff and Rob Collard, are further behind the frontrunners in the speed traps this year.

The rear-wheel-drive cars in the series are permitted to run more rear wing in order to retain stability in the corners, but that, combined with the BMW producing more drag than others on the grid, hurts it on the straights.

"We're a bit unsure what's happened," team boss Dick Bennetts admitted. "Brands we went from 3mph down to



WSR BMWs had a tough weekend

5mph down. We've had to take something off the car over the winter. That to us is one of the reasons why. I think it's affecting drag. We can't prove it unless we go to a windtunnel."

AUTOSPORT understands the part relates to a duct on the rear of the car. Bennetts now wants series officials to re-evaluate their rule tweaks after the

RWD cars were pegged back.

"They want parity off the line but what about parity on aero drag?" he added. "It's down to TOCA. All the fuss about the start, that lasts for five seconds. We've got to race 25 minutes with the difference."

It is understood that any rule changes from TOCA are unlikely.



Double Honda podium in doubt

Neal win provisional after appeal

MATT NEAL HAS PROVISIONALLY kept his win in the third race at Donington Park, but a final decision on his collision with Andrew Jordan will be made in three weeks.

The Honda hit the MG at McLeans while they battled for third on lap six, sending Jordan sideways and through the gravel.

Jordan rejoined and their battle resumed, eventually for the lead, but Neal held on and took a second on-track victory of the year.

The MG man told AUTOSPORT he would "be amazed if nothing is done about it", and he and his Triple Eight team protested the three-time champion.

Officials investigated the incident and Neal was given a verbal warning but retained the victory.

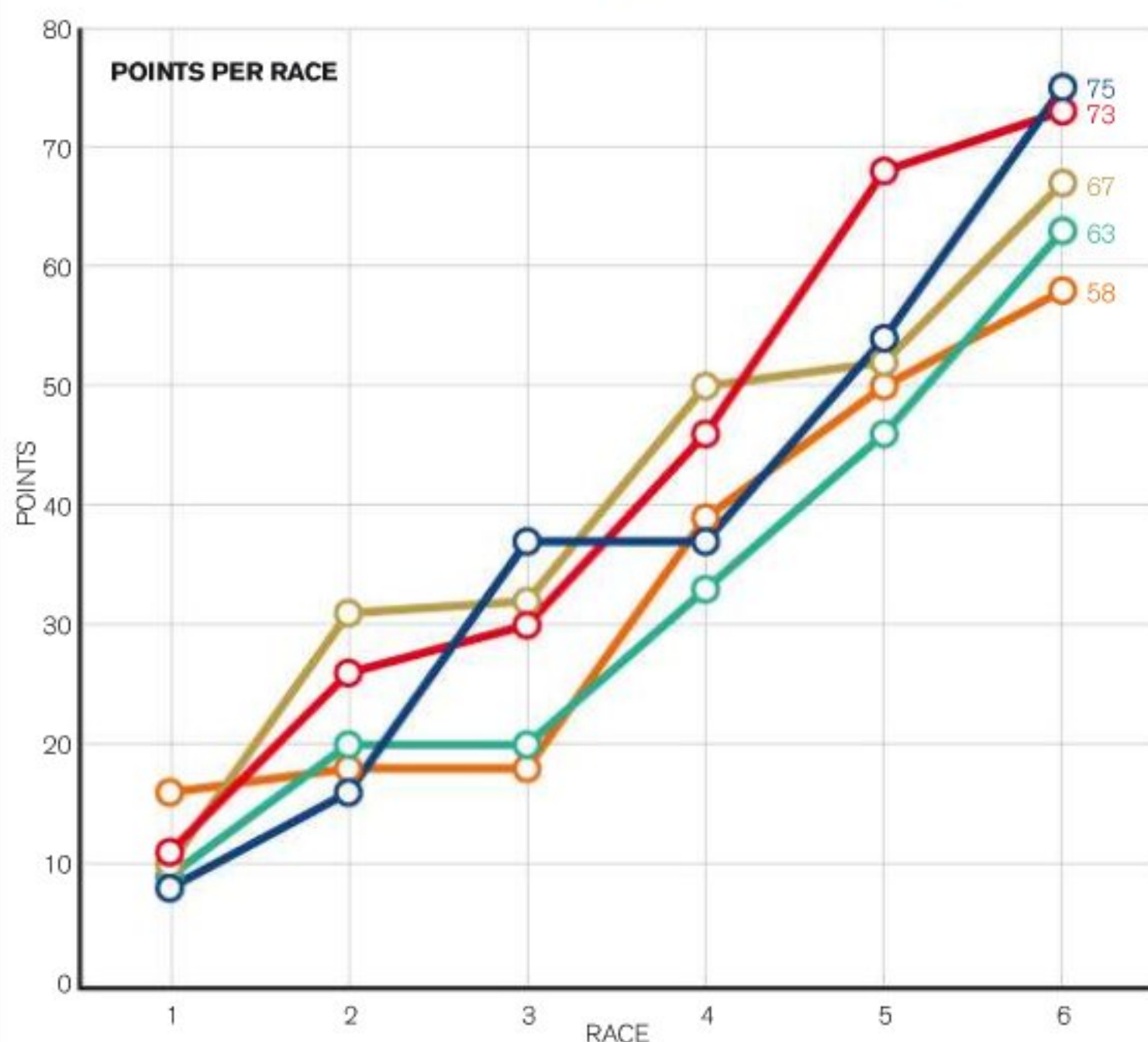
Jordan and the team have appealed and the case will be heard at the next round at Thruxton on May 9-10.

THE TITLE CHASE

A glance at the round-by-round points graph shows just how tough it's been to score consistently in the opening rounds, with reversed-grid wins crucial to Neal's early lead

TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS SCORED

NEAL	75
TURKINGTON	73
SHEDDEN	67
JORDAN	63
PLATO	58



INFINITI'S ISSUES

Richard Hawken belatedly made his British Touring Car Championship debut last weekend, but Infiniti team-mate Derek Palmer Jr was forced to withdraw from the second and third races with an engine issue. While Hawken notched 23rd, 24th and 20th-place finishes, Palmer, 22nd in race one, sat out the rest of the day after his Q50's engine suffered a main bearing failure.

SHEDDEN TOO QUICK

Gordon Shedden, who finished third in race three, lost his fastest lap and the championship point that goes with it for setting it while yellow flags were being waved on the final lap. He also received a £500 fine and three points on his licence. Aiden Moffat picked up the point for fastest lap instead.

COOK TAKES JST LEAD

One of the stars of the weekend, Josh Cook, now leads the Jack Sears Trophy for series rookies. The Power Maxed Racing driver qualified sixth and finished 13th in race one, and was seventh and fifth in his Chevrolet in races two and three to earn a hat-trick of JST wins. Erstwhile leader Mike Bushell has dropped to fifth after a trio of non-finishes.

MSA FORMULA DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 18-19 RD 2/10

Ticktum moves back ahead with double success

TWO DOMINANT AND IMPRESSIVE VICTORIES enabled Daniel Ticktum to climb to the top of the MSA Formula standings, and with it he sent a clear message of title intent.

Before the weekend had even begun, stewards congregated to hear the appeal by Lando Norris following his exclusion from victory at the final race at Brands Hatch. The appeal was successful, the win reinstated, and Norris headed the points before a wheel had turned.

"It was a bit of a relief," the Carlin driver admitted. "It helped me focus on my job for the rest of the weekend."

But Ticktum wasn't going to allow Norris to have any further spotlight. The Fortec racer put his car on pole ahead of Norris for the opener and sprinted away to a comfortable victory.

After a disappointing first weekend in Kent, Double R's Gustavo Myasava impressed to jump ahead of both Norris and James Pull (JTR) when the lights went out. But that was as high as the Brazilian would climb as he was soon reeled in by the pair and passed at Redgate on successive laps.

Pull and Norris played out an entertaining tussle, with Pull finally making his move for second stick on the final tour. Pull stuck to the outside around Redgate, the Craner Curves and the Old Hairpin, and finally nicked the spot at McLeans. Norris then lost out to Myasava out of Coppice. "I just ran out of grip on these rear tyres," Norris said.

Ticktum cruised to a seven-second win. "I had a great start, and although I've not done many of them I've learnt from the little experience that I have," he said. "I knew the competition would be



Ticktum showed dominant form

tough but the car has been so good."

In the reversed-grid second encounter, a number of the frontrunners fitted two new slick tyres to the left side of their Mygale racers. That enabled Double R man Matheus Leist to score victory, with Ricky Collard finally managing to get past Sennan Fielding for second. Fielding kept third despite having to defend due to transmission woes that had blighted his weekend. Ticktum, sticking to old rubber, took a fine fifth.

Ticktum used his pair of new slick tyres in the final skirmish to once again dominate from pole position. A chaotic opening lap forced an early safety-car interlude. Myasava lost his nosecone by tagging Norris, who suffered a race-ruining puncture, before the Brazilian punted Sandy Mitchell off at Redgate. To compound his misery, he stopped at the exit of the chicane.

The action became more sedate following the

restart, with Collard taking second from Pull at Redgate before struggling on used rubber. That enabled Ticktum to sprint away to another win.

"I may be a car-racing rookie, but this is my season," Ticktum said later.

● Russell Hayes

RESULTS

Race 1 (18 laps) 1 Daniel Ticktum 20m40.072s (103.30mph); 2 James Pull +7.094s; 3 Gustavo Myasava; 4 Lando Norris; 5 Sennan Fielding; 6 Ricky Collard. **Fastest lap** Pull 1m07.880s (104.95mph) Record. **Race 2 (18 laps) 1 Matheus Leist 20m46.252s (102.79mph);** 2 Collard +2.852s; 3 Fielding; 4 Jack Barlow; 5 Ticktum; 6 Norris. **FL** Barlow 1m08.140s (104.55mph). **Race 3 (15 laps) 1 Ticktum 20m46.087s (85.65mph);** 2 Collard +6.006s; 3 Pull; 4 Colton Herta; 5 Barlow; 6 Tarun Reddy. **FL** Ticktum 1m07.929s (104.88mph). **Points 1 Ticktum, 114;** 2 Collard, 87; 3 Pull, 77; 4 Norris, 74; 5 Leist, 65; 6 Barlow, 45.

GINETTA JUNIORS DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 18-19 RD 2/10

Senna's Donington drive increases his margin

SENNA PROCTOR EXTENDED HIS LEAD OF THE Ginetta Junior Championship with a brace of podiums including his second win of the year.

The action was some of the most exciting of the weekend, with the Juniors producing two thrilling races. Jonathan Hadfield and Lewis Brown ensured that the R&J Motorsport squad led the field in the opening affair, but it was Proctor who made the better getaway, jumping from fourth to be Hadfield's closer pursuer.

Pre-season title favourite Jamie Caroline suffered a torrid getaway, got squeezed onto

the grass on the outside of Hollywood and locked up before rejoining at the back of the field.

Hadfield took advantage of the scrap for second between Proctor, Billy Monger and Brown. The trio exchanged places, enabling Hadfield to sprint away to his maiden Ginetta Junior victory.

Monger stole third from Brown at McLeans on the final tour, and Proctor made sure he stayed ahead as he defended staunchly to remain second.

Despite Proctor claiming that Donington Park doesn't suit his driving style and that this wasn't a weekend he was looking forward to, he went one

better in the second encounter, leading after another blinding start from second.

After pairing off and exchanging places, the frontrunners bunched up into a four-car train on the final tour. Hadfield lost the lead he had taken from Proctor at Craner Curves, as both Proctor and Brown made their way through. Proctor was into the lead by McLeans and forged enough of a gap to take victory. Brown scored the final podium spot when Monger was handed a five-second track-limits penalty.

After starting 20th on the grid, Caroline made a fine recovery drive to finish fourth.

● Russell Hayes

RESULTS

Race 1 (11 laps) 1 Jonathan Hadfield 15m49.242s (82.41mph); 2 Senna Proctor +7.127s; 3 Billy Monger; 4 Lewis Brown; 5 Patrik Matthiesen; 6 Dan Zelos. **FL** Matthiesen 1m24.577s (84.23mph). **Race two (9 laps) 1 Proctor 13m01.561s (81.86mph);** 2 Hadfield +0.292s; 3 Brown; 4 Jamie Caroline; 5 Zelos; 6 Kyle Hornby. **FL** Sophia Floersch 1m24.295s (84.52mph). **Points 1 Proctor, 126;** 2 Hadfield, 94; 3 Matthiesen, 91; 4 Brown, 84; 5 Monger, 79; 6 Zelos, 70.



Proctor won second Juniors race

CLIO CUP UK DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 18-19 RD 2/9

Whorton-Eales stays ahead despite losing Clio classic

"THEY'RE GOOD, THESE CLIO RACES!" SAID championship leader Ant Whorton-Eales after claiming runner-up spot in the second race following a tremendous six-car lead duel.

The SV driver was certainly right as the action was frenetic for much of the weekend. The racing was close but, unlike at Brands Hatch two weeks ago, it was largely clean.

The first race was the postponed Brands opener (when a first-lap smash resulted in a delay that led to it being abandoned) and was an encouraging start.

Whorton-Eales, Ashley Sutton, Jordan Stilp and Brett Smith were glued together throughout, with much position-swapping.

After Whorton-Eales's feisty move to win the sole Brands race, Sutton got his revenge as



Hand recovered from this to win race two

a pass through the Craner Curves sealed the ex-Formula Ford racer's first victory in tin-tops.

The BMR-supported driver was wearing Alain Menu's old overalls and it was a performance the Swiss great would've approved of.

The top four finished just 0.6s apart and there could've been even more cars in the mix had Ash Hand and Paul Rivett not made contact at the chicane early on. Rivett struggled round in last, while Hand was forced into retirement.

Race two made up for the disappointment as Team Pyro driver Hand claimed victory after even more scrapping at the front.

Whorton-Eales led early on but was passed around the outside of the chicane by Sutton in a terrific move. But at mid-race it was Hand's turn to grab the lead and he was able to break the tow and pull away. "That was a tough race," said Hand. "Racing like that, you've got to be committed."

Sutton would've claimed second but was handed a five-second penalty for exceeding track limits so dropped to seventh. This promoted Whorton-Eales, while Rivett grabbed third at the final corner as Stilp was forced out wide and fell behind Jack Mitchell and Smith.

It had without doubt been one of the category's best races in recent years, with the main protagonists all expressing their enjoyment.

The third race was tame in comparison as Whorton-Eales dominated to take his second win



Whorton-Eales and Sutton (r) rivalry continued

of the season. Sutton was second, despite briefly dropping behind SV driver Mitchell when he ran wide at Redgate early on. Hand sneaked fourth from Rivett across the line.

● Stephen Lickorish

RESULTS

Race 1 (all 14 laps) 1 Ashley Sutton 18m19.746s (90.57mph); 2 Ant Whorton-Eales +0.131s; 3 Jordan Stilp; 4 Brett Smith; 5 Jack Mitchell; 6 Charles Ladell. **FL** Whorton-Eales 1m17.088s (92.42mph). **Race 2 1 Ash Hand 18m16.733s (90.82mph);** 2 Whorton-Eales +5.823s; 3 Paul Rivett; 4 Mitchell; 5 Smith; 6 Stilp. **FL** Whorton-Eales 1m16.975s (92.55mph). **Race 3 1 Whorton-Eales 18m12.215s (91.19mph);** 2 Sutton +2.967s; 3 Mitchell; 4 Hand; 5 Rivett; 6 Stilp. **FL** Whorton-Eales 1m17.158s (92.33mph). **Points 1 Whorton-Eales, 126;** 2 Sutton, 104; 3 Stilp, 83; 4 Hand, 81; 5 Mitchell, 75; 6 Smith, 74.



Breeze led the way in race two

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 18-19 RD 2/10

Oliphant, Breeze and Orton take a victory each

THERE WERE THREE DIFFERENT WINNERS IN THE three Ginetta GT4 Supercup races at Donington, with Tom Oliphant, Carl Breeze and Jamie Orton inseparable throughout the weekend.

Double Brands victor Orton repeated his pole of two weeks ago but lost out to HHC team-mate Breeze on the first lap of the opener when he ran wide at Redgate.

After a safety-car period for a startline shunt, the top four were locked in battle. Oliphant made the decisive move at the chicane to take the win, with Orton following through to leave Breeze third. Will Burns had to settle for fourth.

The second race was similarly frantic. Breeze made a blistering start and dived between front-row men Oliphant and Orton to take the lead.

"I got good momentum and the gap was inviting and then it started to close, but it worked," said the former champion.

Breeze had to quickly switch to defence mode when Oliphant attempted a move later in the lap – he robustly forced the Century Motorsport driver onto the grass and down to fifth.

Breeze struggled with straightline speed but his rivals were unable to prevent a first win of 2015, although Orton, Oliphant, Michael Caine and Burns were within two seconds at the flag.

The reversed grid left Caine on pole for the finale but it wasn't long before Orton displaced the JHR man. Orton was never headed from then on, with Burns remaining over a second adrift.

Caine clung onto third, despite the best efforts

of Oliphant and Breeze, while struggling with a downshift issue. "Once we get the gremlins sorted, I think we will be really good," he said.

● Stephen Lickorish

RESULTS

Race 1 (15 laps) 1 Tom Oliphant 20m36.556s (86.31mph); 2 Jamie Orton +0.649s; 3 Carl Breeze; 4 Will Burns; 5 Michael Caine; 6 Rob Boston. **FL** Oliphant 1m09.783s (102.09mph). **Race 2 (16 laps) 1 Breeze 18m58.301s (100.02mph);** 2 Orton +0.548s; 3 Oliphant; 4 Caine; 5 Burns; 6 Ollie Jackson. **FL** Boston 1m09.651s (102.29mph). **Race 3 (16 laps) 1 Orton 18m54.623s (100.34mph);** 2 Burns +1.786s; 3 Caine; 4 Oliphant; 5 Breeze; 6 Reece Somerfield. **FL** Boston 1m09.989s (101.79mph). **Points 1 Orton, 187;** 2 Breeze, 172; 3 Oliphant, 155; 4 Burns, 147; 5 Somerfield, 121; 6 Caine, 120.

Kiwi kicks Long Beach demons into touch

The California street circuit had been a bogey track for Scott Dixon, until last Sunday. **MARK GLENDENNING** watched him add it to his long list of victories



INDYCAR

Long Beach (USA)

April 19

Round 3/15

46

THERE IS ONLY A HANDFUL OF ACTIVE DRIVERS IN any major racing category who can equal Scott Dixon's achievements, and certainly none who can match the Kiwi's ability to hide in plain sight.

Discretion has almost become as much of a calling card as speed: it's difficult to imagine Sebastian Vettel or Fernando Alonso being able to move through a crowd on race day with not much more than a pair of sunglasses as a disguise.

The below-the-radar approach is entirely by design, and it's amazing how well Dixon has made it work. He is amassing a resumé that will ultimately place him among American racing's all-time greats, and yet he maintains a lower public profile than many drivers who are yet to achieve a fraction of his accomplishments.

"He has quietly built a resumé that reflects his personality," said Dixon's long-time team boss Chip Ganassi after his man's triumph last Sunday through the streets of Long Beach.

"Not everybody needs to be the most popular guy to be successful in this business. That's not

what pushes everyone's buttons. There are drivers who don't feel the need to be the most popular, or doing every function, every bowling tournament, or every television show. They're willing to live with letting the results of their career do the talking for them. I think Dixon's one of those guys who might fall a little bit into that category.

"But at the same time, the record books will show that you can't have a conversation about the top drivers without mentioning his name. Yes, he's in the record books and yes, he's not the most outgoing guy you've ever met in your life. But he has shown to be a great family man and a great person, so I'm pretty proud of him and what he has developed into."

Ganassi's point about Dixon's place among the top drivers is a fair one: with his win at Long Beach on Sunday, he broke a tie with Bobby Unser on the all-time winners' list, and now sits alone in fifth. Another three wins will bring him level with Al Unser. Even those within the

IndyCar paddock occasionally need reminding just how special his career is becoming, and Dixon himself is not about to go out of his way to remind anyone. If he is underappreciated among motorsport's current heavyweights; it's probably partly because he is almost invisible outside the car – and partly because when the topic of his emerging place in history is broached with him, he immediately pours water on it.

"It's different eras, different racing," he said when asked about surpassing Bobby Unser. "You know, those guys I've always looked up to and enjoyed watching replays of their races, whether it's him, or AJ [Foyt], or Mario or Michael [Andretti]. We'll keep trying to do our job and see if we can build on this, but that list is not our focus right now."

The other hallmark to Dixon's career is loyalty. He began his career with PacWest Racing, which promoted him to CART from its Indy Lights programme. When financial problems brought the curtains down on PWR midway through his



Castroneves led Dixon from pole position...



...but took P2, ahead of his Penske team-mate Montoya



Dixon's win was his first
Long Beach IndyCar podium



Dixon was 'helped' by
Kanaan (r) during stops



Power had a tough
weekend, taking 20th

I was pushing really hard trying to get Dixon, but a guy of his experience is really hard to catch

HELIO CASTRONEVES

second year, he was offered an opportunity by Chip Ganassi Racing... Fourteen years, three championships and an Indy 500 win later, he's still there. And he has no plans to leave.

"I hope this is a career team," he said. "I've been able to work with so many great people. Every day you're learning, and that's the exciting part for me. A lot of credit goes to the team for the consistency we've had, and at a place like this, Dario [Franchitti] was a big help this weekend. It was a track that he'd always been very strong at."

Of course, Franchitti's advice was reinforced by access to data from Dixon's three current team-mates, which allowed Dixon to work out why Tony Kanaan was so fast in Turn 1, and Charlie Kimball so quick through Turn 6, and newcomer Sebastian Saavedra on the money through Turn 5. All of that contributed to Dixon's win, but Kanaan made an even bigger contribution completely by accident.

Helio Castroneves had led the race going into the first round of pitstops, but was short-changed by Long Beach's tight pitlane: his car had been serviced and he was preparing to pull out of his pit bay when the team stopped him just as

Kanaan was chopping across the front of the Penske car in order to access his own pit box directly ahead. Castroneves only lost a few seconds while he waited for the way to be clear, but that was all that Dixon needed to leapfrog him during the pitstop cycle.

"I probably need to buy TK a beer," said Dixon. "Although he doesn't drink, so I'll drink it myself. Obviously he didn't [block Castroneves in the pits] on purpose, but that's the way it happens, and it definitely helped with our scenario."

Castroneves harboured no hard feelings about it either, although he was confident that he could have kept Dixon in check had he retained the lead after that first stop. "He was much better [off] being in front," he said. "We can see that he was very consistent. But I don't think he would have been able to get by."

The flipside is that Castroneves was equally powerless to do anything about Dixon once he found himself in the role of pursuer: "I was pushing really hard and trying to get Dixon, but a guy with his experience is really hard [to catch], he said. "I knew it would be really [unlikely] for him to make a mistake."

Until Sunday afternoon, Long Beach had been something of a bogey track for Dixon – he'd won there years ago in Indy Lights ("Doesn't count," he said flatly), but his subsequent visits in bigger machinery had never even yielded a podium. From his perspective, there was more significance to the fact that Ganassi had performed strongly on a street circuit, a configuration that he considers to be a current weak point for the team.

"We did a lot of testing at the start of the year, and I think five out of the six [test days] were at New Orleans," he said. "Obviously that didn't work out for us [due to the rain on race day]."

"So we did almost zero testing on the street-course car. I don't think we actually did a test this year with the street-course tyre, so I think the road courses are our strong suit right now. But we'll see how that plays out with Barber and Indy [road course] coming up."

In the meantime, his win was an unexpected early strike at what was looking increasingly like a Penske domination of the early part of the season. True, Penske didn't win at NOLA, but Juan Pablo Montoya was comfortably fastest of the cars on conventional strategies, and it was only an incessant string of yellows that prevented him from converting his performance into a victory. The Penske cars were fast last weekend too, with three of the four cars finishing immediately behind Dixon – but this time, they were behind because they'd been legitimately defeated.

And they were beaten by a guy who, according to his Twitter bio, is a father to 'two gorgeous little girls'. A guy who is 'married to the beautiful Emma'. And it's only after he's covered those bases that he adds one more thing: 'Racer'... ❄️

POWER CUT FOR CHAMPION

Reigning champion Will Power endured a difficult weekend at Long Beach. He qualified 18th, and was in the process of trying to recover lost ground during the race when he checked up behind the stationary car of Luca Filippi at the pit entry and stalled. He was restarted, but fell off the lead lap.

FILIPPI PLAYS IT TOO SAFE

Filippi's problems in the pit entry were caused by his car unexpectedly entering safety mode, which cut the power. The CFH team pushed the Italian down to his pit bay to get the car restarted, but he lost two laps in the process.

DALY GETS LATE COYNE CALL

Conor Daly received a last-minute call-up from Dale Coyne Racing after Rocky Moran Jr – himself a late replacement for Carlos Huertas – was ruled out with an injury sustained in a crash on Friday. Daly got the call 45 minutes before practice on Saturday, and set the second-fastest race lap of any Honda-powered driver on his way to 17th.

COLETTI'S RUN SPOILED

A strong run by Stefano Coletti was cut short when the rookie developed a gearbox problem midway through the race. Coletti started from the back and had climbed to 15th when the problem struck.

DEBRIS CAUSES ONLY CAUTION

Sunday's race was interrupted by just one caution period, which was triggered by a piece of Gabby Chaves's front wing falling off early in the race. The damage was sustained through light contact with Jack Hawksworth's car.

SATO RUNS DRY AT THE END

Takuma Sato had a frustrating end to the race when his car ran out of fuel on the final lap. The Foyt driver managed to roll across the finish line, but lost three positions in the process and was classified 18th.

HONDA BOSS UNHAPPY

HPD president Art St Cyr expressed his disappointment after rival Chevrolet secured the top seven finishing positions at Long Beach. "Obviously this was a very disappointing day for Honda Performance Development," he said. "We need to perform better." Marco Andretti was the highest-placed Honda driver in eighth.

FOR FULL RESULTS, PAGE 50

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WTCC MARRAKECH (MA), APRIL 19 RD 2/12

Lopez leaves the crashfest behind

TWO ROUNDS INTO THE 2015 WORLD Touring Car Championship season, and Marrakech did absolutely nothing to deter the view that Citroen, and Jose Maria Lopez, are an unbeatable package for the second year running.

Lopez took a comfortable pole position in qualifying ahead of Moroccan Mehdi Bennani, and thanks to a new, secretive handbrake-style arrangement in the Citroen, he and team-mates Ma Qing Hua and Sebastien Loeb enjoyed great starts in race one. After fending off Ma on the first lap, Lopez produced another of his characteristically dominant displays for an easy win.

Rubbing in his superiority, the Argentinian overcame the heat in the cockpit and the wearing tyres and brakes, and delivered a lap quicker than his pole time on the penultimate lap of the race. Ma did

stay surprisingly close to Lopez for the majority, a testament to his improving pace as Citroen held the top five spots all to itself.

Coming into the race on the back foot with a penalty for a collision at the Rio Hondo opener hanging over him, Yvan Muller delivered the most perfectly average lap in qualifying. This enabled him to secure the 10th place required to gain pole for the reversed-grid second race.

From pole, it was then a battle between 10-time ice racing champion Muller and nine-time World Rally king Loeb, who were within a second of each other for the race's entirety. Muller used his tin-top experience to hold the lead until the end.

"I am really happy to get back to winning ways," said Muller. "It has been a long time!"

Indeed it was, since the 41st of what is now 42 WTCC victories came at Spa in June last year.

Loeb – third in race one – scored his second podium of the day in Muller's slipstream, ahead of the incredible Lopez, who started 10th and already has a bigger points lead than at this point last year.

"Often, I feel quite relaxed after winning the first race," said Lopez. "This time I was feeling anxious because I didn't want to lose too many points against Yvan and Seb."



Lada lost two cars in one shunt in race two

Lopez needn't have worried. He was up to fifth on the opening lap as carnage unfolded at the first corner. Norbert Michelisz tapped Tom Coronel from behind, forcing him into the back of Tiago Monteiro, putting both Coronel and Monteiro into the tyre barrier.

Lopez then set about fighting the Campos Chevrolet of Hugo Valente, who was finally enjoying a period of luck after a terrible start to the season. Lopez was soon through into fourth, and up past a remorseful Tom Chilton, who was reeling from having put ROAL team-mate Coronel out in the first race when he lost his Cruze under braking.

It was a bitter-sweet day for home-town hero Bennani, who had a poor getaway from second on the grid in the first instalment and, despite being the second fastest car on the track to Lopez, couldn't find a way past Loeb for third. Not legally

anyway, since he briefly took the place, but had to give it back since he had exceeded the track limits in completing the move. The second race proved to be even worse for Bennani; a penultimate-lap lunge on Valente didn't pay off and he ended up off the circuit, which cost him three positions on the last lap.

One of the cars fighting past Valente was Gabriele Tarquini, who suffered a disappointing event along with team-mate Monteiro. Their best result for Honda over the weekend was Monteiro's sixth-place finish in race one.

Lada managed to get its new Vesta into the points in both races, with 10th for Rob Huff in race one and seventh for James Thompson later on, both helped by various midfield penalties. But the Russian team's day was marred by the collision that wiped Huff and third driver Mikhail Kovlovskiy out in race two. ❌



Lopez dominated the first race

RESULTS ROUND-UP

Vandoorne: new GP2 points leader



S. BLOKHAM/GP2

GP2 SERIES

ROUND 1/10 BAHRAIN, APRIL 18-19

RACE 1 (32 LAPS - 107.459 MILES)

1	Stoffel Vandoorne (B) ART Grand Prix	1h01m23.306s
2	Rio Haryanto (RI) Campos Racing	+5.056s
3	Alexander Rossi (USA) Racing Engineering	+5.497s
4	Jordan King (GB) Racing Engineering	+12.322s
5	Robert Visoiu (RO) Rapax	+20.048s
6	Mitch Evans (NZ) Russian Time	+25.543s
7	Nathanael Berthon (F) Lazarus	+27.729s
8	Julian Leal (CO) Carlin	+28.463s
9	Andre Negrao (BR) Arden International	+29.502s
10	Nobuharu Matsushita (J) ART Grand Prix	+29.664s
11	Marlon Stockinger (RP) Status Grand Prix	+36.875s
12	Sergey Sirotkin (RUS) Rapax	+38.516s
13	Artem Markelov (RUS) Russian Time	+41.021s
14	Sergio Canamasas (E) MP Motorsport	+41.391s
15	Richie Stanaway (NZ) Status Grand Prix	+43.375s
16	Zoel Amberg (CH) Lazarus	+44.062s
17	Rene Binder (A) Trident	+44.682s
18	Daniel de Jong (NL) MP Motorsport	+48.421s
19	Alex Lynn (GB) DAMS	+1m05.572s
R	Raffaele Marciello (I) Trident	5 laps-collision damage
R	Norman Nato (F) Arden International	4 laps-collision
R	Arthur Pic (F) Campos Racing	4 laps-collision
R	Pierre Gasly (F) DAMS	4 laps-collision
R	Marco Sorensen (DK) Carlin	4 laps-puncture/suspension

Winner's average speed 105.028mph.

Fastest lap Vandoorne, 1m44.617s, 115.720mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Vandoorne, 1m39.237s; 2 Matsushita, 1m39.545s; 3 Lynn, 1m39.599s; 4 Pic, 1m39.630s; 5 Marciello, 1m39.645s; 6 King, 1m39.770s; 7 Nato, 1m39.857s; 8 Rossi, 1m39.872s; 9 Gasly, 1m39.877s; 10 Sirotkin, 1m39.887s; 11 Markelov, 1m39.955s; 12 Haryanto, 1m39.961s; 13 Evans, 1m39.999s; 14 Visoiu, 1m40.128s; 15 Stanaway, 1m40.251s; 16 Leal, 1m40.353s; 17 Canamasas, 1m40.434s; 18 Sorensen, 1m40.444s; 19 Negrao, 1m40.634s; 20 de Jong, 1m40.653s; 21 Berthon, 1m40.654s; 22 Binder, 1m40.773s; 23 Stockinger, 1m40.995s; 24 Amberg, 1m41.690s.

RACE 2 (23 LAPS - 77.193 MILES)

1 Haryanto, 41m35.490s; 2 Vandoorne, +3.004s; 3 Berthon, +5.639s; 4 Rossi, +6.258s; 5 Leal, +13.945s; 6 Matsushita, +15.923s; 7 Visoiu, +19.794s; 8 Negrao, +20.159s; 9 King, +21.101s; 10 Pic, +25.690s; 11 Stanaway, +32.040s; 12 Markelov, +33.200s; 13 de Jong, +34.335s; 14 Sirotkin, +34.361s; 15 Lynn, +35.050s; 16 Nato, +39.501s; 17 Evans, +39.536s; 18 Amberg, +41.084s; 19 Stockinger, +43.390s; 20 Marciello, +47.545s; 21 Sorensen, +49.715s; 22 Gasly, +56.504s; R Canamasas, 4 laps-collision; R Binder, 2 laps-collision damage.

Winner's average speed 111.358mph.

Fastest lap Marciello, 1m44.715s, 115.612mph.

GRID FOR RACE 2

Decided by result of Race 1, with top eight finishers reversed. Nato given three-place grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Vandoorne, 43; 2 Haryanto, 33; 3 Rossi, 23; 4 Berthon, 16; 5 King, 12; 6 Visoiu, 12; 7 Leal, 10; 8 Evans, 8; 9 Matsushita, 7; 10 Negrao, 3.



Maiden win for Haryanto

S. BLOKHAM/GP2

Abbott recovered from this off



FBREY/LAT

BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

ROUND 2/10 DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 19

RACE 1 (16 LAPS - 31.664 MILES)

1	Jason Plato (GB) Team BMR Volkswagen CC	18m54.080s
2	Gordon Shedden (GB) Honda (Dynamics) Honda Civic Type-R	+1.401s
3	Colin Turkington (GB) Team BMR Volkswagen CC	+1.782s
4	Andrew Jordan (GB) MG (Triple Eight) MG6	+5.961s
5	Sam Tordoff (GB) WSR BMW 125i M Sport	+14.328s
6	Dave Newsham (GB) Power Maxed Racing Chevrolet Cruze	+15.177s
7	Jack Goff (GB) MG (Triple Eight) MG6	+20.279s
8	Rob Collard (GB) WSR BMW 125i M Sport	+20.314s
9	Adam Morgan (GB) Ciceley Racing Mercedes A-Class	+21.774s
10	Rob Austin (GB) Rob Austin Racing Audi A4	+22.269s
11	Warren Scott (GB) Team BMR Volkswagen CC	+25.881s
12	Andy Priaulx (GB) WSR BMW 125i M Sport	+26.711s
13	Josh Cook (GB) Power Maxed Racing Chevrolet Cruze	+29.701s
14	Jeff Smith (GB) Eurotech Racing Honda Civic	+30.707s
15	Martin Depper (GB) Eurotech Racing Honda Civic	+30.988s
16	Tom Ingram (GB) Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Avensis	+35.130s
17	Matt Neal (GB) Honda (Dynamics) Honda Civic Type-R	+35.812s
18	Aiden Moffat (GB) Laser Tools Racing Mercedes A-Class	+35.836s
19	Hunter Abbott (GB) Rob Austin Racing Audi A4	+36.069s
20	Alex Martin (GB) Team Parker Racing Ford Focus	+39.095s
21	Kieran Gallagher (GB) Team Hard Toyota Avensis	+58.407s
22	Derek Palmer Jr (GB) Infiniti (Support Our Paras) Infiniti Q50	+1m03.124s
23	Richard Hawken (GB) Infiniti (Support Our Paras) Infiniti Q50	-1 lap
24	Stewart Lines (GB) Houseman Racing Toyota Avensis	-1 lap
R	Andy Wilmot (GB) Welch Motorsport Proton Gen-2 Persona	3 laps-engine
R	Simon Belcher (GB) Handy Motorsport Toyota Avensis	3 laps-spun off
NC	Daniel Welch (GB) Welch Motorsport Proton Gen-2 Persona	3 laps
R	Mike Bushell (GB) AmD Tuning Ford Focus	0 laps-driveshaft

Winner's average speed 100.39mph.

Fastest lap Shedden, 1m09.741s, 102.15mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Turkington, 1m09.483s; 2 Shedden, 1m09.539s; 3 Plato, 1m09.552s; 4 Morgan, 1m10.021s; 5 Jordan, 1m10.029s; 6 Cook, 1m10.119s; 7 Neal, 1m10.179s; 8 Tordoff, 1m10.193s; 9 Moffat, 1m10.288s; 10 Newsham, 1m10.337s; 11 A Smith, 1m10.365s; 12 Austin, 1m10.378s; 13 Goff, 1m10.378s; 14 Bushell, 1m10.527s; 15 Scott, 1m10.543s; 16 Ingram, 1m10.580s; 17 J Smith, 1m10.614s; 18 Depper, 1m10.652s; 19 Collard, 1m10.823s; 20 Martin, 1m10.978s; 21 Abbott, 1m11.013s; 22 Belcher, 1m11.374s; 23 Priaulx, 1m11.535s; 24 Palmer, 1m11.930s; 25 Gallagher, 1m12.065s; 26 Wilmot, 1m12.508s; 27 Lines, 1m12.896s; 28 Hawken, 1m15.799s; 29 Welch, no time.

RACE 2 (18 LAPS - 35.622 MILES)

1 Turkington, 22m58.065s; 2 Neal, +2.501s; 3 Morgan, +8.832s; 4 Jordan, +10.484s; 5 Plato, +10.693s; 6 Collard, +10.982s; 7 Cook, +10.991s; 8 Goff, +12.002s; 9 Tordoff, +12.150s; 10 Priaulx, +12.320s; 11 Newsham, +13.666s; 12 A Smith, +14.514s; 13 Ingram, +14.695s; 14 Shedden, +17.086s; 15 J Smith, +17.387s; 16 Moffat, +19.452s; 17 Abbott, +25.108s; 18 Austin, +25.210s; 19 Depper, +26.380s; 20 Gallagher, +37.303s; 21 Belcher, +54.977s; 22 Lines, +58.907s; 23 Martin, +1m06.987s; 24 Hawken, +1m15.832s; NC Bushell, 9 laps; R Welch, 4 laps-engine; R Scott, 1 lap-accident; NS Palmer; NS Wilmot.



FBREY/LAT

Neal flew to race-three BTCC win

Winner's average speed 92.96mph.

Fastest lap Turkington, 1m10.055s, 101.70mph.

GRID FOR RACE 2

1 Shedden; 2 Turkington; 3 Morgan; 4 Plato; 5 Jordan; 6 Goff; 7 Neal; 8 Collard; 9 Newsham; 10 Moffat; 11 Tordoff; 12 Priaulx; 13 Cook; 14 Austin; 15 Depper; 16 Abbott; 17 Scott; 18 Ingram; 19 J Smith; 20 Martin; 21 Gallagher; 22 Palmer; 23 Lines; 24 Hawken; 25 Belcher; 26 Wilmot; 27 Bushell; 28 Welch; 29 A Smith.

RACE 3 (19 LAPS - 37.601 MILES)

1 Neal, 24m50.589s; 2 Jordan, +0.157s; 3 Shedden, +1.038s; 4 Collard, +3.563s; 5 Moffat, +3.613s; 6 A Smith, +3.889s; 7 Cook, +4.035s; 8 Plato, +6.542s; 9 Depper, +7.515s; 10 Ingram, +7.600s; 11 Turkington, +8.582s; 12 Morgan, +8.772s; 13 J Smith, +11.162s; 14 Abbott, +12.057s; 15 Scott, +13.476s; 16 Belcher, +13.951s; 17 Lines, +18.151s; 18 Gallagher, +18.994s; 19 Martin, +19.335s; 20 Hawken, +44.917s; R Bushell, 18 laps-accident damage; R Austin, 17 laps-accident; R Newsham, 16 laps-accident; NC Priaulx, 14 laps; R Tordoff, 5 laps-accident; R Goff, 5 laps-accident; NS Welch; NS Palmer; NS Wilmot.

Winner's average speed 90.72mph.

Fastest lap Moffat, 1m10.575s, 100.95mph.

GRID FOR RACE 3

Decided by result of Race 2, with top seven reversed.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Neal, 75; 2 Turkington, 73; 3 Shedden, 68; 4 Jordan, 63; 5 Plato, 58; 6 Goff, 54; 7 Collard, 53; 8 Morgan, 53; 9 A Smith, 50; 10 Priaulx, 44.

Dixon ended his victory drought at Long Beach



LEVITT/LAT

WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

ROUND 2/12 MARRAKECH, APRIL 19

RACE 1 (14 LAPS – 39.538 MILES)

1 Jose Maria Lopez (RA) Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	24m31.802s
2 Ma Qing Hua (PRC) Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	+0.942s
3 Sebastien Loeb (F) Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	+4.492s
4 Mehdi Bennani (MA) Sebastien Loeb Racing Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	+5.405s
5 Yvan Muller (F) Citroen Total Citroen C-Elysee WTCC	+21.617s
6 Tiago Monteiro (P) Honda Racing Team JAS Honda Civic WTCC	+22.986s
7 Gabriele Tarquini (I) Honda Racing Team JAS Honda Civic WTCC	+23.410s
8 Norbert Michelisz (H) Zengo Motorsport Honda Civic WTCC	+24.799s
9 Stefano D'Aste (I) Munnich Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	+26.904s
10 Rob Huff (GB) Lada Sport Lada Vesta WTCC	+35.044s
11 James Thompson (GB) Lada Sport Lada Vesta WTCC	+45.222s
12 Mikhail Kozlovskiy (RUS) Lada Sport Lada Vesta WTCC	+53.650s
13 John Filippi (F) Campos Racing Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	+54.397s
14 Tom Chilton (GB) ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	+1m00.552s
15 Hugo Valente (F) Campos Racing Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	-3 laps
R Gregoire Demoustier (F) Craft Bamboo Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	8 laps-brakes
R Tom Coronel (NL) ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet RML Cruze TC1	1 lap-acc dam
NS Dusan Borkovic (SRB) Proteam Racing Honda Civic WTCC	too tall

Winner's average speed 96.708mph.
Fastest lap Lopez, 1m43.847s, 97.902mph.

Q3 1 Lopez, 1m43.854s; 2 Bennani, 1m44.109s; 3 Ma, 1m44.582s; 12 Valente, no time*; 13 Chilton, no time*.

Q2 Lopez, 1m43.393s; Valente, 1m43.882s; Ma, 1m43.971s; Bennani, 1m43.987s; Chilton, 1m44.062s; 4 Monteiro, 1m44.118s; 5 Loeb, 1m44.150s; 6 Coronel, 1m44.177s; 7 Michelisz, 1m44.102s*; 8 Tarquini, 1m44.313s; 9 D'Aste, 1m44.573s; 10 Muller, 1m44.185s*.

Q1 Ma, 1m43.652s; Muller, 1m43.844s; Lopez, 1m43.845s; Loeb, 1m44.185s; Monteiro, 1m44.250s; Tarquini, 1m44.339s; Valente, 1m44.378s; Michelisz, 1m44.472s; Coronel, 1m44.539s; Chilton, 1m44.559s; Bennani, 1m44.648s; D'Aste, 1m44.716s; 11 Kozlovskiy, 1m46.407s; 14 Huff, 1m44.834s*; 15 Thompson, 1m46.113s*; 16 Demoustier, 1m46.261s*; 17 Filippi, 1m45.773s*; NS Borkovic, 1m45.087s. *grid penalty.

RACE 2 (14 LAPS – 39.538 MILES)

1 Muller, 24m22.255s; 2 Loeb, +0.552s; 3 Lopez, +18.113s; 4 Chilton, +22.754s; 5 Tarquini, +39.496s; 6 D'Aste, +40.215s; 7 Thompson, +54.634s; 8 Filippi, +55.245s; 9 Valente, +56.490s; 10 Ma, +59.952s; 11 Michelisz, +1m07.677s; 12 Bennani, +1m10.653s; R Demoustier, 10 laps-brakes; R Huff, 1 lap-accident damage; R Monteiro, 1 lap-accident damage; R Coronel, 0 laps-accident; R Kozlovskiy, 0 laps-accident; NS Borkovic.
Winner's average speed 97.340mph.
Fastest lap Lopez, 1m43.480s, 98.249mph.

GRID FOR RACE 2

Decided by qualifying, but with the top 10 reversed.

1 Muller; 2 Coronel; 3 Loeb; 4 Monteiro; 5 Michelisz; 6 Chilton; 7 Valente; 8 Ma; 9 Bennani; 10 Lopez; 11 Tarquini; 12 D'Aste; 13 Huff; 14 Filippi; 15 Demoustier; 16 Kozlovskiy; 17 Thompson*.
*grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Lopez, 93; 2 Loeb, 76; 3 Muller, 57; 4 Ma, 38; 5 Tarquini, 38; 6 Monteiro, 36; 7 Bennani, 26; 8 Chilton, 21; 9 Michelisz, 18; 10 D'Aste, 12.

INDYCAR SERIES

ROUND 3/15 LONG BEACH, APRIL 19

80 LAPS – 157.440 MILES

1 Scott Dixon (NZ) Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	1h37m35.2353s
2 Helio Castroneves (BR) Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	+2.2221s
3 Juan Pablo Montoya (CO) Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	+13.4862s
4 Simon Pagenaud (F) Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	+13.7382s
5 Tony Kanaan (BR) Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	+14.6249s
6 Sebastien Bourdais (F) KVSH Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	+15.0829s
7 Josef Newgarden (USA) CFH Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	+18.8398s
8 Marco Andretti (USA) Andretti Autosport Dallara-Honda	+33.9476s
9 Carlos Munoz (CO) Andretti Autosport Dallara-Honda	+34.9599s
10 Sebastien Saavedra (CO) Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	+35.5359s
11 Graham Rahal (USA) Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing Dallara-Honda	+37.4628s
12 James Hinchcliffe (CAN) Schmidt Peterson Motorsports Dallara-Honda	+38.7713s
13 Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA) Andretti Autosport Dallara-Honda	+40.3347s
14 Jack Hawksworth (GB) AJ Foyt Enterprises Dallara-Honda	+41.2744s
15 Charlie Kimball (USA) Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	+44.3872s
16 Gabby Chaves (CO) Bryan Herta Autosport Dallara-Honda	+46.6589s
17 Conor Daly (USA) Dale Coyne Racing Dallara-Honda	+50.0574s
18 Takuma Sato (J) AJ Foyt Enterprises Dallara-Honda	+53.8043s
19 James Jakes (GB) Schmidt Peterson Motorsports Dallara-Honda	+1m39.7966s
20 Will Power (AUS) Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
21 Francesco Dracone (I) Dale Coyne Racing Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
22 Luca Filippi (I) CFH Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
23 Stefano Coletti (MC) KV Racing Dallara-Chevrolet	-11 laps
NS Rocky Moran Jr (USA) Dale Coyne Racing Dallara-Honda	injury

Winner's average speed 96.800mph.
Fastest lap Coletti, 1m08.0969s, 104.040mph.

Q3 1 Castroneves, 1m06.6294s; 2 Montoya, 1m06.6587s; 3 Dixon, 1m06.7870s; 4 Hunter-Reay, 1m07.0473s; 5 Pagenaud, 1m07.1433s; 6 Newgarden, 1m07.1716s.

Q2 Pagenaud, 1m06.7894s; Newgarden, 1m06.8083s; Castroneves, 1m06.8702s; Montoya, 1m06.9419s; Dixon, 1m06.9819s; Hunter-Reay, 1m07.0307s; 7 Kanaan, 1m07.1090s; 8 Rahal, 1m07.1290s; 9 Bourdais, 1m07.2411s; 10 Andretti, 1m07.3161s; 11 Saavedra, 1m07.3924s; 12 Munoz, 1m07.4049s.

Q1 – GROUP 1 Montoya, 1m06.8304s; Saavedra, 1m07.6781s; Pagenaud, 1m07.8440s; Newgarden, 1m07.9507s; Bourdais, 1m08.5265s; Andretti, 1m08.5426s; 14 Filippi, 1m08.6104s; 16 Hawksworth, 1m08.6276s; 18 Power, 1m08.8348s; 20 Sato, 1m08.8732s; 22 Dracone, 1m09.8815s; 23 Coletti, 1m10.4644s.

Q1 – GROUP 2 Kanaan, 1m06.7442s; Hunter-Reay, 1m06.8979s; Castroneves, 1m06.9672s; Dixon, 1m06.9742s; Munoz, 1m07.1190s; Rahal, 1m07.1896s; 13 Hinchcliffe, 1m07.3976s; 15 Kimball, 1m07.4217s; 17 Chaves, 1m07.4653s; 19 Jakes, 1m07.7702s; 21 Daly, 1m08.7825s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Montoya, 119; 2 Castroneves, 116; 3 Kanaan, 93; 4 Dixon, 87; 5 Hinchcliffe, 83; 6 Power, 80; 7 Pagenaud, 73; 8 Newgarden, 66; 9 Bourdais, 66; 10 Rahal, 62.

Muller leads, but disaster for Monteiro and Coronel





ROZENDAAU/LAT

THE F1 DRIVER RACING IN FR3.5

Roberto Merhi started 2015 preparing for a Formula Renault 3.5 campaign. Then he made his F1 debut with Manor. But, as he tells **PETER MILLS**, abandoning FR3.5 was never on the cards

As a twist to the usual script, this weekend's Formula Renault 3.5 season opener at Motorland Aragon will feature both the customary array of Formula 1 hopefuls and a man who has already arrived in the top echelon.

FR3.5 last year provided the revitalising elixir to Roberto Merhi's expiring career. Ejected from the DTM to make way for Formula 1 refugees Paul di Resta and Vitaly Petrov, Merhi faced an uncertain future. That the ever-cheerful, floppy-haired Spaniard is embarking on both a maiden season of Formula 1 with Marussia Manor and a concurrent FR3.5 attack for Pons Racing indicates the restoration of his reputation.

Merhi has completed a U-turn from his original decision to eschew the category. The comeback is potentially high-risk. Pons has failed to register a podium since 2011. It has been anchored to the bottom of the teams' standings for two of the past three years. So, why do it? In a narrative familiar to many a racing driver, financial considerations have influenced a sequence of career moves.

"My aim after winning the F3 Euro Series was to do GP2," says Merhi, raising his voice over the noise of a busy Dubai airport restaurant. "But at that time, I didn't have the budget for GP2 or even World Series. The only option then was to enter DTM. My deal with Zeta Corse last year was also a completely free drive, and I had known [team boss] Felix Porteiro since I was young. All my other options for 2014 required me to pay."

Last winter, Pons succeeded in attracting a

group of sponsors to fund both its bike and World Series operations. The deal allowed it to pursue proven winner Merhi.

"I am quite open to doing both championships, because Pons has wanted me to drive for them since November," says Merhi, whose father, also Roberto, was an amateur driver during his late twenties thanks to a burgeoning ceramics business.

"They have really pushed hard to find the sponsors. In Spain, that is pretty tough. They

placed confidence in me; I want to reward them.

"In Formula 1, I need to learn as much as I can, race by race. In FR3.5 I want to win the championship this time and do the best I can to develop the Pons car. The first time I drove it in Jerez, I was P1 immediately by 0.4s in the first morning. But when I drove the car for a long run it didn't work so well; we have a lot of degradation on the tyres. We are maybe missing three tenths, but I think I know where we can gain them."

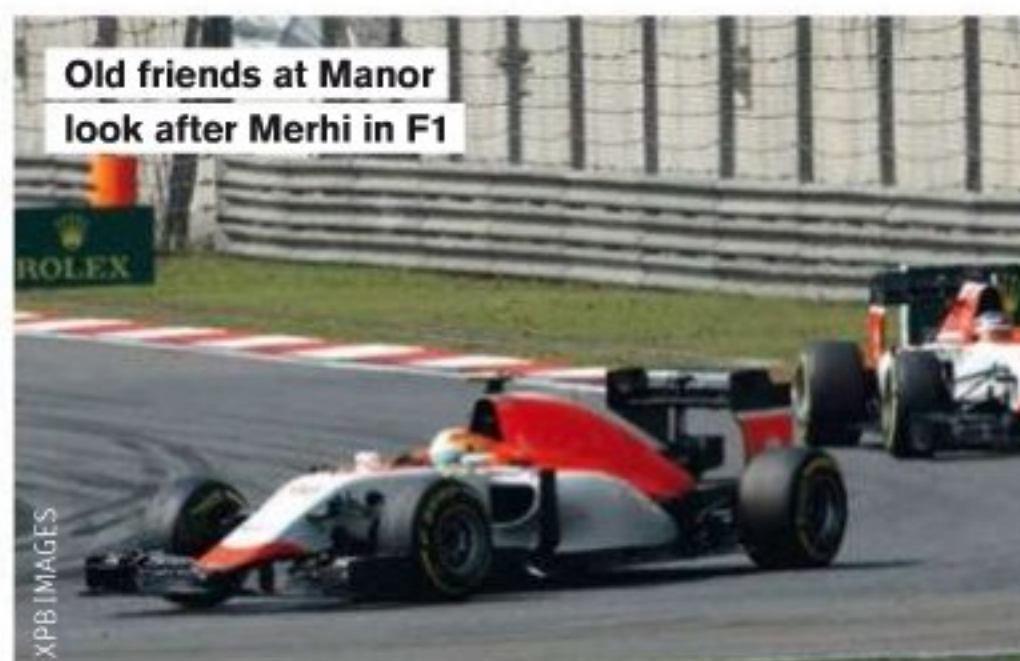
For Merhi, loyalty and rekindled relationships are themes that run through his tale of resurgence. The adage that it pays to be good to people on the way up appears to have held true for the Castellon racer in the wake of being axed from Mercedes' DTM line-up.

Engineer Humphrey Corbett is certainly one man who has got Roberto Merhi under his skin. "Roberto is such a top guy," enthuses Corbett, in customary clipped tone. "I joined Zeta Corse for 2014, and I didn't even know he was going to be the driver. Felix Porteiro, who was sort of co-owner of the team, said, 'You know, we're going to run Robert Merhi,' and looked at me to say, 'Is that going to be a problem?' My reaction was, 'Brilliant!'"

Corbett is well-qualified to judge drivers' abilities. During spells in Formula 1 at Prost, Jaguar and Toyota, he engineered a roster of talents including Olivier Panis, Nick Heidfeld, Eddie Irvine and Jarno Trulli. "I first met Merhi back with Epsilon Euskadi in 2008," recalls Corbett. "He was the star in their FR2.0 team and I saw him at close quarters when it was decided to test him in the World Series car." ▶



With FR3.5 rival and fellow F1 rookie Sainz



Old friends at Manor look after Merhi in F1



Merhi is pleased to see former F1 Renault 2.0 rivals Bottas (l) and Ricciardo (r) doing well in F1

► Merhi had offered the only serious opposition to fellow standout performers Daniel Ricciardo and Valtteri Bottas that season. While Merhi went on to become a dominant Formula 3 Euro Series champion in 2011, the transition of his former rivals into Formula 1's young dynamos served to raise his stock.

"I was very happy when I saw both of them doing so well," says Merhi. "When I raced against them I was two years younger than them. To see people that you've raced against doing so well in F1, when they were at a similar level, is really nice as your aim is to compete with the best."

The first step on Merhi's path to being reunited with his contemporaries in Formula 1 was to strike a deal to race for Russian-owned, Valencia-based Zeta Corse. Although Merhi would bloom to joust with eventual champion Carlos Sainz Jr, early tests reacclimatising to a single-seater after his tin-top sojourn proved trying.

"When I first tried the car, it didn't go well," admits Merhi. "I hadn't driven a single-seater since Macau 2011. It did take a while to get used to everything, but the team always believed in me and pushed hard to make sure I got results."

Corbett reveals the team's modest doubts: "I sort of knew he had F1 potential because he had very good history, and had blown a lot of superstars away in the past. But that doesn't mean to say that when he joined Zeta he'd still got it. It was three years on. At the first test he was actually beaten by [team-mate Roman] Mavlanov, but it came together."

It would take until round four at Spa in June for the partnership to truly gel. "It took three or four races complaining about the same problems before we got the car working," assesses Merhi.



First exposure to F1 came with Caterham outings last season



The 2014 FR3.5 season brought three wins with Zeta including here in Hungary...

"We inherited a set-up that was developed around Sainz," explains Corbett. "He had got some top-six finishes [in 2013] so I thought it was quite a good set-up. I kept saying to myself, Sainz did well with it, so it should be good for Roberto. It took me two or three races to realise they have different styles. We had exhausted all of the possibilities, so then we changed it."

"After Spa, Roberto said this isn't good enough and we really have to sort the car out. We went back to base and devised a rear set-up that he really liked. After that, he was able to brake really late and had good traction. That gave him the confidence to push. He started to win races and set pole positions. He was a lot, lot happier."

Rain in race one in Hungary provided an opportunity for Merhi to deliver a masterclass in wet-weather driving, achieving a scarcely believable 30-second margin of victory.

"The wet drive he did in Hungary was absolutely stonking," says Corbett. "I was shouting down the radio, 'Look after your tyres, look after your rear tyres.' He came back very calmly: 'Don't worry.' The other engineers later were saying they had been waiting for his rear tyres to go off, but they didn't because he is very precise under braking, he doesn't stress them. He thinks a lot during the race. That was one of the best wet-weather races I've ever seen. He just blew everybody away and that was down to him, it was nothing to do with the car. He looked after the tyres, drove sensibly and found the limits."

The Hungaroring performance struck a note with former Mercedes HWA DTM boss Gerhard Ungar, trying to steer the listing Caterham Formula 1 team away from the rocks. Ungar had remembered Merhi's audacious drive from last on the grid to second, including an additional pitstop to serve a penalty, in the previous year's wet Hockenheim DTM finale. The financial health of Caterham had become perilous following the Monaco points finish by fellow perennial straggler Marussia. For Ungar, Merhi was a long shot worth pursuing.

"Gerhard was the one who called me to test the Caterham," recounts Merhi. "He told me, 'Look, we must score points if we're going to survive into next year. Maybe there'll be a decision to put you in the car. If we have a wet race or a strange race with damp, changing, conditions, that's our best chance! That's why I did the FP1s with them. They all went quite well – even if I was running

with the old floor and old front wing."

Merhi's involvement in F1 has continued into 2015. To add to the revived relationships with Porteiro, Corbett and Ungar, Merhi got back together with his friends at Marussia Manor, which grew out of the team that fielded him in the 2009 F3 Euro Series.

Why the repeated instances of fandom from motor-racing movers and shakers? Corbett offers his view: "I like Roberto's precise feedback. 'That's it, fix this.' Then he would go away running or

cycling. The other thing I like about the guy is he has an impish sense of humour that I can relate to. I have seen lots of cosseted drivers, who go around with carers and head shrinks. He reminds me a lot of Panis, who used to staple your notes together and you'd spend hours trying to pull the staples out. Roberto would reorganise your desk or do something like that. That is just fantastic in

"TO SEE PEOPLE WHO YOU RACED WITH DO WELL IS NICE. YOUR AIM IS TO COMPETE WITH THE BEST"





...which the Spaniard celebrated in suitable fashion on the podium

ROZENDAAU/LAT

VAN DER LAAN/LAT

a driver. He is not grey or bland. He is not an old-school driver, but he still maintains a life outside motor racing, and it hasn't spoiled him."

The Manor deal was remarkably last minute. Stepping off the plane in Melbourne for the first grand prix of the year, Merhi was unaware he had secured the seat. "When I landed in Australia, it was only when Marc Hynes [the team's head of driver development] sent me an SMS that I found out that I would be a Manor F1 driver," he confirms. "Of course, I knew I had a chance, but I didn't know if it was an 80 per cent chance or a 20 per cent chance."

Back with the South Yorkshire team, there was a host of familiar and welcoming faces for Merhi, including Hynes, team boss John Booth and F3 team manager Pete Sliwinski.

"It feels great," says Merhi of his promotion to the sport's elite. "I am really happy because the team chose me because they believe in me. I don't have any budget to race there. It's really good to start and learn how everything works. In Shanghai we did as many laps in free practice as was possible. I'd say it was my first real grand prix. Maybe I went in the wrong direction on the set-up, but after the weekend I think I know the way to go. They are pushing really hard, with the same philosophy that they had in Formula 3."

Merhi exercises caution on his longer-term prospects, but has clear ambitions for the forthcoming season.

"Winning World Series would, of course, help me. I hope some good performances at Manor could help find a sponsor. We hope to debut a new car around the summer, then let's see. Maybe I can be on the F1 grid next year, in a position to score points or win races." ❧



Rowland stays with his 2014 team Fortec...

VAN DER LAAN/LAT

ROWLAND THE TITLE FAVOURITE

Oliver Rowland joins Roberto Merhi as a returning 2014 race winner. Continuing his partnership with championship powerhouse Fortec, the Racing Steps Foundation-backed Briton starts the season as a title favourite.

A new headache for all the teams is the introduction of a mandatory low-downforce set-up for Saturday races. How does Rowland assess the new season?

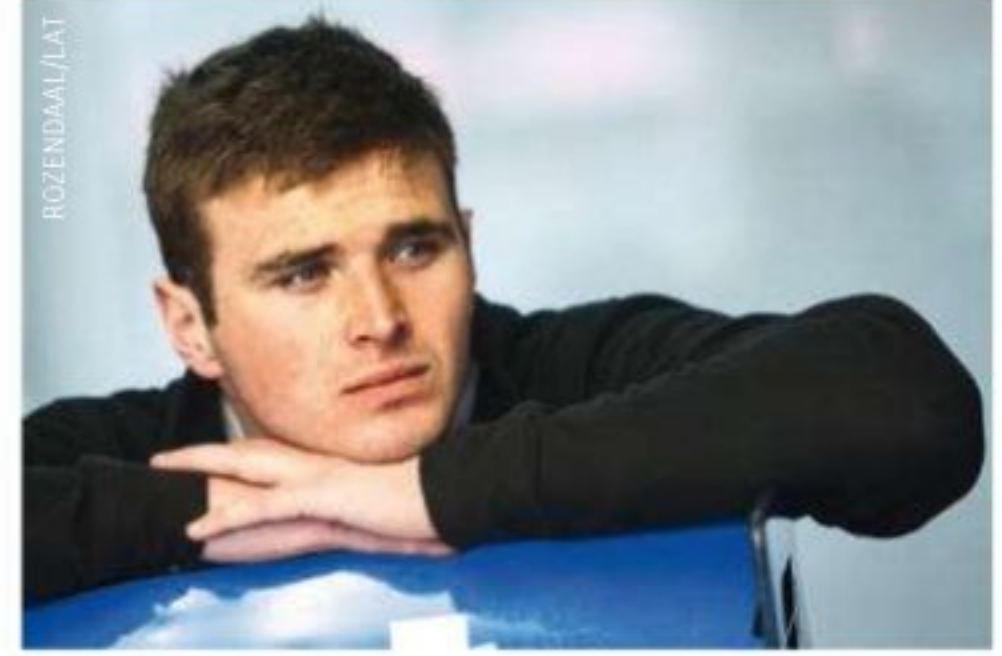
"Based on last year we have a quick car," he says. The low-downforce is a new challenge for us. The first test wasn't so good, but at the second test we made some good improvements. It requires quite a different driving style, but I think I'd got my head around it by the end of the last test at Motorland Aragon.

"It shouldn't make much difference to the racing. The problem is the gears limit you. In Motorland you are on the limiter for 500 metres.



...and aims to repeat last year's race-winning form

VAN DER LAAN/LAT



ROZENDAAU/LAT

It's going to provide more mistakes and more brake and tyre wear, but if you're clever and look after your tyres in the right places, and push in the right places, you'll be fine."

Who does Rowland consider to offer the strongest title threats?

"[Matthieu] Vaxiviere looks very quick," he says. "We'll have to see if it stays that way. If it does, we may need to improve a bit. [GP3 runner-up] Dean Stoneman has been quite steady apart from the last afternoon in Aragon, when he made a bit of a step. Tio Ellinas was quick at Jerez. At Aragon it took him a while to find some speed but by the end he looked pretty good. Tom Dillmann has been in GP2 so I expect him to be quick. It seems Carlin look better on low downforce rather than high, but let's see. People have set blistering times in testing but it's not quite the same in the races."



Merhi must turn around the fortunes of Pons for an FR3.5 title attack

VAN DER LAAN/LAT

Entries Now Open for the Fourth Henry Surtees Foundation Brooklands Team Karting Challenge



John Surtees cordially invites you to enter the fourth annual Henry Surtees Foundation Brooklands Team Karting Challenge taking place on Tuesday 30 June 2015. The event organised by John Surtees OBE, will be staged once again at the iconic Mercedes-Benz World, Surrey. Racing starts with practice and qualifying. Teams will then compete in a challenging 2 hour endurance race, where they battle it out in Daytona High-Performance two-stroke DMAX Birel Karts in the hope of securing the coveted 'H' trophy.

John Surtees OBE said "Each year the HSF Team Karting Challenge receives tremendous support from a host of star names from the world of motorsport, business and the entertainment industry and 2015 will be no exception. Why not put a team of four together and come and join us at the original home of motorsport at Brooklands where you will be

able to enjoy the superb facilities of Mercedes-Benz World in the company of the Henry Surtees Foundation and star guests".

The interval features a spectacular display of Surtees built Formula cars and Brooklands Museum exhibits plus 'special' vehicle demonstrations.

The day culminates in a prize giving Champagne reception courtesy of G H Mumm in the impressive state-of-the-art Mercedes-Benz World venue where the prestigious 'H' trophy is awarded to the 2015 karting champion. The Champagne and canapé reception will be hosted by Steve Rider and feature interviews with racers and celebrity guest participants, plus an incredible fundraising auction hosted by Malcolm Barber of Bonhams featuring exclusive artwork, memorabilia and experiences.



Team entry for the Brooklands Team Karting Challenge £1200 per team of 4 competitors and includes 4 x tickets to the champagne and canapé reception

Champagne & Canapé Reception

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For further event details, to enter a team or book tickets to the reception, please contact:
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DAMS

Le Mans-based DAMS joined the series in 2012 and has masterminded back-to-back drivers' titles for Kevin Magnussen and Carlos Sainz Jr.



#1 NYCK DE VRIES (NL)

2014 Formula Renault Eurocup champion; Formula Renault ALPS champion



Enjoys the patronage of McLaren. The reigning FR2.0 Eurocup champion has displayed occasional top-six pace in testing. Credentials suggest he has the potential to develop into a race winner.



#2 DEAN STONEMAN (GB)

2014 2nd in GP3



Earmarked to compete in FR3.5 in 2011, before testicular cancer was diagnosed. Secured Red Bull support over the winter and will be aiming for the title. Preparations disrupted by a heavy crash at Jerez, but fastest in the final pre-season session.

FORTEC MOTORSPORTS

Fortec scored championship success with Robin Frijns in 2012, cementing its respected status, and has been a leading contender ever since.



#3 JAZEMAN JAAFAR (MAL)

2014 10th in Formula Renault 3.5



After spells at Carlin and ISR, the Malaysian has elected to switch to his third team in three years. The man who beat Carlos Sainz Jr and Alex Lynn in British F3 should add to his tally of three podiums, but can he make it onto the top step?



#4 OLIVER ROWLAND (GB)

2014 4th in Formula Renault 3.5



Rowland remains with Fortec after an impressive debut season in the category, in which he won races at Motorland Aragon and Jerez. Feels more confident on the team's high-downforce set-up than low, but starts as a championship favourite.

ARDEN MOTORSPORT

Arden made a late title bid in 2012 with Antonio Felix da Costa. The team's driver line-up this year is promising rather than stellar.



#5 NICHOLAS LATIFI (CDN)

2014 10th European Formula 3



Latifi always appeared more at home on fast, flowing circuits in F3, and scored a podium in one of three late-season FR3.5 outings last year for Tech 1. Combining this with a programme in the Carrera Cup GB.



#6 EGOR ORUDZHEV (RUS)

2014 8th in Formula Renault Eurocup



Russian Orudzhev set three fastest laps in last year's Eurocup and produced several strong performances in the wet. May spring the occasional surprise in his rookie season, but expectations should nevertheless be kept in check.

ZETA CORSE

The Valencia-based team carried Roberto Merhi to third in last year's standings, but will not be at the first round, although hopes to be back in time for Monaco. Facu Regalia was announced to drive before the deal fell apart, leaving the team with two vacant seats.



CALENDAR

RACE	LOCATION	DATE
1&2	Motorland Aragon, Spain	April 25-26
3	Monaco	May 24
4&5	Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium	May 30-31
6&7	Hungaroring, Hungary	June 13-14
8&9	Red Bull Ring, Austria	July 11-12
10&11	Silverstone, Great Britain	September 5-6
12&13	Nurburgring, Germany	September 12-13
14&15	Le Mans Bugatti, France	September 26-27
16&17	Jerez, Spain	October 17-18

LOTUS (CHAROUZ RACING SYSTEM)

The Czech team achieved race wins with Dane Marco Sorensen in 2012-13. Matthieu Vaxiviere's testing speed suggests further success may be within reach.



#9 MATTHIEU VAXIVIERE (F)

2014 8th in Formula Renault 3.5; 9th in World Endurance GTE-Am class



Testing pace indicates that Vaxiviere can break his win duck. The 2011 French Formula 4 champion has enjoyed a fabulous closed season, including a stellar run of fastest times in sessions at Jerez and Motorland Aragon.



#10 MEINDERT VAN BUUREN (NL)

2014 19th in Formula Renault 3.5



Showed some promise when he leapt up from Formula Renault 2.0 to Auto GP in 2013, and transferred that to a maiden FR3.5 season with Pons Racing last year. Will be targeting further progress this time around.

STRAKKA RACING

Sportscar benefactor Nick Leventis acquired P1 Motorsport after it was divested by Walter Grubmuller Sr at the start of 2013. Will Stevens picked up two wins en route to sixth last season. Tio Ellinas appears destined to add to the silverware this season.



#11 TIO ELLINAS (CY)

2014 Selected GP2 races



Ellinas could be set for a breakthrough year. The Cypriot has consistently disputed fastest times in testing. His composed driving style, evident in GP3 and the MRF Challenge, appears well-suited to the Strakka car.



#12 GUSTAV MALJA (S)

2014 5th in Formula Renault NEC; 12th in Formula Renault Eurocup



The Swede is gearing up for his debut season in FR3.5, and has hovered around the top 10 in testing. Finished runner-up in ADAC Formel Masters in 2012 before progressing to FR2.0 for the past couple of seasons.

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July 19th	Rye House - Full Circuit
August 16th	Daytona Sandown Park - Alternate Circuit
September 20th	Clay Pigeon - Full Circuit
October 18th	Daytona Tamworth - Extended Circuit
November 15th	Daytona Milton Keynes - International

ROUND 3 RESULTS:

Light Enduro	1st James Baldwin	2nd Chris Hackworth	3rd Dom Whiting	Light Heats	1st Chris Hackworth	2nd Ben Leslie	3rd Dom Whiting
Inter Enduro	1st Joe Holmes	2nd Bobby Trundley	3rd Tim McKeegan	Inter Heats	1st Joe Holmes	2nd Bobby Trundley	3rd Tim McKeegan
Heavy Enduro	1st Jamie Pender	2nd Chris Carter	3rd David Vincent	Heavy Heats	1st Chris Carter	2nd Jamie Pender	3rd George Duffield



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AVF

Arthur Pic gave Adrian Valles's team its maiden win at Moscow Raceway in its debut season in 2013. The team has since been looking to repeat the success. Dutch racer Beitske Visser appears its best bet this year.



#15 ALFONSO CELIS JR (MEX)
2014 21st in GP3



The 18-year-old has packed in outings in a variety of series. Former racer Valles should be able to help the Mexican's development. Celis, who also races in GP3 this year, has posted times around the mid-teens in testing.



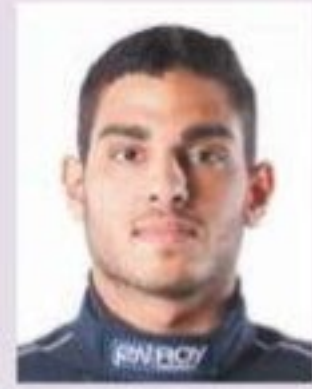
#16 BEITSKE VISSER (NL)
2014 21st in Formula Renault 3.5



Peaked with top-four fastest test times at both Jerez and Motorland Aragon. Regular points finishes are achievable, but it's going to take a big step for the former Red Bull junior to repeat test pace on a race weekend.

TECH 1 RACING

Brother and sister Simon and Sarah Abadie run a top-class operation. This year's driver line-up may prove too inexperienced to bring more silverware back to the accomplished Toulouse team, which has faded since Jules Bianchi's fine run in 2012.



#17 ROY NISSANY (IL)
2014 17th in European Formula 3



The French-Israeli has not troubled the leading runners in pre-season testing. He possessed the ability to produce a respectable laptime in F3, but regular involvement in incidents suggests he needs to build on his consistency.



#18 AURELIEN PANIS (F)
2014 9th in Formula Renault Eurocup



In Eurocup Panis occasionally had the ability to put everything together on a weekend, but not often enough. Testing form suggests he will be spending the early races acclimatising to the car and championship.

INTERNATIONAL DRACO RACING

The long-standing Italian team is seeking its first FR3.5 race win since current Audi DTM driver Nico Muller's success in Monaco in 2013.



#19 PIETRO FANTIN (BR)
2014 15th in Formula Renault 3.5



Brazilian Fantin has been recognised as being fearless since he came into FR3.5 in 2013. Two fastest laps last year suggest he possesses good car control, but has difficulty stringing a sequence of quick laps together.



#20 BRUNO BONAFICIO (BR)
2014 5th in Formula Renault Eurocup



The Brazilian has been around for quite a while at the Formula Abarth/Formula Renault level. Made a strong start to Renault Eurocup last season and appeared set to threaten de Vries before his form faded.

COMTEC RACING

The Norfolk team struggled to field two drivers last year, after Russian Nikolay Martsenko's withdrawal, and has missed the majority of pre-season tests.



#21 TBA



No drivers had been confirmed as we went to press, and Comtec may only have one car present at Motorland Aragon for round one.



#22 FACU REGALIA (RA)?
2014 Selected GP2 appearances



A great runner-up spot in GP3 two years ago was a prelude to a disjointed GP2 campaign for Hilmer. Was announced at Zeta Corse, and tested for the Valencia-based team over the winter (above). Rumour links him to late Comtec switch.

JAGONYA AYAM WITH CARLIN

The team returns to the championship after a sabbatical. Carlin achieved back-to-back drivers' titles with Mikhail Aleshin and Robert Wickens in 2010 and '11.



#25 SEAN GELAE (RI)
2014 18th in European Formula 3



The 18-year-old graduates to FR3.5 after two seasons in European Formula 3, in which his best result was a sixth at the Norisring last year. Will benefit from experienced team-mate. Missed the final day of testing owing to exam commitments.



#26 TOM DILLMANN (F)
2014 3rd in Porsche Carrera Cup France; selected GP2 appearances



Dillmann's career is back on track, eight years after a Nogaro F3 crash left him with a broken sternum and vertebrae. First tested an FR3.5 car back in 2010, after winning the German Formula 3 championship.

PONS RACING

Pons has been loyal to the series since its inception in 2005. Has won races with Spanish racers Adrian Valles, Miguel Molina and Marcos Martinez.



#39 PHILO PAZ PATRIC ARMAND (RI)
2014 18th in Formula Renault ALPS



Given his unremarkable FR2.0 results, the Indonesian surprised in testing at Jerez. Like team-mate Merhi, appeared to struggle in the final pre-season test at Motorland Aragon. Proven winner Merhi will provide a useful benchmark and should accelerate learning.



#40 ROBERTO MERHI (E)
2014 3rd in Formula Renault 3.5



Merhi will aim to end Pons's three-year podium drought. When everything is on song, the former F3 Euro Series champion is as good as anyone, but appeared to struggle with chronic oversteer in the most recent test at Motorland.



Lotterer won at Suzuka one week after Silverstone

SUPER FORMULA SUZUKA (J), APRIL 19 RD 1/7

Lotterer proves his versatility – again

FRESH FROM THE OPENING ROUND OF the World Endurance Championship at Silverstone, Andre Lotterer and Kazuki Nakajima flew to Japan to take a one-two finish for the TOM'S Toyota team in the opening round of the Super Formula series.

Lotterer, who anchored the winning crew for Audi the weekend before, made a great start from third on the grid to take the lead, while Nakajima – who had lined up fifth after his hot lap in qualifying was ruined by a red flag – burst through to second place from the off.

Lotterer steadily increased his

lead over Nakajima, so that the duo finished nine and a half seconds apart after 43 laps of racing.

Naoki Yamamoto, the 2013 champion, planted his Mugen Honda machine on pole position and looked set to finish in third place, only for engine failure to scupper his chances with just one lap to go. That promoted Narain Karthikeyan to the podium – the revitalised Indian ex-Formula 1 driver qualified his Honda-powered Docomo Dandelion car on the front row, and went on to take his best finish yet in Japan's top category.

James Rossiter was ninth on the grid in his Toyota-engined Kondo Racing car, and gambled on taking on fuel only at his pitstop. On old rubber he was holding off Joao Paulo de Oliveira, only for a nerf from the Brazilian at the chicane to send him across the grass runoff. It was all for nothing anyway, as Rossiter ran out of fuel halfway round the final lap.

That promoted Hiroaki Ishiura – who ran as high as third at the start after also getting the better of poleman Yamamoto – to fifth, with Nakajima's younger brother Daisuke rounding out the top six.

Ex-F1 racer Kamui Kobayashi was the best of the series debutants. He took ninth with Bertrand Baguette 10th and Will Buller 14th.

● Jiro Takahashi

RESULTS

1 Andre Lotterer (Dallara-Toyota), 43 laps in 1h14m01.371s; 2 Kazuki Nakajima (D-T), +9.484s; 3 Narain Karthikeyan (D-Honda); 4 Joao Paulo de Oliveira (D-T); 5 Hiroaki Ishiura (D-T); 6 Daisuke Nakajima (D-H); 7 Takuya Izawa (D-H); 8 Tomoki Nojiri (D-H); 9 Kamui Kobayashi (D-T); 10 Bertrand Baguette (D-H). **Points 1 Lotterer, 10;** 2 K Nakajima, 8; 3 Karthikeyan, 6; 4 de Oliveira, 5; 5 Ishiura, 4; 6 D Nakajima, 3.

JAPANESE FORMULA 3 SUZUKA (J), APRIL 18-19 RD 1/8

Cassidy from zero to hero

NICK CASSIDY ATONED FOR TAKING out his own TOM'S team-mate on his Japanese debut by taking victory in race two the following day.

The Kiwi held the sister Dallara-Toyota of Kenta Yamashita at arm's length for most of the opening race before sliding wide at Spoon Curve on the penultimate lap. Yamashita got a run on Cassidy up to the chicane, but the leader moved over and there was contact, with the young Japanese hitting the barriers.

With Cassidy punished by a 40-second penalty, Nissan protege Mitsunori Takaboshi therefore inherited the win in his B-Max Dallara-Toyota after an early pass on the Toda-run car of Keishi Ishikawa.

Cassidy made it a double pole for the second race, in which Takaboshi never relented in his chase and finished just over two seconds down, with Yamashita third.

Brit Struan Moore took a best



A happy Kiwi. And a very big bear

result of sixth on his series debut with the KCMG team.

● Jiro Takahashi

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Mitsunori Takaboshi (Dallara-Toyota F315), 12 laps in 23m17.389s; 2 Keishi Ishikawa (Dallara-Toda F312), +4.068s; 3 Tsubasa Takahashi (D-Mugen Honda F312); 4 Lucas Ordonez (D-Toyota F312); 5 Nirei Fukuzumi (D-MH F312); 6 Struan Moore (D-Toyota F312).

Race 2 1 Nick Cassidy (Dallara-Toyota F314), 17 laps in 32m48.821s; 2 Takaboshi, +2.153s; 3 Kenta Yamashita (D-Toyota F312); 4 Takahashi; 5 Ordonez; 6 Ishikawa. **Points 1 Takaboshi, 17;** 2 Cassidy, 14; 3 Ishikawa, 8; 4 Takahashi, 8; 5 Yamashita, 5; 6 Ordonez, 5.

WORLD CHALLENGE GT LONG BEACH (USA), APRIL 19 RD 3/11

Beretta fires them off

OLIVIER BERETTA CLAIMED victory for the R Ferri Motorsports Ferrari team on Sunday evening, but this round of the usually scintillating Pirelli World Challenge on the Long Beach streets can only be described as an embarrassment.

A fine entry of 31 GT3 cars, augmented by seven GT3 Cup Porsches, was decimated by a succession of full-course cautions that allowed for only five proper laps of green-flag racing.

The fact that Beretta led all 24 laps from pole en route to his third

win of the season only partly tells the story. On lap 16, after one of the many restarts, reigning champion Johnny O'Connell (Cadillac) made a fine pass for the lead in Turn 6, and Kevin Estre (McLaren) took advantage to squeeze through into second.

At the ensuing right-handed Turn 8, however, Beretta scythed through in a banzai manoeuvre that sent both of his rivals into the wall and allowed Chris Dyson's Bentley into second place.

● Jeremy Shaw

RESULTS

1 Olivier Beretta (Ferrari 458 Italia GT3), 24 laps in 50m14.291s; 2 Chris Dyson (Bentley Continental GT3), +0.999s; 3 Ryan Dalziel (Porsche 911 GT3-R); 4 Michael Lewis (Porsche); 5 James Davison (Nissan GT-R GT3); 6 Ryan Eversley (Acura TLX-GT). **Points 1 Beretta, 572;** 2 Dalziel, 514; 3 Kevin Estre, 428; 4 Eversley, 386; 5 Johnny O'Connell, 363; 6 Lewis, 334.



Beretta won chaotic race

NASCAR SPRINT CUP BRISTOL (USA), APRIL 19 RD 8/36

Kenseth dodges the rain for win

NEARLY 10 HOURS AFTER THE GREEN flag had been due, and following 11 cautions and two red flags, poleman Matt Kenseth became the winner of the Bristol Sprint Cup race.

With little respite from rain in the forecasts, many expected to be coming back to race on Monday. An initial 90-minute delay was followed by a four-hour stoppage 22 laps into the scheduled 500, and the final green-white-chequered dash was delayed by another red flag for a shower, but NASCAR achieved its aim before 11pm local time.

Kenseth was one of the few to have a relatively clean day. He lost the lead to Kevin Harvick early on but stayed out of trouble and re-emerged in first place at the final pitstops, then survived the string of incidents, cautions and delays that followed.

In his wake, Jimmie Johnson passed Jeff Gordon for second at the last corner. Johnson had earlier tangled with backmarker Jeb Burton and triggered a pile-up that eliminated Harvick, and also escaped



Kenseth (20) was on top at half-mile Bristol bullring

being hit by Kurt Busch when a tyre problem sent the Stewart-Haas man spinning into him. Busch recovered to fight for victory until collecting Carl Edwards as Edwards bounced off Gordon in a late tangle.

Penske's hopes had ended much earlier, Joey Logano ploughing into team-mate Brad Keselowski when the 2012 champion spun amid traffic just 20 laps in.

The curiosities even included a mid-race driver change, as Denny Hamlin bailed out with neck spasms during the long stoppage and handed his car to Xfinity ace Erik Jones.

RESULTS

1 Matt Kenseth (Toyota Camry), 511 laps in 3h37m54s; 2 Jimmie Johnson (Chevrolet SS), +0.287s; 3 Jeff Gordon (Chevy); 4 Ricky Stenhouse Jr (Ford Fusion); 5 Ryan Newman (Chevy); 6 Tony Stewart (Chevy); 7 Kyle Larson (Chevy); 8 Justin Allgaier (Chevy); 9 Danica Patrick (Chevy); 10 Austin Dillon (Chevy). **Chase grid 1 Kevin Harvick, 2 wins/314 points**; 2 Johnson, 2/258; 3 Joey Logano, 1/284; 4 Brad Keselowski, 1/255; 5 Kenseth, 1/236; 6 Denny Hamlin, 1/223; 7 Martin Truex Jr, 0/281; 8 Dale Earnhardt Jr, 0/241; 9 Kasey Kahne, 0/237; 10 Gordon, 0/227; 11 Aric Almirola, 0/226; 12 Jamie McMurray, 0/223; 13 Patrick, 0/211; 14 Paul Menard, 0/210; 15 Carl Edwards, 0/203; 16 Newman, 0/201.

INDY LIGHTS LONG BEACH (USA), APRIL 19 RD 2/10

Jones makes it three from three in Lights

ED JONES REMAINS UNBEATEN IN this year's Indy Lights season after picking up his third win at Long Beach on Sunday.

The Carlin-run rookie held off Spencer Pigot through the last quarter of the race in what boiled down to a battle of different downforce settings: Pigot had Jones covered in the corners, but he couldn't stay with Jones on the straights, and the Emirati ex-European Formula 3 racer crossed the line 0.6 seconds clear of the reigning Pro Mazda champion.

"It's hard, because if you're too conservative, you'll get caught," he

said. "I risked it a bit but fortunately I didn't make any mistakes and that's what kept me the lead."

Jones had started from fourth and lost a position off the line, but made up two almost immediately when Kyle Kaiser torpedoed Jack Harvey at Turn 1 ahead of him.

That incident put Kaiser out on the spot, while Harvey was only able to rejoin after losing several laps having his rear wing replaced. A second crash later in the race with Juan Piedrahita ended the Brit's involvement for good.

Felix Serralles was third, the Belardi driver having run strongly all

race after narrowly avoiding the opening-lap fracas. Further back, Jones's Carlin team-mate Max Chilton managed to recover to fifth after a crash in qualifying put him at the rear of the grid, while Shelby Blackstock and Matthew Brabham were both hampered by mechanical problems.

● Mark Glendenning

RESULTS

1 Ed Jones, 42 laps in 56m48.7630s; 2 Spencer Pigot, +0.6131s; 3 Felix Serralles; 4 RC Enerson; 5 Max Chilton; 6 Scott Anderson. **Points**
1 Jones, 95; 2 Pigot, 69; 3 Jack Harvey, 62; 4 Chilton, 45; 5 Serralles, 44; 6 Kyle Kaiser, 43.



Jones leads ex-F3 rival Serralles



FRENCH FORMULA 4

Stand by for another 'son of': Giuliano Alesi, the 15-year-old progeny of Jean, took a win double on his debut car-racing outing at Ledenon. Alesi led all the way from pole in race one to defeat second-year F4 exponents Valentin Moineault and Axel Matus. He also took the final race, which was called off after four laps due to storms, from Nerses Isaakyan (brother of Formula Renault racer Matevos) and Reuben Kressner. The reversed-grid race ended with Alesi on the sidelines after a collision, and was won by Sacha Fenestraz. Bertrand Gachot's lad Louis was also making his debut – he took a best result of 10th.

FRENCH GT

The ASP Ferrari of Morgan Moullin Traffort, Philippe Giauque and Jean-Luc Beaubelique took the honours in the first round at Ledenon, where heavy rain meant the cancellation of the second race. Giauque battled it out with the Sebastien Loeb Racing Audi of David Hallyday in the early stages, but both cars started the final stint behind the Imsa Porsche of Sebastien Dumez, who was sharing with Raymond Narac and Olivier Pernaut. First Moullin Traffort got ahead of Dumez, then Mike Parisy got past in the Audi to take second for himself, Hallyday and Philippe Gaillard.

FRENCH CARRERA CUP

As with the GTs, the second race fell victim to the weather at Ledenon. Steven Palette won a very close fight in the opener from ex-F3 Euro Series racer Jim Pla, with Porsche scholarship winner Jules Gounon filling the last podium slot on his first outing since his switch to sportscars.

NASCAR XFINITY

Joey Logano led every lap at Bristol in his Penske Ford, including the last stretch after the final restart, after which he pulled away from Mexican Daniel Suarez for victory. Third place for Chris Buescher moved him level with pre-race points leader Ty Dillon, who finished fifth behind Erik Jones. Reigning champion Chase Elliott was sixth, and remains just 12 points adrift of Buescher and Dillon.

REMUS F3 CUP

British and German F3 may be in a metaphorical coma, but 24 F3 cars assembled at Monza for a joint first round of the Austrian-organised Remus F3 Cup and Italian 'F2'. Malaysian Akash Nandy dominated both races in his Performance Racing Dallara-VW. In the first he beat Marco Zanasi by 27 seconds despite a poor start, and in the second he raced from 12th on the reversed grid to beat Christopher Hoher by 17s.

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Taylor's fought off dogged Ganassi chase

UNITED SPORTSCAR LONG BEACH (USA), APRIL 18 RD 3/10

Taylor's sew it up after Ganassi fight

RICKY AND JORDAN TAYLOR DROVE A perfect race to ensure a hard-earned victory for their father Wayne Taylor's team as their raucous Dallara-Corvette DP finished just over three seconds clear of Scott Pruett and Joey Hand in Chip Ganassi's Ford EcoBoost turbo-powered Riley.

The United SportsCar Championship now can boast the completion of 155 laps of racing around the unforgiving Long Beach street circuit over the past two seasons without a single full-course yellow. Saturday afternoon's third round of the season might have attracted only 17 Prototype and GTLM cars for the shortest race of the campaign, a mere 100 minutes in duration, but that was more than enough to provide a thrilling encounter for the large crowd basking in perfect Southern California weather.

Older brother Ricky set the tone by claiming the pole on Friday after an exciting back-and-forth tussle with the remarkable Pruett, who even at age 55 (seven years more than the combined age of the Taylors!) shows absolutely no signs

of slowing down. The margin between them was just 0.258s following a sizzling last-gasp lap to eclipse Pruett's record set last year by more than half a second.

Taylor maintained his advantage at the start and even stretched his lead to a little over three seconds after 28 laps, but that margin dwindled rapidly as Pruett set some fast times in preparation for the only scheduled pitstop, which came just a little after the half-distance mark with 40 laps in the books. The strategy enabled Hand to rejoin ahead of Jordan Taylor, who had taken over from Ricky after 37 laps, but Jordan was not to be denied as he executed a textbook pass under braking for Turn 1 on lap 43.

As in the opening stanza, the Dallara Corvette was able to stretch out a slight advantage, only for Hand to reduce the deficit to just a few car lengths in a classic Chevrolet-v-Ford tussle. The cars were rarely separated by more than a second until Hand was held up on the final lap by the third-place GTLM battle between Antonio Garcia (Corvette) and Fred Makowiecki (Porsche), which resulted in an unrepresentative 3.3-second margin of victory.

"I knew we'd only have one shot so I went for it," recounted the younger Taylor. "I knew everything was a tenth here and a tenth there. Thankfully, in the final laps we got some separation with some GT cars and it was more comfortable."

The GTLM battle was equally hard-fought. Giancarlo Fisichella atoned for a mistake in the final



Werner/Auberlen BMW claimed GTLM honours

pre-qualifying practice session by jumping from third on the grid into the lead at the start with Giuseppe Risi's bright red Ferrari 458 Italia, but he was never able to shake off the two BMW Team RLL Z4 GTEs of local Redondo Beach resident Bill Auberlen and John Edwards, who shared the front row of the grid.

Pierre Kaffer emerged from the pitstops with a comfortable eight-second margin in the Ferrari and seemed to be in control, until a moment suddenly enabled Dirk Werner (who had relieved Auberlen) to close within striking distance. Kaffer, oddly, then struggled for pace for a handful of laps, by which time the BMW driver was long gone in the lead and the Risi team had to settle for second.

● Jeremy Shaw

RESULTS

1 Ricky Taylor/Jordan Taylor (Dallara-Corvette DP), 78 laps in 1h40m59.571s; **2** Joey Hand/Scott Pruett (Riley-Ford DP), +3.300s; **3** Richard Westbrook/Michael Valiante (Coyote-Corvette DP); **4** Eric Curran/Dane Cameron (Coyote-Corvette DP); **5** Joao Barbosa/Christian Fittipaldi (Coyote-Corvette DP); **6** John Pew/Oswaldo Negri Jr (Ligier-Honda JSP2).

GTLM 1 Bill Auberlen/Dirk Werner (BMW Z4 GTE); **2** Pierre Kaffer/Giancarlo Fisichella (Ferrari 458 Italia); **3** Jan Magnussen/Antonio Garcia (Chevrolet Corvette C7.R); **4** Patrick Pilet/Frederic Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR); **5** John Edwards/Lucas Luhr (BMW); **6** Bryan Sellers/Wolf Henzler (Porsche).

Points 1 Barbosa/Fittipaldi, 96; **2** Westbrook/Valiante, 93; **3** Hand/Pruett, 88; **4** Cameron/Curran & Taylor/Taylor, 85; **6** Negri/Pew, 72.

GTLM 1 Magnussen/Garcia, 103; **2** Auberlen/Werner, 93; **3** Fisichella/Kaffer, 89; **4** Luhr/Edwards, 85; **5** Pilet, 83; **6** Henzler/Sellers, 81.



Fisichella's Ferrari led but faded

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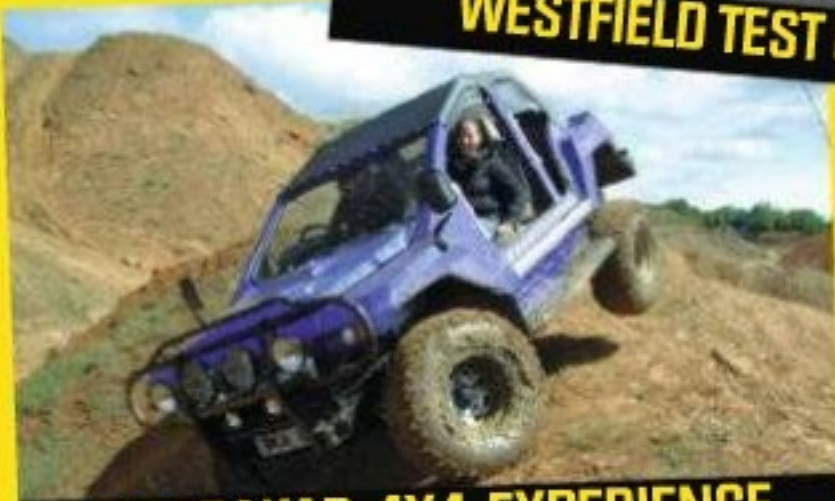
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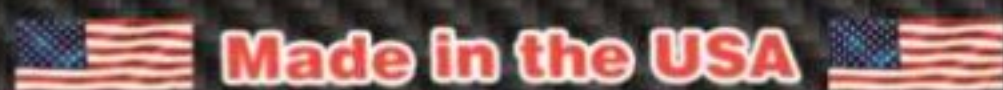


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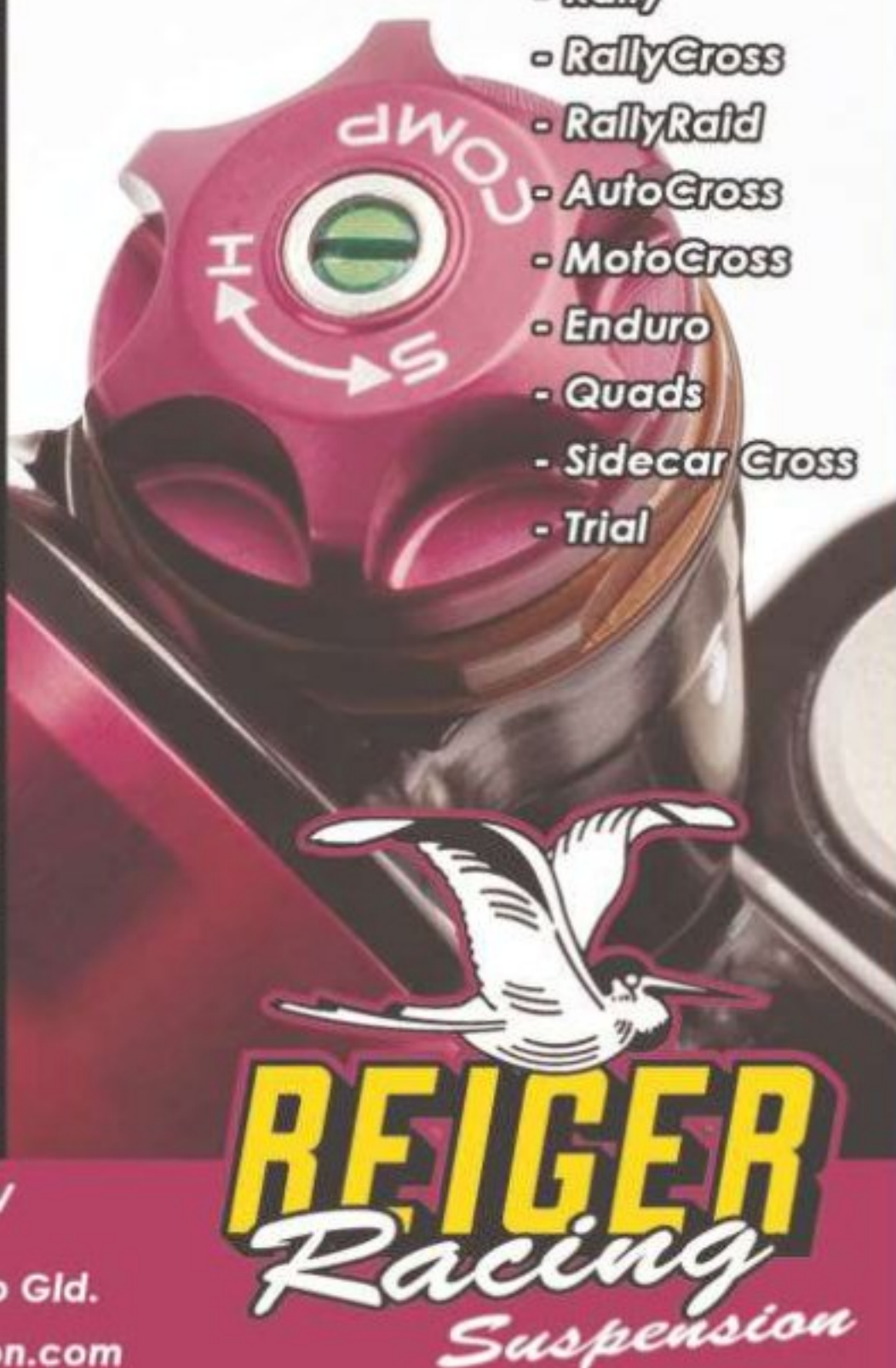
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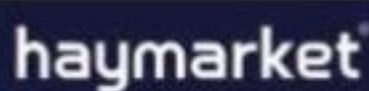
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Silverstone race returns this weekend

Silverstone 24H future 'secure'

Britcar boss says returning event is safe as 34-car entry is announced

BRITCAR 24 HOURS BOSS

James Tucker says the race's future is secure as it returns with a provisional 34-car entry list at Silverstone this weekend after two seasons off the calendar.

The race had been canned following objections from local parish councils after they received noise complaints from close to the Northamptonshire circuit. This season though, Tucker, who plans to leave his positions as Britcar director at the end of the year, has introduced regulation changes that include strict policing of noise.

"This is going to be a mega weekend," Tucker said. "With the Britcar Trophy and other full supporting races, it means there will be over 60 cars in the garages.

"There's nothing else like it in Britain for this variety of cars. It's

the same for the Nurburgring 24 Hours. It's really magic and could well be my swansong to the event as I'm 60 years old and I've put 15 years into it."

Tucker said a lot of work had gone into securing the future of the event after the problems in recent years.

"There have been a lot of misunderstandings, but there's now a much bigger feeling of trust in all parties," he said. "The future is guaranteed, the race has a year-on-year contract and regulation changes will include strict noise levels, which will be easily policed and keep the noise to a minimum.

"Previously, when the pace car has been on track, the racers would bunch up and create a different noise than normal. That will not happen. All cars will now be directly communicated to via radio by race

control for car issues or if their machine exceeds the 102 decibel limit. They will be charged to come off the circuit immediately, preventing increased noise from cars for multiple laps before pitting."

Tucker has pushed for more sports-prototypes to enter this year. The Ginetta-Nissan LMP3 prototype, which made its debut in the opening round of the European Le Mans Series at Silverstone earlier this month, will feature.

"I wanted the race to have both open- and closed-top sportscars mixing it with GT machines," Tucker added. "I'd like to see a mini Le Mans for gentleman drivers."

Among the entry will be Aston Martin Lagonda chief Andy Palmer, who will join former Formula Renault BARC champion Alice Powell in a GT4 Vantage.

Meanwhile, British GT ace Rory Butcher will join the MJC Motorsport team's bid for a second Britcar 24 Hours victory.

Scot Butcher has struck a deal to join Witt Gamski, Phil Dryburgh and Joe Macari in the squad's GT2 Ferrari 430. The crew won the Britcar 24 Hours event back in 2010 with the same car.

"The chance came about through Phil who I know from BGT and I tested the car at Silverstone and loved it," said Butcher.

ROB LADBROOK GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR

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BRITISH GT'S PLAN TO HOLD

a public display in Corby Town Centre is not only great news for one of Britain's most exciting championships, but it's also an overall positive for UK motorsport in general.

Like it or loathe it, motorsport can still be labelled as a niche activity when up against many of the more mainstream sports.

Football, cricket, rugby etc can all be played either for free or cheaply so don't struggle to pick up fresh-faced participants or fans.

The problem motorsport has it that it's not accessible enough. It's not free or cheap to try circuit racing, and to get to a track to see a race you have to part with cash for a ticket.

The key to attracting new fans is participation, and British GT promoter SRO has hit the nail on the head on that count. By having the racing cars and championship participants in a public area it helps to liberate the world of motorsport from the confines of a race track and spread its appeal and message to the wider community.

Yes, for now it's a static display. But consider this event to be the foundations of something far bigger and greater. Top marks to the Corby Town Centre executives for their willingness to support Rockingham Motor Speedway. They understand that motorsport brings tourism with it and is proven to generate serious revenue for local business.

If more town rulers take up the same accepting and open stance we could soon be seeing GT, single-seaters and touring cars performing demos on closed-road city streets. Now that would truly take motorsport to the masses and help spread the excitement of the sport we love.



Butcher will race GT2 Ferrari



The BTCC has run demos before



Toyota and Porsche will be in Corby display

British GT

British GT eyes live town-centre demos

THE BRITISH GT CHAMPIONSHIP is targeting live-action demonstrations in city centres in the wake of a free public display in Corby town centre this Saturday (April 25).

Toyota GT86 and Porsche 911 GT4 race cars will be on display on Saturday ahead of the second British GT event of the year at nearby Rockingham on May 2-3. Support

races are also featured, with two BRDC Formula 4 cars due to be displayed in Corby alongside machines from the Volkswagen Racing Cup.

British GT Championship manager Benjamin Franassovici said the display was part of a new push to grow interest in the series, and did not rule out working with other venues to do more to bring motorsport to the public.

"We're excited about the Corby display because it's not a common thing to take motorsport on to the streets," said Franassovici.

"We were due to have GT3 cars on display but many teams have clashing commitments.

"If this event goes well we want to do more, definitely, and we want to do live-action elements where possible to get

cars running maybe 100 metres and doing sound-offs."

Corby Town Centre director Dan Pickard added: "We're delighted to work with British GT because it's vital that the town represents a big asset like Rockingham Motor Speedway. We'd like to work with other promoters too, not just British GT, so we're open to ideas of touring car displays and such."

76

MSA Formula

MRF and F3 champ Sowery set for MSA Formula debut

REIGNING F3 CUP CHAMPION

Toby Sowery will switch to MSA Formula for next round's Thruxton month with the Falcon Motorsport squad.

The 18-year-old, whose F3 Cup title came in his maiden car racing season with Lanar Racing last year, had targeted a move into Auto GP but the opening round in Morocco was canned.

Sowery tested with Falcon at Brands Hatch recently, and again at the championship's official pre-event test at Donington Park last Thursday.

Falcon boss Nick Streatfield said: "Toby was excellent at Brands, setting lap times similar to those of Lando Norris and other top pacesetters. Donington just came too late to arrange all the finances as he wants to mount a challenge for the

full season. Although he won the F3 Cup, he needs to prove himself against tough opposition in this championship."

Alexandra Marinescu, involved in a testing accident before the opening round at Brands Hatch, will complete further testing before making a return.



Sowery tested at Donington Park

Ginetta GT4 Supercup

Ellis makes Ginetta GT4 Supercup bow at Donington

FORMER BRITISH GT

champion Bradley Ellis endured a frustrating debut in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup at Donington Park last weekend.

The 27-year-old had struck a late deal with the SV Racing squad to replace Jack Clarke, but struggled with differential problems in qualifying. Ellis will dovetail his outings alongside commitments in the Twisted Team Parker Ginetta G55 GT4 in British GT. "I'm friends with [SV Racing boss]



Ellis will contest more races

Danny Buxton and he has three cars, and would much rather they were racing, so I joined," said Ellis. "I will do as many as I can that don't clash with my commitments, such as British GT."

Although the team attempted to repair the car, a lack of spare parts prevented Ellis from taking to the grid in race one. He asked to join the race later for a shakedown but was refused. There were more software problems in race two and Ellis was unable to even start the finale.

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Historic F1

Brit Thornton starts packed Historic F1 season with win

BRITON GREG THORNTON (Classic Team Lotus 91/5) and Belgium's Loic Deman (Tyrrell 010) won an FIA Masters Historic Formula 1 race apiece as the championship kicked off with 29 cars on Barcelona's Spanish GP circuit last weekend.

Starting fifth, 2013 champion Thornton beat second-placed starter Deman by 7.7 seconds. Martin Stretton (Tyrrell 012)

was third ahead of Joaquin Folch (Brabham BT49C), who pipped Michael Lyons (Hesketh 308E) after a late spin. Deman passed Thornton early on Sunday, then stayed ahead. Christophe D'Ansembourg, Folch and Steve Hartley finished together, more than half a minute down, having benefited from Stretton's retirement. Lyons and returnee Andy Wolfe (Tyrrell 011) won their classes in both legs. Engine problems in practice precluded Italian F1 veteran Paolo Barilla from starting his Williams FW07.

American Jason Wright (Lola T70) won the FIA Masters Sports Car round from Leo Voyazides/Simon Hadfield, whose similar car's coil lead came adrift while leading, but a debut Gentlemen Drivers/Pre-'66 Touring Car victory in the Greek's Shelby American Daytona Cobra Coupe brought consolation.



Historic F1 kicked off at Barcelona

Ginetta GT4 Supercup

Boston's one-off return

FORMER KX AKADEMY MEMBER Rob Boston made a one-off return to the Ginetta GT4 Supercup at Donington Park last weekend. It was a late decision for Lotus Cup UK team owner Boston to race since his intended driver Adam Gore, set to make his Supercup debut, was absent with his second child due. "It was extremely last minute," said Boston, a former Lotus Cup UK

champion. "The car felt good straight away – we attempted to be out at Brands [with Gore] but didn't make it. It's all looking positive and Tom Wrigley in the other car hopes to do the full season with us." Having spun on cold tyres on his out-lap in qualifying, Boston was unable to set a time. He finished sixth in the opener, but further spins hampered him in the two other races.



Boston stepped in for absent Gore

MSA Formula

Norris wins Brands appeal

LANDO NORRIS HAS HAD HIS MSA Formula victory from Brands Hatch on April 5 reinstated after his Carlin team's appeal was successful. Championship stewards ruled at Donington Park last weekend that although the 15-year old had overtaken Matheus Leist under yellow flags, Leist had just passed him – out of sight of the Brands stewards – as the field slowed for the safety car. Norris had therefore been retaking the position. Norris regains his 25 points for the win, but receives a reprimand and two penalty points on his licence. He has also lost the championship lead after a tough

weekend at Donington Park in which he finished fourth, sixth and 10th. "At least the weekend wasn't all bad," said Norris. "It's a valuable 25 points and could make a big difference to where I finish at the end of the season."



Norris had been stripped of win

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club racing



Pye's love of the ERA remains

"EIGHTY-YEAR-OLD RACERS THRILL AT VSCC SILVERSTONE"

Almost 48 years have passed since I first saw an ERA in action. It was when Leslie Brooke, David Murray and Tom Wisdom demonstrated English Racing Automobiles in the company of fellow 'Anciens Pilotes' including Juan Fangio and Stirling Moss (Mercedes), Louis Chiron (Bugatti), 'Phi Phi' Etancelin and Baron de Graffenried (Maserati 250Fs), Tony Brooks (Vanwall), Duncan Hamilton (Jaguar D-type), and Tony Rolt and Roy Salvadori (Aston Martins) before the 1967 British GP at Silverstone.

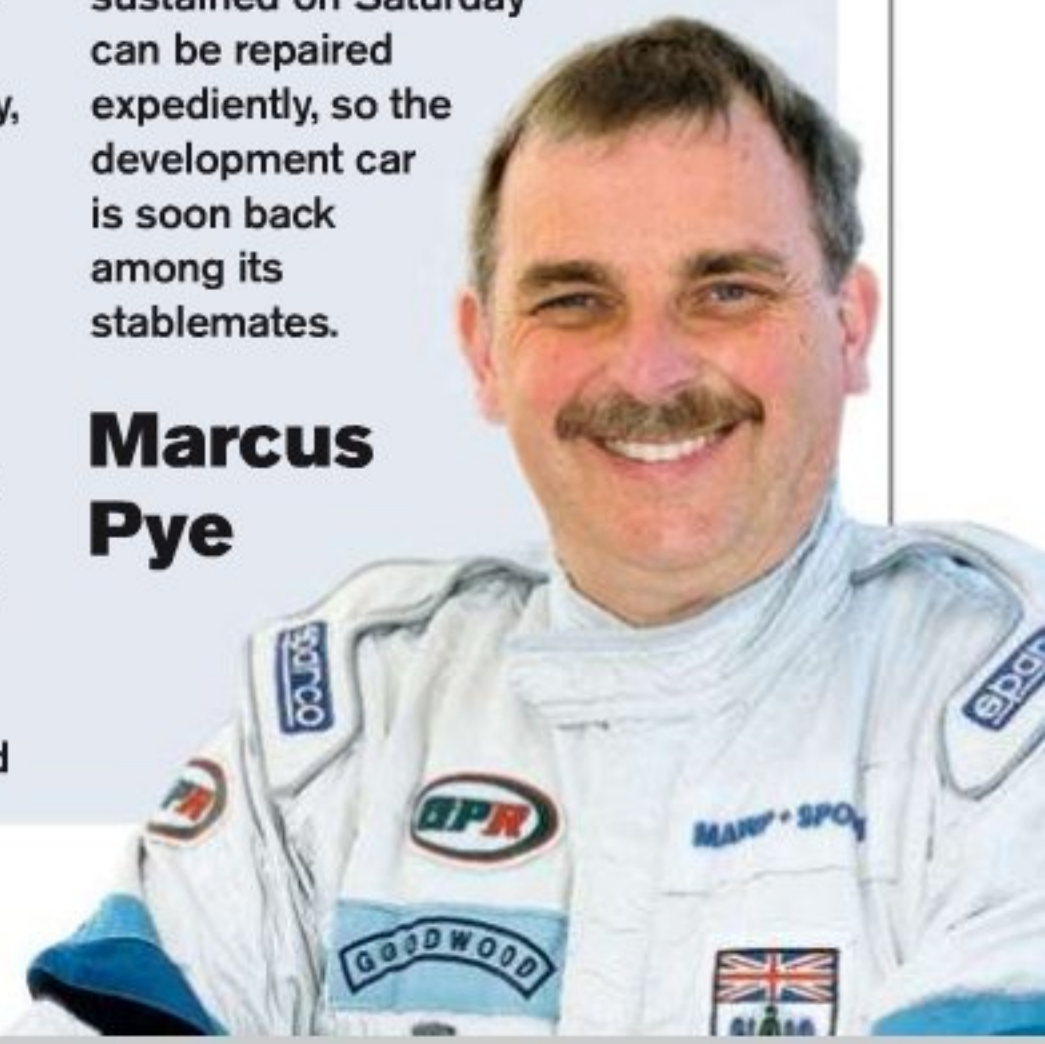
I've adored watching Raymond Mays's rorty ERA A, B and C-type brainchildren, plus the immortal R4D (the first racing car my wife saw close-up, in the early '90s, and indelibly Fiona's favourite) competing ever since. That I drove Bira's R5B 'Remus' for AUTOSPORT at Silverstone in 2000, during Ludovic Lindsay's custodianship, remains one of my most treasured motoring experiences.

Back at Silverstone last Saturday, R4A, R7A, R12C and R4D were reunited on track alongside the E-type GP1 at the Vintage Sports-Car Club's Spring Start racing season opener. Each time those rasping methanol-fuelled supercharged six-cylinder engines were run up, enthusiasts gathered, silently, as if paying homage to the heroes who raced ERAs in period, and kept the three-ringed flag flying post-war, when they changed

hands for what seem now to be absurdly low sums. Incredibly, either side of that July afternoon on which I, perched on a scaffolding crossbar at Stowe, saw Jim Clark win the GP in his Lotus 49, Barry Swann raced R2A in the Singapore and Johore GPs. Indeed, he raced the ex-Humphrey Cook and (post-war) George Abecassis car until 1970, when it was 36 years old! Now with Irishman Paddins Dowling, R2A joins R10B and will be his US mount this season.

The youngest of the perpendicular ERAs is 77 years old, but they are still stunning to behold, and quick. Take the opportunity to see the cars from Bourne performing in VSCC and other events, including July's reborn Chateau Impney hillclimb and September's Goodwood Revival. I hope the damage to R4D's suspension and diff casing sustained on Saturday can be repaired expediently, so the development car is soon back among its stablemates.

Marcus Pye



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MSA Formula

Teething troubles hit new car

MSA FORMULA CHIEFS WILL investigate problems with its new Mygale-manufactured car following numerous complaints from teams and drivers at Donington Park last weekend.

Drivers claimed that the car was unresponsive to gearshifts. Sennan Fielding struggled with transmission issues while James Pull and Ricky Collard reported similar problems.

"It prevented me from qualifying well all through to the final race," Fielding said. "In the races, I had to focus on defending well as the car would not downshift."

Fielding's JHR team boss Steven Hunter added: "We believe the problems could be because of the technical nature of the Donington circuit because we didn't have these issues at the recent Thruxton test. But there are not many

tracks like Thruxton which doesn't have many corners. Drivers are having difficulty shifting when braking."

MSA Formula boss Sam Roach said: "We know of Sennan's issues and we have the relevant people going through his data. It's a Sadev gearshift but we have a couple of weeks before the next rounds at Thruxton and we will be looking to address any problems."



In brief

Johnston joins TF

Former Renault Clio Cup racer Martin Johnston will have joined the TF Sport team as it expands to run three cars in this year's GT Cup Championship. Johnston, 47, will race TF's British GT4 race-winning Aston Martin Vantage (pictured) in the MSVR-sanctioned class this season.

Mono man's robbery

Mono Classic 2000 racer Peter Venn was forced to miss Sunday's second race at Cadwell Park after his wallet and credit card were stolen in the paddock. He had finished third overall in Saturday's race in his Anson SA4.

750MC eyes growth

750 Motor Club bosses hope that the newly-launched Summer Endurance Cup can become a mini championship next year. The two-and-a-half-hour race will take place as part of the club's meeting at Snetterton 200 on August 1/2. Up to three drivers per car are permitted with three classes based on the power-to-weight ratio of each machine. All cars must be derived from a series production racer.

GREG MARGETTS 1951-2015

Historic engine builder Greg Margetts has died at the age of 63. Margetts started as an apprentice at Graham Hill's Speedwell tuning company before working alongside Sir Frank Williams at the F1 ISO Marlboro engine shop. He founded Competition Engine Services in 1975 alongside John Middleton, building engines for Surtees, Fittipaldi and Ram, before supplying engines for F5000, Le Mans and historic racing. His units continue to be successful, producing the 2014 Formula Junior-winning engines for Jon Milicevic. AUTOSPORT sends its sincere condolences to his family.



STYLES

Title favourite's huge roll at opener

Caterham Academy champion David Webber suffered a dramatic accident in the Roadsports category opener at Snetterton last weekend. The pre-season title favourite launched into the spectacular roll at the chicane and was fortunately unhurt when the car finally came to a rest. AUTOSPORT photographer Richard Styles captured the entire incident

Ginetta Junior

Suspension for Ginetta driver

GINETTA JUNIOR DRIVER TRISTAN Charpentier has had his racing licence suspended for 30 days following a post-race clash with rival Matt Chapman at Donington Park last weekend.

The 14-year-old Tollbar Racing driver was also excluded from 22nd place in the first race of the double-header after an incident with Chapman in parc ferme shortly after the race finish.

"There was a confrontation between the two in parc ferme, after they clashed on track," said championship boss Ash Gallagher. "Chapman was the innocent party. Following the Ginetta stewards ruling, the matter was referred to the stewards of the meeting who viewed it as a severe case."

Charpentier did not start the second race at Donington, and will also miss the next round at Thruxton on May 9/10.

Mini Challenge

Fiesta champion in Mini Challenge move

FORD FIESTA ACE DAVID GRADY will switch to contesting the Mini Challenge Championship this season.

Grady, 29, has signed up to race one of the new two-litre turbocharged Generation 3 F56 Challenge machines and will run it through his family Unitec Motorsport team.

The first rounds take place at Donington Park this weekend.

Grady has been a regular in the BRSCC Fiesta category, lifting the ST title in 2011 and finishing second last year.

"I felt I wanted a change this year and the new Mini Challenge car is a really

exciting prospect," said Grady. "I've tested the car a few times and it's a great bit of kit. It has a lot more power than the Fiesta and also a sequential gearbox."

So far 16 of the F56 cars are entered for the first round, and will share the grid with nine older R56 JCW machines.

Fiesta Grady is swapping to Minis



JONES

Robust move earned
Witts the lead



SNETTERTON, APRIL 18 BRSCC

Golf ace keeps his Witts about him

A FABULOUS RECOVERY DRIVE IN the second Mk2 Production GTi race secured Thomas Witts a worthy double victory after he'd dominated the earlier event.

Entering its fifth year, the VW series is as popular as ever with 28 cars lining up for the first race of the season. Witts topped the pack in qualifying by a handy margin over Jason Tingle, who was fresh from winning the inaugural Golf Mk5 event held earlier in the day.

The nearest Tingle got to Witts in race one was on the grid as the poleman extended his advantage lap by lap. As the race drew to a close Tingle had to fend off a rampant Chris Webb, whose penultimate-lap challenge around the entire 300 infield section was just repelled.

Alistair Miles lost third place on the opening lap but was able to keep

the challenge from Chris Sanders in check for the entire distance to finish in fourth place.

Race two was a different story. Witts looked in control, until the Montreal hairpin. "I was defending the corner when Jason [Tingle] got underneath me and knocked me over the grass and I got swamped," said Witts of the incident that took him out of the lead.

Re-establishing himself in fourth place, Witts was then clipped from behind again, this time by Sanders, as a gaggle of cars vied for position going into Oggies. Sanders spun, triggering the safety car.

Once the race resumed Witts eased past Josh Johnson into Riches and then set about taking second place from Chris Webb, who put up stiff resistance, thereby letting Tingle extend his lead.



Eventually Witts's pressure paid off with a neat move into Palmer, and with a clear track ahead of him he set about the leader.

Heading to Murrays, Witts caught the leader by surprise with an excellent late-braking move and he swept past for his second victory.

Trying to make amends, Tingle

locked a brake into Riches, allowing Webb to close in and challenge down the Bentley Straight before edging past when the former leader became stuck in third gear.

Electing to carry on, Tingle narrowly failed to hang onto the final podium place when Johnson slipped past yards from the finishing

RESULTS

TEEKAY COUPLINGS MK2 PRODUCTION GTI CHAMPIONSHIP (7 LAPS) 1 Thomas Witts 16m41.775s (74.68mph); 2 Jason Tingle +4.053s; 3 Chris Webb; 4 Alistair Miles; 5 Christopher Sanders; 6 Adam Hance. **Class winner Andrew Aldridge. Fastest lap Witts 2m20.732s (75.94mph). Pole Witts. Starters 28. RACE 2 (6 LAPS) 1 Witts 15m38.813s (68.30mph);** 2 Webb +1.721s; 3 Josh Johnson; 4 Tingle; 5 Tim Hartland; 6 Hance. **CW Aldridge. FL Witts 2m 20.500s (76.07mph). P Witts. S 28. CATERHAM TRACKSPORT (BOTH 14 LAPS) 1 Timothy Dickens 31m28.492s (79.23mph);** 2 Henry Heaton +0.144s; 3 Jack Sales; 4 Jack Brown; 5 Chris Hutchinson; 6 Dan Gore. **FL Brown 2m12.675s (80.55mph).**

RACE 2 1 Dickens 31m29.248s (79.20mph); 2 Sales +0.017s; 3 Lee Bristow; 4 Heaton; 5 Brown; 6 Max Robinson. **FL Dickens 2m12.195s (80.85mph).**

CATERHAM ROADSPORT (8 LAPS) 1 David Webber 21m47.245s (65.40mph); 2 Paul Aram +0.500s; 3 Steve McCulley; 4 Anthony Barnes; 5 Joe Draper; 6 Robert Ryder. **FL Webber 2m15.686s (78.77mph).**

RACE 2 (5 LAPS) 1 McCulley 11m31.929s (77.23mph); 2 Aram +0.182s; 3 Barnes; 4 Damian Wilkins; 5 Ryder; 6 Benjamin Wigg. **FL Oilly Wigg 2m15.942s (78.62mph).**

INTERMARQUE & ULTIMATE SALOONS (8 LAPS) 1 Lewis Smith (Vauxhall Tigra) 16m16.660s (87.54mph); 2 Malcolm Blackman (Tigra) +9.605s; 3 Chris Brockhurst (Tigra); 4 Kevin Wendt (BMW E46 M3); 5 Mike Thurley (Tigra); 6 Chris Ayling (Tigra). **FL L Smith 1m59.718s (89.27mph). RACE 2 (6 LAPS) 1 L Smith 12m15.812s (87.15mph);** 2 Blackman +15.279s; 3 Simon Smith (Autocross BMW Z4); 4 Steve Burrows (Peugeot 206); 5 Brockhurst; 6 Ayling. **FL L Smith 2m00.113s (88.98mph).**

CATERHAM SUPERSPORTS (11 LAPS) 1 James Robinson 27m32.906s (71.12mph); 2 Clive Richards +0.784s; 3 Stephen Nuttall; 4 Danny Killeen; 5 Philip Jenkins; 6 Christopher Wright. **FL Nuttall 2m09.788s (82.35mph).**

RACE 2 (14 LAPS) 1 Nuttall 30m51.659s (80.81mph); 2 Killeen +0.079s; 3 Jenkins; 4 Richard Noordhof; 5 Andres

Sinclair; 6 Nick Powell. **FL Jenkins 2m10.167s (82.11mph).**

CATERHAM SUPERLIGHT R300 (15 LAPS) 1 David Robinson 30m51.132s (86.60mph); 2 Aaron Head +0.034s; 3 Matt Dyer; 4 Lee Wiggins; 5 Sean Byrne; 6 Jonathan Mortimer. **FL Robinson 2m02.174s (87.48mph).**

RACE 2 (14 LAPS) 1 Robinson 28m50.523s (86.46mph); 2 Head +0.956s; 3 Byrne; 4 Wiggins; 5 Dyer; 6 Trevor Carvey. **FL Head 2m02.052s (87.56mph).**

FIESTA JUNIOR (BOTH 9 LAPS) 1 Michael Higgs 21m30.768s (74.52mph); 2 Aaron Thompson +3.616s; 3 Nathan Edwards; 4 Elliot Wilson; 5 Sikander Hussain; 6 Connor Grady. **FL Thompson 2m20.729s (75.94mph).**

RACE 2 1 Higgs 21m18.409s (75.24mph); 2 Thompson +1.394s; 3 Edwards; 4 Grady; 5 Hussain; 6 Cameron Pugh. **FL Higgs 2m20.037s (76.32mph).**

MKS PRODUCTION GTI (BOTH 7 LAPS) 1 Jason Tingle 15m49.059s (78.83mph); 2 Martyn Walsh +4.052s; 3 Robert Sadler; 4 Craig Fleming; 5 Simon Hill; no other finishers. **FL Tingle 2m13.831s (79.86mph).**

RACE 2 1 Tingle 15m48.190s (78.90mph); 2 Walsh +0.670s; 3 Fleming; 4 Sadler; 5 Hill; no other finishers. **FL Tingle 2m13.905s (79.81mph).**

FIESTAS (BOTH 9 LAPS) 1 Samuel Priest (ST) 20m50.866s (76.90mph); 2 Scott Robertson (ST) +0.832s; 3 Simon Horrobin (ST); 4 Jamie Going (ST); 5 JJ Ross (ST);



6 Ian Wilson (ST). **CW David Nye (Zetec S);** James Styles (Si); John Cooper (Zetec). **FL Ross 2m16.288s (78.42mph). RACE 2 1 Robertson 20m48.457s (77.04mph);** 2 Going +0.814s; 3 Priest; 4 Gareth Broadbent (ST); 5 Kevin Stirling (ST); 6 Horrobin. **CW Nye; Styles; Cooper. FL Going 2m16.644s (78.21mph).**





Intermarque field head for the Bomb Hole



Nuttall won Supersports race two from Killeen

line. "Just as I crossed the line the car went into fourth gear," remarked a frustrated Tingle.

Tim Hartland advanced to fifth place with steady progress throughout the race, while Adam Hance edged past Alex Nuttall in the final stages to secure sixth position.

SMITH LEADS INTERMARQUE

Starting from the rear of the **Intermarque** grid didn't hinder Lewis Smith, who scythed through a Tigra-dominated field to lead by the time he negotiated Riches for the second time. It took Smith a little longer to lead race two from eighth on the grid – Oggies on lap two – while Malcolm Blackman unseated Simon Smith for second.

Olly Webb's **Caterham Roadsport** victory was removed for not having a front numberplate fitted. That promoted David Webber, who had got past Paul Aram on the final lap. Webb sliced through the field in race two to contest Webber's lead with the pair clashing at high speed, resulting in Webber cartwheeling over Webb's car to halt the race. It left Steve McCulley to take the win.

A truncated **Caterham Supersport** race was won by James Robinson from Clive Richards, who had got the better of his battle with

Stephen Nuttall and Danny Killeen. When race-two leader Philip Jenkins slid wide at Palmers on dropped fluid, Nuttall powered by and held off Killeen's late challenge.

The fight for supremacy in the **Caterham Superlights** between David Robinson and Aaron Head came down to a drag race out of the final corner, with Robinson just slipstreaming by the title holder. Robinson completed a double on Sunday, with Head in his wheeltracks once more.

A fantastic five-way battle developed in the latter stages of the **Caterham Tracksports**, with Tim Dickens timing his last-lap attack to perfection to dislodge Henry Heaton. After mid-race contact with Jack Brown, Dickens's recovery to snatch victory into Brundle on the last lap of race two was epic.

A sterling recovery drive saw Aaron Thompson climb from eighth to second in the **Fiesta Juniors**, but Michael Higgs proved out of reach. After a tardy start to race two, Higgs chased after leader Thompson and pressurised him into a final-corner error to complete a superb double.

In a sparse field Jason Tingle won the inaugural **Mk5 Golf** race after demoting fast-starting Simon Hill. Tingle's second victory was hard fought, Martyn Walsh keeping him honest throughout.

Sam Priest took advantage of an early slip from JJ Ross to take his maiden **Fiesta** victory despite late pressure from Scott Robertson. Robertson unseated Priest into Brundle to lead race two, while Jamie Going also slipped past the earlier race winner but was unable to unseat his team-mate.

● Lewis Beales



Smith's Vauxhall Tigra won twice



RXC was faultless

ROCKINGHAM, APRIL 18 360MRC

British GT and Britcar men win inaugural ERS race

OSMAN YUSUF AND ROB WHELDON combined consistent pace with patience to win the Endurance Racing Series three-hour race.

The Radical RXC pairing drove hard early on, staying with leaders Zac Chapman (Radical SR8) and Mike Wilds (BMW Z4 GT3) and inheriting the lead just after mid-distance. Gearbox problems in the closing miles couldn't stop Wheldon, who brought the RAW Motorsport machine home 1m 13s ahead of the BMW that Wilds shared with son Anthony and Ian Lawson, with Guillaume Gruchet (Porsche 997 GT3) third, seven laps in arrears.

Chapman sat on pole having dominated qualifying. From the rolling start he stormed into the lead only to lose the advantage one lap later, when the safety car was deployed while Chris Babington's BMW M3 was retrieved from the School Straight gravel trap. With the course clear, Chapman worked to build a 40s lead over Wilds Sr, with Yusuf and Mark Radcliffe (Lamborghini Supertrofeo) in hot pursuit. Further back, a superb battle developed between Chris Knox (Mini Cooper) and David Pittard (VW Golf). The two were only separated when Pittard stopped to check an oil-pressure problem.

Wilds took the lead when Chapman pitted for fuel, only to pit himself soon after, handing top spot to Yusuf. The leading

duo scheduled their first fuel stop/driver change for much later and consequently retained the lead when they rejoined.

After two hours Chapman refuelled again, but soon returned to the pits and retired with rapidly rising oil temperature. This left Wheldon with a substantial lead, and he chose to ease his pace slightly to conserve an ailing gearbox. Wilds Jr, driving the second-placed BMW sensed a chance of victory and went on a charge, setting fastest lap and reducing Wheldon's lead considerably. Lone driver Gruchet overcame a 30s stop-go penalty for an under-timed fuel stop to take third. He finished ahead of the Lambo, now driven by Kevin Clarke, who struggled late on due to tyre degradation.

Karl Cattliff/Nigel Innes won the accompanying 360MRC **Allcomers** two-hour race. Driving separate cars in a relay, the two BMW M3 pilots chased long-time leaders Anna Walewska/Kevin Clarke (also BMW M3-mounted) until, with 20 minutes left, Walewska dramatically slowed and pulled onto the start straight apron, retiring with engine woes. This left Cattliff/Innes with a three-lap buffer over Chris Whiteley/Nic Hayes (Ginetta G50), who were a lap ahead of Duncan Rodgers/Danny Russell (Mini).

● Ian Harden



Cattliff/Innes won Allcomers support



FORMULA VEE MONDELLO PARK, APRIL 18-19 IMRC

Vee thrillers leave them wanting Moore

ANTHONY CROSS AND RAY MOORE split the victories in a pair of frenetic **Formula Vee** outings.

With the Mondello Park timing system crying enough, the grid was decided by current championship position as opposed to fastest laps.

The qualifying race was an absolute cracker with impressive novice Des Foley charging up through the field after a difficult start in the works Total Leastone.

Unfortunately, just as he relieved Anthony Cross of the lead with a tidy move round the outside at Turn 1, the red flags came out for an incident, and on countback the places were reversed.

Cross regained the win from Foley, and the vastly improved Justin Costello completed the podium after a hairy mid-race spin.

Fresh from a win at Kirkistown, series leader Kevin Grogan's Avanti Leastone automatically earned pole position for the Vee Final via his points status, with Dan Polley's LOH Sheane alongside.

Grogan led away with Polley

right with him, but multiple champion Moore was already on a charge from a lowly grid position.

A few laps in, with a relatively comfortable lead, Grogan discovered oil at the Esses and rotated, as did Dave O'Brien. When the field settled down again, Polley led from Moore, Dave Kelly and Jimmy Furlong.

A little further back Foley was battling with his earlier heat-race foes before setting his sights on the lead pack ahead.

With a succession of quick laps, Moore dragged himself up to Polley's tail before breezing by on the main straight with apparent ease to take the lead.

In their wake, Foley had closed down third-place man Kelly and, having tried a number of moves with no success, annexed the place with a last-minute dive down the inside at the first corner.

Kelly wasn't giving up without a fight however and replicated the move on Foley two laps later to complete the podium.

Colm Blackburn was a lonely fifth from Stephen Morrin, who recovered well from an early trip through the gravel at Turn 3.

RABBIT RUNS AWAY IN FIESTAS

Barry Barrable took the **Fiesta** qualifier after a superb battle to the end with Michael Fitzgerald. Darragh McMullen completed the podium. In the final, poleman Barry Rabbit made no mistakes to lead away. Phil Lawless charged to second and, although he could run with Rabbitt, he wasn't quite close enough to have a go. The vastly improved Ulick Burke completed the podium having pressurised Lawless for the entire race.

Enda O'Connor was beaten away by fellow **Formula Sheane** front-row starter Brian Hearty but soon reasserted himself. When O'Connor's car lost drive, Hearty grabbed an easy win, with Keith Hogg an incredible second, all the way from the back. In race two, O'Connor made no mistakes to take the win, while Hearty broke a driveshaft on the final lap, allowing Kevin Sheane to take second and Richie Kearney third.

Ian Thornton took **Future Classic** honours once early leader Sophie Byrne had spun, with Aidan Byrne taking a close second from Dave Hammond's giant-killing Uno and Byrne recovering to fourth.

Paul Dagg blitzed the **BOSS** grid – his Dallara Formula 3 car clearly the class of the pack. Cian Carey was his closest challenger in race one with Clive Heak's Juno in third. In race two, Colm Hynes'

Quinn won on his tin-top debut



Formula 3000 Reynard charged to second with Noel Robinson first of the Formula Renaults in third.

Rod McGovern took the first **Irish Touring Car** race with Barry English and Michael Cullen making it an all SEAT Supercopa podium. Ian O'Driscoll's Civic was first production-class car home.

In race two, Niall Quinn drove superbly to avoid all the carnage and take the win on his saloon debut, ahead of McGovern in second and Barry English third. O'Driscoll again took production-class honours.

Once Bernard Foley's MGB V8 retired, Michael Doyle's BDG Elan only just held off the spectacular Steve Griffin for **HRCA** honours, the Modsport Midget shadowing the more powerful car across the line with Matt Dunne third.

Alan Auerbach took two hard-fought **Stryker** wins, with Alan Watkins leading both races early on. Dave Griffin completed the podium in race one while Mark Baker impressed in race two en route to third.

Mark 'Bernie' Braden took **Global GT** honours from Ivor Miller and Mark Twomey.

● Leo Nulty

Rabbitt pulls clear of a messy start



**NORTHERN SALOONS & SPORTS
CADWELL, APRIL 18-19 MSVR**

Morrison in the pound SEAT at Cadwell

ANDREW MORRISON'S SEAT LEON Cupra and Andy Robinson's Ford Falcon shared the victory spoils in the **Northern Sports and Saloons** class A & E races.

Robinson led the first race from pole, with Morrison snatching second when Andrew Wilson's Holden Monaro ran wide exiting Charlies on the second lap.

Morrison then chased down Robinson and surged ahead on Park Straight to snatch victory on the penultimate lap. "I hadn't switched to my fuel reserve and it began to splutter," Robinson explained. In their wake, Wilson's third place came under attack from Mike Cutt's BMW M3. Exiting Barn at half-distance, Cutt was through, and Wilson's hopes of powering back ahead on the straight were dashed by a line of oil.

Robinson stalled on pole for race two, giving Wilson the early lead while Morrison pushed hard for a second win. But as their battle raged, Robinson was staging a recovery drive, reaching third on lap three, after Cutt retired with an oil leak.

Within a couple of laps they were line astern for the lead, before Robinson surged into second at Coppice. An identical move on Wilson a lap later completed his comeback, leaving the Monaro driver to hold off Morrison for second.

The first of the **Multi**-class races was red-flagged twice, once when Steve Kirton's Vauxhall Corsa took out David



Morrison overcame Robinson for win

Cox's Peugeot 205 at the Mountain and the second when Paul Moss's Citroen Saxo went end-over-end at Park while running fourth in a four-car lead battle. Paul Bellamy's BMW M3 was declared the winner after two laps, from Kirk Armitage's similar car and Peter Dixon's Honda Civic.

Mike Williamson's Mitsubishi Evo 4 was lights-to-flag winner in the second race, with Bellamy taking second at Park on lap four and Steve Kell's Ford Sierra XR4x4 successfully holding off Armitage for third for most of the race.

RED FLAGS BLIGHT MONOPOSTOS

Bryn Tootell's Van Diemen RF99 and Jim Blockley's Ralt RT3 went clear from the start of the first, red-flag interrupted **Monoposto Classic 2000, 1800 and DTec** race and repeated it again in the



Bellamy held lead through red flags

four-lap re-run. Peter Venn's Anson and Alistair Bell's Reynard both pounced to complete the top four when Robin Dawe's Vauxhall Lotus went sick. Blockley was never headed in race two, once again interrupted – this time when Lou Watts rolled his Van Diemen. Dawe and Chris Lord's Vauxhall Lotus completed the top three after Bell spun at the hairpin.

Marc Mercer and Paul Donkin swapped the first **Atom Cup** race lead, before Mercer made it decisive into Coppice on the last

lap. Lee Cunningham looked on from third in race one, but was never headed in the second, but Mercer was inches away at the flag, with Donkin a close third.

Both **Monoposto Moto & 1600** races were convincing lights-to-flag wins for Jeremy Timms' Dallara, with Adrian Wright's GEM AW3 equally secure throughout in second.

In the **Trackday Trophy** Gary Burstow's BMW 328i led a three car break from Simon Clark's Mini Cooper S and Ben Abbitt's Peugeot 306. But Abbitt worked his way to the front of the trio by lap seven, only to drop out of contention when he hit a bump and it cut the ignition. With Burstow crashing out, Clark was left to take a dominant win over Jim and Ryan Gibbs' Ford Puma and James Clink's Clio.

Although Daryl Jones' Dallara was never headed in the first **Monoposto 200** race, he had Ben Cater poised to challenge until a spin at Chris Curve. Carter regained second on countback after Robbie Watts' Lola spun at Hall bends and caused a red flag. Jonathon Hughes was classified third and he went clear in a wet race two, after early leader Jones slid onto the grass at Mansfield. Cater chose wets and held onto third.

Mark Flower's BMW M3 led the **MSVT Team Trophy** all race, with Darren Johnson's Renault Clio grabbing a late second from Andrew Ball and Richard Hughes' Porsche 968.

● Peter Scherer



Timms dominated his Monoposto class

Ricketts Alta ego ends ERA monopoly

A FRENETIC FOUR-WAY SCRAP FOR Amschel Rothschild Trophy honours at the VSCC Spring Start event went the way of Fred Harper's Kurtis Indy Roadster, but Duncan Ricketts's Patrick Lindsay Memorial success in the concurrent pre-war race in David Baldock's charismatic Alta broke an ERA run stretching back to 1999.

The well-matched Connaughts of Simon Diffey and Michael Steele set the pace with poleman Marshall Bailey's Lotus 16 before Harper let the 1957 and '58 Monza Races of Two Worlds veteran's Offenhauser engine have its head. Once in front, Harper staved off the resurgent Bailey as their rivals faded.

Ricketts flew in the Alta – which, delightfully, had a sister in the field in Ian Baxter's ex-George Abecassis machine, last raced in the 1960s. The car's popular success in the 30th anniversary Lindsay feature rewarded its long-time pilot Paul Jaye, who has hung up his helmet to spanner the ex-Anthony Beadle car from Geoffrey Taylor's stable.

Earlier, Ricketts had retired ERA GP1 from the inaugural **Premier Cru Pre-'41** showpiece when his spare Zoller blower packed up. Alas, the race was defused on lap one when Calum Lockie dropped the ex-'Raph' Maserati 6CL attempting to wrest



Ricketts starred in six-wheeled Alta

the lead from James Baxter in Mac Hulbert's ERA R4D at Brooklands. As the 'Maser' spun Baxter unavoidably clipped it and both were out.

That left Nick Topliss to score a poignant victory in his ex-Pat Fairfield ERA R4A, despite a slipping gearbox band that sidelined them from the Lindsay field. Terry Crabb (R12C) and Sean Danaher (ex-Ecurie Braillard/Benoit Falchetto Maserati 8CL) enjoyed a great battle for second, in which Crabb prevailed after several exchanges.

Matt Grist stormed HWM 1 from the back of the **FiSCar** pack to win marque co-founder George Abecassis's Trophy, but Jonathan Abecassis (Austin-Healey 100M) did his late grandfather proud, challenging Grist to the chequer. Andrew Sharp (Aston Martin DB2) just kept third, with poleman Chris Ward breathing down his neck in

Eddie McGuire's pretty Gordini. Early leader James Cottingham's glorious Ferrari finished sixth in father David's steadier hands.

'Chain Gang Charlie' Gillett wagged his Frazer Nash's tail to take the **GP Itala and Lanchester Trophies** chequer from the equally exuberant Dougal Cawley's GN-Ford hybrid. Only one of the four Morgan Super Aeros survived, third-placed Gary Caroline winning the club's prestigious GP Itala staple for the first time since 1995.

Despite a sluggish start, Buckingham engineer Mark Lewis blasted his pristine self-built Lister-Corvette replica to '50s **Sports-Car** race victory after a mighty dust-up with Tony Bianchi's Allard-Cadillac Farrallac (stopped by diff failure) and Philip Walker, who recovered to second after gyrating his Lotus 11 at Becketts.

Red-flagged when David Ozanne's Aston Martin shed a wheel at Copse, the **Fox & Nicholl Trophy** was decided over a three-lap sprint closer. HRGs ruled but Will Mahany's bold run around Andrew Mitchell at Becketts was the arbiter. Polesitting Talboteer Richard Pilkington, 76, repassed Mark Brett's Ballamy-Ford V8 for third and his sixth F&N prize, 26 years after his first.

Scot Durward Lawson's Riley Sprite was just too fleet for Cawley's snorting 'Piglet' and Ewen Getley's lofty Bentley in the **Silverstone Trophy** set. John Earle Marsh's road-driven Alvis and William Elbourn the younger's Riley outran jostling packs to top the **Handicaps**, while Julian Grimwade overcame battery-frying problems in practice to win the short **Scratch** race in his Alvis-engined Nash.

● Marcus Pye

Shunt shakes up the FF1600 pack

A MULTI-CAR PILE-UP TRIGGERED by Jamie Jardine clipping the fast-starting Chris Hodgen defined the day's **FF1600 Northern Championship Pre-90** category.

Jardine touched Hodgen, who had the lead by Old Hall, and the ensuing crash reshuffled the order. Calum McHale capitalised to take his first Formula Ford win, in his first race in his ex-Hodgen Van Diemen RF89. He got a perfect restart after the safety car and drove away to the tune of seven seconds ahead of Matthew Cowley and David Murphy.

McHale subsequently started on

pole for race two, and completed a brace of wins ahead of Hodgen, who started at the back of the grid.

The **Post-89** category had its own slate of races, in which Josh Fisher moved out of his natural Castle Combe habitat to take on the McArthur brothers. Fisher drew first blood by beating last year's championship runner-up Dave McArthur by 0.578s, but the positions were swapped in the second race. Tom McArthur spent some time in the lead, but a mistake at Fosters put him into the grasp of Tom Brown in fourth. The two collided on the last lap at Lodge,



putting both out of the race.

A pair of first-time winners stole the spoils in the **Mighty Minis** races. Eighteen-year-old Brayden Fletcher took the first ahead of Josh Young, who made his racing debut after only recently passing his driving test, and the returning Maria Brown. Race two went the way of Australian Liam Sullivan, who dived with eventual runner-up Fletcher and Stuart Coombs for the duration.

Scott Kendall claimed contrasting wins in the **Super Mighty Minis** Championship. He took the first by 11.9s, but had to make a late-race pass on Jamie White in race two.

Mark Robinson beat Ralph Fernihough and Craig Brookfield in both **XR Challenge** races and broke a 19-year-old lap record. Robinson's brother Simon had a torrid day – he couldn't get going after a safety car in race one, and suffered after contact with Fernihough in the second.

Gary Duckman pulled off two brilliant victories in the **Porsche** Championship. He came from fourth on the grid in the first race to head Garry Lawrence, and recovered from an off at Old Hall to head Lawrence again later on.

● Jack Benyon

RESULTS ROUND-UP

ROCKINGHAM
APRIL 18, 360MRC

ENDURANCE RACING SERIES (121 LAPS)

1 Osman Yusuf/Rob Wheldon (Radical RXC) 3h01m14.161s (77.71 mph); 2 Ian Lawson/Anthony Wilds/ Mike Wilds (BMW Z4 GT3) +1m13.965s; 3 Guillaume Gruchet (Porsche 997 GT3 Cup); 4 Mark Radcliffe/Kevin Clarke (Lamborghini Super Trofeo); 5 Mike Moss/Chris Babington/Darren Nelson (BMW M3); 6 Martyn Compton/David Pittard/Danny Holland (VW Golf). **Class winners** Gruchet; Moss/Babington/Nelson; Compton/Pittard/Holland. **Fastest lap** A Wilds 1m20.271s (87.00mph). **Pole** Zac Chapman (Radical SR8). **Starters** 9. **360MRC ALLCOMERS RACE (73 LAPS) 1 Karl Cattiff (BMW M3)/Nigel Innes (BMW M3) 2h00m29.086s (70.52mph);** 2 Chris Whiteley/Nic Hayes (Ginetta G50) -3 laps; 3 Duncan Rodgers/Danny Russell (BMW Mini); 4 Anna Walewska/Kevin Clarke (BMW M3); no other starters. **CW** Whiteley/Hayes; Rodgers/Russell; Walewska/Clarke. **FL** Clarke 1m27.977s (79.38mph). **P** Walewska/Clarke. **S** 4.

MONDELLO PARK
APRIL 18-19, MRC

FORMULA VEE (8 LAPS) 1 Anthony Cross (Sheane);

2 Des Foley (Leystone); 3 Justin Costello (Leystone); 4 Paula Moore (Leystone); 5 Brendan O'Brien (Leystone); 6 Mark Elliott (Sheane). **P** Foley **S** 9. **RACE 2 (15 LAPS) 1 Ray Moore (Leystone);** 2 Dan Polley (Sheane); 3 David Kelly (Sheane); 4 Foley; 5 Colm Blackburn (Leystone); 6 Stephen Morrin (Leystone). **P** Kevin Grogan (Leystone). **S** 18.

BOSS IRELAND FORMULA LIBRE (BOTH 15 LAPS) 1 Paul Dagg (Dallara-Toyota F3);

2 Cian Carey (Tatuus F Renault); 3 Clive Heak (Juno Jaguar); 4 Fergus Faherty (Tatuus F Renault); 5 Martin Daly (Tatuus F Renault); 6 John Daly (Lola T93 Holden). **P** Dagg. **S** 11. **RACE 2 1 Dagg;** 2 Colm Hynes (Reynard 88D); 3 Noel Robinson (Tatuus F Renault); 4 Carey; 5 Heak; 6 Peter Dwyer (Lola T95/50 F3000). **P** Dagg. **S** 10.

FORMULA SHEANE (BOTH 16 LAPS) 1 Brian Hearty;

2 Keith Hogg; 3 Robbie Allen; 4 David Parks; 5 Paul McLoughlin; 6 John Linnane. **P** Enda O'Connor. **S** 14. **RACE 2 1 O'Connor;** 2 Kevin Sheane Jr; 3 Richard Kearney; 4 Allen; 5 Hogg; 6 McLoughlin. **P** O'Connor. **S** 14. **FIESTAS (13 LAPS) 1 Barry Barrable;** 2 Michael Fitzgerald; 3 Darragh McMullen; 4 Hugh Grennan; 5 Colm Barrable; 6 Shane Kenny. **P** Barrable. **S** 26. **RACE 2 (12 LAPS) 1 Barry Rabbitt;** 2 Phillip Lawless; 3 Ullick Burke; 4 Stephen Kirwan; 5 Fitzgerald; 6 Barrable. **P** Rabbitt. **S** 28.

IRISH TOURING CARS (15 LAPS) 1 Rod McGovern (SEAT Leon Supercopa);

2 Barry English (SEAT Leon Supercopa); 3 Michael Cullen (SEAT Leon Supercopa); 4 Eoghan Fogarty (BMW M3); 5 Kevin Doran (Honda Civic); 6 Owain Drought (Honda Integra). **CW** Jan O'Driscoll (Honda Civic). **P** Doran. **S** 15. **RACE 2 (4 LAPS) 1 Niall Quinn (SEAT Leon Supercopa);** 2 McGovern; 3 English; 4 Drought. **CW** O'Driscoll. **P** Doran. **S** 15.

STRYKER/GLOBAL GT (16 LAPS) 1 Alan Auerbach (Stryker);

2 Alan Watkins (Stryker); 3 Mark Braden (Global GT); 4 Ivor Miller (Global GT); 5 Mark Twomey (Global GT); 6 Conor May (Global GT). **CW** Braden. **P** Auerbach. **S** 19. **RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Auerbach;** 2 Watkins; 3 Paul Fitzpatrick (Global GT); 4 Miller; 5 Braden; 6 Mark Twomey (Global GT). **CW** Fitzpatrick. **P** Auerbach. **S** 24.

HRCA HISTORICS (13 LAPS) 1 Michael Doyle (Lotus Elan);

2 Steve Griffin (MG Midget); 3 Matt Dunne (MG Midget); 4 Wolfgang Schnittger (MG Midget); 5 Jonathan White (MG Midget); 6 Liam Ruth (MG Midget). **P** Bernard Foley (MGB GTV8). **S** 11.

FUTURE CLASSICS (13 LAPS) 1 Ian Thornton (VW Golf);

2 Aidan Byrne (Fiat Punto); 3 David Hammond (Fiat Uno); 4 Sophie Byrne (Ford Fiesta XR2); 5 Eddie Kinirons (Talbot Sunbeam); 6 Mick Walsh (VW Golf). **P** Thornton. **S** 14.



McGovern won at Mondello

SILVERSTONE
APRIL 18, VSCC

PATRICK LINDSAY MEMORIAL & AMSCHEL ROTHSCHILD TROPHY PRE-'61 RACING CARS (14 LAPS) 1 Fred Harper (Kurtis Indy Roadster) 16m08.23s (85.32mph);

2 Marshall Bailey (Lotus 16) +1.49s; 3 Michael Steele (Connaught C-type); 4 Simon Diffey (Connaught B-type); 5 Eddie McGuire (Cooper-Bristol Mk1); 6 Duncan Ricketts (Alta 2-litre). **CW** Ricketts; Crispian Besley (Elva 100). **Handicap** Tim Greenhill (Wolseley Hornet Spl). **FL** Harper 1m07.63s (87.25mph). **P** Bailey. **S** 23.

PREMIER CRU PRE-1941 RACING CARS (17 LAPS) 1 Nick Topliss (ERA R4A) 20m18.83s (82.30mph);

2 Terry Crabb (ERA R12C) +1m03.50s; 3 Sean Danaher (Maserati 8CM); 4 Richard Pilkington (Talbot T26 SS); 5 Chris Hudson (Bugatti T35B); 6 Julian Wilton (ERA R7B). **FL** Topliss 1m10.41s (83.80mph). **P** James Baxter (ERA R4D). **S** 10. **FISCAR GEORGE ABECASSIS TROPHY: 1950S SPORTS-CARS (23 LAPS) 1 Matt Grist (HWM-Jaguar) 30m03.19s (75.28mph);** 2 Jonathan Abecassis (Austin-Healey 100/4) +2.52s; 3 Andrew Sharp (Aston Martin DB2); 4 Eddie McGuire/Chris Ward (Gordini T23S); 5 Spike Milligan (HWM-Jaguar); 6 James & David Cottingham (Ferrari 500TRC). **CW** Abecassis; Sharp; Cottingham/Cottingham. **HC** Matthew Collings (Austin-Healey 100M BN2). **FL** J Cottingham 1m11.70s (82.29mph). **P** Ward. **S** 26.

GP ITALIA & LANCASTER TROPHIES VINTAGE RACING CARS (10 LAPS) 1 Charles Gillett (Frazer Nash Super Sports) 12m58.12s (75.83mph);

2 Dougal Cawley (GN/Ford Piglet) +2.02s; 3 Gary Caroline (Morgan Super Aero); 4 Chris Williams (Napier-Bentley); 5 Chris Hudson (Bugatti T35B); 6 Clive Morley (Bentley 3-4 1/2-litre). **HC** Alex Peacock (Frazer Nash AC). **FL** Cawley 1m16.51s (77.12mph). **P** Gillett. **S** 13.

FOX & NICHOLL TROPHY STANDARD & MODIFIED PRE-WAR SPORTS-CARS (3 LAPS) 1 William Mahany (HRG Le Mans Model) 4m05.47s (72.11mph);

2 Andrew Mitchell (HRG 1 1/2-litre) +0.47s; 3 Richard Pilkington (Talbot T26 SS); 4 Mark Brett (Ballamy-Ford LMB V8 Spl); 5 Jo Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash Super Sports); 6 Andy Bush (Riley TT Sprite Replica). **HC** Brett. **FL** Mitchell 1m20.26s (73.52mph). **P** Pilkington. **S** 23.

SILVERSTONE TROPHY: SPECIAL PRE-WAR SPORTS-CARS (7 LAPS) 1 Durward Lawson (Riley Sprite) 9m19.86s (73.77mph);

2 Dougal Cawley (GN/Ford Piglet) +1.22s; 3 Ewen Getley (Bentley 3-4 1/2-litre); 4 Tim Kneller (Riley TT Sprite); 5 Richard Illife (Riley Kestrel 12/4 Spl); 6 David Pryke (Riley 12/4 TT Sprite Replica). **FL** Cawley 1m18.59s (75.08mph). **P** Cawley. **S** 21.

1950S SPORTS RACING CARS (13 LAPS) 1 Mark Lewis (Lister-Chevrolet Knobbly) 15m06.32s (84.63mph);

2 Phillip Walker (Lotus 11 Le Mans) +20.93s; 3 Marshall Bailey (Cooper T39 Bobtail); 4 Matt Grist (HWM-Jaguar); 5 Oliver Llewellyn (Allard J2); 6 Ralf Emmerling (Elva Mk5). **CW** Grist. **HC** Howard McGuire (Playford-MG). **FL** Lewis 1m07.80s (87.03mph). **P** Lewis. **S** 20.

PRE-WAR HANDICAP (5 LAPS) 1 John Earle Marsh (Alvis Silver Eagle) 7m33.03s (70.57mph);

2 Greg Lerigo (Riley Spl) +3.98s; 3 Andrew Kellock (Fiat AC); 4 Tim Kneller (Riley TT Sprite). **FL** Simon Stokes (Riley Treen) 1m17.92s (75.72mph). **S** 26.

PRE-WAR HANDICAP (5 LAPS) 1 William Elbourn Jr (Riley 12/4 Spl) 9m04.02s (63.58mph);

2 Mike Painter (MG Kayne Spl) +6.39s; 3 Guy Northam (Bentley 4 1/2-litre); 4 David Asplin (Austin 7 Ulster Replica). **FL** Painter 1m21.65s (72.26mph). **S** 30.

PRE-WAR SCRATCH (7 LAPS) 1 Julian Grimwade (Frazer Nash Single-Seater) 8m58.29s (76.59mph);

2 Simon Stokes (Riley Treen) +25.03s; 3 Durward Lawson (Riley Sprite); 4 David Pryke (Riley 12/4 TT Sprite Replica); 5 Pete Candy (Riley Super Rat); 6 Richard Illife (Riley Kestrel 12/4 Spl). **HC** Ralf Emmerling (Riley Brooklands). **FL** Grimwade 1m16.03s (78.64mph). **P** Candy. **S** 26.

CADWELL PARK
APRIL 18-19, MSVR

NORTHERN SALOONS & SPORTS CLASSES A & E (11 LAPS) 1 Andrew Morrison (SEAT Leon Cupra) 17m48.25s (81.07mph);

2 Andy Robinson (Ford Falcon) +4.287s; 3 Mike Cutt (BMW M3); 4 Andy Wilson (Holden Monaro); 5 Stuart Carr (Caterham CSR); 6 Neil Finnighan (Caterham R400 SV). **CW** Carr; Mark Leybourne (Westfield FW); Scott Hubbel (Peugeot 205 T16R). **FL** Morrison 1m34.403s (83.39mph). **P** Robinson. **S** 10.

RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Robinson 16m35.030s (79.12mph);

2 Wilson +1.171s; 3 Morrison; 4 Finnighan; 5 Carr; 6 Alan McPherson (MK Indy RR). **CW** Finnighan; McPherson; Hubbel. **FL** Robinson 1m35.815s (82.17mph). **P** Robinson. **S** 10.

CLASSES B, C, D AND H (2 LAPS) 1 Paul Bellamy (BMW M3 E36) 3m26.688s (76.18mph);

2 Kirk Armitage



Hubel 205 at Cadwell Park

(BMW M3) +0.435s; 3 Peter Dixon (Honda CRX);

4 Martin Whitehouse (BMW 328); 5 Allan Gibson (Lotus Exige); 6 David Botterill (Porsche 944 Turbo).

CW Armitage; Dixon; Anthony Wilson (Austin Metro).

FL Paul Moss (Citroen Saxo) 1m39.221s (79.35mph).

P Mike Williamson (Mitsubishi Evo 4). **S** 20.

RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Williamson 16m47.024s (78.18mph);

2 Bellamy +0.765s; 3 Stephen Kell (Ford Sierra XR4x4); 4 Armitage; 5 Whitehouse; 6 Gibson.

CW Armitage; Steven Kirton (Vauxhall Corsa GSi); Daniel McKay (Ford Fiesta RS1600). **FL** Williamson 1m38.013s (80.32mph). **P** Williamson. **S** 17.

MONOPOSTO 2000, 1800 & DTEC (3 LAPS) 1 Bryn Tootell (Van Diemen RF99 F4) 4m25.519s (88.95mph);

2 Jim Blockley (Ralt RT3) +1.630s; 3 Peter Venn (Anson SA4); 4 Alistair Bell (Reynard 883); 5 Andrew Barron (Formula Vauxhall Lotus); 6 Robin Dawe (Formula Vauxhall Lotus).

CW Matthew Walters (Formula Ford Zetec); Douglas McLay (Mygale S10). **FL** Tootell 1m27.671s (89.80mph).

P Tootell. **S** 17. **RACE 2 (6 LAPS) 1 Blockley 8m55.808s (88.16mph);** 2 Dawe +34.168s; 3 Chris Lord (Formula Vauxhall Lotus); 4 Bell; 5 Barron; 6 Mark Drew (Van Diemen).

CW Walters; McLay. **FL** Blockley 1m27.319s (90.16mph). **P** Blockley. **S** 17.

ATOM CUP (13 LAPS) 1 Marc Mercer 21m09.338s (80.63mph);

2 Paul Donkin +0.488s; 3 Lee Cunningham; 4 Steven Endress; 5 Richard Marler; 6 Jonathan Lek.

FL Jack Rawles 1m36.250s (81.79mph). **P** Donkin. **S** 8.

RACE 2 (11 LAPS) 1 Cunningham 20m39.799s (69.85mph);

2 Mercer +0.131s; 3 Donkin; 4 Rawles; 5 Colin Tester; 6 Marler. **FL** Mercer 1m36.868s (81.27mph). **P** Endress. **S** 7.

MONOPOSTO MOTO & 1600 (BOTH 9 LAPS) 1 Jeremy Timms (Dallara) 15m00.101s (78.73mph);

2 Adrian Wright (GEM AW3) +9.827s; 3 Craig Hurrin (Jedi Mk6); 4 Jason Timms (Speads RM07); 5 Jonathan Reed (Jedi Mk6); 6 Mick Kinghorn (JKS JR01). **CW** David Wild (Lola T200). **FL** Jeremy Timms 1m22.677s (95.22mph). **P** Jeremy Timms. **S** 20.

RACE 2 1 Jeremy Timms 15m05.508s (78.25mph);

2 Wright +30.491s; 3 Jason Timms; 4 Marc Fortune (Jedi); 5 Hurrin; 6 Reed. **CW** Wild. **FL** Jeremy Timms 1m32.583s (85.03mph). **P** Jeremy Timms. **S** 18.

MSVT TRACKDAY TROPHY (25 LAPS) 1 Simon Clark (Mini Cooper S) 46m00.626s (71.29mph);

2 Jim Gibbs/Ryan Gibbs (Ford Puma) +25.634s; 3 James Clink (Renault Clio 182); 4 George Wright/Jack Wright (Porsche 944); 5 Alex Di Donato/Benjamin Punter (Peugeot 205); 6 Gary Papworth (Mini JCW). **CW** Steve Dolman (Mazda MX-5 Mk3); Jim Hart (Mazda MX-5); David Hitchin (Renault Clio); Ben Cook/Dave Jackson (Ford Fiesta). **FL** Ben Abbutt (Peugeot 306 Rallye) 1m43.539s (76.04mph). **P** Gary Burstow (BMW 328i). **S** 19.

MONOPOSTO 2000 (6 LAPS) 1 Daryl Jones (Dallara F302) 8m43.872s (90.17mph);

2 Ben Cater (Dallara F301) +0.291s; 3 Jonathon Hughes (Dallara F301); 4 Tony Bishop (Dallara F304); 5 Malcolm Scott (Dallara F398); 6 Shane Kelly (Formula Renault 2000). **FL** Hughes 1m25.519s (92.06mph). **P** Hughes. **S** 14. **RACE 2 (9 LAPS) 1 Hughes 15m00.954s (78.64mph);** 2 Jones +21.057s; 3 Cater; 4 Scott; 5 Jim Blockley (Ralt RT3); 6 Robbie Watts (Lola F106/03). **FL** Hughes 1m36.627s (81.48mph). **P** Jones. **S** 10.

MSVT TEAM TROPHY (34 LAPS) 1 Mark Flower (BMW M3) 1h00m15.548s (74.03mph);

2 Darren Johnson (Renault Clio) +36.302s; 3 Andrew Ball/Richard Hughes (Porsche 968); 4 Bruce White (Renault Clio Cup); 5 Paul

Sheard/Anthony Neild (Mazda MX-5 Mk3); 6 George Barrett/Phil Barrett (Ford Focus). **CW** Johnson; Ball/Hughes; Ben Littlewood/Gary Littlewood (Renault Clio Cup).

FL Flower 1m41.456s (77.60mph). **P** Flower. **S** 12.

OULTON PARK
APRIL 18, BRSCC

PORSCHE CHAMPIONSHIP (18 LAPS) 1 Gary Duckman (Boxster 987) 21m09.076s (84.45mph);

2 Garry Lawrence (Boxster) +1.668s; 3 Ed Hayes (Boxster); 4 Nick Hull (Boxster 987); 5 Jayson Flegg (Boxster); 6 John Cleland (Boxster). **CW** Simon Hawksley (924). **FL** Adam Southgate (Boxster S 986) 1m09.491s (85.68mph). **P** Hayes. **S** 16.

RACE 2 (17 LAPS) 1 Duckman 20m04.906s (84.01mph);

2 Lawrence +0.518s; 3 Hayes; 4 Hull; 5 Flegg; 6 Angus Archer (Boxster). **CW** Hawksley. **FL** Hayes 1m09.677s (85.45mph). **S** 15.

FORMULA FORD 1600 NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP PRE 90 (17 LAPS) 1 Calum McHale (Van Diemen RF89) 20m58.740s (80.41mph);

2 Matthew Cowley (Reynard 88FF) +7.067s; 3 David Murphy (Van Diemen RF85); 4 David Franklin (Reynard 84FF); 5 Will Alterman (Reynard 89FF); 6 John Wilkinson (Van Diemen RF86). **CW** Murphy; Colin Williams (PRS RH01). **FL** McHale 1m05.847s (90.42mph). **P** Jamie Jardine (Reynard 84FF). **S** 17. **RACE 2 (19 LAPS) 1 McHale 21m06.144s (89.35mph);** 2 Chris Hodgen (Van Diemen RF89) +7.701s; 3 Andrew Thomas (Reynard 89FF); 4 Cowley; 5 Jaap Blijleven (Reynard 88FF); 6 Murphy. **CW** Murphy; Williams. **FL** Hodgen 1m05.232s (91.28mph). **S** 18.

MIGHTY MINIS (BOTH 15 LAPS) 1 Brayden Fletcher 20m56.339s (71.09mph);

2 Josh Young +4.395s; 3 Maria Brown; 4 Steven Rideout; 5 Caroline Gilbert; 6 Stuart Coombs. **FL** Liam Sullivan 1m22.216s (72.42mph). **P** Gregory Jenkins. **S** 21. **RACE 2 1 Sullivan 20m55.334s (71.15mph);** 2 Fletcher +0.357s; 3 Coombs; 4 Jenkins; 5 Peter Bonas; 6 Young. **FL** Coombs 1m21.888s (72.71mph). **S** 21.

FORMULA FORD 1600 NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP POST 89 (19 LAPS) 1 Josh Fisher (Van Diemen RF99) 20m30.233s (91.96mph);

2 David McArthur (Van Diemen LA10) +0.578s; 3 Tom McArthur (Van Diemen LA10); 4 Doug Crosbie (Van Diemen JL13); 5 Martin Short (Van Diemen JLO12K); 6 Tom Brown (Ray GR07). **CW** Matthew Chisholm (Van Diemen RF92). **FL** D McArthur 1m03.964s (93.09mph). **P** Fisher. **S** 11. **RACE 2 (19 LAPS) 1 D McArthur 20m34.781s (91.62mph);** 2 Fisher +0.218s; 3 Short; 4 Chisholm; 5 Jack Wolfenden (Van Diemen JLO13K); 6 Stephen Roberts (Van Diemen RF91). **CW** Chisholm. **FL** Fisher 1m03.856s (93.24mph). **S** 11.

SUPER MIGHTY MINIS (BOTH 16 LAPS) 1 Scott Kendall 20m42.715s (76.66mph);

2 Ian Slark +11.901s; 3 Paul Inch; 4 Jamie White; 5 Steve Maxted; 6 David Berney. **FL** White 1m16.562s (77.77mph). **P** White. **S** 15. **RACE 2 1 Kendall 20m36.585s (77.04mph);** 2 White +0.186s; 3 Berney; 4 Slark; 5 Maxted; 6 David Kirkpatrick. **FL** Kendall 1m16.135s (78.20mph). **S** 15.

XR CHALLENGE (13 LAPS) 1 Mark Robinson (XR2) 21m17.097s (60.61mph);

2 Ralph Fernihough (XR2) +1.377s; 3 Craig Brookfield (XR2); 4 Simon Robinson (XR2); 5 Mark Buxton (XR2); 6 Mark Upton (XR2). **CW** Andrew Lennie (XR3i); Mark Noble (Fiesta Si). **FL** Brookfield 1m13.858s (80.62mph). **P** M Robinson. **S** 21.

RACE 2 (17 LAPS) 1 M Robinson 21m15.736s (79.34mph);

2 Fernihough +4.530s; 3 Brookfield; 4 S Robinson; 5 Michael Heath (XR2); 6 Upton. **CW** Lennie; Noble. **FL** M Robinson 1m13.290s (81.24mph). **S** 17.



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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



Formula 1 needs to be all about speed

Formula 1 has to be fastest

In response to Steve Cobbold's letter (April 16), speed is massively important to Formula 1. Motorsport is all about and has always been about speed, and the pinnacle of the sport should be substantially quicker than any other series.

As soon as another category is faster than F1, it will devalue the series, with questions being asked as to whether it

justifies its place at the top of the sport.

I agree that F1 needs to be spectacular and the cars need to be visually exciting to watch, but part of the excitement is seeing a car take a corner at a speed you just can't comprehend. F1 cars need to be unbelievably quick, they need to do things that no other cars can do because otherwise it becomes just another series.

Tom Martin, Cardiff

I feel compelled to write to you

in response to Ben Anderson's article analysing the current state of F1 (April 9). For me, a passionate life-long motorsport obsessive, I have to say I'm really bored. The cars aren't exciting, too many of the tracks are characterless and samey, the driver counts for very little now and the teams are all going bust!

The sport, as we used to know it, doesn't exist any more, but I do think it's saveable. The bottom line is that the few teams that profit from the current set-up need to accept that they may have to become slightly worse off to save the teams that are no longer viable, otherwise they will all be fighting over percentages of nothing!

We need cool cars (Ferrari's F1 concept was bang on), participating needs to be affordable and the sport needs to be a meritocracy (of course). We need cool tracks, accessibility,

noise (just a little bit more please) and then we'll have a sport – sorry, business – that will get people excited again!

Nick Keynes
By email

Here we go again! Bernie is

banging on about returning to V8s. This is not practical, Ecclestone is the only one saying this now and he's trying to drag his old friends at Ferrari into it.

If V8s did come back, we'd lose Renault and Honda and probably Mercedes, leaving just Ferrari (is that his agenda?).

It, again, proves he's completely out of touch with the teams, the fans and the realities of modern technology.

Richard Hargrave
Hitchin

I rarely find myself actively angry at whatever Bernie says these days – they come so thick and fast that there's barely

time to register them. However, I found his comments on the grid before the Chinese GP nothing short of insulting. Apparently, F1 fans are being driven away from the sport because TV pundits 'overcomplicate everything'!

Perhaps, Bernie, fans are being driven away by pay-per-view TV deals, tickets for races that break the bank because of the high fees you demand of the host circuits, and the rank unfairness of the money-driven world of F1, which is seeing over half the grid struggling financially week-to-week.

Carolyn Doyle
Gateshead

CORRECTION

On page 65 of the April 16 issue the picture of Hans-Georg Burger at Zandvoort in 1980 was taken by Dutch photographer Willem J Staat, not LAT as we credited.

BIG NUMBER

19 Seasons of racing at Croft since the North Yorkshire track reopened in 1997. The first of 2015 is this weekend, with a strong clubbie mix.

MILESTONE

The World Rallycross Championship had a super-successful first season in 2014, and its second year kicks off in Portugal this weekend with 21 entries in the Supercar class.



MCKLEIN/LAT

WHAT'S ON TRACK IN THE UK

EVENT OF THE WEEK



Racing around the clock at Silverstone

AVRES

BRITCAR 24 HOURS

April 24-26

The 24-hour race at Silverstone is returning after two years and promises to be a thriller. Competitors include 2014

British GT4 title winner Beechdean AMR, while Ginetta enters the LMP3 prototype that made a winning debut in the European Le Mans Series. SZ Motorsport has 2011 winning

driver Sean McInerney, and 2009 victor Topcats Racing will contest its 10th consecutive Britcar 24 Hour race. Support races range from Historic Touring Cars to 250cc karts.

BRANDS HATCH 750 MC

April 25-26

A busy programme of packed grids from the 750 Motor Club squeezed onto the Brands Hatch Indy layout.



WALDER

CROFT BARC

April 25-26

Classic Formula Ford 2000 and Clubmans Cup will set the pace at Croft, while Legends and Max5s provide frenetic racing.

PRESCOTT BRITISH HILLCLIMB

April 25-26

The 2015 MSA British Hillclimb Championship gets under way, along with a host of other competitive hillclimb series.

DONINGTON PARK MSVR

April 25-26

MSVR's visit to Donington Park features the big-name sportscar brands of the GT Cup, plus rapid single-seaters in the F3 Cup and tin-top thrills of the Mini Challenge.

KIRKISTOWN 500MRCI

April 25

Kirkistown's regular local series are headlined by the brewing FF1600 rivalry between Jonny McMullan and Jake Byrne.

WHAT'S ON TRACK AROUND THE WORLD



MCKLEIN.DE

WRC

RALLY ARGENTINA

World Rally Championship
Rd 4/13
Villa Carlos Paz, Argentina
April 23-26
wrc.com

INDYCAR SERIES

Rd 4/15
Barber Motorsports Park,
Alabama, USA
April 26
indycar.com

INDY LIGHTS

Rd 3/10
Barber Motorsports Park,
Alabama, USA
April 25-26
indycar.com/RoadToIndy

FORMULA RENAULT 3.5

Rd 1/9
Motorland Aragon, Spain
April 25-26
renaultsport.com

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP

Rd 1/7
Motorland Aragon, Spain
April 25-26
renaultsport.com

WORLD RALLYCROSS

Rd 1/13
Montalegre, Portugal
April 25-26
rallycrossrx.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 9/36
Richmond, Virginia, USA
April 25
nascar.com

ADAC GT MASTERS

Rd 1/8
Oschersleben, Germany
April 25-26
adac-gt-masters.de

INT'NATIONAL GT OPEN

Rd 1/7
Paul Ricard, France
April 25-26
gtopen.net

EUROFORMULA OPEN

Rd 2/8
Paul Ricard, France
April 25-26
euroformulaopen.net

V8 STOCK CARS

Rd 3/12
Velopark, Brazil
April 26
stockcar.com.br

SUPER TC2000

Rd 2/12
Rosario, Argentina
April 26
super-tc2000.com.ar



FR3.5

Renault's single-seater season kicks off in Spain

DUTCHPHOTOAGENCY/LAT

FROM THE SOFA

WHAT'S ON TELEVISION

Q&A

BEN EDWARDS BBC F1 COMMENTATOR

@benedwardstv

AUTOSPORT: Does having some racing experience help?

Ben Edwards: The psychology of the sport has always fascinated me because I was once an aspiring driver trying to be a professional.

I won two national championships in my racing so – although it wasn't against the best drivers in the world – it does give me an insight into what it is not only to win races, but to chase championships.

AS: What was the first race you commented on?

BE: I won the Formula First championship [in 1987] and as a result, I wasn't allowed to compete in the three-race winter series. But the BBC had been covering it, so I wrote to them and asked if I could be the expert commentator. Around the same time I was helping Brian Jones out with some commentary at Brands Hatch and he was the one who said 'you have some ability here, you should pursue it'.

AS: Did you have any commentary aspirations then?

BE: I was busy trying to be a racing driver and I saw being a commentator as showing a way of being able to communicate the sport that could help in terms of attracting sponsorship.

AS: What prompted you to switch?

BE: My opportunity to start doing more commentary with Eurosport in 1993 with IndyCar. I did that for two years but I was still trying to race and won the Caterham Vauxhall championship in 1992. Then at the end of 1994, the boss of Eurosport came to me and said they'd like me to do Formula 1 with John Watson. That was the point where I realised I had to focus on commentary.



FFirst experience was useful



XPBIMAGES

Edwards took lead
BBC role in 2012

AS: How has the job changed?

BE: The main difference is the access to [public domain] information but that is slightly countered by reduced access to information from the teams. If I'm looking up a driver's bio, it only takes me a second now whereas you used to trawl through old editions of AUTOSPORT. Nowadays, I go on to the website.

In terms of commentary, the radio communication that comes through makes a big difference because you've always got to be ready to break your train of thought. It was a more lengthy kind of storytelling and now it's more reactive.

AS: Have you had moments where the technology has failed on you?

BE: In Brazil with Eurosport in the

mid-nineties, John and I had blank screens and were on a telephone handset with a phone to each other because that was the only way our commentary could go down the lines.

AS: Do you have a standout race?

BE: They've often been championship deciders so the two that stand out for me are 2009 British Touring Cars and 2012 Formula 1. Jim Bamber did a cartoon after that race of me and David Coulthard in the commentary box and my head exploding. It's kind of how it felt!

AS: What's the big future challenge for a commentator?

BE: Being as well informed as the guy at home. Sitting at home with so much technology, you're going to be as well informed, if not better than we are. There is now other information out there coming from all directions.

Ben Edwards was talking to Lawrence Barretto

TV pick of

Edited by Rian Hoskins



VAN DER LAAN/LAT

ARAGON FR3.5 - LIVE ESPN

Saturday 1330-1415

Formula Renault 3.5 launched its last two champions – Carlos Sainz Jr and Kevin Magnussen – straight in to Formula 1. There's already a grand prix driver on its 2015 grid, though, with Roberto Merhi competing for Pons alongside his Manor F1 commitments.

British fans will be focused on Dean Stoneman and Oliver Rowland, and Carlin is back too, led by likely title contender Tom Dillmann. The full season should be on BT and ESPN, but it's not all live – race two from Aragon just gets delayed highlights.



McKELIN/LAT

WORLD RALLYCROSS

Eurosport

Sunday 1800-1900

Petter Solberg begins his World RX title defence at Montalegre in Portugal, with an even higher-quality field of opposition, including fellow rallying converts Manfred Stohl and PG Andersson (in the mighty works-backed Marklund Volkswagen).

There's as strong a Scandinavian contingent as you'd expect - Toomas Heikkinen, Timmy Hansen, Andreas Bakkerud and Reinis Nitiss are also potential winners, and will his new tie-up with Solberg bring Liam Doran back to the front? Eurosport has highlights of the whole event shortly after the finish.

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ONLINE

the week



WRC ARGENTINA HIGHLIGHTS Motors TV Saturday-Monday 0900-0930

BT Sport has a live superspecial on Friday and the powerstage on Sunday, but this time the next-morning highlights packages are probably the better bet for getting a flavour of what is now the longest event on the World Rally Championship calendar.

A plethora of relative 'endurance' stages is headlined by the 32 miles of Ascchinga.

Double champion Sebastien Ogier has dominated proceedings so far in 2015, with three wins from three rallies and an early 34-points lead over Volkswagen team-mate Andreas Mikkelsen.



BARBER INDYCAR - LIVE ESPN Sunday 2000-2300

Juan Pablo Montoya appears to have rediscovered his love for racing in the series that established his name internationally, and he still leads the championship after Long Beach.

He's also Penske's only IndyCar winner of 2015 so far, despite the number of top-three and top-four sweeps the expanded team has notched up in practice and qualifying sessions.

Ryan Hunter-Reay won at Barber last year for Andretti Autosport, which is yet to win this season.



CLASSIC F1 - SPAIN 2012 Sky Sports F1 Monday 2100-2315

With the Spanish Grand Prix next up after F1's current gap, Barcelona 2012 seems the ideal pick of Sky's re-runs.

While known as someone with a propensity to tangle with his fellow competitors, the frequently lambasted Pastor Maldonado showed what he could do when everything comes together in Spain three years ago.

Promoted from a surprise front row to a shock pole by McLaren's fuel error, he defeated Fernando Alonso at home. Remember that achievement next time he's being hauled over the coals.



RICARD GT OPEN - LIVE Motors TV Saturday 1450-1620

No WEC, Blancpain, USC or British GT this week, so Jesus Pareja's alternative European GT series takes precedence for sportscar coverage as its 2015 season gets under way with two races at Paul Ricard, the first shown live on Motors TV, the second in highlight form at 8.50pm on Sunday.

Last year built to a three-way title shootout in the finale and the stakes have been raised by McLaren's involvement, with factory ace (and 2005 British F3 champion) Alvaro Parente placed with the Teo Martin squad.

Top stories on AUTOSPORT.com in the last week

ECCLESTONE CALLS FOR 1000HP V8S

Bernie Ecclestone brought the Formula 1 engine debate back to the fore with some eye-catching comments ahead of the Bahrain GP

RICCIARDO NOW ON TO FOURTH ENGINE

After another Red Bull-Renault engine went up in smoke, team boss Christian Horner confirmed on Sunday night that it "will become a coffee table" now

McLAREN NOW 'RAMPING UP' PERFORMANCE

There was positive news for McLaren fans when its racing director Eric Boullier told AUTOSPORT the latest plans to improve the MP4-30

ALONSO WANTS 'DEEP' RELIABILITY PROBE

Jenson Button's repeated car failures over the Bahrain GP weekend caused concern for his team-mate Fernando Alonso, who wants McLaren to conduct a thorough investigation

RAIKKONEN REPRIMANDED FOR PIT INCIDENT

Kimi Raikkonen caught the attention of the Bahrain GP stewards for his actions in the pitlane during practice, while Lewis Hamilton escaped any sanction



WHO IS WINNING THE TEAM-MATE WARS?

Gary Anderson looks at the differences between F1's team-mates and decides who his number one drivers would be

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube **COOK SHOWS HIS QUALITY IN BTCC QUALIFYING**



SEARCH FOR: JOSH COOK'S DONINGTON PARK QUALIFYING | BTCC 2015

Watch Clio Cup graduate Josh Cook clock the sixth-fastest time in only his second BTCC meeting. The Power Maxed Racing Chevrolet Cruze driver impressed all weekend at Donington, and now leads the Jack Sears Trophy for series rookies.

@AUTOSPORT TWEETERS

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Edd Straw
@eddstrawF1 | Matt Beer
@mattofautosport | Mark Glendenning
@m_glendenning |
| Glenn Freeman
@glenn_autosport | Stuart Codling
@CoddersF1 | Mitchell Adam
@DrMitchellAdam |
| Marcus Simmons
@MarcusSimmons54 | David Evans
@davidevansrally | Henry Hope-Frost
@henryhopefrost |
| Jonathan Noble
@NobleF1 | Scott Mitchell
@ScottMitchell89 | Lawrence Barretto
@lawrobarretto |
| Ben Anderson
@BenAndersonAuto | Gary Watkins
@gazzasportscars | Rob Ladbrook
@LaddersMN |

Fred Gallagher

■ Safari Rally ■ April 11-16 1990 ■ Toyota Celica GT-4 ■ Victory with help from an arch-rival



African mud tested rally crews' mettle

96

The choice would have to be one of my Safari Rally wins with Bjorn Waldegaard. Every time I did it with him – which was seven times in a row from 1986 to '92 – we either won, led or were competitive, so it was a great partnership that I remember fondly.

I'd won it with Juha Kankkunen in 1985, which was the first time either of us had done the rally, and that was memorable too of course, but my favourite was my victory with Bjorn in '90.

We'd done a massive amount of testing in the four-wheel-drive ST165 Celica, an entire rally's worth, in fact, so we were totally prepared and confident.

I remember early on, we left Nairobi and were flying down the Mombasa road. After 30 or 40km we caught Miki Biasion in the Lancia and I thought, 'Yeah, this is great.' Bjorn was more circumspect, however, and told himself he had to slow down.

The pace between us and the two Lancias of Biasion and Kankkunen

was very similar and stayed like that for the first day and a half.

Then things started to get interesting. We left Nairobi at the start of leg two and came to a steep section on the Mau escarpment. I'd never seen mud like it. It was chaos – there were cars stuck everywhere. Bjorn and I did a sharp right, went over a bank and ended up in a field. We were doing 6000rpm in second gear, crawling along... just! I said to

Bjorn, 'How are we going to get out of this, then?' and he looked at me and said, 'Dunno!'.

We did eventually get out; Kankkunen did the same so the two of us had about a 45-minute lead over the field. Then our lead became even bigger as Juha had some engine trouble.

We got back to service and the team changed *everything* just to be on the safe side. We dropped

loads of time but were back in battle with Biasion.

The next section, the Eldoret loop, was run in the dark. We broke a driveshaft so were down to two-wheel drive and got stuck in another muddy section. We thought it was all over and waited forlornly for a chase car to pull us out. Who should come along to rescue us? My old friend Kankkunen. In a rival manufacturer team! It's probably OK to mention this now, but it would've been frowned upon back then. Juha just didn't want teammate Biasion to win – they didn't get along well in those days.

I had some old O/S maps from the 1950s and found a way round yet another muddy section and we won by 38 minutes from Kankkunen, while Biasion had engine failure late on.

It was the late, great Bjorn's 16th and last WRC win and my fifth, which all came in Africa. It was a great way to sign off. *✎ Fred Gallagher was talking to Henry Hope-Frost*

PROFILE

Fred Gallagher began co-driving aged 17 and progressed to British rallies and occasional WRC outings. He went on to sit alongside top names Tony Pond, Henri Toivonen, Juha Kankkunen, Bjorn Waldegaard, Ari Vatanen and, on one occasion, Petter Solberg. Now 63, he has been clerk of the course for Rally GB since 1996 and has been on the organising team of Tour Britannia, Pirelli Marathon, Race of Champions and the Safari Rally. He has also chaired the WRC Regulation Working Group.



LAT

NEXT WEEK

Caterham's F1 failure

Plus: DTM preview; Rally Argentina action



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