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 **AUTOSPORT**

# SCHUMACHER AND FERRARI

**ROSS BRAWN AND JOHN BARNARD** ON HOW IT ALL BEGAN



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# A difficult opening chapter for a legend

WHEN MICHAEL SCHUMACHER AGREED TO JOIN Ferrari ahead of the 1996 season, it was clearly the start of something big. But none of us realised just how big. His success at Maranello rendered his double world championship at Benetton little more than a preface to becoming Ferrari's greatest driver.

But it wasn't easy. In this issue, Adam Cooper speaks to two of the key players in the formation of the Ferrari superteam – John Barnard, the incumbent technical leader when Schumacher joined – and Ross Brawn, who was with Schumacher at Benetton and, after a little delay, followed the German to Maranello.

Those first months are remembered for Schumacher's famous victory in the wet Spanish Grand Prix, and heroic performances on Ferrari's home soil – taking pole position at Imola and winning the Italian Grand Prix at Monza later in the year. But 1996 was also a year in which Schumacher grappled with a troubled car, and failed even to take the start from pole position at Magny-Cours after a formation-lap problem.

But it was during this period that the foundations were laid for that incredible run from 1999-2004, when Ferrari won six constructors' titles and Schumacher five drivers' titles.

At a time when distasteful speculation and intrusive stories about the great man's condition regularly flare up in the news, *Autosport* prefers to celebrate his incredible success.

Twenty years on, enjoy the story of how it all began.



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LAT; Mauger/LAT

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THE START OF





SOMETHING...





Schumacher was immediately quick at first test at Estoril



Todt had lured Schumacher with help of Shell money



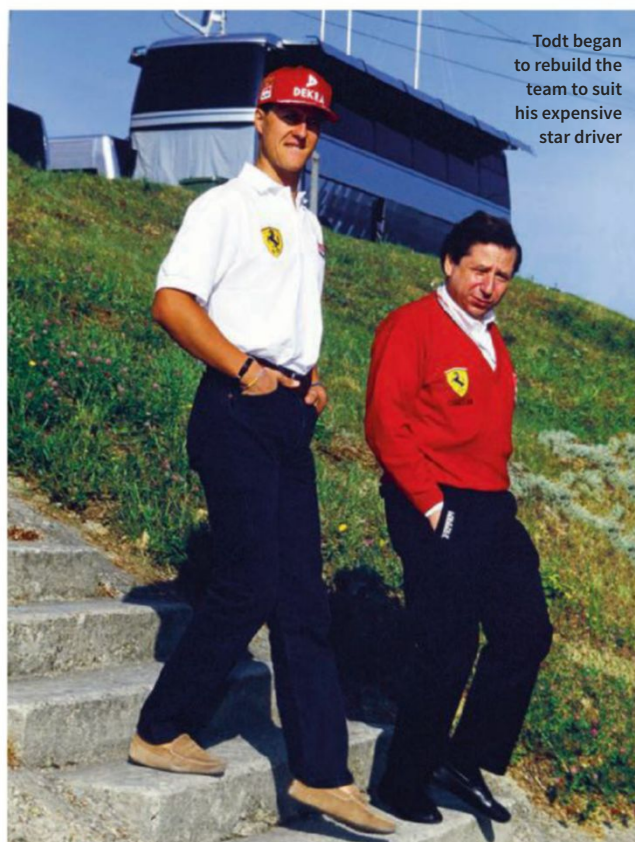
First test used old '95 car



Schumacher with Osamu Goto, Ferrari's head of engine R&D



Schumacher's driving style would direct design of new car



Todt began to rebuild the team to suit his expensive star driver



# BIG

When he arrived at Ferrari as a two-time world champion, Michael Schumacher found a very different squad to the one he would leave 10 years later. The team's technical brains describe how it evolved

**By Adam Cooper, F1 Contributor. Photography: LAT**

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**TWENTY YEARS AGO MICHAEL SCHUMACHER WAS JUST EMBARKING ON A NEW** life with Ferrari. The 1996 season was perhaps a disappointment for a man who'd won the previous two world championships with Benetton, but the important thing was that it laid the foundations for what was to come. That year, Ferrari team boss Jean Todt began to build his dream team around the German superstar, and the Ferrari that Schumacher left a decade later would be almost unrecognisable compared to the one he had joined.

Todt had been putting the pieces in place since he joined the fractured and struggling Scuderia in July 1993. By '95 the team was in better shape, although the only win in a year dominated by Benetton and Williams was achieved by Jean Alesi in Montreal. There was still a mountain to climb.

Hiring Schumacher, the undoubted star of the post-Senna era, was a no-brainer. Michael was happy at Benetton, but team chief Flavio Briatore had made it easier for Ferrari by always squeezing him over money. Schumacher and his manager Willi Weber had not forgotten 1993, when they found out at a late stage that – contrary to what had been agreed – Riccardo Patrese was earning more. Michael was announced as a Ferrari driver in mid-August 1995, with what was said to be a \$25 million salary. A big chunk of that would be absorbed by the team's lucrative new deal with Shell.

Todt had expected Gerhard Berger to stay on, but the canny Austrian could see where things were going, and he bailed out. In October, Eddie Irvine was named as Schumacher's team-mate, and it was clear to all that he would be expected to play a supporting role.

Todt aside, the key figure in Ferrari at the time was John Barnard. In effect the chief designer, his official job title was technical director of Ferrari Design and Development – the R&D facility he

had established in Surrey. He had rejoined the team on the basis that he was a step away from the race team, looking at the bigger technical picture, but things hadn't quite worked out that way.

"It had all gone wrong in my second time at Ferrari because I wasn't supposed to get involved with the racing day-to-day," Barnard recalls. "I was supposed to be sitting in the UK designing the next car. Then Harvey [Postlethwaite] left and it all fell apart. I had Luca di Montezemolo on the phone saying, 'What are we doing for the next race?' That was not the deal! If you ask me who was the chief technical person in Maranello after Harvey left, I can't tell you. And that was the problem."

Todt had already begun to switch the focus towards Italy by recruiting Benetton aero man Willem Toet to set up a new wind-tunnel programme in Maranello, to run alongside FDD's work in the UK. Barnard was soon aware that Schumacher's arrival would precipitate further changes.

"We started FDD in the middle of 1992, and in '93, '94, '95, every time we put in a budget it would get knocked back 20 per cent. 'You can't have that, you can't have this.' They signed Schumacher in '95 and suddenly Todt comes along and says, 'What do you want? If you need more machines, if you want this, you want that, get it.' »





“He was three years too late. That’s when we should have been doing work to get ready for Michael, not two months before he’s coming. You don’t just turn around a facility like that in a couple of months! It was classic, ‘We’ve just spent zillions on a super driver, now we’ll spend zillions on the facilities.’ Actually we should have already done it.”

Barnard was already well advanced on what would become the F310, the first Ferrari to feature a V10 as the team finally gave up on its thirsty V12.

“Michael came to us at the end of 1995 and we went testing with him straight away at Estoril. We had two cars there — one

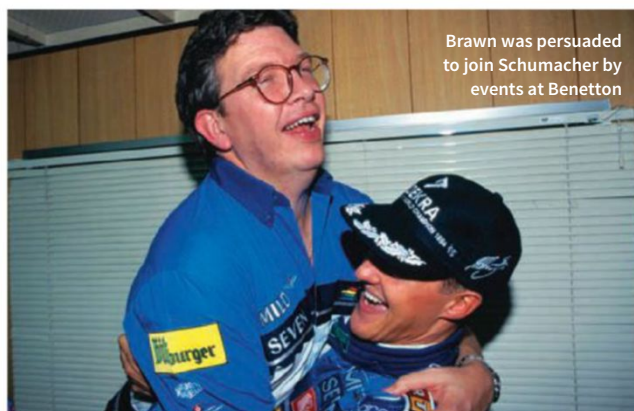
as it raced with the V12, and the other was a bit of a mule with the V10 in it, which was the first time it had been out on track. It was fundamentally a more efficient engine.

“He went out and did a few laps in the V12 and was immediately a second quicker than both Alesi and Berger had been in it. He’d just won the title with Benetton. He came in and said, ‘I could have won it more easily with this car.’ That cheered us up!

“He wanted a car that was completely opposite to what Alesi and Berger wanted. He liked to drive the car on the throttle — he used the engine braking in the corner to balance the car. Alesi and Berger didn’t like the V12 because, when they lifted off in



Barnard admits that he never got close to Schumacher



Brawn was persuaded to join Schumacher by events at Benetton



Schumacher's pole at Imola '96, although he lost out to Hill in race, won over tifosi



a high-speed corner, there was too much engine drag and it upset the car too much.

"I thought his way of setting the car up wasn't actually correct, but he obviously had the reactions and balls to be able to drive the car like that. Other drivers would come in and say, 'I can't handle that, the back end is too lively. However, you can't argue — the bloke was a world champion, and he was bloody quick.'"

The F310 did not appear until February 2015, just three weeks before the first race. Reliability issues, notably with the gearbox, meant that it completed just 300km of testing before its debut in Australia. Schumacher started fourth and ran third behind the Williams duo before brake issues forced retirement, allowing Irvine to take over the spot.

More problems with the new titanium gearbox forced the team to revert to the previous year's rear end for a couple of races, which was a major compromise. Michael finished third in a rain-affected Brazilian GP, and then retired in Argentina when the rear wing began to break up.

It had been a bit hit-and-miss so far, but on home ground at Imola Schumacher delighted the tifosi by taking pole, although in the race he had to give best to Damon Hill. It was a turning point both in terms of car performance and Michael's relationship with the Italian public.

Behind the scenes he was still finding his way. He missed the partnership he'd enjoyed with Ross Brawn at Benetton, and couldn't recreate that with Barnard. "I never got close to him," Barnard admits. "I could never talk to him like I could talk with »



## The Ferrari F310

THE FERRARI F310 IS BEST remembered for its high cockpit sides — a response to an FIA rule change. As the 1996 cars emerged, it became clear Ferrari had taken a more conservative approach than most rivals.

That was partly because John Barnard had gone for a more literal interpretation of the safety requirement. However, there was another reason for the design.

"We were doing our aero work at the British Aerospace tunnel in Bristol," John says. "I did something I didn't do very much, which was kind of let somebody else go on it. People used to say that I didn't delegate enough, but I had an aero guy — he's not in the business any more — and I thought I'd delegate to him, and see where he goes."

"We had this new cockpit regulation, which required a raised bit around the helmet for head protection, or at least that's the way I read it. We went in with it as low as we could get away with it, and the aero guy said, 'I keep raising that area up, and the numbers keep getting better.' I said, 'Are you sure? It doesn't look right.' 'Yeah, yeah, I keep checking it.'"

"I followed the regs literally, which probably made for a safer car, but alongside was this thing

of my aero guy saying the numbers were better. So that's how we came out. Meanwhile, other people started using these little bits the size of 50p pieces on the side of the monocoque to cover the regulations!

"The bottom line was that it affected the air inlet to the engine, and we lost some straight line speed. Quite often you'd see

**"Schumacher would often go down the straight with his helmet to the side"**

Schumacher going down the straight with his helmet tipped to the side, and that was because the air had been disturbed by these raised sides.

"The F310 was not as drivable as the '95 car by any means. We never got to grips with why that was, although it was an aero problem for sure. I think it had a lot of downforce, because Michael did win in the wet in Spain. I suspect we were losing out on drag, to be honest. I should have got more involved with the aero..."



# The team that Schuey left behind

After winning three titles in the previous two seasons, the Benetton team failed to win a single race in 1996 following Schumacher's departure

IN 1995, BENETTON switched from Ford V8 to Renault V10 power and proved to be the dominant force in F1. Michael Schumacher won his second world title with two races still to run and, with his nine victories complemented by two for team-mate Johnny Herbert, the constructors' title was also secured.

For 1996, the only change to the package involved the drivers, and at the lavish launch of the B196 Flavio Briatore made it clear that the success would continue. Yet the team failed to win a grand prix for the first time since 1988, and scored just 68 points compared to the 175 of Williams.

"The car proved to be pretty good, but we managed one way or another to not even win a race that year," says former Benetton technical director Ross Brawn. "It was a travesty with what we had. To be a title-defending team that goes the next year without winning a race was pretty poor."

Is it fair to blame the team's dramatic slump on Jean Alesi and Gerhard Berger, the men who had the task of replacing Schumacher? Brawn certainly believes that Briatore's decision to hire not just one but two former

Ferrari stars backfired spectacularly.

Initially, Berger was not on the radar. Alesi was an obvious candidate to replace Schumacher, and he was quickly signed up in a straight swap. It was only later that Berger, who had been expected to stay at Ferrari, decided he could not face life alongside Michael. Briatore seized the chance to re-sign the man

**"Bringing Alesi and Berger in as a couple, seeing the relationship they had, was a mistake"**

who had scored the team's first win a decade earlier, viewing it as a PR coup.

"I think because Michael was going to Ferrari, Flavio had an ambition to take the Ferrari drivers who had not achieved any championships," says Brawn. "He wanted to bring them to Benetton and show that it could be done with those drivers. That was

clearly his objective, and he didn't consult very much in his choice, so we ended up with Jean and Gerhard as the result of Flavio being on the rebound from Michael leaving.

"Given that you could see that Alesi and Berger had a somewhat fractious relationship at Ferrari, it was a bit naive to think that they were going to come to Benetton and it was going to be any different.

"When Flavio signed Jean we all thought he was very talented and quick, but needed nurturing and management. The last thing you'd want to do was put him with Gerhard Berger again. I think either one of them alone might have achieved more, but bringing them as a couple, seeing the relationship they had, was a mistake. Unfortunately most of Gerhard's energy was spent trying to make sure he beat Jean, and Jean was trying to do the best he could with Gerhard trying to screw him...

"Jean was also deeply resentful about the fact that he'd been sold on coming to the team, and Gerhard was not part of the package. He was very upset when it was announced that Gerhard was joining us."

Alongside the relationship between Alesi and Berger,



the team suffered from a simple lack of continuity. It was rare for a World Champion team to head into the following season with two new drivers, and it had last happened at Tyrrell in 1974, if you discount Williams promoting test driver Damon Hill in 1993. It would not happen again until Brawn GP became Mercedes in 2010.

"We had two drivers who were pushing in completely different directions as to how they wanted the car set up," says Brawn. "Gerhard was always trying to dial a lot of understeer in the car, and Jean was the opposite – he wanted a responsive, lively car. You can debate what was the best solution, but we had this difficulty of them both wanting quite different cars. Jean was paranoid, probably quite rightly, that Gerhard was

doing things with the car to make sure he didn't get what he wanted."

To be fair to the drivers, Alesi lost a Monaco win to broken suspension, and Berger was leading when a piston failed at Hockenheim. But Brawn is adamant that the B196 was worth far more than the five second places it ultimately earned.

"It was a situation we weren't used to, because we were used to a reasonably cohesive driver structure that was all working in unity to get the best job done. Suddenly we had this situation where two drivers were pulling in different directions, and it was not easy to handle.

"It was a bit comical in some ways, and quite an education for me. And I guess one of the things that drove me to want to work with Michael again."







Schumacher led from pole in Hungary until throttle problems

Berger, Alesi or Prost. I never had that kind of relationship. Once he came, I felt I was not going to be able to work with him like I could work with the other guys, and that ultimately was going to be a problem.”

At the next race in Monaco, Todt took the first step towards creating the comfort zone that Schumacher wanted. It’s easy to assume that Brawn’s eventual move to Maranello was preordained. In fact, Brawn wanted to stay at Benetton but, as with Schumacher, Briatore’s actions had made him an easy target for Todt.

“When Michael left I had no intention of going to Ferrari,” Brawn recalls. “Off the back of him leaving, and knowing where I felt the team had to go in that position, I negotiated a new deal with Benetton for 1996. That included some changes in the management structure, and in my responsibilities.

“Flavio never acted upon them, he would never support the changes which he’d agreed to make me sign the contract. It was quite an important part of the agreement that I took on overall responsibility for the team, so I started to feel pretty aggrieved at the beginning of ’96 because that wasn’t happening. And then we had the issue with the drivers [see left].

“Willi Weber rang me in May and said, ‘Michael would appreciate you at least talking to Ferrari to see if that’s an option, because he’s not quite hitting it off with John Barnard in the way that he’d hoped.’ So I met Jean in Monaco, and that’s when it started. It was a perfect storm in a way, because Michael wasn’t completely happy at Ferrari, and I’d got frustrated at Benetton, because they weren’t doing what they’d said.”

Any agreement was still a long way off, but the seeds had been sown. Meanwhile, on that Monaco weekend Schumacher took another pole, only to throw it away with a first-lap crash. Two weeks later he made amends with a virtuoso drive to victory at a soaking-wet Barcelona. It was a landmark in his career and that of Todt, and it was clear to all that there was much more to come.

By now, Todt’s wind-tunnel programme was up and running, and updates were coming through from both Maranello and FDD, which complicated matters. “There’s always an argument over numbers,” says Barnard. “To have two models, even though they are supposed to be the same car, in two different wind-tunnels, is very difficult. Then there’s the interpretation of the numbers. It all got a bit scrappy by that time.”

In the middle of the season, Ferrari struck a disastrous run of poor reliability. Schumacher had a driveshaft issue in Montreal, failed to take up his pole position after a piston failure at Magny-Cours, hit hydraulic problems at Silverstone, and stopped with throttle gremlins at the Hungaroring, where he’d earned another pole. Meanwhile, from Magny-Cours to Spa Irvine suffered five consecutive mechanical retirements. The need to get someone like Brawn in to sort it all out was even more apparent.

“I don’t know how much of it was a problem with the components,” says Barnard. “And how much was a problem with the ‘mechanicking.’ It’s hard to say. We didn’t have the numbers of people they have today, and things like reliability testing weren’t done because we didn’t have the production capacity.”

By now Barnard was well aware that Brawn was being »





Schumacher won at Spa with Barnard's new seven-speed 'box

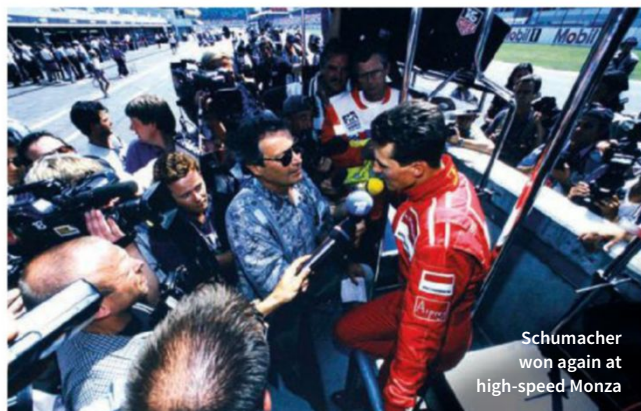
romanced by Todt, and in fact he endorsed the choice: "Jean said to me, 'We want to take it all back to Italy. Do you want to come and be technical director?' I said, 'As you know I don't want to go and work in Italy.' So who do we get? And Todt said, 'What about Ross Brawn?'"

"I said, 'Well, if you get Ross you'd better get the other guys that go with him, otherwise it isn't going to work.' And that's what he did — he went out there and paid the money and got what he wanted. The change on how they were prepared to spend money was massive..."

After a stressful summer everything began to fall into place. To complement Schumacher's driving style Barnard had

developed a seven-speed gearbox, and that finally came on stream at Spa. Schumacher won that race and triumphed again at Monza, where the team had an unexpectedly good straight-line package. Schumacher finished the year with podiums at Estoril and Suzuka. His final tally was three wins, four poles and third in the world championship — a respectable outcome given the turmoil of the season.

Off the track, the process of change continued. Brawn was finally able to extract himself from a messy legal situation at Benetton, and after minimal gardening leave he arrived at Maranello in December, in the role of technical director. Back in Surrey, Barnard was hard at



Schumacher won again at high-speed Monza



Schumacher ended 1996 season third in championship





Three wins in 1996 were a sign that better was to come

work on the F310B, but it was already agreed that he would leave early in 1997 — and take the FDD facility off Ferrari's hands.

"It just wasn't working the way it should work," says John. "I wasn't unhappy to let somebody come in and take it on. My deal was up with them anyway in '97, and that was it. I wasn't going to go to Italy. For the first test for the new car at Jerez I was there, and Ross was as well. Then I stayed back in the UK and they carried on running the car."

"When I started the discussions with Jean, I wanted to know what was happening with John," says Brawn. "I didn't want to have a 'situation' with him, because I respected what he did."

"I think Michael had been used to a certain way of working with me, and basically that was his only knowledge of F1. John being at a distance in the UK, with everything happening in Italy, was not an ideal situation. It was one of Ferrari's own creations — they agreed to it — but it did cause some difficulties. I was willing to work in Italy, and he wasn't."

"Actually John and I got on fine, and there was no problem at all. I had to show some tolerance while it worked itself out, because I'd been told I was in charge of the engineering team, and John had as well. We were both fairly adult about it!"

Brawn would later be joined by the briefly retired former Benetton chief designer Rory Byrne, and the Enstone team's electronic wizard, Tad Czapki. But he also looked elsewhere. "We trawled through the teams in the UK and found people who were willing to move to Italy, because there was no strong core of people to draw on," he says. "There were some good



Brawn rebuilt team around core of key personnel

engineers, but they didn't have a lot of experience.

"I was fortunate that, when I arrived, Aldo Costa was in the wings, effectively doing gardening leave from Minardi in the road-car division. When that ran out we were able to bring him across to the racing side and start to build a design office at Maranello, which is what it needed. We inherited John's '97 car, added some things to it that we thought were important, and it wasn't a bad package in the end."

It would take time, but the work begun in 1996 would eventually bring huge rewards for all concerned. "It was the element of trust between several people in the group that was important," says Brawn. "None of us were perfect, we all had our characters, but we trusted each other. It was all for one and one for all. The press or Montezemolo couldn't really pick off an individual — everyone stuck together." ❄





## FORMULA 1

# McLaren must hold on

MCLAREN WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR ITS new chief executive officer Jost Capito to take office – the German wants to be sure he's leaving Volkswagen Motorsport's impeccable World Rally Championship record in safe hands before he departs Hannover for Woking.

Capito, whose departure from Volkswagen Motorsport was revealed last week, is making his return to Formula 1 having worked as chief operating officer at Sauber; from there he moved to a senior role in Ford's motorsport operation before its withdrawal from F1.

"We wanted to make the announcement, to get the news out there, so that we could stop the rumours and all of that," says Capito. "Now the process has to start to try to find somebody to replace me. I don't know how long that will take, but until that is done and I am happy with the way that's done, I won't be going anywhere. I will be here for [this week's] Monte Carlo [Rally], I will be here for the next three or four rallies, it could be longer – I don't know.

"For now, it's business as usual with Volkswagen. You know, it's kind of like with the children. You bring up your children and, at some stage, they have to leave home and go

on their own. As a parent, you want to make sure the children are well prepared for what is coming and that's what I want to do with Volkswagen."

Capito, who replaces Jonathan Neale, described his new job as one of motorsport's greatest challenges, but added that, on a personal level, that the decision to move wasn't easy.

"Anybody who works in our industry knows that F1 is about McLaren and it's about Ferrari," he says, "and the chance to run the McLaren team is not one that you can say no to. For people who live in our world, it would be impossible to say no to this. McLaren deserves to be in a better position than it is right now.

"It was a very tough decision to take. This was the most difficult decision in my career and it will be the biggest challenge in my career, that's for sure. But it's McLaren... and it's me. I am always interested in the big challenge."

Capito was quick to quell speculation that his move out of VW had been prompted by the emissions crisis, which hit the firm late last year.

"I heard that people are talking about different reasons for me taking this new job, but I can tell you here and now for sure: there is nothing wrong with Volkswagen Motorsport," he says.





WRC

## WHO WILL TAKE OVER THE TOP VW ROLE?

AS VOLKSWAGEN SEEKS Jost Capito's successor, the early rumours are of an internal appointment, a German executive – although according to the team nothing is even close to being finalised.

Regardless, the loss of Capito will be significant. He's a charismatic, almost talismanic kind of a chap who knows the World Rally Championship inside out after his time with Ford as well as VW.

Eighteen months ago, his relationship with Sebastien Ogier wasn't the best. The pair turned their troubles around and the improved and now near-perfect alliance with his triple world champion is testament to what Capito can do.

It's the ability to work at all levels that has endeared him to VW. He brings everybody together to develop a family atmosphere you wouldn't expect from the team of one of the world's biggest car makers.

And he brought the family together with an exceptional eye for detail, a fact to which anybody who attended one of VW's end-of-season parties would testify.

The loss of Capito to Formula 1 won't only be felt within the confines of VW but in the wider World Rally Championship. He was a powerful force in the service park. The energy and passion with which he tackled the world championship promoter regarding the ongoing commercial development of the series was always impressive.

DAVID EVANS

# for new recruit Capito

"My decision to move is because of the challenge; this is not a situation which has come around since the diesel [emissions] issue. I first talked about the possibility in the early summer.

"Volkswagen's programme in the WRC is safe and we need success on this side more than ever before. Of course, we try to save some budget, but the commitment to the WRC is the same."

The resolve of the VW Group has been tested in recent months and involvement – on the periphery – in some of the decisions taken in the wake of the emission scandal will have sharpened Capito's adroit abilities in the boardroom.

He will need those skills more than ever as he re-enters the political world of Formula 1.

Capito's ability lies in bringing people together and getting them to deliver simultaneously. He works at an executive level to build the bridge between the suits and the racesuits, creating the right environment to deliver success.

He is not the kind of leader who involves himself in the minutiae. When, for example, VW

was looking for a way around a power-steering issue in year one of its WRC programme, Capito's only question to his technical team was regarding resource and whether they had enough of it.

Capito will also bring significant experience from all sides of the motorsport world. He's worked in pretty much every area of the sport.

Volkswagen's potentially parlous state as we await the next development in the emissions story excepted, Capito's jump from the WRC's all-conquering squad to a fallen giant of Formula 1 is a risk. Volkswagen has won 34 of the 39 WRC rounds it has started under Capito; McLaren had a famously troubled 2015.

"It is a risk," he said, "but I'm used to that. It was a risk when I left Ford to go to Volkswagen in 2012. It was a completely new job when I went to Volkswagen. I had to put the place in the sat-nav – I had no idea where I was going and I didn't know any of the people who worked there. And it will be the same when I go to McLaren."

DAVID EVANS

**"It is a risk but I'm used to it. It was a risk when I left Ford"**



## F3 ACE ROSENQVIST WEIGHING UP MOVE TO GT WITH MERC

REIGNING FORMULA 3 European champion and two-time Macau Grand Prix winner Felix Rosenqvist is confident that he will be racing full-time in 2016 – but it could be in GTs.

The Swede, who has long faced a battle with lack of funding, is understood to be in the frame to join the GT3 line-up of Mercedes, which has supported him in F3 since 2011, but he is also eyeing GP2 and Indy Lights.

Rosenqvist had his first test in Indy Lights last month with Team Pelfrey – which is entering Lights for the first time in 2016 after taking over the 8Star team – at Palm Beach in Florida, and told *Autosport*: “It went really well. I was quite impressed by the team – they’re a good group of guys. I was quick but it was just a test, a first taste of the car. It’s definitely still on my radar for this year.

“Also the GP2 option is not completely closed – I would say there’s still a small chance of that.”

Rosenqvist took part in the post-season Abu Dhabi GP2 test with Prema Powerteam (below) and Status Grand Prix. Prema, which ran Rosenqvist to European F3 and Macau glory last season and is moving into GP2 for a debut campaign this year, has long been linked with Red Bull

Junior Pierre Gasly, while Antonio Giovinazzi was confirmed on Tuesday for the other Prema seat (see ‘In the headlines’, right).

That means that Rosenqvist’s best bet for GP2 is with Status – *Autosport* understands that his mentor Stefan Johansson is still in discussions with Status managing director David Kennedy (his team-mate in the 1980 Shadow Formula 1 team) but that he is still some way short of the required budget.

Of a campaign in Mercedes’ new AMG GT3 car, Rosenqvist said: “We’ve always been talking about this for the past two years. Last year I had some role in the development of the new car – that could also be something.”

In the meantime, he is contesting next week’s Daytona 24 Hours with a Starworks Motorsport PC-class ORECA-Chevrolet in a line-up that includes Merc GT3 ace Maro Engel. “The test was great,” he said. “I was with the team for eight days and we had good fun. It’s obviously very different in endurance racing, working as a team and focusing on bringing the car back in one piece.

“I was a little bit shocked in the beginning with the traffic, but I think we can fight for a class win.”

**MARCUS SIMMONS**



# Huff makes Honda move

2012 WTCC champion swaps from Lada as Honda ramps up to a three-car factory assault

R

ob Huff says he is confident his latest World Touring Car Championship switch will give him the chance to become champion for a second time after signing with Honda.

The 2012 champion joins fellow new recruit Norbert Michelisz and stalwart Tiago Monteiro at the JAS Motorsport-run squad, which has expanded its line-up from two cars to three for 2016.

The Briton, who finished 10th in the previous two campaigns while presiding over an upswing in form at Lada, believes he must capitalise on the impending exit of Citroen as a works team at the end of the 2016 season.

“I feel that I’ve now put myself in the perfect seat and the perfect opportunity – the best place effectively to learn a lot and develop with the team and with the car over the next 12 months,” said Huff.

“No-one needs to try and hide that Citroen is a level above everyone at the moment, but I can’t help but feel that this puts me in a very strong position for 2017 with JAS and Honda to give ourselves a very realistic and fantastic opportunity at being a champion again.”

Huff made a one-off appearance with a JAS-built Honda Civic last November in Macau in the TCR International Series finale. He topped all practice sessions before taking pole and the opening-race win. That outing led Huff into discussions with JAS team principal Alessandro Mariani about a drive in the WTCC. He completed his deal on Tuesday of last week and got his hands on the Honda Civic WTCC three days later at Jerez (pictured below). “I’ve known Alessandro Mariani for many years obviously and he’s one of those guys that I’ve just always clicked with,” he said.

“I don’t want to say I’m better or worse than anyone but obviously something happened [in Macau] that they really quite liked, and basically from there I took it upon myself to see if there was an opportunity in the WTCC with them. The whole process came around quite late and quick. After Macau I said to them, ‘I’ve really enjoyed working with you and we’ve had a great relationship over a number of years. We’ve spoken about me having a car in the past and I would seriously like, if there’s an opportunity, to pursue it for 2016 in World Touring Cars.’

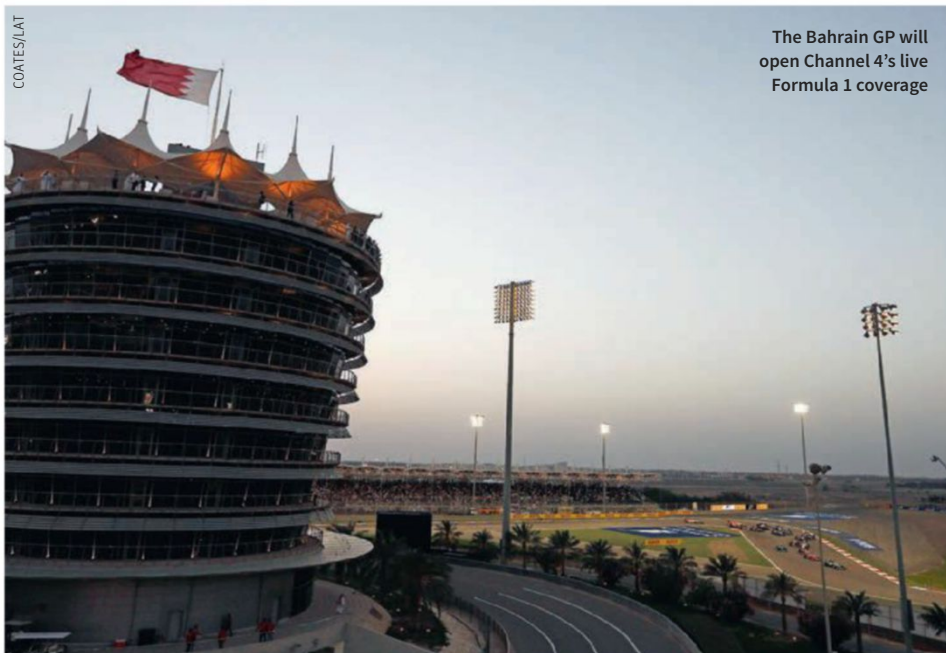
“I think a lot of people think it happened a while ago but it definitely didn’t. The relationship between me and Honda blossomed very quickly and my contract was literally signed the day before I went testing.

“The car was fantastic,” he continued. “I sat in it on the Thursday night to do a seat fitting, and I could tell that they’ve really thought a lot about everything to do with the car. It just gave me a hidden confidence that I’d be able to just focus on my driving and the set-up.”

**JACK COZENS**







COTES/LAT

The Bahrain GP will open Channel 4's live Formula 1 coverage

## FORMULA 1

# C4 chooses live races

CHANNEL 4 HAS REVEALED DETAILS OF which 2016 grands prix it will broadcast live after recently taking over Formula 1's UK terrestrial television rights from the BBC.

Its live broadcasts begin with round two in Bahrain, and also include Azerbaijan's first GP, the British event at Silverstone and the finale in Abu Dhabi.

It was announced before Christmas that Channel 4 would take up the remaining three years on the BBC's contract to screen F1.

The BBC was forced to pull out with immediate effect in a bid to make significant savings, and C4 stepped into the breach.

A week ago, C4 confirmed former F1 racer David Coulthard will join its commentary team, and that Whisper Films had been handed the production contract.

Following a selection process with Sky Sports F1, which shows every race live, C4 has announced Bahrain, Spain, Europe (Azerbaijan), Britain, Hungary, Belgium, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico and Abu Dhabi as its live broadcasts. There will be no advertisement breaks during the races.

For the remaining 11 grands prix Channel 4 will show a highlights package.

IAN PARKES

## TOP 3

# Honda touring-car drivers

Rob Huff is joining an extensive list of great drivers to race tin-tops for Honda. Here are three of the best so far



LAT

### #1 MATT NEAL

A tally of 51 victories and four titles in Honda machinery in the British Touring Car Championship stretching back to 2003 is impressive - and there's every chance there are more to come.



LAT

### #2 GORDON SHEDDEN

The Team Dynamics regular has eclipsed team-mate Matt Neal in recent times, winning the British Touring Car Championship in 2012 and 2015 and racking up 41 wins in Honda machinery.



LAT

### #3 GABRIELE TARQUINI

His recently ended three-year stint with Honda didn't yield the success hoped, but he did win races. While he didn't take a title for Honda, he has been a regular winner for it at all levels.

## IN THE HEADLINES



TEE/LAT

### MCLAREN LAUNCH DATE REVEALED

McLaren will unveil its new challenger for the 2016 Formula 1 season via an online launch on February 21.

### NEW SAUBER TO RUN AT SECOND TEST

Sauber will wait until the second winter test to introduce its 2016 Formula 1 car, having adjusted plans due to the late change to the grand prix calendar. The team will run its old car in the first test at Barcelona on February 22-25.

### TOMBAZIS JOINS MANOR TEAM

Ex-Ferrari chief designer Nikolas Tombazis has joined Manor as chief aerodynamicist. The Greek spent nine years at Ferrari but it was announced he was leaving amid a restructure in December 2014. Manor is progressing well with its car, and has completed its final crash test ahead of the start of pre-season testing.

### PIRELLI STILL WAITING ON CONTRACT

Pirelli does not yet have a contract from the FIA for its Formula 1 tyre-supply deal covering 2017-19. An agreement is in place, but motorsport boss Paul Hembery has confirmed "we're still awaiting a contract proposal from the FIA, which has not been forthcoming".

### BLOCK HEADS TO WORLD RALLYCROSS

Ken Block will contest the full 2016 World Rallycross Championship in a factory Ford Fiesta ST.

### EVANS, GIOVINAZZI, GELAE DEALS

GP2 Series ace Mitch Evans has switched to Campos Racing for his fourth season in the category. The New Zealander has joined the Jagonya Ayam scheme, run by KFC Indonesia magnate Ricardo Gelael, and will partner Gelael's son Sean. Jagonya Ayam will also continue its long patronage of European F3 runner-up Antonio Giovinazzi, who has become the first confirmed driver at Prema Powerteam for the squad's first season in GP2.

### MARCIELLO HEADS TO RUSSIAN TIME

Raffaele Marciello will move to Russian Time for a third GP2 Series season in 2016, but has lost his Sauber Formula 1 third-driver role. He will partner Russian Time regular Artem Markelov.

### SIROTKIN LANDS ART GP2 DRIVE

Sergey Sirotkin will move to reigning champion team ART Grand Prix for the 2016 GP2 Series. He was third in the championship for Rapax last year (below).



SBLOXHAM/LAT





**MOUNTAIN HIGH** Toro Rosso driver Max Verstappen demonstrated a Red Bull RB7 on a course marked with ski gates and red paint on the world-renowned Streif downhill ski course in Kitzbuhel, Austria, last week. The team had to draft in a helicopter and a crane just to get the car up to the top of the slope. It then bolted on a set of bespoke spiked Pirelli tyres and snow chains for the demonstration run, which Verstappen completed in front of 3500 fans. "The main difficulty was what you'd expect – it was really slippery," he said. "But added to that was the fact it was on a mountainside." The car ran in a snow livery to promote the Austrian Grand Prix. **Photograph by Philip Platzer/Red Bull**

#### WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

## New Toyota LMP1 car hits its target

TOYOTA HAS HIT THE TIGHT schedule it set itself to ready its 2016 World Endurance Championship challenger after bringing forward plans to develop a new engine for the coming season when the TS050 HYBRID ran for the first time last week.

The third in a line of P1 prototypes from Toyota Motorsport in Cologne ran for three days at the Aragon circuit in Spain with Sebastien Buemi, Stephane Sarrazin and Mike Conway driving. No comment was made on the test, except to say that everything went to plan.

Toyota planned to build a new car with a battery-energy storage system in place of the super-capacitor unit it has used since 2012, while retaining its existing V8. The TS040's poor showing

in the opening two rounds of last year's WEC then resulted in the introduction of a new engine planned for 2017.

Pascal Vasselon, technical director at TMG, insisted both car and engine were on schedule as the 2015 WEC drew to a close, while pointing out there was no margin for error. Toyota never revealed the date it had for the TS050's first run, but a shakedown before the end of January puts it on the same schedule as its challengers of the past four seasons.

The Japanese manufacturer has yet to confirm the specification of the new powerplant, though it has talked openly about it being turbocharged. It is known that it has the same V4 engine configuration as Porsche's 919 Hybrid.

**GARY WATKINS**



Toyota's TS040 LMP1 car was not competitive in 2015

XPS IMAGES





## OBITUARY

# Mike Salmon

## 1933-2016

MIKE SALMON, WHO HAS DIED AT the age of 82 after a prolonged illness, was a long-time racer with 13 starts at the Le Mans 24 Hours to his name.

Salmon's career as an amateur driver spanned six decades and included a top-six finish at Le Mans and a British Touring Car Championship race victory, and he was still racing into his seventies in historic.

The first of Salmon's 13 Le Mans participations came in 1962 with his own Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato, but it was the following year that he made his name at the French endurance with what turned out to be his best result in the 24 Hours. Sharing a Maranello Concessionaires-run Ferrari 330LMB with Jack Sears, he finished fifth overall.

"We made up our minds that we were going to drive to finish rather than drive to impress," says Sears. "There were three four-litre 330LMBs in the race and ours was the only one to get to the end, although we had our problems."

Salmon raced for UK Ferrari importer Maranello Concessionaires, run by Col Ronnie Hoare, at Le Mans in 1965 and '66, driving a 250LM and then a Dino 206S. An outing in a JW Automotive-run Ford GT40 at Le Mans in '67 left him with serious burns when the fuel cap was incorrectly replaced after the car's first pitstop.

After one more Le Mans start, also in a GT40, he retired from racing at the end of 1968, before returning to the cockpit in the

historic ranks in the mid-1970s.

Salmon was back at Le Mans aboard Robin Hamilton's Aston Martin AMV8 RHAM in 1977 and '79 and would become a regular on the grid of the 24 Hours in the early '80s. He raced Group 5 Ferrari 512BBs in 1980 and '81 and was a member of Viscount Downe's Aston Martin Nimrod squad in 1982-84.

Together with Ray Mallock and Simon Phillips, Salmon finished seventh at Le Mans in the first of those years and would have ended up much higher but for a dropped valve.

"Mike was a very smooth and sympathetic driver," says Mallock, who took over development of the Lola-built Nimrod NRA/C2 for 1983. Richard Williams, who was team manager for Viscount Downe, recalls a "perfectionist with a lot of talent".

Salmon started racing in a Jaguar XK120, his 21st birthday present, in the mid-'50s and claimed major national-level victories with an ex-Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type in the Martini Trophy at Silverstone and the Autosport 3 Hours at Snetterton in 1961. He also enjoyed success in touring cars in the first half of the '60s, initially in a Jaguar MkII and then a Ford Mustang, claiming his BTCC victory in the latter at Snetterton in 1965.

Salmon is survived by his wife Jean (nee Bloxham), who was also a keen club racer.

GARY WATKINS

## IN THE HEADLINES

### MIKE McKEE 1933-2016

Mike McKee, the winner of two domestic British Formula 2 events in 1960, has died at the age of 82. The Briton won races at Aintree and Snetterton in August that year aboard a Cooper-Climax T45 loaned to him by Jim Russell, at whose Snetterton racing school he was chief instructor. McKee started racing at the wheel of a Jaguar XK120, competed successfully in Formula Junior, and also contested the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1961 in a UDT-Laystall Lotus Elite before retiring at the end of that season.

### TINCKNELL REMAINS WITH JOTA

Harry Tincknell will contest the European Le Mans Series for a third consecutive season with the Jota Sport team in 2016. He will share the Jota Gibson-Nissan 015S LMP2 with team co-owner Simon Dolan and Giedo van der Garde.

### ONE-RACE BAN FOR SCUDERIA PRAHA

Endurance race organising body Creventic has banned the Scuderia Praha team for one race for causing an "avoidable collision" in the Dubai 24 hours. Matteo Cressoni was leading the race when his Ferrari 458 Italia collided with the Primus Racing Ginetta G50 driven by Thomas Martinsson, eliminating both. Martinsson was taken to hospital and released with a reported broken rib.

### STEWART INVOLVED IN SPECTATOR ROW

Tony Stewart was involved in an altercation with a spectator at a midget car event last Friday. Stewart went into the grandstands at the Chili Bowl Nationals to confront a man who had been loudly deriding him. The heckler was revealed to be off-duty sheriff's deputy Kyle Hess.

### BARNICOAT TAKES FINAL HITECH DRIVE

Racing Steps Foundation protege Ben Barnicoat has taken the final seat at new team Hitech Grand Prix for this year's Formula 3 European Championship. Barnicoat, whose projected deal with Prema fell through, joins childhood karting rival George Russell and Russian Nikita Mazepin at Hitech.

### LORANDI JOINS CARLIN FOR F3

Carlin has secured Italian Alessio Lorandi, who has switched from Van Amersfoort Racing, for European F3 this season. Meanwhile, German Formula 4 runner-up Joel Eriksson will race for Motopark, the team that ran his older brother Jimmy to the 2012 German F3 title.

### EREBUS DROPS MERCEDES

V8 Supercar team Erebus Motorsport has dropped its Mercedes programme after three years, meaning the E63 AMG (below) will drop off the grid of Australia's top series. Erebus has switched to Holden, and will run David Reynolds – third in the 2015 standings with Prodrive – as well as series rookie Aaren Russell.





# FEEDBACK

## Numbers count, and not just in F1

I must agree with everything Brian Warrior said about the poor standard of numbering on Formula 1 cars (January 14).

Race numbers might seem trivial compared to the myriad problems facing the sport, but isn't it still supposed to be a spectator sport?

While IndyCar does a far better job despite the poor placement of the numbers on those clumsy bodykits, look at a typical mid-'70s USAC racer. That's how you number a car!

The standard of race numbering in F1 has been deplorable for years. I even remember Chris Nixon in *Autosport* in 1987 bemoaning the standards then. If only it was as good as 1987 now, and that the cars looked as good as well!

Formula E isn't much better either, yet GP2 can do it right.

You couldn't imagine NASCAR adopting those dreadful window numbers that now blight touring cars. BTCC, WTCC, TCR, V8 Supercars and the rest take note!



MURENBEELD/LAT

NASCAR knows the value and power of a race number as a brand, so makes sure its fans can identify them from a distance.

What other sport does so much to hide the identity of its competitors?

**Peter Kerr**  
Hamilton, South Lanarkshire

### The new sound of Formula 1?

In answer to Frances Stewart (January 7), there is a piece of music better than *The Chain* for F1. Listen to the instrumental at the end of *Speedway at Nazareth* by Mark Knopfler.

It's written with motor racing in mind as it mentions all the venues in the 2001 Champ Car season.

**John Lyon**  
Caerphilly

### The Stig issue

Good to see The Stig's grandfather in your *The Archive* photo (January 7)!

**Ian Walker**  
By email

No need to squint to work out what number Bobby Unser's '74 Eagle is sporting

## CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS

Congratulations to Phillip Edwards of Staines, who has won our Christmas Quiz and therefore has earned a pair of three-day passes to this year's British Grand Prix, as well as access to the *F1 Racing* campsite. Thanks to all of you who sent in your entries. As ever the standard was incredibly high, and it was a very close-run thing!

### Here are the answers:

**A/1** Marcos Gomes. **2** 17. **3** Overtaking the safety car. **4** European Touring Car Championship. **5** Adam Morgan. **6** Three rounds/six races. **7** 200. **8** Norbert Michelisz. **9** 5. **10** 7.

**B/1** Fernando Alonso. **2** 6th. **3** 165. **4** 6th. **5** An unsafe release. **6** Sebastian Vettel. **7** 4. **8** Daniel Ricciardo. **9** 1127. **10** 5th.

**C/1** Autopolis. **2** Spa. **3** Osterrehring. **4** Anderstorp. **5** Buenos Aires. **6** Sebring. **7** Long Beach. **8** Kyalami. **9** Mondello Park. **10** Barbagallo.

**D/1** Nelson Piquet. **2** Scott Dixon. **3** Mario and Michael Andretti. **4** David Coulthard. **5** Johnny Herbert. **6** Alan Jones. **7** Damon Hill. **8** Emerson Fittipaldi. **9** Rubens Barrichello. **10** Yvan Muller.

**E/1** Allan McNish, Laurent Aiello, Stephane Ortelli. **2** 591. **3** 3. **4** Jamie Chadwick. **5** 3. **6** Lee Mowle/Joe Osborne. **7** 36. **8** Once. **9** 1996. **10** Eight points.

**F/1** Reinhold Joest/Claude Haldi, Porsche Carrera RSR, Le Mans 24 Hours, June 9-10 1973. **2** Juan Pablo Montoya, Lola T96/50, International F3000, Barcelona, May 9 1998. **3** David Brabham/Jan Magnussen, Panoz LMP-1, American Le Mans Series, Nurburgring, July 9 2000. **4** Gilles Villeneuve, Ferrari 312T2, Canadian Grand Prix, Mosport Park, October 9 1977. **5** Eje Elgh, Chevron B42, European F2, Pau, May 15 1978. **6** Jim Clark, Lotus Cortina, British Saloon Car Championship, Silverstone, May 2 1964. **7** Bernard Darniche/Alain Mahe, Lancia Stratos HF, Monte Carlo Rally, January 19-25 1980. **8** Joe Macari/Ben Aucott, Maserati MC12 GT1, FIA GT Championship, Bucharest, May 20 2007. **9** Bob Bondurant, Lotus 33, Mexican Grand Prix, Mexico City, October 24 1965. **10** Colin McRae, Ferrari 550 Maranello, Le Mans 24 Hours pre-qualifying, April 23-25 2004.

**G/1** Rally Catalunya. **2** 2001. **3** 128. **4** 20. **5** WTCC. **6** Kris Meeke. **7** 5. **8** 82. **9** Rally Mexico. **10** 2003.

**H/1** Nasser Al-Attiyah. **2** Viktor Shaitar. **3** Nick Cassidy. **4** Wolfgang Reip. **5** Spencer Pigot. **6** Philipp Eng. **7** Timo Bernhard. **8** Joao Barbosa. **9** Jamie Caroline. **10** Ross Gunn.

## HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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# Power of publicity

Red Bull knows all about mastering the media agenda, but that's no reason why other Formula 1 teams can't get in on the act

By Lawrence Barretto, F1 Reporter

[@lawrobarretto](#)

**THE SIGHT OF MAX VERSTAPPEN TAKING A RED BULL** Formula 1 car for a spin around one of the most famous alpine ski courses in Kitzbuhel, Austria, made for great television.

It's nothing unusual for Red Bull. The four-time world champion team's cars have performed doughnuts on a helipad high above Dubai, zipped along the world's highest driveable road in India and messed about on frozen lakes. But it's something we don't see anywhere near enough of in F1.

This stunt will have required serious planning, and expense. The car had to be transported by helicopter, crane and chairlift. Pirelli produced two bespoke sets of spiked tyres, which then needed snow chains when temperatures rose.

But the results were spectacular. The footage made the headlines on major news channels and was all over social media. Even my mum called me to say she'd seen it – and she has very little interest in F1. It was the kind of exposure that money, spent without imagination, can't buy.

Red Bull is obviously in F1 for the publicity, but it's strange that other teams don't encourage their sponsors to do the same. An F1 car

is a spectacular thing to have as part of a PR campaign. Some realise the potential: like Red Bull, Ferrari and Lotus also do roadshows, taking F1 cars to the streets of cities across the globe.

Felipe Massa drove the historic Williams-Cosworth FWo8C in the Live Action Arena at Autosport International last weekend, while his team gave fans a close-up look at its impressive motorhome. Clearly, if you make the effort, people will come. The show was sold out on Saturday and Sunday and there's no doubt that Williams's and Massa's presence played a big part in that. It proves there is a massive appetite among fans.

Back in 2004, eight F1 teams took part in a demo run on the streets of London just before the British Grand Prix. Around 500,000 turned up, hanging out of windows and climbing lampposts to catch a glimpse of the cars driving down a route between Regent Street and Piccadilly Circus.

It was phenomenal PR for those involved and a great way of getting closer to the fans, given that during a race weekend the paddock is a closed environment.

But not every idea has to be expensive. Ferrari tried something on social media this week, creating the #readysretred campaign to build some hype around launch season. As it transpired, the countdown was to a competition the team was instigating to give 10 fans the chance to attend the unveiling

of its 2016 machine, rather than a first look at the car. But it created a buzz. And how brilliant would it have been if it had actually launched the 2016 car, catching everyone unaware and grabbing the headlines?

Not only would it have been the first F1 car unveiled, but the unique way it was done would have got everyone talking. Ferrari would have dominated the F1 news agenda, and its car would be the example used in pre-season material because it was the only one out there. There would be a real buzz.

Gone are the days of flash launches. Back then, you had McLaren drafting in the Spice Girls to launch their 1997 car and announcing a new title sponsor and livery. Honda used the Natural History museum to unveil its 'earth car' in 2007, while Renault chose Palermo's Teatro Massimo opera house to launch its 2004 machine. Jordan staged glitzy launches in Moscow's Red Square and London's Royal Albert Hall, while McLaren held an impressive show in Valencia in 2007.

Reviving these glory days would be very expensive, but in the grand scheme of things, considering how much they spend on development, is it really that significant?

The winter is a low point for F1 fans, so the launch season used to be something to get excited about. It's a bit of a letdown, then, when teams crank up the garage


shutters and roll the car out for an installation lap on the first day of testing and call that a launch.

For 2010, the Formula 1 Teams Association discussed the option of a group launch in Valencia, but the idea never saw the light of day. Can you imagine the excitement, much like you get at a motorshow, as each team had their moment to shine?

Sure, some of the smaller squads may not be too keen because they'd be overshadowed on the news agenda, but it's still better than what they're getting nowadays.

Maybe a couple of teams could do a joint launch – Red Bull and Toro Rosso, for example – or all the Mercedes-powered squads could do something together, spreading the cost.

We're living in an age where 'shareable content' is so important and the opportunity of global coverage is huge providing you have the right material. That's why teams and sponsors should take a leaf out of Red Bull's book and make the most of the fact that they have an F1 car at their disposal.

The fans will be happy, the teams will be more attractive to sponsors, and the sponsors will get exposure and more return on their investment. It's a win-win. 

**“Red Bull’s PR stunt was all over social media. Even my mum said she’d seen it”**

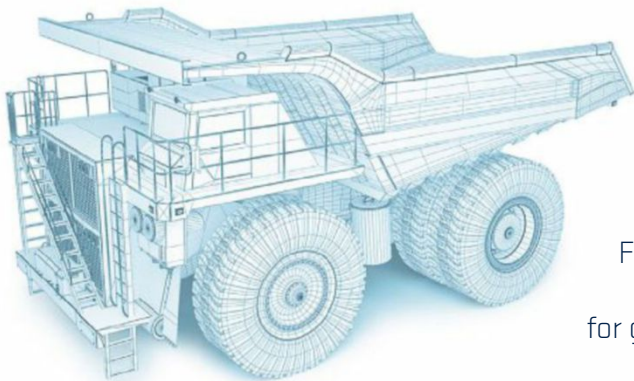
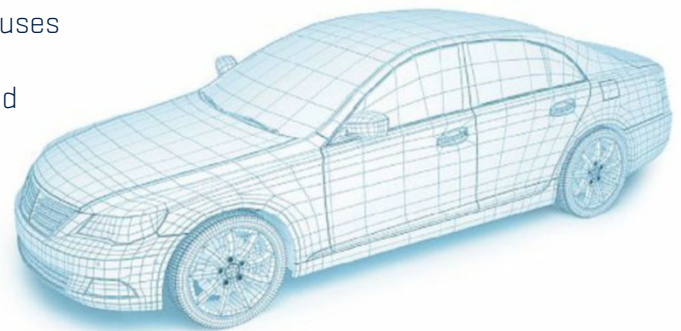


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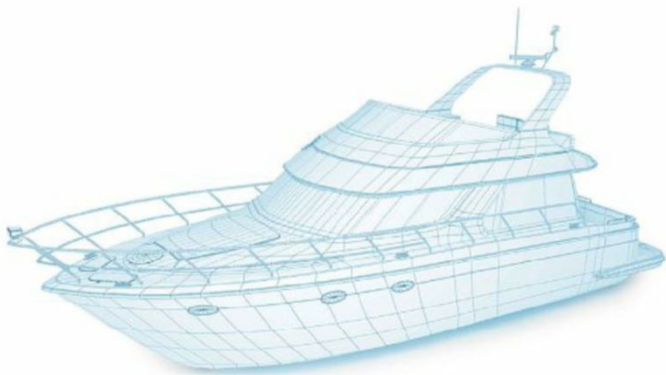
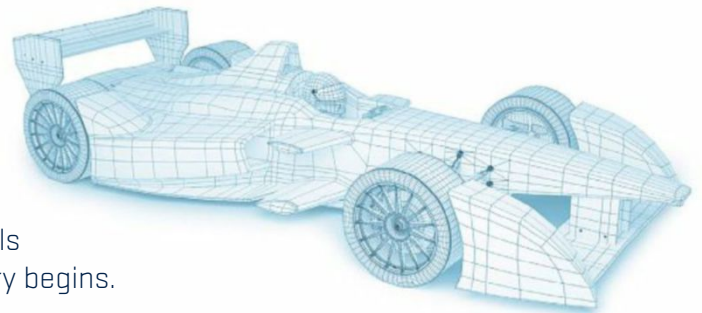
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# The last chance to beat Ogier

Jari-Matti Latvala has been roundly beaten by team-mate Sebastien Ogier during their time at Volkswagen. Is 2016 the likeable Finn's last chance to turn the tables?

By David Evans, Rallies Editor

🐦 @davidevansrally







**J**ARI-MATTI LATVALA HAS SEEN THIS ONE coming. We've tried to dress it up, but it's no good. He's smiling, putting us through it. If we want this one, we're going to have to work for it. He puts us out of our misery. "I know what you are saying," he offers. Finally. In for a penny... "Aren't you worried you're running out of time, Jari-Matti?"

He takes a deep breath.

"Look at Marcus [Gronholm]," he says. "Look at Tommi [Makinen]. And Sebastien Loeb. Look at nearly every world champion... They were over 30 when they won for the first time. Colin [McRae] is still the youngest."

He's right. Since 1979, there have been 17 world champions. Latvala is still younger than eight of them were when they took their first title. For information, McRae was 27 when he took the 1995 crown. Juha Kankkunen was the youngest in 1986, but the Scot beat him by four months nine years later.

But he's right. Latvala's lack of age concern is understandable. Big Bjorn Waldegaard, first ever world champion? Thirty-six. Stig Blomqvist? Two years older than that. Hannu Mikkola? »



# Volkswagen Polo-R WRC



**SEBASTIEN OGIER**  
(F)

AGE 32  
CAR NUMBER 1  
STARTS 97  
WINS 32  
PODIUMS 45  
TITLES 3



**JARI-MATTI LATVALA**  
(FIN)

AGE 30  
CAR NUMBER 2  
STARTS 156  
WINS 15  
PODIUMS 54  
TITLES 0



**ANDREAS MIKKELSEN**  
(N)

AGE 26  
CAR NUMBER 9  
STARTS 65  
WINS 1  
PODIUMS 14  
TITLES 0



Will Ogier's domination come to an end in 2016?

ALL PICS: MCKLEIN

Latvala flew again in Finland in 2015, but will want to win more often

# Hyundai i20 WRC



**DANI SORDO**  
(E)

AGE 32  
CAR NUMBER 4  
STARTS 128  
WINS 1  
PODIUMS 38  
TITLES 0



**THIERRY NEUVILLE**  
(B)

AGE 27  
CAR NUMBER 3  
STARTS 58  
WINS 1  
PODIUMS 12  
TITLES 0



**HAYDEN PADDON**  
(NZ)

AGE 28  
CAR NUMBER 10  
STARTS 47  
WINS 0  
PODIUMS 1  
TITLES 0



**KEVIN ABBRING**  
(NL)

AGE 27  
CAR NUMBER TBA  
STARTS 29  
WINS 0  
PODIUMS 0  
TITLES 0

He gives Latvala real room for manoeuvre: Mikkola was 41 when he finally landed the big prize with Audi in 1983. Latvala was 30 years old last year. So he still has plenty of time.

"I know," he says, "that I am getting older. But I think that I'm at a very good age right now for the sport. I'm getting more mature and I have the experience."

It's that experience that fools you. Latvala has started 156 rounds of the World Rally Championship. That's 10 more than McRae managed. Latvala's first outing at the highest level was in 2002.

He's been around the sport a long time. As one of the new generation, he's done his learning at the pinnacle of rallying, whereas the likes of Mikkola and Blomqvist cut their teeth in domestic series and then the British Rally Championship.

So, age is no barrier.

That just leaves Sebastien Ogier... The Frenchman's a slightly more daunting prospect.

This, if you're reading this, Jari-Matti, would be a good time to look away.

Ogier has dominated Latvala for the past three years. The likeable Finn shouldn't take that too personally – Ogier has dominated everybody for the past three years.

But it's J-ML who gets it in the neck the most for not being able to keep up with the flying Frenchman – they're in the same team and using the same kit. In the past 39 rallies, Latvala has won eight, been on the podium 22 times and hauled in 563 points. Not bad, by all accounts.

All accounts except Ogier's. He's won 25 rallies, finished top-three 31 times and stacked up 820 points. Oh yeah, and





three world titles. And scored 136 more fastest stage times.

How on earth do you try to take on a team-mate with stats like that? Psychologically, you're not just on the back foot, you're not even out of bed.

OK, you can come back now, Jari-Matti.

Latvala has a plan. He has lots of plans. He's spent the winter skiing and plotting. Fortunately, he's happy to share his plans with us. "First of all," he says, "I'm not going to say I am going for the championship."

Good plan, that'll fox Ogier – not to mention your employers... "I am going 110 per cent for every rally," he adds. "But, that doesn't mean I'm going to try to win every rally."

OK...

"Look at last year's championship, look at the start of the year," he says.

Really? Do you really want to go there? Three rallies into 2015, Latvala was 62 points down on Ogier. Sixty-two. That's bonkers.

"In the first half of the season," he says, "I have never been so successful. I have usually had to wait for the second half of the year for the rallies where I go well. So now I have to play the tactics. And the tactics are to not try to be winning every rally – sometimes I have to take the podium and wait for the second half where I am more suited."

We saw that strategy sporadically last season. In Argentina, for example, where he was content to run a risk-free second. That was working well, until his Polo coughed and died with a fuel-pump problem on El Condor.

Last year's Monte Carlo Rally was a better example. "I did not have such a good record with this rally," he says, "so last year I was determined to take the points and I was second. There were definitely times and places where a different approach would

not have worked. I remember coming out of that first stage, where there was so much black ice and I knew that in the years before, in similar conditions, I would have tried to attack too much. I seemed to understand the conditions a little bit last time. It was a real eye-opener to see how slow and how careful you really have to be in the snow and ice. This has to be my approach."

His theory on the second half of the year absolutely bears out. From Finland until the end of the season, Latvala outscored Ogier by 14 points. It would have been a lot more, had it not been for a mistake on what looked to be a fairly straightforward Sweet Lamb left-hander.

In a nutshell, isn't that the way things go for Latvala: it's all good, until it's all bad? "That rally was different," he says, "I was really pushing for the win there..."

For the past two years, Finland has been a source of immense pride for Latvala. He's shown Ogier the

way home both times. In 2014, his victory in Jyväskylä was as good as anything any driver has ever produced down those roads.

Competing at home brings the best out in everyone – but it almost carries Latvala to another level. "I definitely need more rallies to be like Finland," he says. "Finland lifts me and boosts me and it gives me even more concentration. It's that concentration I need on every rally. It has to be 110 per cent every time. This is the idea that I'm trying to work for, to make every rally the same: 110 per cent approach as in Finland."

Latvala is painfully aware that he hasn't put enough pressure on Ogier. He's been the one making the mistakes early and, »

## **"I definitely need more rallies to be like Finland... 110 per cent every time"**

**Jari-Matti Latvala**





once he's got his nose in front, the Frenchman has proved impossible to beat.

"If I can avoid the mistakes," he says, "then it means he cannot afford to make any mistakes of his own. That gives pressure to him. If we can do that and sustain a challenge and a threat, then we can see what happens. But all I can do is concentrate on my own job."

That's not necessarily the case with some of the other drivers. Thierry Neuville and Kris Meeke have, in the past, been happy to give the tiger a bit of a poke. Sometimes it's worked; sometimes they've been bitten.

Latvala's not interested in that kind of approach. "I don't play the mind games," he says, "I'm the honest guy who just tries to concentrate on my own performance. I have a lot of passion for this year's championship. And being nice is good, everybody likes it — but nobody remembers it. Being a nice guy's not going to make me a champion."

Latvala is an extremely nice chap. Too nice to be a world champion? "I am what I am," he says. "I can't change it. This is a new year and I am looking forward to doing my job."

## **"Being nice is good, but being nice is not going to make me a champion"**

**Jari-Matti Latvala**

A Latvala title at the end of the season would be well celebrated in the four corners of the service park. Latvala has been here for a long time and the WRC has endured the highs and lows: the terrifying crash in Portugal in 2009, the tears of his final-stage superspecial shunt in Poland later that season and the absolute highs of that first victory in Sweden in 2008 or his victory at home in 2014. Latvala's

time at the top of the sport he loves has been the ultimate emotional rollercoaster.

And, when the lows have been very low, he has come close — probably closer than we will ever truly know — to being shown the door. He talks with genuine warmth of those

M-Sport folk who stuck with him when his Ford Focus RS WRC shells were spending as much time in the bodyshop as they were on the stages.

And, regardless of what anybody says, patience was wearing thin at Volkswagen last season. But then, at the darkest of times, Latvala manages to find a chink of light.

In Portugal, we all saw the light. Latvala beat Ogier in a final-day fight. Granted, the #1 Polo had been first on the road





Latvala impressed in Portugal last year, beating Ogier home

ALL PICS: MCKLEIN



Latvala (r) has plans for beating dominant team-mate Ogier (c)

and sweeping the stones clean for the majority of the two previous days, while Latvala luxuriated in a faster line a few cars back. But, come Sunday morning in Porto, there was just 9.5 seconds between leader Latvala and Ogier with three stages to run. Three stages later, Latvala remained 8.2 seconds to the good.

Not only did he win, but he succeeded in getting under Ogier's skin – while still being himself. And that's got to be the key to Finland ending 12 years of French domination of the World Rally Championship.

But what if it's not Latvala? What if Jari-Matti can't make good on his promises or turn the tactics on to stack the early-season points? Who else can carry the fight to the all-conquering one from Gap.

Well, there is a third Polo R WRC in the field, that of Andreas Mikkelsen. The Norwegian has been with Volkswagen since the start of 2013, but only really emerged from beneath the protective cover of the junior-driver moniker last season. Win number one came a few months ago in Spain and, while he really needs to be stacking the 25-pointers up, a year-long title tilt is probably still too optimistic.

Citroen's Kris Meeke was the man most likely to upset Ogier's pace last season, but the Dungannon driver's reduced to a bit part this time around (see panel, p30).

Meeke's former team-mate Mads Ostberg is back at M-Sport and driving a Ford Fiesta RS WRC – the car in which he has taken his sole win in the world championship.

Ostberg never settled into the DS 3 WRC, but the Fiesta always fitted like a glove. For his year to catch, a win in Sweden is an absolute must. If he can do that, then come away from the Americas with big points, who knows what might happen?

But in reality, standing on the outskirts of Rouaine this evening (Thursday) at the »

## DMack

FORD FIESTA RS WRC



**OTT  
TÄNAK  
(EST)**

AGE	27
CAR NUMBER	12
STARTS	53
WINS	0
PODIUMS	0
TITLES	0

## M-Sport

FORD FIESTA RS WRC



**MADS  
OSTBERG  
(N)**

AGE	28
CAR NUMBER	5
STARTS	90
WINS	1
PODIUMS	14
TITLES:	0

**ERIC  
CAMILLI  
(F)**

AGE	28
CAR NUMBER	6
STARTS	10
WINS	0
PODIUMS	0
TITLES	0



# The part-timers

There's an upside to Kris Meeke's 2016 that even he probably hasn't thought of: he won't leave his mobile telephone in Argentina this year... because he won't be there.

This is going to be an odd year for Meeke. He'll start it like he's started the last two, in Monte Carlo and then Sweden. After that, nothing is terribly clear.

"We'll be doing six, eight maybe even 10 rallies," he says. "Nothing has been decided yet. We'll probably go to events like Portugal, Poland and maybe somewhere like Corsica. There's no point going to the events like Finland where I have pretty good experience."

The Northern Irishman sounds extraordinarily upbeat about what looks from the outside to be a season on the bench. That's because he's going nowhere near a bench.

Away from rallies, he'll be in a Citroen C3 WRC pounding out 10,000 test miles in readiness for 2017.

"I have the best of both worlds," he says, "rallies to keep me sharp and the chance to completely immerse myself in the development of the new car." Doesn't it worry him that, as this season unfolds, his outdated DS 3 WRC will struggle to make an impact



Kris Meeke will be throwing himself into developing new Citroen C3 in 2016

against the VWs?

"I'll be honest," he says, "it's not like we haven't had a bit of an ass-kicking for the last two years... Of course we're competitive and we'll be trying, but there's no development on our car and we're on these rallies to stay sharp and get more experience."

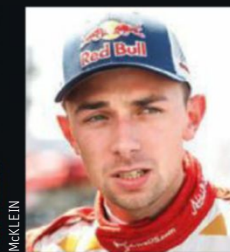
And, of course, Meeke won't be the Emerald Isle's only representative in the

Abu Dhabi World Rally Team this season, as Craig Breen steps up from WRC2. After years of struggling to make Peugeot's 208T16 work, the Irishman – a former WRC Academy and SWRC title winner – needed a break and this is it. He will appear as Meeke's team-mate for the first time in Sweden, but his DS 3 WRC programme after the season's only snow rally has yet to be decided.

Robert Kubica won't even make it as far as Sweden. The Polish star will compete in this week's Monte Carlo Rally, but after that there's a huge question mark over not only his WRC future but the direction his career takes from here. It would appear circuits are calling again and, should he fail to land enough cash to stick with the WRC, he could be going around in circles

by the summer.

Kubica's former WRC2 rival Elfyn Evans has the chance to do what he couldn't do in 2013 and take that WRC2 title. Dropped from the frontline M-Sport squad in favour of Eric Camilli, Evans drives the evolution Fiesta R5 for the Cumbrians. Get that right and he'll be pushing the Frenchman for his seat back in no time.



**KRIS MEEKE (GB)**

**ABU DHABI TOTAL CITROEN DS 3 WRC**  
**AGE** 36  
**CAR NUMBER** 7  
**STARTS** 66  
**WINS** 1  
**PODIUMS** 7  
**TITLES** 0

**STEPHANE LEFEBVRE (F)**

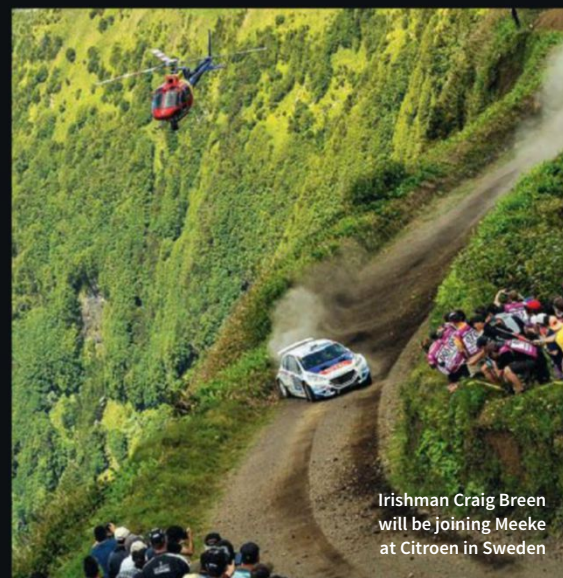
**ABU DHABI TOTAL CITROEN DS 3 WRC**  
**AGE** 23  
**CAR NUMBER** 8  
**STARTS** 21  
**WINS** 0  
**PODIUMS** 0  
**TITLES** 0

**CRAIG BREEN (IRL)**

**ABU DHABI TOTAL CITROEN DS 3 WRC**  
**AGE** 25  
**CAR NUMBER** TBA  
**STARTS** 21  
**WINS** 0  
**PODIUMS** 0  
**TITLES** 0

**ROBERT KUBICA (PL)**

**RK WRT FORD FIESTA RS WRC**  
**AGE** 31  
**CAR NUMBER** 16  
**STARTS** 32  
**WINS** 0  
**PODIUMS** 0  
**TITLES** 0



Irishman Craig Breen will be joining Meeke at Citroen in Sweden



end of the first stage of the Monte Carlo Rally, all eyes will be on two numbers and four names. Numbers 3 and 4, and the names of Thierry Neuville and Dani Sordo.

Hyundai's i20 WRC is the next generation as well as the New Generation. Six months late in delivery, the car must hit the ground running in the 13 miles leading to the season's first stage end. And thereafter.

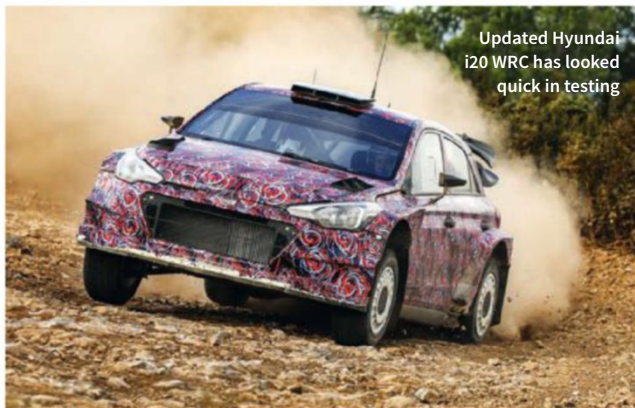
The accepted theory is that the South Korean car's on the money. From what we've seen in testing, it looks a good bit quicker, more efficient and more powerful than its predecessor, with weight distribution to breathe new life into the front tyres.

Hyundai has taken a big step with its new car. But, if we believe the stories coming out of Hannover, the spec sheet for this year's Polo bears a striking resemblance to the one that left Deeside 66 days ago.

So, it's down to the wheelmen. Sordo's a safe pair of hands who will deliver rally-winning potential in Germany and Spain – maybe even in September's all-asphalt return to China. On the dirt, it's down to Neuville and the team's rising star Hayden Paddon.

The first job for that pair, however, is to look beyond their own rivalry, which is undoubtedly building and bubbling. Neuville's probably the quicker of the two right now, but his confidence is still shot from a shocker in 2015. Paddon's getting faster and faster, but does he have the experience to target Ogier yet? Time will tell.

Either way, the last season for the current crop of World Rally Cars has plenty to keep us entertained until the modern-day incarnation of the Group B car arrives a year from here. 🌿



Updated Hyundai i20 WRC has looked quick in testing

## “We’re on these rallies to stay sharp and get more experience”

Kris Meeke



Elfyn Evans will be targeting WRC2 title in new Fiesta

## THE CALENDAR

### MONTE CARLO RALLY JANUARY 21-24

World's best-known rally is a French Alps mix of snow, sun, ice and rain. Everything changes on every corner.

### RALLY SWEDEN FEBRUARY 11-14

Magical, marvellous high-speed snow rally... when it snows. Miserable mud-fest when it doesn't. Best served well below 0C.

### RALLY MEXICO MARCH 3-6

High-altitude scorcher is the first gravel rally of the year. Cracking 2016 itinerary includes a final-day 50-miler.

### RALLY ARGENTINA APRIL 21-24

Water crossings and lunar landscapes abound mid-way between Buenos Aires and the Andes. Fast roads for fans full of thrills.

### RALLY OF PORTUGAL MAY 19-22

Booming since last year's return to rallying heartland in Porto. Stages like Fafe have been missing from the WRC for too long.

### RALLY ITALY JUNE 9-12

Very hot, very dusty and very, very big jump in the Monte Lerno stage. Better based in Alghero because Olbia was horrible.

### RALLY POLAND JUNE 30-JULY 3

Fast, narrow stages lined with gazillions of fans and based out of hotel built for the entertainment of Communist party members.

### RALLY FINLAND JULY 28-31

Select gear six, bury throttle and prepare for take-off. The WRC's annual flying festival is the fastest rally of the year.

### RALLY GERMANY AUGUST 18-21

Complete mix of roads from Mosel vineyards to military testing tracks. Notoriously fickle Trier weather usually livens things up.

### RALLY CHINA SEPTEMBER 8-11

All-new asphalt rally for this season. Based in Huairou north of Beijing, roughly the same area as China's last WRC foray in 1999.

### RALLY OF FRANCE SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 2

Pretty much washed away last year, Corsica will be hoping for drier conditions to show off its 10,000 corners this time around.

### RALLY SPAIN OCTOBER 13-16

Usual mix of gravel and asphalt for the Salou-based event – that's once they've warmed up with a run around Montjuic, Barcelona.

### RALLY GB OCTOBER 27-30

Bit earlier than last time, but it'll make no difference – it will still be that magic mix of the best woods in the worst weather.

### RALLY AUSTRALIA NOVEMBER 17-20

New South Wales summer will bake the gravel hard for the season's finale. Great roads in the middle of nowhere.



# Britain's hat-trick hero on the rise

Jack Aitken clinched one of junior single-seater racing's most coveted titles in 2015 – alongside two other championship crowns. Now he's on the brink of being in a bigger shop window

By Marcus Simmons, Deputy Editor

🐦 @MarcusSimmons54

**H**e won three single-seater titles in 2015, including the series that has arguably been the most consistently competitive over the past decade. Yet Jack Aitken has operated below the radar for much of his career. He's never had the highest of profiles or level of hype. So let's change that now...

After all, he deserves recognition. Aitken wrested Formula Renault Eurocup glory in 2015 – the first British national to do so since James Matthews way back in 1994 – in a gripping eight-way title showdown, to add to the Formula Renault ALPS crown he'd secured the previous weekend, as well as the Pro Mazda Winterfest laurels that went his way on a pre-season warm-up in the US. He did that despite breaking his back in a nasty crash at Monza in July, which left serious doubts over whether he'd be back in a car at all for the rest of the year.

Aitken stands on the brink of a step up to a higher level in 2016. He's keeping shstum for now on whether that's going to be GP3 or Formula V8 3.5 (or whatever it's called this week), although the word on the street is that it's going to be the former. Wherever he goes, the intrigue over his destination is a sign that a guy who arrived in single-seaters four years ago with a minimum of fanfare is being taken very seriously.

To recap, Aitken's rookie season in car racing was 2012,

where as a karting graduate he finished third in the Intersteps series (a coda for the old Formula BMW cars) with Fortec Motorsport. He stayed with Fortec for the step up to the Formula Renault Northern European Cup in '13, and took the runner-up spot. Both titles were won by team-mate Matt Parry, something Aitken acknowledges as "quite good for me, because he was more of an experienced guy to follow and I learned quickly". The Fortec team was highly impressed, but there was one thing missing from Aitken's NEC season: a win. "I remember when we finished the year that struck me, and I thought, 'Bloody hell, that must be the first time since I was nine or 10 that I haven't won a race,'" he recalls. "We at least put that right the following year, but only just!"

Aitken remained with Fortec in the Renault Eurocup for 2014, but it was a tough start to the season, with no points from the first three race weekends. "That was the year Renault brought in a couple of minor changes to the car, with tyres and brakes," says Aitken. "I missed a lot of the pre-season testing because of my school commitments, and for whatever reason we weren't quite on top of it and I dropped the ball a bit as well. You can't go into as competitive a series as the Eurocup with 10 or 12 days' less testing than the rest of them and expect to be at the sharp end. So I took a bit of a beating in the first half of the year."

Aitken's family had insisted on his education being taken seriously. After taking his A-levels in the summer of 2014, ➤





CV

## JACK AITKEN

- 2015** Formula Renault Eurocup champion with Koiranen GP  
*5 wins, 6 podiums, 4 poles*
- Formula Renault ALPS champion with Koiranen  
*4 wins, 7 podiums, 3 poles*
- Pro Mazda Winter Series champion with Team Pelfrey  
*3 wins, 4 podiums, 1 pole*
- 2014** 7th Formula Renault Eurocup with Fortec Motorsport  
*1 win, 4 podiums, 1 pole*
- 2013** 2nd FRenault NEC with Fortec  
*5 podiums, 2 poles*
- 2012** 3rd InterSteps with Fortec  
*2 wins, 13 podiums, 2 poles*
- 2nd FRenault BARC Winter Series with Fortec  
*1 win, 4 podiums, 1 pole*



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Aitken tested GP3 (far left) and FR3.5 machinery post-season, but has yet to confirm his 2016 plans

he was able to concentrate on his racing and put any thoughts of university on ice. From July onwards, his points tally – with a win at the Hungaroring – was second only to that of runaway champion Nyck de Vries.

“My mum and dad were quite keen for me to do the proper education to make sure I got my qualifications if this thing doesn’t work out, which I can’t disagree with, but it did create some difficult situations,” he explains. “The worst point was Spa, where throughout the weekend I had my history books out – whether it was in the garage, the back of the truck, the car or the plane back – because on the Monday I had my history A-level. I took the plane back to try and save time instead of driving back with my parents, and I got to the front door of my house and realised I hadn’t taken a set of keys with me! So I sat on my front doorstep with a set of history books with me for two hours waiting for my parents to get back. Not great...”

“We took the view that university wasn’t an option, in the sense that you’ve either got to do one or the other – you’ll not be able to do both properly. At the moment, it’s 100 per cent focus on the racing and the change in results since that switch has been incredible.”

Aitken switched to Koiranen GP for his second season in Eurocup, which he combined with a campaign in the ALPS series. “De Vries had a great season with them, and the thing that really struck me about Koiranen was they never made mistakes,” explains Aitken. “When I went to do my first test with them that was the first thing that I was really impressed by – you walked into the garage and there was this atmosphere of almost complete calm and quiet confidence. Throughout the year, even when things weren’t going well the team were great, and just sitting down and saying, ‘OK, well let’s look at the facts and try and work through this.’ And they’ve got such great experience that they rarely find themselves in that situation anyway.”

The Monza crash resulted in a broken vertebra, and meant a fightback to defeat team-mate Jake Hughes to the ALPS crown as well as to beat early-season pacesetter Louis Deletraz to the Eurocup: “The initial reports from the doctor were that I could be out for the rest of the year and might have to be in a full back brace. It was another couple of days before we got any sort of

good news from the doctors back home. I was back in the car at Misano one and a half weeks later and managed to fight the race out – that was a bit of white-knuckle drive, but the good thing is that it’s a bike track so it was nice and smooth.”

Aitken, who lost a couple of millimetres in height due to the compression of the vertebra – “I can’t afford that as I’m perfect racing-driver height!” – got back to acceptable fitness over the summer break for his remarkable season run-in: “It allowed me to drive safely, but the bone was still – and is currently still – weak and as such I can’t train as hard as I had done. I’ve lost a bit of muscle, which was inevitable, but now I’m at 98 per cent, which was good enough – the Renaults are not too physical – and I’ve now got time to properly recover before the GP3 season... if that’s what we end up doing.”

Of his end-of-season spree, he says: “That wasn’t a great increase in form; it was the just the level of performance we expected, and that we’d seen in pre-season testing. It was a case of things coming together. We didn’t change anything on the car – it was already quick – and I didn’t change anything that I was doing. We just cut out a few of the smaller mistakes and luck turned with us.”

From there, it was on to tests in Formula V8 3.5 and GP3 – each with three different teams: “The 3.5 car is absolutely unbelievable, and every driver raves about it. It’s got tons of downforce and is so stable. The GP3 is almost the opposite philosophy – instead of pushing yourself to trust the car and carry more speed, it’s almost instantly a case of pulling yourself back and being disciplined. Tests in both went very well.”

Aitken also pays tribute to Renault, which pulled its support from FV8 3.5 and, with it, its bursary for the Eurocup champion to graduate: “Immediately after I won the championship at Jerez we got a message saying, ‘Come to the Renault truck and we’ll just clarify a few things with you.’ They went through everything and were very professional. They are going to offer us some scholarship money, even if we don’t use it in 3.5. It will be a smaller amount, but we’re very grateful for it and it was good to be reassured like that.”

Whatever his final 2016 plans, Aitken, for the first time, goes into a new season with the limelight of expectation upon him. 🌟



With Koiranen FR team-mate Hughes

## Winning the battle of the Brits

THREE BRITS WENT TO THE FORMULA Renault Eurocup finale of 2015 with a shot at the title. They all get on very well with each other, despite their very different personalities. Firstly there’s dry-witted Brummie Jake Hughes, secondly there’s bubbly East Midlander Ben Barnicoat, and finally it’s the softly-spoken Jack Aitken, who drops the occasional London glottal stop but otherwise could pass nicely as a 1950s BBC announcer.

“Jake [who was Aitken’s Koiranen team-mate] pushed me on in both the ALPS and the Eurocup all the way

through,” acknowledges Aitken. “It’s quite rare to be able to have a really hard battle on the track – we were very close on a few occasions at Silverstone in Eurocup and at the Red Bull Ring in ALPS; we were quite hard on each other – but as soon as you’re out of the car it’s, ‘I understand, I would have done the same.’”

“We had a great relationship. When we weren’t racing we were usually in the back of the truck, laughing about Vine or Facebook and watching videos of cats – the usual stuff!”

“I have a really good relationship

with Ben as well. We’ve been in the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award as finalists [Aitken, Hughes and Barnicoat all took part for the second time in 2015] and he’s always got a smile on his face. You can’t knock him, and he’s bloody quick as well.

“It’s nice to have guys in the paddock who you can race hard with, and then in the paddock it’s as you were half an hour before you got in the car. They are very different characters, but both Jake and Ben and their families are absolute top-notch.”





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AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL IS TRADITIONALLY the start of the motorsport season in this country, but even by its high standards the 2016 event was a classic.

The spectacular display of Williams machinery, as well as the team's motorhome, was the centrepiece of the packed show. Among the star names was Damon

Hill, whose 1996 world championship victory was honoured, while we were also privileged enough to be visited by FIA president Jean Todt.

With star cars and drivers from all disciplines of motorsport, the halls of the Birmingham NEC were packed with fans eagerly anticipating the year ahead.







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Patrick Allen, Rob Austin, James Barclay, Simon Belcher, David Brabham, Kenny Brack, Iain Campbell, Ben Collins, David Croft, Charlie Eastwood, Elfyn Evans, Mike Ewan, Will Fewkes, Mike Flewitt, Marino Franchitti, Blake Friend, Wayne Gardner, Oliver Gavin, Jack Goff, Alan Gow, Ian Harrison, Jack Harvey, Paul Hembery, Damon Hill, Andrew Jordan, Jordan King, Andrew Kirkaldy, Freddie Lee, Felipe Massa, Perry McCarthy, Allan McNish, Struan Moore, Johnny Mowlem, Matt Neal, Gerard Neveu, Harrison Newey, Will Palmer, Jason Plato, Andy Priaulx, Sebastian Priaulx, Phil Read, Sergio Rinland, Charlie Robertson, Chris Routledge, Warren Scott, Gordon Shedden, Petter Solberg, Otmar Szafnauer, Nick Tandy, Christopher Tate, Ben Taylor, Harry Tincknell, Jean Todt, Lawrence Tomlinson, Jeremy Townsend, Colin Turkington, Darren Turner, Oliver Turvey, Ari Vatanen, Max Vatanen, Derek Warwick, Andrew Watson, Claire Williams, Scott Williams, Malcolm Wilson, Susie Wolff





INDYCAR

# Harvey still chasing IndyCar

JACK HARVEY REMAINS IN CONTENTION FOR an IndyCar drive this year, but admits he could switch to sportscar racing.

The British driver finished as runner-up in Indy Lights in 2014 and '15, and was pursuing an IndyCar drive with Schmidt Peterson Motorsports. That seat ultimately went to Mikhail Aleshin, but Harvey is still chasing funding to advance talks with Bryan Herta Autosport and Dale Coyne Racing. BHA ran Gabby Chaves last year, while Coyne has filled one of its two full-time 2016 seats with Conor Daly.

"It's progressing," Harvey told *Autosport* of his push for an IndyCar drive. "At the same time we were talking with SPM, we were still talking with Bryan

and Dale, so for sure it's not a back-up plan.

"Honestly, to end up with any of the teams would be great – they've all shown they can win races and that's what I'm trying to achieve if we can. It's a difficult trail and one that probably every driver is on at some point."

Harvey could race in the World Endurance Championship or IMSA SportsCar Championship instead. "When you say it in your head, 'To do WEC is the back-up plan,' actually it's not really a back-up plan," he added. "To do that championship would be amazing. It's not a Plan B – it would be an excellent career move.

"We have some options, I'm told by my management. Hopefully we could exercise them quite quickly if we needed to."



STALEY/LAT

GP2

## RACING ENGINEERING GETS KING

MANOR FORMULA 1 TEAM test driver Jordan King will stay with Racing Engineering for his second season in GP2.

The Brit stepped into the series in 2015 after two seasons in the Formula 3 European Championship, finishing 12th in the standings with a best of second at Spa.

King tested in Abu Dhabi with the team, and has now completed his deal for 2016 as he eyes a title challenge.

"I've kept the continuity with the same team, so there aren't any excuses," he said when announcing the news at *Autosport International*. "The pressure is high, but I feel confident I can do it."

The 21-year-old made his F1 testing debut with Manor in last year's Pirelli tyre test, and is hopeful of spending more time in the 2016 challenger. "We're not 100 per cent sure yet," he said of his Manor role. "It will be similar to last year, but maybe with a few more times in the car."

SPORTSCARS

# RINLAND (RE)JOINS BRABHAM

FORMER BRABHAM FORMULA 1 DESIGNER SERGIO RINLAND has become technical advisor to Project Brabham, which aims to revive the famous team.

Rinland took over from Gordon Murray as Brabham chief designer at the end of 1986, and had two spells at the team before its first incarnation closed in 1992. Project Brabham is focused on sportscar racing, with LMP1 the ultimate aim.

"We've brought Sergio on board to help us on the team side to work on how our roadmap will look on the technical side," said David Brabham on the *Autosport* stage. "He'll make a great difference because we've got ambitions and some of those entail certain technologies that Sergio has been involved with.

"When I went to Sergio when I came up with the idea of Project Brabham, his eyes lit up. We continued the conversation and now is the right time to bring him on as a consultant because things are moving on."

Rinland's F1 design career also involved stints at Williams, Benetton, Sauber and Arrows. His recent focus has been on his own engineering consultancy company Astauto.

"The world is changing fast, very fast, towards the digital age," said Rinland. "The young people want a different kind of engagement and involvement with racing and life in general. David grasped that concept and had the idea to apply that to motorsport."



HOVER/LAT





FIA president Todt has proposed return of refuelling for 2017

## FORMULA 1

# Tech rules toned down

AFTER MONTHS OF DISCUSSIONS regarding a new technical rules package for the 2017 F1 season, it seems the final product will not be as revolutionary as first thought.

The championship's bosses set a mandate to increase the speed of F1 machinery by five seconds per lap, increase the size of the tyres and widen the cars in a bid to create a more spectacular show for the fans.

But, according to Williams technical director Pat Symonds, who has played a key role in the discussions, the final package will be a "halfway house".

"What we are left with is a car which is now two metres wide and it's got bigger tyres - 300mm front, 400mm rear," says Symonds.

"I think it has quite an attractive look to it but the bodywork width, which was going to be 1800mm, has come back down to 1400mm, which is what it is now.

"It was going to have a very big diffuser, but it has been made smaller and is basically the same as what we have now. In fact, the underbody of the car is very similar.

"We still have a bit more freedom around the front bargeboard area but it's a bit of a halfway house from the original proposal.

"I feel there may be some merit in thinking again and waiting until 2018. But I suspect I won't have much support from my fellow teams.

"There are some people who just want to get on and do things, which is fair enough, but I like to do things right rather than just do them.

"I think, to be honest, what will happen is we will polish the details with a view to having a set of 2017 regulations by March 1."

## 2016 set to be noisier

The sound of the cars has been scrutinised since the new turbo-hybrid power-unit formula was introduced at the start of 2014.

But the noise of an F1 engine could be as much as 25 per cent louder in 2016 because of changes to the exhaust regulation, claims Symonds. Cars will have a separate exhaust-wastegate tailpipe through which all - and only - wastegate exhaust gases may pass.

"It means even with the wastegate closed, it acts like a silencer in the exhaust," says Symonds. "Getting rid of that means it'll be a bit louder. With the wastegate closed, you'll perceive it is around 14 per cent louder. With it open, it'll actually be 20 to 25 per cent louder, so quite significant."

## Refuelling return?

The return of refuelling is also being mooted for 2017. FIA president Jean Todt suggests it would only cost €50,000 per year to bring it back, but Symonds disagrees.

"He's an order of magnitude out," he says. "That's worrying. Freight costs for shipping equipment is £175,000 and it's probably £200-250,000 to buy and service the kit in the first year and the ongoing cost of servicing it. There is also one dedicated salaried person for looking after it, so the costs are significant."

## MORE FROM THE SHOW

### FIA SET FOR AUDIT

The FIA has brought in an independent audit company in an attempt to show the organisation is above board and transparent in its dealings. It comes after two other world governing bodies, football's FIFA and athletics' IAAF, have been engulfed in scandal in recent months. Late last year, the European Union agreed to look into a complaint made by Force India and Sauber over what the teams claim to be an "unfair and unlawful" division of Formula 1's revenues and setting of the rules.

"Unfortunately some global sporting organisations have been facing some problems, and I can only be sorry for them," president Jean Todt told *Autosport*. "I have asked a specific audit company to have a look at our organisation, and if they feel they can advise on some improvements, then I'm very happy to take them on board."

### JOINING THE ACADEMY

Single-seater converts Struan Moore and Alex Fontana have joined the expanded and renamed McLaren GT Driver Academy for 2016. Moore and Fontana, who respectively raced in the Japanese Formula 3 Championship and GP3 last season, were announced alongside existing member Andrew Watson on the roster of what was previously known as McLaren's young-driver programme. The trio, who could be joined by further academy members before the start of the season, have been selected from drivers who have confirmed race programmes at the wheel of one of McLaren's 650S GT3s in 2016.

### MOWLEM LOCKS IN IMSA

British sportscar stalwart Johnny Mowlem will contest the full IMSA SportsCar Championship in the Prototype Challenge class this year. Mowlem, who announced the programme at *Autosport* International on Thursday, will share one of two ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09s entered by BAR1 Motorsports with 18-year-old Matt McMurry in the sprint rounds of the championship. His team-mates for the long-distance rounds that make up the North American Endurance Cup element of the IMSA series have yet to be confirmed, but are likely to include Tomy Drissi and Marc Drumwright.

### AUSTIN A HANDY MAN

Race winner Rob Austin will drive a Toyota Avensis in the British Touring Car Championship in 2016 after sealing a deal with Handy Motorsport. Austin will merge the crew from his Rob Austin Racing team with Simon Belcher's Handy operation to contest his sixth season in the class. The 34-year-old will drive a freshly built Toyota Avensis after campaigning a rear-wheel-drive Rob Austin Racing-run Audi A4 since 2011.









# FOLLOWING IN AYRTON SENNA'S FOOTSTEPS

In 1983, Ayrton Senna had his first Formula 1 test in a Williams FW08C. Thirty-three years later, FELIPE MASSA emulated his Brazilian hero by giving it a whirl at *Autosport International*



**H**AVING A SHOW LIKE this for the fans is really nice. Actually, when I first landed in the UK I saw everything was white with snow and I wasn't sure we would even be able to drive. In Brazil the weather is sometimes nice enough to go to the beach at this time of year, so it was quite a shock... I also didn't know the style of this event, so had no idea we would be driving indoors!

The event looks really good – so many different cars, different categories, and different drivers. I think it's really nice for the people to be able to mix with all these examples from different forms of racing.

When I sat in the FW08C for the first time, it gave me a really special feeling. Driving something that is part of the history of Ayrton Senna is special for any Brazilian driver, and for sure I was thinking of Ayrton when I was driving the car. I was thinking about him, even though the car was actually Keke Rosberg's car. »



I was not thinking about Keke at all!

I was actually with Bruno Senna the day before I came to Birmingham, and he told me a story I didn't know so much. Bruno told me when Ayrton drove this car at Donington, which was his first test in F1, that Ayrton destroyed all the other guys who were testing on the same day – including Keke!

He was a lot quicker, maybe a second or something like that. That shows just how special he really was. I'm told Frank still thinks it was his biggest mistake not to sign Ayrton up that day...

Actually, my first memory of Ayrton is pretty bad. When I was maybe eight or nine years old, I was having dinner in a yacht club in Brazil. It was a very quiet evening with not many people around. This boat arrived and Senna jumped from the boat with a girl. I went up to him to ask for an autograph but he wouldn't give me one.

It was really frustrating for me! I was always supporting him when I was a child, and I cried so much when he died. Not getting his autograph was really one of the worst days of my life when I was young.

Of course, I never knew at the time that I was going to become a Formula 1 driver myself, but actually I learned massively from what happened, because now, whenever kids come up to me and ask for an autograph, I remember how I felt that day and I make sure I give them my time.

I can't remember ever doing something like this show before, but it was really nice. The track was small, but it was good for the show. The only thing I would say is that maybe the show was too short. I only did about four laps. But it was nice to entertain the crowds.

I thought about maybe doing some donuts, but the car is very old and I didn't want to break it. It's not so easy to make the parts now, and Dickie Stanford [general manager of Williams Heritage]

wouldn't have been very impressed if I damaged it. So I just tried to enjoy driving, sliding and pushing on the throttle, but no crazy stuff...

I was looking at the steering wheel while I sat in the car and I was thinking how nice it was to have such a completely different wheel to the one we usually have. Not even one button on the steering wheel, which was so nice to see! The H-pattern gearbox, three pedals, nobody talking to you when you're driving. It was so nice!

It took me back to when I was in Formula 3000, which maybe had a similar level of cars to this. When I drove Formula 3000, the engine and tyres we had were not so far away compared to this car. Maybe the F1 engine was a little bit more powerful, but not so much different.

I won the championship in Euro F3000 and have really fond memories of those times. I cannot really compare that to how Formula 1 is now, but the only thing I really miss from those times is how relaxed I was able to be.

You cannot relax in Formula 1, because you have so many things to do, so many things to follow, so much politics around you, and sometimes you cannot be yourself. Pressure you always have, but it was a different world. The environment was so much more fun to be in.

Driving this historic Williams was amazing. It was really good fun. It was easier than I expected, because everything is related to the mechanical grip. I thought I would need to understand how the car is and maybe it would not be so easy, because the car is completely different to my usual Williams. But actually it just goes sideways in the corners, and it's pretty easy to control.

The acceleration was nice, because the Ford DFV is the right engine for the amount of grip you have. You don't have



Massa takes Rosberg's Cosworth DFV-powered FW08C for a spin around the arena

the same levels of aerodynamic grip, so you have a lot less grip than I'm used to, but you feel the engine in a nice way, because there's no turbo.

It was not a 'proper' track – it was like an oval – but you could feel the car a little bit in the tight corners. It was nice, but not very fast. I was in first gear the whole time. But that first gear was pretty long, so it was OK. The track was really tight, so I didn't need second gear.

I was going sideways in the corners and early on the throttle to kick out the back. There was a bit too much understeer, because the grip level was pretty low. Plus I was using rain tyres – they didn't want me on slicks!

It was good fun, and I got a really good reaction from the fans. They were really happy, really screaming and enjoying the time. It would have been good to have cars from other Formula 1 teams there too, but anyway it was really nice for us to be a part of the show. 🏆

## OTHER WILLIAMS CARS



Williams's first F1 car, the FW06, driven by Alan Jones in 1978



Hill poses with his 1996 title-winning Williams FW18





## CROWD REACTION

ON A WEEKEND WHEN WILLIAMS TECHNICAL chief Pat Symonds promised fans at *Autosport International* that Formula 1 cars would sound 25 per cent louder in 2016, his team's heritage division was next door providing a beautifully noisy reminder of what many fans will regard as the classic F1 sound: a Ford Cosworth DFV in the back of a 1980s chassis.

The 1983 Williams-Ford FW08C did have the acoustic advantage of having an indoor chamber to echo around. Perhaps Williams – or one of its F1 rivals – could prove that the current generation of much-maligned turbo-hybrids would sound great in the Live Action Arena by giving one an indoor whizz in 2017?

This was far from the first time an F1 car had performed in the arena, but – with no disrespect to Nick Yelloly, the FW08C's occupant for most of the weekend – what made this outing extra special was the presence of a current F1 driver in Felipe Massa, who flew in especially for the Sunday lunchtime performance.

Complete unfamiliarity with the car didn't stop him doing his utmost to entertain. The stereotype of a previous-era grand prix car is a lot of noise and oversteer, and that's exactly what Massa provided from his first lap of the arena's skating rink of an oval. And when he sprinted through from the backstage 'pitlane' to address the crowd, beaming and waving, it was clear he'd enjoyed himself even more than the spectators in the grandstands. Winter PR gigs in a freezing cold Birmingham hall needn't be dull.

The F1 cameo was a very welcome cherry on a live-action sundae that also included high-flying motorbike stunts, oval and autograss racers, a McLaren GT3 making a pitstop and ASI showman extraordinaire Petter Solberg, whose repertoire of tricks this year included hanging outside his Citroen World Rally Car as it doughnuttet. Now that would be harder to do in an FW08C.



Massa in FW08C fitted with wet-weather tyres for slippery surface



Impressive Williams Heritage display drew the crowds

MAUGER/LAT



MAUGER/LAT



# DARING TO BE DIFFERENT

Ex-Williams Formula 1 tester  
Susie Wolff and the MSA launched  
an initiative aimed at boosting  
female participation in motor  
racing at *Autosport* International

ONE OF THE KEY CONCLUSIONS to the question posed in *Autosport's* Women in Motorsport last August issue of when a female driver will next race in Formula 1 – four decades since Lella Lombardi was the last to do so – was perfectly simple. It's a question of boosting participation. The real question is how to achieve that.

Newly retired ex-Williams test driver Susie Wolff, guest editor of that special edition of *Autosport*, plus Rob Jones, chief executive of the Motor Sports Association, have found a potential solution. And its ambition ranges far beyond getting women behind the wheel in competition.

Dare to be Different, which also has support from *Autosport* owner

**“I WAS SEEN AS A ROLE  
MODEL, SO I FELT I HAD  
TO DO SOMETHING”**

Haymarket Media Group, Sky Sports F1, Daytona Motorsport, STEMNET, Williams and Formula Kart Stars, will run five taster events this year around the country (for dates, see right) designed to give young girls their first taste of motorsport. In addition to that, a community is being built by women with an interest in, or experience of, motorsport – and judging by the level of interest at *Autosport* International, where the initiative was launched, it is going to be successful.

But why ‘Dare to be Different’?

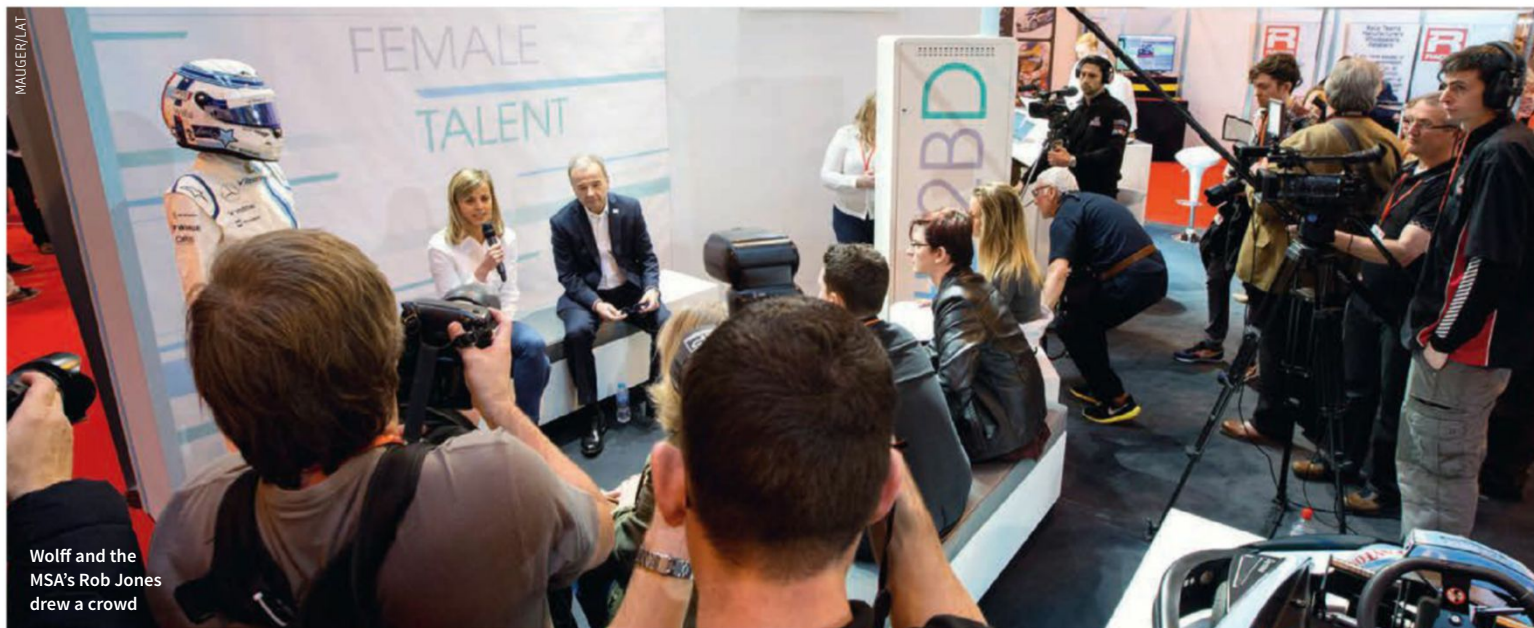
“The name came because we got a call from *Harper's Bazaar* magazine – they



Wolff is keen  
to boost female  
participation

MAUGER/LAT





Wolff and the MSA's Rob Jones drew a crowd

were considering featuring me in their annual 'Women Who Dare' issue, along with Serena Williams and a couple of others. And my initial reaction was to ask how I have dared to be different.

"When I spoke to the journalist, she said she was so happy to speak to me and that it was amazing, and I wondered why. I was just a little girl that followed her passion in life and wanted to get to the top of her sport, but the way I was perceived as having dared to be different really struck a chord. Dare to be different, dare to think outside the box, dare to challenge the preconceptions and stereotypes our society is full of."

The six events will offer the opportunity to drive a kart, but the aim is to offer an insight into the many different opportunities that exist in motorsport. And, crucially, to break through the barriers that often result in the sport not being seen as a credible avenue for women to explore career-wise despite the fact that there are many capable ones who have established themselves.

"The girls will try karting, but that's only one of the activities on our events," says Wolff. "You also get to see an F1 car up close and your photo in a show car. Many girls will never have been within 10 metres of an F1 car, let alone have got a picture of themselves in it. They also get to do a piece to a Sky Sports camera to try journalism. And there's an engineering challenge because if you have a girl who is good at maths or physics, she might just be inspired. There's also the fitness and nutrition side, learning the importance of eating well, being fit. It's about showing there are different avenues for a career in motorsport and opening it up beyond the on-track stuff."

There will also be two 'networking'

events that draw on the experience of successful women in motorsport such as Williams F1 deputy team principal Claire Williams. She is one of a group of ambassadors that includes former GP3 racer Alice Powell and Sky Sports presenter Rachel Brookes. As Wolff says: "It's about connecting them to share stories; women can be inspired and inspire each other."

Wolff has been somewhat taken aback by her growing stature as a role model in motorsport. As she is keen to underline, she started out in karting at the age of eight not to be a female driver, but simply a driver. Her presence at the pinnacle of the sport, thanks to those Friday appearances for Williams, has made her a natural focal point for the initiative. Her message is clear: that it is about women competing on an even footing in motorsport, which she stresses is a performance-based business. She sees her emergence as a role model as a positive – if unintended – consequence of her F1 activities in recent years.

"When I was in F1, I came to be seen as a trailblazer and got so many messages from women who said I was an inspiration," she says. "So I felt I had to do something with that. The feeling now in society, women are supporting each other a lot more, so it felt like the right time to do something. Everyone I spoke to said the time is right for something like this. The conversations based on the announcement at Autosport International have already been very positive."

The topic of women in sport is one that has growing cultural relevance far beyond motorsport. Wolff suggests that the momentum started to build in this country during the London Olympics.



Sportscar legend – and fellow Scot – Allan McNish is a keen supporter

## DARE TO BE DIFFERENT EVENTS

[www.daretobedifferent.org](http://www.daretobedifferent.org)

**April 13**

Daytona Sandown Park, Surrey

**May 5**

Nutts Corner, Northern Ireland

**June 24-26**

The Sports Show at the NEC, Birmingham

**August 25**

Knockhill, Fife

**September 15**

Daytona Manchester

"Women's sport is getting more traction – look at football," says Wolff. "It's not happening overnight; it's changing slowly but surely. You have some fantastic female role models, Jessica Ennis for example. The Olympics in 2012 helped to kickstart all of that. We all watched it, we were in awe of the female athletes competing. That was the first sense I got that things are changing."

The ambitions for Dare to be Different are for the long term. Wolff describes 2016 as a foundation year and the objective is for this to be something that builds. The objective is not the pursuit of fifty-fifty participation, or to eliminate the oft-criticised grid girls, but to ensure that those outside of motorsport see it as a viable option for women. It's about opportunity and a change of mindset.

That's what makes it so important. Motorsport has often not done itself justice with outreach, so a scheme such as this can only be positive for it. ❄



# LIGHTS, CAMERAS – AND LIVE ACTION

LAT's crack team of photographers covered every angle of *Autosport International*. Here's a selection of their images from this year's action at Birmingham's NEC



## FAN FAVOURITE

Even on the trade days the Williams Formula 1 team's collection of cars – spanning nearly four decades of racing – drew many admirers



## WITH A LITTLE HELP

Stars of the show, Petter Solberg and Damon Hill, gave a young fan the opportunity to open the doors on Saturday



## LOOK, MA – NO HANDS!

Dual World Rallycross champion Solberg spent the bulk of his weekend wowing crowds in the Live Action Arena



### THE HEIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Motocross stunt riders used *all* of the available space within the NEC's Live Action Arena



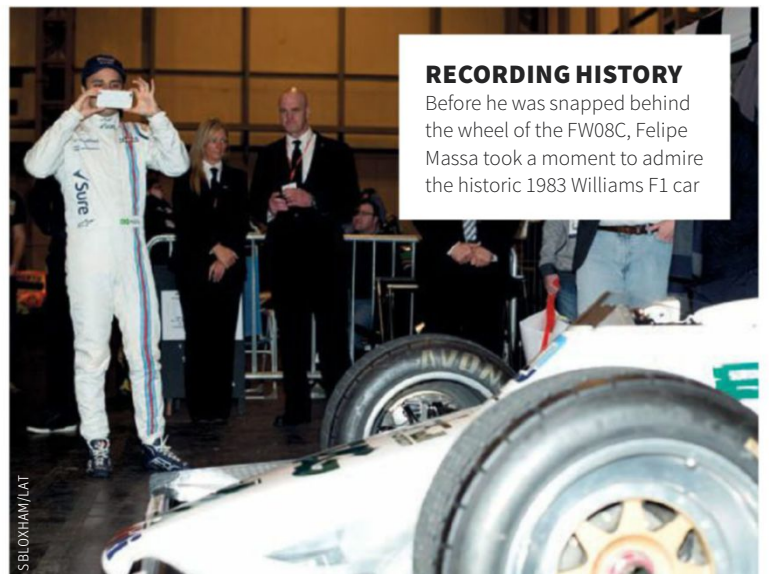
### SHOW STOPPER

Ford's new GT turned heads on the Autosport Stage, with Andy Priaulx and Marino Franchitti stopping by to discuss their new toy



### RECORDING HISTORY

Before he was snapped behind the wheel of the FW08C, Felipe Massa took a moment to admire the historic 1983 Williams F1 car





# TODT ON THE SPOT

FIA president Jean Todt gave the 2016 Watkins Lecture at *Autosport* International, hosted by the Motorsport Safety Fund. And he also dusted off some old anecdotes...



THE MOTORSPORT SAFETY FUND, organiser of the annual Watkins Lecture at *Autosport* International, has a proud history of illustrious guests. But even by its own standards, this year was a special one. FIA president Jean Todt is a busy man, and as such not easy to tie down, but this year he gave the lecture to an enthralled audience. He's not the first FIA president to give the talk – Max Mosley did so in 2000 – but it was a rare chance for the audience, comprising largely those who give their time freely to make motorsport happen in this country and beyond, to hear what he had to say.

Inevitably, road-car safety was one of the topics Todt addressed during the lecture, which was held to a Q&A format hosted by Formula 1 journalist James Allen. The sobering statistic that 1.3 million deaths occur on the roads around the world each year cannot be ignored. And no matter what your stance on Todt's record as FIA president on motorsport, nobody can argue with his sincerity and determination in tackling something that would be considered a pandemic were it to be a disease.

But, inevitably, it was the motorsport anecdotes that were the highlight. Todt started off with an explanation of his transition from co-driver with some of the best rally drivers of the era to boss of the Peugeot team. According to Todt,



he had always only wanted to sit in the co-driver's seat until he was 35 and, after finishing his final event in late 1981 on a Thursday, he started his job as boss of Peugeot Talbot Sport on the Friday morning!

His journey has certainly been remarkable. After winning world titles on the stages, he also spearheaded the Peugeot sportscar programme that yielded the Le Mans 24 Hours, prior to being targeted by Ferrari.

As he explained, Bernie Ecclestone first approached him in 1992 to suggest setting up a meeting with Luca di Montezemolo. And, although Todt took his time deciding, he eventually went to work as Ferrari team principal, starting at the 1993 French Grand Prix. He admitted that many advised him not to make the move, suggesting he would be



Jean Todt enthralled the audience with his thoughts on motoring safety and tales of his life in motorsport

lucky to last more than 18 months. Such was his success that he lasted 16 years, overseeing the most remarkable period of domination in grand prix history with a run of six constructors' titles and five drivers' crowns for Michael Schumacher.

It was no surprise that Ferrari didn't want to see him go, but when he made the decision to run for office, beating old rallying charge Ari Vatanen to the position, a whole new avenue opened up.

As well as fielding questions from the audience, Todt was also at pains to thank the volunteers for their contribution. And he did so with sincerity. For all the money in motorsport, a huge amount of it depends on the enthusiasts who give their time willingly. So if nothing else, at least they know the man right at the top of the governance of motorsport does appreciate it. ✎





MAUGER/LAT

# THANK YOU

We would like to thank all the drivers, team bosses, designers and industry specialists who gave us their time, as well as all of the behind-the-scenes staff who made the 2016 Autosport main stage a great success.

We wish to say particular thanks to Ford, Porsche and Honda Racing/Team Dynamics for supplying the cars for the spectacular display in front of the stage, an attraction

that drew huge crowds throughout the four-day event.

We would also like to say thanks to Williams Martini Racing for bringing its fantastic motorhome to the show for the first time.

And finally, don't forget to watch highlights of the show on Sky Sports F1. See you in 2017.



MAUGER/LAT



MAUGER/LAT



SELOXHAM/LAT



# RACE CENTRE

## DAKAR RALLY • TOYOTA RACING SERIES • DUBAI 24 HOURS



## Peterhansel is pride of

**DAKAR RALLY**  
**BUENOS AIRES (RA)**  
**JANUARY 3-16**

ON THE FACE OF IT, THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT motorsport competition of 2016 was pretty straightforward for Peugeot and Stéphane Peterhansel as they crossed the Dakar Rally finish line first in Rosario on Saturday.

But appearances can be deceptive, and that was especially so regarding the second week of the 6000-mile race from central Argentina to the far side of the Andes and back.

Through week one, the Parisian manufacturer sailed serenely into a comfortable lead and provisional podium lock-out at the rest day in Salta. Then the wheels started to come off on an all-Argentinian second week. Sébastien Loeb's dream debut turned to a nightmare when he rolled out of the lead in the dunes, and his event continued to go south when he suffered a broken driveshaft for the second day in succession close to the Chilean border on a loop in and out of Belén. With hours dropped, the best the World Rally Championship hero could hope for was a top-10 and plenty of experience.

Peterhansel moved to the front with a hard-charging Carlos Sainz right behind him. And, on that same Belén special – which took the event to its westernmost point – the Spaniard made his move. In the searing heat, which sent temperatures as high as 47 degrees and brought about the cancellation of the last part of the stage, Peterhansel lost 11 minutes changing punctures and Sainz hit the front for the first time on this year's Dakar.

Following the engine problems that had cost Sainz 14 minutes on the opening day's action, the turnaround in fortunes was startling, but entirely in keeping with the marathon nature of this event. But what Dakar gives with one hand it can quickly and cruelly rob with another.

Last Wednesday that was the case for Sainz. The spacer between the engine and gearbox on his 2008 DKR broke, stopping him immediately. His seven-minute lead evaporated in an instant. He was towed into the bivouac in La Rioja, where the Peugeot mechanics set about his car.

There would be no second Dakar win for Sainz. Typically, he refused to remain downbeat and, shortly before boarding the first available flight back to Madrid, El Matador had only good





Peterhansel was master of the Andes – again



## Habsburg's new empire

**TOYOTA RACING SERIES**  
**RUAPUNA (NZ)**  
**JANUARY 16-17**  
**ROUND 1/5**

SUBLIME WET-WEATHER SKILLS weren't enough for Lando Norris to prevent Austrian Ferdinand Habsburg topping the points after the opening round of New Zealand's TRS.

Norris had pole for race one but Habsburg won the start and carried on to his first victory in car racing. Later, Russian GP2 driver Artem Markelov grabbed second when Norris ran wide.

MSA Formula champion Norris cut through from an early fourth place to snatch the reversed-grid race victory after a prolonged struggle in the wet with Pedro Piquet. "I got a better drive onto the straight and got inside him," the 16-year-old said. "He tried to push me over but I didn't back off."

In the feature race for the historic Lady Wigram Trophy, Norris pulled out an 18-second lead, running slicks on a damp track.

Luck turned against him as the drizzle intensified and other drivers started gambling on pitstops for wet-weather tyres – and the gamblers won as a safety-car period eliminated Norris's big lead and he finished fourth, later demoted to ninth when he was given a post-race time penalty.

Indian Formula Renault 2.0 ace Jehan Daruvala, on wet tyres, was delighted with his first car-race victory, with Habsburg finishing second.

**BERNARD CARPINTER**

### RESULTS

**Race 1 1 Ferdinand Habsburg**, 15 laps in 20m48.146s; 2 Artem Markelov, +1.674s; 3 Lando Norris; 4 James Munro; 5 Guan Yu Zhou; 6 Brendon Leitch. **Race 2 1 Norris**, 15 laps in 25m17.149s; 2 Pedro Piquet, +4.066s; 3 Zhou; 4 Markelov; 5 Antoni Ptak; 6 Timothe Buret. **Race 3 1 Jehan Daruvala**, 17 laps in 28m42.571s; 2 Habsburg, +1.043s; 3 Markelov; 4 Zhou; 5 Leitch; 6 Devlin DeFrancesco. **Points 1 Habsburg**, 184; 2 Markelov, 181; 3 Norris, 171; 4 Zhou, 163; 5 Daruvala, 140; 6 Leitch, 130.

### NEW ZEALAND TOURING CARS

Sharpened by a season of V8 Supercar racing, Andre Heimgartner won the fourth round at Ruapuna. With two wins and a second – from a reversed grid – Heimgartner outpaced series leader Simon Evans, both driving Holden Commodores.

# the wounded Lion

words for the turnaround Peugeot had produced from last year's farcical effort.

"Obviously I'm disappointed," Sainz said. "I think that's normal. But at the same time I'm encouraged. You can't compare the circumstances of this year with last year. We were competitive from the beginning and we were leading the rally. If you see how competitive the car is, the whole team can be very proud of the performance here."

At the rest day in Salta, the first non-Peugeot on the leaderboard was Nasser Al-Attiyah's Mini All4 Racing. Despite being soundly beaten across the first week, the Qatari refused to give up and insisted his chances of victory remained alive, even from a distant fourth at the day off.

Those hopes faded when Al-Attiyah rolled just a couple of miles into Wednesday. He remained Peterhansel's nearest challenger, but was an hour down on the leader with three days to run.

Peterhansel himself was close to the edge. "I nearly went out of my mind in there," he said at the end of Wednesday's test. "We had been wandering around lost for 15 minutes. I blew a fuse..." He needn't have worried. But Peugeot did when the 11-time winner was found to have gone into a refuelling zone not meant for cars.

Ultimately he was cleared by the event stewards, but for a while there was genuine concern.

Three days later, when Peterhansel rolled into Rosario, 34 minutes up on Al-Attiyah, there was sheer delight for Peugeot. Former winner Giniel de Villiers was third for Toyota with Mikko Hirvonen finishing a strong fourth, scoring his first stage win on the penultimate special.

Having walked away with week one, Peugeot and Peterhansel dug deep to deliver in week two, with Cyril Despres seventh and Loeb ninth.

Team director Brun Famin, all smiles at the finish, admitted this was more than he expected. And that the bar had been raised for next year. Time for a 1-2-3...

**DAVID EVANS**

### RESULTS

**1 Stephane Peterhansel/Jean-Paul Cottret (Peugeot 2008 DKR)**, 45h22m10s; 2 Nasser Al-Attiyah/Matthieu Baumel (Mini All4 Racing), +34m58s; 3 Giniel de Villiers/Dirk von Zitzewitz (Toyota Hilux); 4 Mikko Hirvonen/Michel Perin (Mini); 5 Leeroy Poulter/Robert Howie (Toyota); 6 Nani Roma/Alex Haro (Mini); 7 Cyril Despres/David Castera (Peugeot); 8 Vladimir Vasilyev/Konstantin Zhiltsov (Toyota); 9 Sebastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Peugeot); 10 Harry Hunt/Andreas Schulz (Mini).





# WRT Audi beats a monster field

**DUBAI 24 HOURS**  
**DUBAI (UAE)**  
**JANUARY 15-16**

THE WRT AUDI TEAM CELEBRATED its first appearance at the Dubai 24 hours in style as Laurens Vanthoor, Michael Meadows, Stuart Leonard and Alain Ferte delivered a resounding victory, five laps clear of the Black Falcon Mercedes squad.

With 98 starters – ranging from fully-fledged GT3 cars to entry-level saloons – all tasked with sharing the Dubai Autodrome's 3.3 miles of asphalt, this was to be a race of survival, decided by who could remain calm in traffic and keep their car out of the pits.

Sure enough, it wasn't long before several fancied runners came unstuck. Jeroen Blekemolen was running third when a rare misjudgement while lapping a slower car caused terminal damage to Black Falcon's brand-new Mercedes AMG GT3, before the race-leading Scuderia Praha Ferrari 458 of Matteo Cressoni collided with Thomas Martinsson's SP3 Ginetta in the 10th hour. The impact eliminated both cars on the spot and required the unfortunate Swede to be cut free from the wreckage.

WRT had lost three minutes in hour two when Leonard had to queue for fuel,

and found itself almost a full lap behind when the leading Land Motorsport Audi, with Connor de Phillippi at the wheel, ran out of fuel in the early hours of the morning. Thanks to bulletproof reliability and consistent times from the support cast featuring two-time Carrera Cup GB champion Meadows, Vanthoor and WRT were never headed thereafter. This was also Leonard's second consecutive victory for WRT, having shared Vanthoor's winning entry at the Sepang 12 Hours in December.

Once its car had been recovered to the pits, a podium was still on the cards for Land following strong stints from Christopher Mies and Marc Basseng, but progressively worsening gearbox problems forced the Audi's retirement with two hours remaining.

Land's sinking opened the door for Black Falcon's #16 Mercedes SLS AMG to finish second, an outcome that had appeared highly unlikely on Thursday afternoon when Patrick Assenheimer was caught in the middle of an inferno from which he was fortunate to escape with only minor burns. After the mechanics pulled an all-nighter to prepare last year's winning chassis from Abdulaziz Al-Faisal's private collection (which had been on display in the team's hospitality

unit), Adam Christodoulou carved his way from 98th to 24th in 14 laps. Al-Faisal, Oli Webb, Oliver Morley and Frank Montecalvo continued the car's progress, although they could do nothing about WRT, the Audi R8 LMS comfortably the quickest car over a single lap, despite a 40kg weight penalty.

This much became obvious when the unheralded Christer Jons took pole in C Abt Racing's Audi, which completed the podium after engine failure for Konrad Motorsport's Lamborghini Huracan in the final 20 minutes. Am winners Hofor Motorsport finished a creditable fourth overall, ahead of the Optimum Motorsport Audi shared by Frank Stippler, Joe Osborne, Ryan Ratcliffe and Flick Haigh, which led at the end of the first hour.

British GT competitors were strongly represented in the SP3 class for GT4 machinery. After Optimum Motorsport's Ginetta suffered alternator problems, the Century Motorsport entry of Nathan Freke, Anna Walewska, Tom Oliphant and Aleksander Schjerpen came through to win by four laps.

Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Dan Cammish temporarily led the 991 class on his 24-hour debut before being delayed by power-steering problems.

**JAMES NEWBOLD**

Top: enough cars for you? Field snakes through desert.

Below: winning Audi laps a 991-class Porsche



## RESULTS

**1 Laurens Vanthoor/Michael Meadows/Stuart Leonard/Alain Ferte (Audi R8 LMS)**, 588 laps in 24h00m52.948s; 2 Oliver Webb/Adam Christodoulou/Oliver Morley/Abdulaziz Al Faisal/Frankie Montecalvo (Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), -5 laps; 3 Christer Jons/Daniel Abt/Isaac Tutumlu/Andreas Weishaupt/Matias Henkola (Audi); 4 Kenneth Heyer/Christiaan Frankenhout/Chantal Kroll/Michael Kroll/Roland Eggimann (Merc); 5 Frank Stippler/Joe Osborne/Ryan Ratcliffe/Flick Haigh (Audi); 6 David Jones/Godfrey Jones/Morgan Jones/Philip Jones/Gareth Jones (Merc).



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## Clios get three more years with BTCC

THE RENAULT UK CLIO CUP WILL remain part of the British Touring Car Championship support bill until at least the end of 2019 after signing a three-year deal with BTCC organiser TOCA.

Renault UK's championship has been an integral part of TOCA since the package's inception in 1993. Since then – with the exception of a four-year interregnum from 1996-99 when it was replaced by the Spider sportscar – the Clio Cup has established itself as a major BTCC feeder category (see panel right), with half of the 2015 touring car grid having raced in Clios.

Renault UK communications director Jeremy Townsend said: "BTCC events are without question the only place we would wish to position the Clio Cup in order to

generate the levels of exposure we seek." BTCC boss Alan Gow added: "The Clio Cup was truly re-energised in 2015 and really ended the year on the crest of a wave with its biggest grids in two years, some superb action on-track and a title race that captured the imaginations of many motor racing fans."

Grid numbers reached a two-year high at the end of 2015 and could be surpassed this year, with Charlie Ladell the latest driver to commit to the series after agreeing a return with WDE Motorsport.

The 19-year-old, who was fifth in the standings last year, said: "I need a fraction more pace in qualifying and better consistency in my results. With that I know the podiums, and hopefully even a few wins, will start to come."

Clios will remain a fixture on TOCA weekends for at least three years

### RENAULT CHAMPS IN THE BTCC

The best Clio (and Spider) kings to make the move

#### 1994 John Bintcliffe

Race winner during three seasons with Audi Sport UK

#### 1996 Jason Plato

Two-time champ is talisman of BTCC's modern era

#### 1998 Dan Eaves

Won six races in Dynamics-run Hondas

#### 1999 Andy Priaulx

Winner in Honda and BMW, 13 seasons apart

#### 2006 Tom Onslow-Cole

Successes in BMW, Vauxhall and Ford machinery

#### 2010 Dave Newsham

Has surprised the big boys as a winner with small team

#### 2012 Jack Goff

Up-and-coming star won with MG; now with WSR

## BIRTHDAY BOY SUTTON GETS HIS HANDS ON RS01 IN CHAMPION PRIZE TEST

RENAULT UK CLIO Cup champion Ashley Sutton completed his prize test in a Renault Sport Trophy RS01 at Vallelunga last week. Sutton completed 15 laps in the 550bhp

car during the test, which fell on his 22nd birthday. "I knew it was going to be fast but not that fast!" he said. "The grip levels in the wet in the morning were

incredible but then it dried and we were able to put slick tyres on and the whole performance – grip, cornering, braking, acceleration, everything – was out of this world.

It's the best birthday present I've ever had! "The cornering was phenomenal and it is by far the fastest car I have ever driven – I think I'd need to try an LMP1 car to better it. I had

a huge grin on my face on my way back to the airport and it's still there." Sutton added that he intends to announce his 2016 plans in the next few weeks.



Sutton tested RS01 at Vallelunga





FORMULA RENAULT

# Palmer secures FR2.0 move

McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC AWARD WINNER Will Palmer is to compete in the Formula Renault Eurocup and Northern European Cup this year after securing a deal to race with the French ART Junior Team.

Palmer, who dominated the BRDC Formula 4 Championship last season with 12 wins from 24 races, will contest 14 Renault 2.0 race weekends, including the Eurocup round supporting the Monaco Grand Prix.

The 18-year-old has already made his FR2.0 debut, when he raced with ART in the Eurocup round at Silverstone last September (pictured above).

"I think by doing both campaigns I get a lot of racing so that's a lot of time to learn and improve – and also just to learn a lot of European circuits," Palmer told *Autosport*. "By doing NEC as well, between the two series I'll be doing pretty much every European F1 track, which will be helpful for whatever I do in the future."

"I've known ART since I did the wildcard round at Silverstone when I did the Eurocup, and I got on really well with them then. They seemed like a great team and we've been having discussions over the past couple of months for 2016 and in the end it turned out to be the best option – they've got a very good engineering base and they're a great team of people. I'm sure they'll be able to provide me with a car capable of fighting for wins."

Palmer tested for Carlin's European Formula 3 team at Valencia last month, while he also sampled the GP3 Series – again with ART as well as with Arden and DAMS – in the post-season Abu Dhabi test, with one of the days part of his prize for clinching BRDC F4 honours.

Pointing to the domination of Prema Powerteam in Formula 3 in recent years, Palmer felt that his Formula Renault move was a more prudent one in the interest of his career prospects.

"The main thing for me is looking at the long-term picture," he said. "Realistically, doing Formula 3 you need to be with Prema to win it, which does make it difficult to move into a series like that when these seats are so hard to get – and it's so expensive as well."

"I think it's better to do a championship where I can really fight for victories and for the championship straight away, which I wasn't sure I'd be able to do in Formula 3 given the situation with teams."

"It's a very tough championship for rookies so I felt that given the extra racing I get with Formula Renault, it's a better platform to launch into other series."

Palmer will line up against fellow Briton Lando Norris, who won the rival MSA Formula title last season. The 16-year-old reached an agreement last November to race with Josef Kaufmann Racing.

## CARRERA CUP GB

## SCHOLAR EASTWOOD OPTS FOR REDLINE

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB scholar Charlie Eastwood will drive for the championship-winning Redline Racing team this year.

The 20-year-old was selected as the 2016/17 scholar last November and follows the path taken by previous winner Josh Webster, who also raced for Redline in his rookie season.

Eastwood tested with three teams at the end of last year but decided that Redline – whose drivers have won the title every year since 2010 – was the right team to race for.

"It's the best possible position to be in," said Eastwood. "I wanted to give myself the best chance to try to do something this year, and I feel that's with Redline."

"I've only tested the car in the wet but I was on the pace; it's still the same car, just with wets on it."


While Webster won the championship in his first year in 2014, Eastwood is likely to face a much stronger grid in his maiden season following the series' rejuvenation last year.

"I will focus on trying to win the rookie championship this year, with it being a two-year scholarship," he said.

Eastwood joins reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion Tom Oliphant in Redline's Pro driver ranks.

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## SPORTSCARS

# Radical puts RXC up for GT3 status

RADICAL HAS APPLIED TO GAIN GT3 homologation for its RXC coupe machine.

The marque has filed a request for National GT3 homologation and the accompanying paperwork with European review firm OSK. The RXC is eligible for consideration since it has an approved production run, which stands at 60 cars since its 2013 launch.

Radical currently races the car in a guest class of the International GT Open championship, but company co-founder

Phil Abbott said gaining GT3 approval would broaden the market for the car.

"Of the 60 RXCs we've built so far, 20 are road-going so it fulfils the [homologation] criteria and we've submitted all of the necessary paperwork to make it happen," he said. "It's about opening the options for customers. With National GT3 homologation the RXC can fight for championships and even do things like British GT if a customer chooses to. The car has proven pace."



EBREY

## BRITISH GT

## Simpson joins Tolman Brit GT squad

TOLMAN MOTORSPORT HAS completed its British GT line-up by signing Ginetta factory racer Mike Simpson and Ian Stinton to crew its second car.

Tolman will strengthen its links with the Leeds marque by running two factory assisted G55 GT3 machines this year.

It will field long-term works

driver Simpson and Stinton alongside the sister G55 of GT4 graduates Luke Davenport and David Pattison.

"I'm delighted to be back for a third British GT season with my good friend Ian," said Simpson, who scored the G55 GT3's maiden podium finish at Oulton Park last year. "We helped to develop the GT3 car together in

the early days.

"Tolman has a great track record with Ginettas so it's going to be an exciting year with them as our factory-backed team."

Team head Chris Tolman added: "Factory backing from Ginetta is quite a coup for my small team and the pressure is now on for us to make all this work the best it can."



EBREY

## BRITISH GT

## Stratton to run Lotus Evoras

STRATTON MOTORSPORT WILL RUN at least two Lotus Evoras in the British GT Championship this year in partnership with UltraTek Racing, with James Nash again spearheading the team.

Former touring car star Nash will again partner Richard Taffinder in one of the GT4 cars, while Tim Eakin will drive another

alongside ex-IndyCar racer Martin Plowman, who contested the opening round of the 2015 season at Oulton Park with the team.

Taffinder and Nash picked up a best result of third in class last season.

Stratton is still finalising its full line-up and could run another Evora and Aston Martin Vantages in the GT4 class.

## IN BRIEF



PAUL LAWRENCE

### HSCC TO PAY HOMAGE TO FORMATION

A recreation of a 50-year-old grid will be a feature of the HSCC's first meeting of the year at Castle Combe on April 16-17. The Wiltshire circuit was the scene of the club's first race – for the Griffiths Formula sportscars built between 1945-55 – held on May 14 1966.

"The response to recreating the first grid has been very encouraging and it is wonderful to discover that some of the cars are still in the same ownership," said the HSCC's Grahame White.

### REITER LAUNCHES RISING-STARS SCHEME

Sportscar constructor Reiter Engineering will launch a new contest in Europe this year, offering two rising stars funded GT3 seats in the 2017 Blancpain Sprint Cup. The Reiter Young Stars contest will be run within five rounds of the GT4 European Series and will centre on two young drivers sharing a Reiter KTM X-Bow GT.

### MORE AMOC EVENTS TO JOIN GT BILL

The Aston Martin Owners Club's Innes Ireland Cup and 50s Sports Car series will appear on the British GT support bill at two rounds this season. Both of the historic categories will share a grid at the Oulton Park and Silverstone British GT meetings this year, as well as having races at AMOC's standalone events.

### NEW ENDURANCE SERIES FOR 750MC

The 750 Motor Club will launch a new endurance series this year for production sport and saloon cars. A three-race calendar has been announced for the non-championship Club Enduro category, with two-hour races planned at Donington Park and Snetterton and a 90-minute contest on the Silverstone International track.

### POLISH GT4 MAKER LOOKS TO BRITAIN

A Polish sportscar has been launched and it could compete in British GT as soon as the end of this year. The Arrinera Hussarya GT4 features a 6.2-litre centrally located V8 engine, capable of producing up to 650bhp. The rear-wheel-drive car's body is made entirely from carbon-fibre and the machine weighs in at 1250kg. The testing programme for the car (pictured below) is now set to begin.



EBREY



## GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

## HHC WILL NOT RUN IN 2016 SUPERCUP

LEADING GINETTA TEAM HHC Motorsport will not run any cars in the GT4 Supercup this year.

The team's drivers Carl Breeze, Jamie Orton (pictured below) and Will Burns finished second, third and fifth respectively in the championship in 2015. But HHC has chosen to focus on its Ginetta Junior and BRDC Formula 4 campaigns this year.

Team boss Charlie Kemp said: "We want to do a better job of getting good drivers in for the junior series. With the new car in BRDC F4 we want to put a lot more resources into that, as well as run four or five cars in Ginetta Juniors."

The team won both titles last year, with Will Palmer in BRDC F4 and Jamie Caroline in Juniors.

Kemp added that the team is considering a different series in 2017. "We might do something in between Juniors and BRDC F4," he said.

HHC has so far secured two drivers for its 2016 BRDC F4 campaign, with Briton Omar Ismail and South African Sisa Ngebulana on board. To date there are three drivers in the squad's Ginetta Junior line-up, with Lewis Brown, Charlie Fagg and Will Tregurtha on the books.



## MSA FORMULA

## McNish protege lands drive at Fortec for MSA Formula

REIGNING FORMULA KART STARS CHAMPION ROSS Martin will race for Fortec Motorsport in MSA Formula.

The Scot, a protege of Allan McNish, won a fully-funded drive in the series as a prize for claiming the Formula One Management-backed karting title.

Martin completed a significant amount of testing with Fortec at the end of last year and was quickly on the pace.

"I'm looking forward to working with Fortec – it is a championship-winning team," said Martin. "The test in

Valencia was a great way to get to know everyone."

He emphasised that the prize drive in MSA Formula represents a unique opportunity.

"There's no other thing like it at any level in British motorsport," Martin said. "The MSA and Ford have put together a great championship with phenomenal drivers."

Martin becomes the second driver confirmed as part of Fortec's line-up, and joins Racing Steps Foundation-backed karting graduate Alex Quinn.



## BRITISH GT

## British GT grid sells out in record time

THIS YEAR'S BRITISH GT Championship has sold out of grid slots, three months before the start of the 2016 campaign.

Last week's *Autosport International* brought a raft of announcements, and championship manager Benjamin Franassovici confirmed to *Autosport* that 32 fully paid entries have already been received.

British GT organisers are now compiling a reserve entries list, and can cater for additional cars at circuits with a higher capacity, such as Silverstone GP or Donington Park.

Franassovici said: "This is probably the earliest we've ever sold out. It seems we fill up at least two weeks earlier every year."

"The championship has a lot of

appeal and momentum at the moment, and the growth of GT4 has been very noticeable. The entry is split fifty-fifty between GT3 and GT4, so it will be the largest GT4 grid ever.

"We'll try our best to accommodate more teams as and when we can, but we're limited in capacity at smaller tracks."





**SPORTSCARS** Ginetta took the wraps off its new G57 sportscar at Autosport International last week. Based on its LMP3 challenger, the G57 features aerodynamics and chassis upgrades, as well as a new 6.2-litre Chevrolet LS7 engine, capable of 580bhp. "We've done everything in-house so it shows our full range of abilities," said company head Lawrence Tomlinson. "We want it to be three seconds faster than an LMP2 car around the Silverstone GP Circuit, and we can definitely achieve that." **Photograph by Jakob Ebrey Photography**



**SPORTSCARS**

## Robertson's works Ginetta deal

EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES LMP3 champion Charlie Robertson has abandoned his plans to graduate to LMP2 this year after inking a five-year deal to become a factory Ginetta driver.

The 19-year-old from Surrey was announced as a works driver alongside Ginetta regular Mike Simpson last week.

Robertson, who won his LMP3 title with Olympic legend Sir Chris Hoy, will join the Leeds marque to head up test and development of the new G57 sportscar as well as taking on a coaching role. He is expected to race the G57 when its programme is decided.

Robertson and Simpson tested an LMP2 machine late last season, but any plans to move up will now be put on hold.

"I have to think about the bigger picture and becoming a factory driver for one of the world's biggest race-car manufacturers is too good a chance to turn down," said Robertson.

"It's disappointing that LMP2 won't happen now. There still may be a chance for Le Mans if Nissan [Hoy's main backer] decided to field a car for Chris.

"But there was a limited future in doing LMP2 and eventually the money and the chances would run out.

"This way I can have a full racing programme and get paid for doing what I love."

Robertson won the 2012 Ginetta Junior title before lifting the 2014 Ginetta GT Supercup crown.

## IN BRIEF

### AMERICAN LALL JOINS BRDC F4

American Quinlan Lall will race in BRDC Formula 4 this year with Chris Dittmann Racing. The 16-year-old has raced in the F2000 Championship Series in the US for the past two years and finished sixth in the standings in 2015, taking one win. Lall had a successful test with the team at Silverstone last year.

### TYRE LIMITS FOR FORMULA FORD

The BRSCC's National Formula Ford 1600 Championship will bring in strict tyre limits to cut costs this year. For the first time the championship will introduce a mandatory limit of one set of Avon tyres per race weekend for each car. There had previously been no restriction on the number of tyres used.

### TVR CHAMPS' THREE-CAR ASSAULT

The David Gerald Sports Car Team, which carried Alex Champkin to last year's TVR Challenge title, will run three cars in its bid for another crown. Team principal Mike Luck heads the Chimera RV8 line-up and will be joined by former karting ace and Eurocar racer Rob Kerkhoven, who will be returning after a brief sabbatical from racing. Novice racer Daniel Norman-Smith completes the line-up.

### BRITCAR TO ADD PROTOTYPES

Britcar Endurance's proposal to add sports-prototype races to its inaugural programme has been welcomed by competitors. The revamped Britcar Endurance championships open at Silverstone on March 26-27, ahead of the following weekend's Silverstone 24 Hours.

### FUN CUP GRID GETS A TOUCH OF F1

Defending Fun Cup champion Racelogic will have grand prix technology behind it this season. Jon Tomlinson, a senior aerodynamicist with Renault F1, will rejoin the team. Its line-up is completed by novice David Denyer, a systems analyst with Red Bull Racing.

### 330 CHALLENGE TAKING SHAPE

Organisers of the new BMW 330 challenge are expecting an entry list of at least 20 cars for its inaugural season. BMW Race Days confirmed that 10 full sets of control parts have already been sold, while more entries are expected.

### SYNCHRO UNVEILS CIVIC TYPE R

Synchro Motorsport will race its new Honda Civic Type R in this year's Britcar Endurance Championship. Run by volunteers from the Swindon Honda factory, the team built the majority of its new challenger from standard parts and received help with its roll cage from Team Dynamics. The Type R made its racing debut in last November's Race of Remembrance at Anglesey, where it finished second. The car is likely to be raced by Martin Byford, Alyn James and Dan Wheeler this season.







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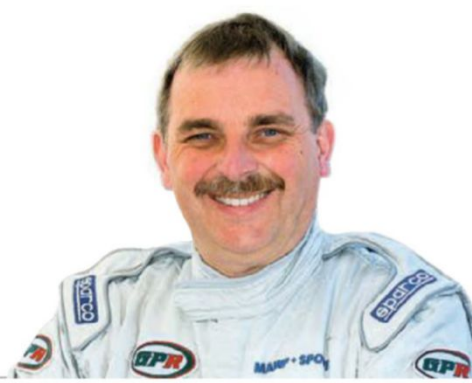
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# Heroes of yesterday, today and tomorrow

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

**AS EVER, TWO DAYS AT AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL** proved both fascinating and enlightening, with Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre – hub of the universe for motorsport fans each January – packed with stars and competition cars. Unusually, though, the highlight of my pilgrimage came within five minutes of entering the halls on Thursday, when veteran stage MC Henry Hope-Frost introduced me to Petter Solberg.

FIA World Rally champion in 2003 and World Rallycross champion for the past two seasons, the 41-year-old Norwegian is without doubt one of the planet's most engaging and unassuming superstars. Indeed, he comes over as a normal guy with a special talent who adores what he does to earn a living. By bizarre coincidence, my father-in-law (who lives 20 miles away from Petter's home town in Norway) is a member of the same golf club. For years, Tony has been asking me whether I've met him. To have finally done so is a delight.

From a contemporary hero to two of the past, I chatted with motorcycle legends Wayne Gardner and Phil Read at the Silverstone Classic enclave. Bikes will feature at July's festival, where 'high-speed demos' are guaranteed to widen its fan base. Gardner, 56, World 500cc champion in 1987, raced cars for 10 years from '93 and confessed that he wouldn't mind a shot in historics. I've bumped into eight-time champion of the '60s and '70s Read, now 77, many times down the years, often at Goodwood where he has always been a crowd favourite.

Another highlight was talking to Lotus Elan ace of my youth Richard Jenvey – founder of the eponymous Bridgnorth-based fuel-injection throttle-body manufacturing business now run by OSS champion son Mike. We covered the great days of BARC Modsports racing and competing [with Nick Mason, Brian Joscelyne and the late Tony Birchough] at Le Mans in 1979

in the Dorset Racing Lola T290/297, which Mason still owns. I was impressed to learn that Richard only recently sold the Esprit he last raced in 1981 to an enthusiast who is rebuilding it.

For aspiring professional racers planning their early career paths, scanning so many options that have six-figure starting points (before an engine is fired) must be as depressing as attempting to get a foot onto the housing ladder. Happily, there are plenty of possibilities for those aiming at touring, GT or sports-prototypes, particularly if resourceful mentors seeking a rapid throttle-jockey to boost results recognise their talent. Britcar Endurance, Radical and, at club level, OSS or 750MC Bikesports provide accessible platforms on which to excel in extremely fast cars.

The single-seater world is less clear-cut, despite the efforts of Jonathan Palmer to keep the uprated iteration of BRDC Formula 4 affordable. I was pleased to learn from my old pal John Corbyn, whose family business in Northamptonshire has built around 170 motorcycle-engined Jedis since 1984, that outstanding young Formula Jedi champion Ben Hingeley is heading for F4 this year. Ben won the title in his rookie car season, on the back of a fine karting pedigree, lapping Cadwell Park at 96mph en route!

For weekend warriors, the 750MC continues to offer a peerless portfolio of entry-level choices. Its inaugural BMW M3 Cup, for stunning E48 models and due to kick off at Donington on March 19, could have as many as 20 entries in its inaugural season. BMW Track Days' 330 Challenge, run by the BRSCC (which I sense is re-emerging as the club racing force it once was) could put marque fanatics on track for as little as £12k meanwhile. Starting in June, it has already attracted reigning Compact Cup champion Steve Roberts and runner-up James Gornall. ❧



## GRAY DEBUTS M3 CUP RACER

Reigning 750MC Bikesport champion Tim Gray is putting a roof over his head for the first time this season, and introduced his M3 Cup racer on the club's stand at Autosport International.

"I've built the BMW to hire, but I'm looking forward to testing it and if it's not rented then I will race it," said Gray.



## RIDDIFORD'S MINI 7 RETURN

Twenty years after he last raced, in the Renault Sport Spider championship, Eian Riddiford is to return to his Mini Se7en roots this season.

Riddiford, 75, finished runner-up to Bill Sollis in the 1991 Unipart national championship, the first to be run with 998cc engines in place of the original 848cc units.



## DI CLAUDIO BACK TO COMBE

Double Castle Combe Saloon champion Will di Claudio will entertain his local fan base anew and gun for a third crown when he returns to the fray with a new Peugeot 106 this season. His 2012-13 winning car is for sale.

"After two years out I'm ready for another go," he said at Autosport International.



# WHAT'S ON



## Channel 4 is Coulthard's chance to thrive

REACTION TO NEWS THAT DAVID Coulthard will be following Formula 1 from the BBC to Channel 4 was unsurprisingly positive. He's proven himself as an excellent commentator and pundit, he spurns the stereotypical one-liners and he's not afraid to poke fun at himself for his racing mishaps.

More importantly, though, DC is *the* racer-turned-pundit for those in their twenties – an important demographic for F1 TV coverage to hang onto.

Those born in the 1980s and '90s grew up in an era when Coulthard had official 'Great British Hope' status between Damon Hill's title and Jenson Button finding his feet. Famous Monaco and Silverstone wins and the 2000 French Grand Prix bird-flipping incident that typified his rivalry with Michael Schumacher – not as intense as Mika Hakkinen's, but with some unforgettable flashpoints – were all incidents you'd scour YouTube for.

Coulthard is not only excellent at putting the viewer in the mind of those

in the cockpit, but those who lived the ups and downs of his career alongside him trust what he's describing. The sight of that impressive jawline on an F1 podium was etched into impressionable young minds, whose experience of becoming F1 fans would have been completely different without him.

It was the same story with Martin Brundle for an older generation. His broadcast longevity is now such that much of the audience must know him better for his TV work than his efforts for all those underdog F1 teams. Brundle



BBC's declining F1 coverage had sidelined the intelligent Scot, who provides racer's insight. Above, with Daniel Ricciardo; below, with BBC sidekick Ben Edwards

has taken on that 'voice-of-the-sport' mantle that the great Murray Walker held for so long. Just as Brundle graduated from his own master/pupil role with Walker, could Coulthard end up surpassing his former BBC colleague?

The decision to ditch the one-media-pro/one-ex-competitor model and pair two retired racers when Coulthard replaced the enthusiastic but rather loud Jonathan Legard for the BBC's 2011 season seemed dubious on paper, but it proved a masterstroke. Brundle's class act was complemented by smooth Scottish undertones and an equal level of expertise, and the pair's long-standing friendship allowed them to interact seamlessly. Although Brundle himself admitted to not being as comfortable in the lead commentator's role, for viewers the short-lived Brundle-and-DC pairing was near perfect – and it was only just getting going when the Sky deal broke it up.

The declining profile of the BBC's F1 coverage since it downgraded to



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Coulthard joins Channel 4's F1 TV coverage

'semi-live' means Coulthard's progress as a commentator has gone under the radar, but there's plenty of anecdotal evidence of fans who pay for Sky subscriptions still choosing the BBC in preference when it's broadcasting live.

Perhaps he was too quick to single out Michael Schumacher or Kimi Raikkonen for criticism at times, maybe his grid walk still needs work to match Brundle's elbows-out-at-the-dinner-table style, but overall Coulthard's journey from rookie to star in the commentary box is going even better than his racing. It's fascinating to see him repeat the process out of the cockpit, especially without crashing into any pitwalls while leading.

With Channel 4 set to put ample promotional effort into its new acquisition, and some of Sky's viewers surely likely to tune in out of curiosity, this year is Coulthard's chance to move out from Brundle's shadow and cement his status as British TV's new face of F1.

JAKE JONES



## HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube SNOWY MAYHEM STAGED IN FINLAND

**Search for:** Jari-Pekka Ralli 2016, Heinola (crash & action)

This week *Autosport* looks ahead to the new WRC season, which starts in Monte Carlo today (Thursday), but at the other end of the rallying spectrum, where the enthusiasm/bravery/insanity of the competitors is seemingly matched by many of the snowsuit-swaddled spectators, is this (frozen) grassroots event in Finland...



### ARCHITECTS OF F1: JOHN BARNARD

SKY SPORTS F1

Friday 2300, Saturday 1800, Wednesday 2300

Given he was one of the key players at Ferrari when Michael Schumacher joined ahead of the 1996 season, which is the subject of our cover feature, what better time to watch Sky Sports F1's programme on John Barnard? And there are three chances to view it over the coming seven days.

## INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

### MONTE CARLO RALLY

WRC Rd 1/14

Monte Carlo, Monaco  
January 21-24

It's here, finally. Little more than two months have passed since the end of the 2015 season, but it still seems too long since we've seen WRC cars in action. Three-time champion Sebastien Ogier will bid to become the first man to win on the event three times in a row in over a decade.

### WATCH ON TV

Coverage on both BT Sport and Motors TV

### TOYOTA RACING SERIES

Rd 2/5

Teretonga, New Zealand  
January 23-24

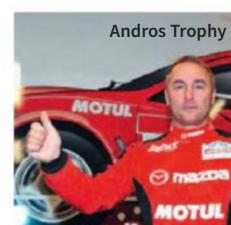
The world's most southerly race track is the destination for round two of the Toyota Racing Series, as the field heads to Teretonga with Ferdinand Habsburg leading the way following success in last weekend's round at Ruapuna. But it's close at the top, with GP2 racer Artem Markelov only three points behind and rising British star Lando Norris, the reigning MSA Formula Champion, third.



Monte Carlo Rally



Toyota Racing Series



Andros Trophy

### ANDROS TROPHY

Round 5/7

Lans-en-Vercors, France  
January 22-23

Another peerless run from Jean-Baptiste Dubourg at Isola allowed him to extend his points lead a fortnight ago, and time is fast running out for the chasing pack to catch him. Reigning champion Jean-Philippe Dayraut got his second win, but will be fighting only for pride in the remaining races of the ice-racing championship.

### WATCH ON TV

Delayed: Motors TV  
Sunday 1210, 2030









## THE ARCHIVE

Who doesn't love a wheel-waving Ford Escort Mk1? Here's Ove Andersson - with Gunnar Palm on the notes - on the way to 1969 Welsh Rally glory.

[McKlein.de](http://McKlein.de)



## INTRODUCING



## CHARLIE EASTWOOD

**H** E'S THE NEW PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB scholarship winner, meaning Charlie Eastwood, to borrow the title of a spaghetti-western film with which his famous namesake is synonymous, has had to raise just 'a few dollars more' to go with his £80,000 per season bounty for 2016 and '17.

It's a career change for the 20-year-old, who has so far worked through karts and single-seaters. A star in the Rotax Max karting world, his rookie car season came in the 2014 BRDC Formula 4 Championship with the Douglas Motorsport squad of fellow Northern Irishman Wayne Douglas.

In January 2015 he went down under for the Toyota Racing Series in New Zealand, where he was beaten only by five drivers who all went on to impress during the '15 Formula 3 season. But it was followed by a disappointing return to Europe in Formula Renault 2.0. "The big thing was we finished second [just behind Lance Stroll] in the New Zealand Grand Prix," he says. "We were so close to winning it and we just didn't get it.

"We went back to Europe and that's where it all went a little spooky for us. We were in a great place at the start of the year with Strakka Racing, but unfortunately because of internal issues they pulled out of the championship, and it was quite hard to find a competitive seat. We had several problems [at AVF], but there's always a good ending to a bad story...

"The application for the Porsche scholarship was out. I filled in the form and didn't really think much of it, and next thing you know I got an email and the rest is history!"

Eastwood tested once each with GT Marques, Team Parker Racing and Redline Racing before opting for Redline. "I've got great team-mates, which for me in my first year in sportscars, trying to learn as much as possible," he says. "They're going to give me the best opportunity to do that – I can learn a lot from [reigning champion] Dan Cammish, better than being on the other side of the fence and wondering how he's going so fast!"

"To be honest, I was actually going to do the Carrera Cup whether I won the scholarship or not, because it seems there's so much opportunity. Now I'm in the Porsche family, they seem to have a progression right up to the top, and Nick [Tandy] has been able to showcase that."

MARCUS SIMMONS



CV

<b>Age</b>	20
<b>2015</b>	6th in Toyota Racing Series with M2 Competition
	17th in Formula Renault NEC with Strakka Racing/AVF
<b>2014</b>	10th in BRDC Formula 4 with Douglas Motorsport
<b>2013</b>	1st in Rotax Max Euro Challenge
	1st in Rotax Florida Winter Tour
<b>2012</b>	1st in Rotax Max Grand Final



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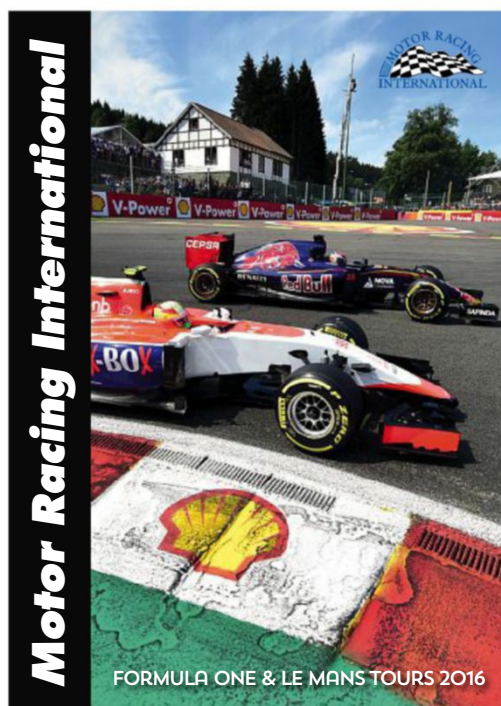
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