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BUTTON SPECIAL

IS JENSON ONE OF THE F1 GREATS?

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Time to give Button the credit he deserves

JENSON BUTTON WAS THE FIRST TEAM-MATE TO outscore Lewis Hamilton over a season. And he did the same to Fernando Alonso last year. He also took his one serious chance of winning the Formula 1 World Championship. And yet he's still rarely mentioned as one of those in the top echelon.

In his 17th F1 season, and with his future again in doubt, we decided to ask: how good is Jenson Button? In our cover story, Ben Anderson speaks to a number of key figures, including the man himself, to assess the 2009 champion's strengths and weaknesses. And understand why he is underrated.

One of the reasons has to be his smooth style. Exuberant driving tends to grab the attention, but – as Jackie Stewart and Alain Prost demonstrated – there is another way to succeed.

Button's decision-making and feel in tricky conditions surely make him one of the greatest wet-weather drivers of all time, and he has shown time and again that he can race wheel to wheel.

His weaknesses are few. He is less able to drag a qualifying lap out of a recalcitrant car than, say, Hamilton, and he hasn't been able to build a successful team around him in the way that Michael Schumacher did.

But beyond that, he has been one of the best performers of a talent-filled era, and continues to race at a high level despite less-than-stellar equipment. No wonder McLaren keeps deciding to give him 'one more year'.



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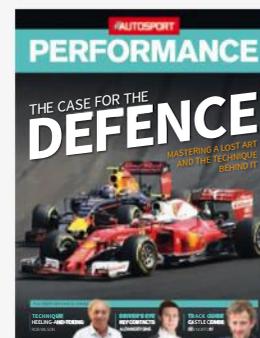
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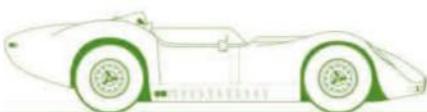
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LISTER

JENSON BUTTON/COVER STORY

The Curious Case of
Jenson
Button

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

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Jenson Button is the most experienced driver in Formula 1. This weekend's Belgian Grand Prix will be his 297th start. Only two others – Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello – have managed more. Button is also a Formula 1 world champion, and a winner of 15 grands prix, making him the seventh most successful British F1 driver of all time.

There is no doubt Button has enjoyed great success in F1. Yet despite all his achievements he is rarely picked as one of grand prix racing's true elite drivers.

He is not discussed in the same breath as those, such as Schumacher and Ayrton Senna, whose style, charisma and success changed the face of F1. Neither is he generally considered one of the absolute best on the current grid, which features multiple champions Lewis

Hamilton, Sebastian Vettel and Fernando Alonso.

Therein lies the rub. Because he is not a multiple world champion, it is easy to assume he is just not quite good enough to be a multiple world champion. Unless McLaren offers him a new contract for 2017 *and* Honda does enough over the winter to thrust McLaren into title contention, Button is likely to end his F1 career without changing that fact.

But does that mean he doesn't deserve to be classed alongside these other top drivers? For all the precise science that defines Formula 1, drivers' careers within this world are still hostages to fortune. This isn't so much about luck as the inevitable ebb and flow of the competitive order.

Button has always raced for what might be termed 'proper' teams, but often not at the right time. He can legitimately claim to have had just one realistic chance to win a world championship, and taken it. It's hard to argue with that strike rate.

Just as fortune has not favoured him for much of his career – earning his F1 spurs with Williams at the beginning of its BMW-propelled revival after a late-'90s slump; moving to



Benetton/Renault before it became a world beater; switching to a BAR/Honda squad that wasn't a match for Ferrari or Renault in its pomp; joining McLaren during the biggest downturn in its modern history – in many ways he owes his biggest achievement to being in the right place at the right time with the phoenix-from-the-Honda-ashes Brawn team. >>





A LONG EARLY WAIT

It seems extraordinary that it took Button 10 seasons to conquer the world. He was once the next great British F1 hope, joining the grid as a fresh-faced Formula 3 graduate just as 1996 world champion Damon Hill waved farewell.

Button's big break in Formula 1 came courtesy of Frank Williams, who needed a stop-gap driver to partner Ralf Schumacher for a season before bringing CART star Juan Pablo Montoya into the team.

Replacing the disillusioned Alex Zanardi with a 20-year-old with only two seasons of single-seater racing under his belt was a risky move for a team just re-entering the works team ranks with incoming engine supplier BMW.

Button was raw, but showed an impressive turn of speed, and performed well enough that team co-founder Patrick Head reckons Williams might actually have been better off retaining the Brit, rather than replacing him with Montoya, for 2001.

"Jenson's performances weren't quite at the level of Ralf's, apart from a few races, but he was very good," recalls Head. "Ralf was quite respectful of Jenson. He thought it was quite good for a young lad to come in and do as well as he did."

"There was never a question of carrying on with Jenson. In truth, although Montoya was fiery and exciting and undoubtedly fast, I think we would have done much better with Jenson."

"It sounds as if I'm rubbishing Montoya – he was exciting and very quick, but so macho that you didn't get the feeling he thought about his car for one minute until he turned up at the race track."

"There's no point in looking back at what happened; we'd already got Montoya, and then Jenson had a very tough time in a very difficult car over at Renault."

Button's two-year spell at Benetton/Renault came as the Enstone squad was building up into the factory force that won back-to-back world championships in 2005-'06.

This is where Button learned the hard way what it really takes to be a successful F1 driver, battling to turn a difficult car into a competitive one rather than simply driving a good one as fast as you can.

"It took time to really gather an understanding of the car, because the first year the car was so good we didn't have much set-up work," explains Button. "And then I got in the Benetton alongside a driver that is used to shit cars –"

"If you are a driver like Jenson, you have the ability to slow down time in the car"

Giancarlo [Fisichella] was the best driver in shit cars!

"That was his strength and my downfall. As soon as I learned more about setting up the car and working with the engineers, the second year at Benetton was much better. I outscored [Jarno] Trulli and was much happier."

At best, those seasons could be described as 'character-building' for Button, who was dropped at the end of '02 to make way for Fernando Alonso. Had Button lasted at Renault, he could have fought for a world championship as early as 2005. But despite beating Trulli in 2002, Button was released.

According to Pat Symonds – then Renault's engineering director – Button became something of a victim of Flavio Briatore's unique style of team management.

"I was quite surprised when he came into F1," remembers Symonds. "In F3 he hadn't really shone in front of me. And



then at Williams I thought, 'Well, actually he's pretty damn competent'. I thought, 'OK, I misjudged that one'.

"Flavio was pretty keen and we decided to give it a go. In all honesty it probably wasn't as successful as we'd hoped it would be, and I know what Flavio's view would be.

"Flavio thought that Jenson tried to run before he could walk. He was taking on the lifestyle too early. I'm not sure that was completely true. In my mind he wasn't a playboy or anything like that, but he was young. What he needed was nurturing and mentoring, and I don't think they're two words in Flavio's vocabulary.

"One thing Flavio did have was very unique views on drivers – if a driver was signed up on a Briatore management contract, they were obviously much more talented than if they weren't...

"The best explanation I could give would be to go back to '92, when we had Martin Brundle and Michael Schumacher in the car. Martin was by far closest to Michael than any of his team-mates, but that wasn't something Flavio thought about. It was 'This guy's good, this guy's not as good'. It was 'not as good equals rubbish'.

"I think Jenson suffered a bit from that because the team loved him. He's a really great guy to work with – so normal, so professional. He wants to succeed. I don't really think we gave him a fair crack of the whip."

Button landed at BAR, a topsy-turvy emerging outfit, not long under the new management of David Richards, and now powered by works Honda engines. That first season was difficult, but Button briefly led the United States and Japanese Grands Prix and comfortably saw off his world champion team-mate Jacques Villeneuve.

Button went on to enjoy a breakout run to third in the 2004 championship, taking his maiden pole at Imola and scoring 10 podium finishes en route to being best-of-the-rest behind the dominant Ferraris.

"From 2000 to 2004 was a massive learning curve," reckons Button. "From 2004 onwards, I felt that if I got a good car that I'd fight for the world championship."

Former World Endurance champion Anthony Davidson was BAR/Honda's test driver throughout Button's first four seasons at the team, and grew up racing against him in karting, so he knows better than most the qualities that Button was able to bring to bear once his F1 career began to finally settle down after the early upheaval.

"He was always one of those drivers right from the early days in karting that, before the days of telemetry and transponders, you wouldn't even bother to put a stopwatch on," recalls Davidson, who says Button's progression to F1 inspired him to give up professional karting to chase the single-seater dream.

"Because you'd watch from the outside and he was silky smooth, didn't put much effort in, it looked like the body language just said to you, 'I'm on an out-lap, I'm just running my engine in'.

"That sounds familiar doesn't it? Very understated. That went on all the way through his karting career, and you'd see the same traits in Formula 1. I remember speaking to Terry Fullerton about him when I was driving for Terry in '96, and he said to me, 'He will be a good Formula 1 driver one day, because he lets the kart do the work'.

"He told me you can see at 17 if a kid is going to have it or not, and that inherent style stays with you. Those words stuck in my head. I was waiting for him to say, '...and you'll be the same, mate, don't worry', but he didn't. What a git!"

Davidson now observes Button from the outside as a Sky Sports F1 analyst. He reckons the V10-engined era of Button's early days – with 900-odd horsepower, high levels of downforce and big grooved tyres – was the period of F1 that best suited his high-momentum driving style.

"If you're a driver like him you have the ability to slow down time in the car," Davidson explains. "If you approach driving the car like he does you're not in a frantic state, everything is more relaxed.

"The V10s were ferocious to drive. They were twitchy beasts. I know you had traction control but they were intimidating, and by not forcing it and allowing it to flow – rather than hanging on for dear life, point and squirt, driving with your elbows – he just rolled his way around the track.

"I was always more aggressive than him, always liked to wrestle the car a bit more, get to the apex then sort it out. I realised quickly he had this style to get the best out of that car in '04, and every Friday session I did I was always trying to emulate him as much as I could.

"That car certainly responded well to that style of driving. If you look back at his BAR V10 days on the Michelins, he always delivered. He came out of the dark days of being beaten down by Flavio and the Benetton team, got his confidence back, matured a lot, and really found his feet." >>

Button's two-year stint with Benetton/Renault started badly, but 2002 was a stronger season



2009 AND THE BRAWN SUPREMACY

Button waited a long time to taste real success in F1. When he finally broke his victory duck at the 2006 Hungarian Grand Prix, it was his 113th start. Of drivers who went on to become race winners, only Mark Webber, Rubens Barrichello and Jarno Trulli started more before they finally took the chequered flag first.

But in fairness to Button, how many genuine chances actually slipped through his fingers during that six-and-a-half season wait? BAR was clearly second-best to Ferrari in '04, lost its way in '05, and, despite that breakthrough victory as the works Honda outfit in '06, things went disastrously awry in '07 and '08.

At the end of 2008, Honda pulled the plug on its F1 project, amid global financial crisis. This threatened to wash Button's F1 career down the drain with it.

By this stage Button had raced in F1 for nine seasons, achieving just one race win and 15 podiums. Not an awful return, but hardly the stuff from which legends are made.

Fortune threatened to turn Button into another Jean Alesi, Jochen Mass, or Peter Gethin as a one-time winner. But Honda team principal Ross Brawn stepped in with a salvation plan – acquiring Honda's F1 team himself, along with a consortium of other former Honda F1 employees.

Prior to pulling out, Honda had devoted much energy and resource into major rule changes for 2009, featuring radically revised aerodynamics and a return to slick tyres.

Brawn stole a march on rivals with the controversial 'double diffuser', which the FIA deemed legal after in-season clarification, and secured a customer Mercedes engine deal to go with the package. Button finally had his hands on a car with title-winning potential, and he delivered – winning six races and beating Vettel to the crown by 11 points. This is where Button begins to elevate himself into conversations about F1's great drivers.

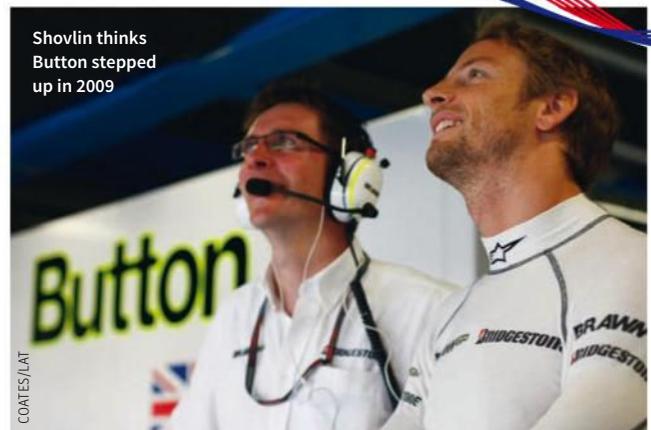
You can argue he enjoyed a car advantage, that Vettel was in only his second season of F1, and that team-mate Rubens Barrichello did not represent top opposition. But Michael Schumacher once described Barrichello as the fastest team-mate he ever had, and many drivers have found themselves unable to grasp the opportunities presented by a superior car.

What's more, the Brawn did not remain the best car throughout the year. Button capitalised on his advantage early on – winning six of the first seven races – but thereafter had to hang on against the rising tide of Red Bull and McLaren.

According to top Mercedes race engineer Andrew Shovlin, who engineered Button throughout the driver's time at BAR/Honda/Brawn, this is where Jensen showed an understated level of class.

"The car was absolutely dominant to start with, but Rubens is no slouch – if there's one thing that Rubens was strong at it was qualifying – and in the early races Jensen's qualifying was pretty stunning," Shovlin says. "He was able to get pole positions he needed to win races. At Monaco he did a stunning lap to get pole.

"That's a sign of Jensen's maturity – to go from a car that rarely qualified in the top 10 and was rarely scoring, to stringing together a whole load of race wins and pole positions. It's difficult to say when a driver peaks in their career, but he was pretty flawless in those early races, because he knew this was his big chance to win a championship. It didn't take him any time



“Jenson was pretty flawless early in 2009 because he knew this was his big chance”

to adapt and there weren't any missed opportunities early on.

"But by Bahrain and Barcelona [rounds four and five] we were caught. We had almost no development that year. I think our development budget was in the hundreds of thousands, not the tens of millions our competitors were probably spending, and we halved in size, to something around 350 people for 2009.

"It was more stressful than perhaps any other time I can remember, because you couldn't do it with brute force by just going out there and being quicker. You had to be more tactical."

Of course, winning the world title that season remains Button's greatest achievement as an F1 driver. But the manner of it also suggests hidden depths – a driver with steely determination to succeed in the face of challenging obstacles.

An ability to operate well under extreme pressure is something that separates elite athletes from the competition. Button later admitted to feeling the strain during that season, but who wouldn't in that situation?

Nearly a decade of racing at the top level, but mostly starved of the success you feel you deserve; your career in jeopardy before the start of the season; suddenly and unexpectedly, there's a massive chance to realistically achieve your lifelong ambition, but in far from ideal circumstances.

"As soon as you start to slip back, it becomes more and more difficult as you're attacked from both ends," adds Shovlin.

"We were struggling to warm the tyres, and if we knew then what we know now we would have done a better job from an engineering standpoint.

"The cooler races exposed a weakness. When it came to qualifying we weren't strong enough. You also get pressure as the championship leader. I think if the car had stayed competitive it would've remained easier for Jensen not to get affected by that pressure, but he was always good at grabbing every single point available."

Button produced a combative drive from a lowly 14th on the grid to finish fifth and clinch the championship at the penultimate race in Brazil.

"By the end of the season that was far from being the best car, but Jensen drove the drive of a champion," says Symonds. "All the odds were stacked against him and he just didn't give up. He drove almost beyond his ability. That's what makes a champion." >>>



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PROVING HIS QUALITY

“You can be really talented and not win a championship, but you can’t lack talent and win one”



Winning a world championship is a statistical sign of superiority over a single season, but the measure of a driver’s true ability is taken in ways less tangible than points accrued and wins tallied.

Button’s subsequent switch to McLaren, following the mental release of world championship success, is perhaps a truer indication of the competitor he really is.

There are drivers in motor racing forever chasing Mark Donohue’s ‘unfair advantage’. Indeed, Formula 1 could be characterised as the pursuit of this on as many counts as possible. Plenty are desperate to lock in contractual advantages over their team-mates, to ensure success at all costs; others simply coast along the current of past glories.

Not Button. Having proved he could win a world championship, he now wanted to prove himself against the best. Lewis Hamilton had arrived in F1 a few years earlier as a wunderkind protege of McLaren boss Ron Dennis, becoming world champion in only his second season.

Hamilton was considered the best British driving talent to emerge since, well, Button himself, so Button wanted to take him on – to prove himself against a driver considered among the greatest F1’s ever seen. Same team, same car, same chance...

“There are many drivers who have won three world championships in the right car – it’s the way Formula 1 is, it’s a sport that isn’t just down to the drivers,” explains Button. “You’re not always going to be fighting for a world championship, so there has got to be some competition there.

“I’ve had three world champions as team-mates, so I think that’s a good place to be, and whether you win the world championship or not, when you’re racing with that team-mate it means so much more to you than when you’re racing with someone who is inexperienced or not as competitive.”

McLaren will now readily admit Button was walking into the lion’s den, but when Hamilton left for Mercedes at the end of 2012, Button came out with his reputation enhanced.

His ultimate record against Hamilton is strong. Button won eight races to Hamilton’s 10, scored three more podiums than his team-mate (25-22), accrued more points (672 versus 657)

and beat Hamilton convincingly in the 2011 world championship – finishing runner-up to Sebastian Vettel.

There is no doubt Button showed his racer’s qualities. The big consistent question mark is qualifying speed. Hamilton scored nine pole positions to one for Button during their time together, and convincingly won the intra-team battle 44-14.

“JB has always been very precise as to how he likes the car set up,” explains McLaren’s acting CEO Jonathan Neale. “There are certain attributes that he is less tolerant of than others. I could compare and contrast that with Kimi Raikkonen. Idiosyncrasies is probably the wrong word, but to be able to get the best out of the car to match their driving styles, Jenson has a very strong sense of that.

“Certainly in the dry he likes the car on rails without any under-rotation on braking, but – and here’s the paradox – the moment the conditions become tricky, when you’ve got anything but great balance, boy does he come good.

“And in Canada 2011 – the four-hour marathon where at one point both of our drivers came together, JB was dead last, and I was getting texts from home saying, ‘Shut the garage, come home, this is too painful to watch’ – he drove from the back to the front and won it – on the last lap.

“There are very few people who can do that. He is one of them and it just shows the enormous talent that’s in there. I think he’s up there with the [other] world champions we’ve had.

“You don’t luck into a world championship. You have to execute it well. If you execute it well you are the real deal. You can be really talented and not win a world championship, but I don’t think you can lack talent and win a world championship.”

Button now finds himself paired with another multiple world champion – Fernando Alonso – a driver some consider the absolute best of the current era and one Button reckons “doesn’t really have any weaknesses”.

McLaren has been at its least competitive over the past two seasons, but Button >>

Many expected Button to struggle against Hamilton at McLaren – but he held his own



Button actually outscored Hamilton at McLaren

has scored points on more occasions than Alonso (Button trails 33-35 on total scored so far) and last year became the first team-mate to outscore Alonso in a season.

McLaren-Honda's persistent unreliability makes comparison difficult, but Button has been more competitive in qualifying, too, trailing Alonso 14-9 in the intra-team battle after accounting for breakdowns and, in Alonso's case, two races missed with injury.

This suggests Button's claims that he is "probably a better driver than when I won the world championship" and "as good as I've ever been" are probably fair. Certainly, McLaren feels Button has performed at a high level against Alonso.

"You can't last in F1 as long as JB has if you're not a very good driver," says McLaren racing director Eric Boullier. "Every driver is different, but you have seen JB has been winning races and there's no doubt about his talent. Normally the driver gets better if he's got a team-mate who is challenging him. In short, Fernando with JB makes JB better and vice versa.

"It's difficult to put JB in a category. Lewis has won three world championships, Vettel four and Alonso two. That's the reason why JB hasn't been called a 'great driver.' With the right car, right place and right moment, he could've been a double or triple champion, I'm sure."

THE TRAIT THAT HOLDS HIM BACK

It's final practice for the 2016 Hungarian Grand Prix. Alonso comes hurtling into the long-radius left-hand hairpin at Turn 13 of the Hungaroring. The rear of his McLaren-Honda rotates in a stylish pendulum motion as Alonso makes for his apex. He balances the car perfectly on a knife's edge, before accelerating firmly and quickly away from the bend.

Button appears shortly afterwards. He attempts the same brand of controlled aggression, but struggles to hang on to the car and ends up correcting the slide with the steering. In that moment the corner is lost, as Button loses the line and cannot re-apply the throttle at the right moment. Lap time drips away as a result.

Next time through, Button takes a 'safety-first' approach — pushing the front of the car into a slide instead. This is more predictable, and allows him to make a better fist of getting back on the power, but some lap time is still sacrificed to understeer.

This is Button's chief weakness in microcosm. Beyond the simple numbers, if there's one aspect of Button's career as an F1 driver that holds him back in discussions about the very best it's that he is often relatively limited in this way by the machinery at his disposal.

"That is one of his issues," concedes Showlin. "With drivers >>>





Being Button's team-mate

SERGIO PEREZ AND KEVIN Magnussen each spent a season as Jenson Button's team-mate at McLaren, so know better than most how good the 2009 world champion really is.

Perez was unfortunate to join McLaren when its current competitive slump began, enduring a difficult 2013 campaign that ended with him leaving Woking and heading back to F1's midfield with Force India.

The Mexican was outscored 73-49 by Button across that season, and says it was Button's relentless points-scoring consistency that made him such a formidable rival.

"He's very quick, not a guy that is unbeatable, just very consistent," says Perez. "Sometimes he can pull out

laps as good as anyone. The reference I have is to compare him against Nico Hulkenberg or Kamui Kobayashi. I think he's a bit down in qualifying compared to those two – especially to Nico. Nico is one of the best qualifiers. But the race from Jenson – how he brings the result from experience that he has – is really quite good.

"He brings in the points. If your car is capable of being P9, he will come P9. He doesn't take [too many] risks; is very calculated, but at the same time his first laps can be very good, so he can be aggressive.

"He hides the secrets, like all of us do, but he's not one of those guys who you simply can't work with. He was a very good guy, someone you can work with to build the team.

"When I came to McLaren he was obviously very established, knew all of the geometries, all of the mechanical set-ups, and that helped him a lot because we had such a difficult car. I learnt a lot from him. Jenson is a very complete driver."

Magnussen replaced Perez as Button's McLaren team-mate for 2014, when the current generation of V6 hybrid turbo engines was introduced.

The Danish rookie more often had the edge over Button in qualifying, but was also comfortably outscored in the world championship.

He believes Button is relentlessly error-free, and says Button coped better with the pressure of the second half of their season together, when it became clear they were competing to drive

alongside Fernando Alonso the following year.

"He doesn't make many mistakes, that's why it's difficult [against him]," Magnussen explains. "The very quick drivers are always quick because they're willing

"Jenson is able to be extremely consistent at a very high level"

to take risks. The more you push, the bigger the chance there is to make a mistake, and then you're behind him. He won't be far behind you if you're pushing flat-out. He's

able to be extremely consistent at a very high level.

"He has 15 years of experience in F1, has been with top teams from the beginning, so knows the language, and what the engineers want very well. And he's a clever, clever dude – able to use and learn from all his experiences. He knows why he's taking all the decisions he's taking.

"I think there was a point late on in the season when he thought he was going to retire, and from that point he relaxed and became really, really good, whereas I was under pressure, and after every race I got more nervous, became less consistent, performed worse and felt under more and more pressure.

"He was definitely better than I expected."

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STALEY/LAT

“If Jenson doesn’t have confidence in the car, he can’t drive how he wants”



like Lewis and Nico [Rosberg], they can go through free practice and the car’s a mess, but when they qualify they can still get a lap together one way or another. With Jenson, if he doesn’t have confidence in the car, he can’t drive how he wants.

“Jenson struggles to adapt his style in the way of some drivers who can just look at the data and drive in a different way. If the car oversteers that’s what you fix. You don’t worry about the next bit of the corner or the exit. You just focus on that problem.

“It’s about keeping the load on the car in a braking and turning phase. I suspect he’s driven like that from karts. If you look at him driving a kart you can tell it’s Jenson just from the style. Very unique.”

Button confirms he has driven this way since his early days – a style that relies on the car’s momentum, and minimal steering inputs from the driver.

“I’m very precise in the way that I drive and if I have a good car then I’ll be quicker than anyone, because I’ll be more precise than anyone,” Button explains. “I carry speed through a corner, and if a car isn’t balanced correctly when you carry speed it’s a lot more difficult when you have oversteer or understeer.”

This perhaps explains why Button’s qualifying record is a little underwhelming. Because of the cornering speed his natural driving style demands, Button places the car into a narrower window of grip than some other drivers, which means he can lose more time to a mistake or some imperfection with the car’s balance through certain corners.

There is no doubt Button has had to work hard to adapt his driving to the unique demands of the Pirelli tyre era of F1, and Button’s old mate Davidson believes this has somewhat neutered Button’s preferred method.

“I felt like the V10 era, with the super-sticky grooved tyres, really suited him,” says Davidson, who reckons Button has always had a tendency to over-analyse his car.

“It was man and machine in harmony. I feel like, ever since it went away from V10, he always wanted the car to feel like that – the higher the grip was and the more about momentum it was, the better it seemed to be for him.

“I would put Mark Webber into that category as well – in the Jaguar days, he was exceptional at getting a lap time out of that car, and the Pirelli era didn’t really work for him.”

Renault driver Kevin Magnussen, who was Button’s McLaren team-mate in 2014 and observed him as a reserve driver at McLaren-Honda last season, says Button’s sensitivity to instability and bumps on corner entry is what sometimes holds him back, while Force India’s Sergio Perez – Button’s team-mate in 2013 – reckons Button requires “a perfect set-up” to perform.

“Over one lap he struggles sometimes to cope with a difficult car, and sometimes he suffers a lot to put temperature on the tyres,” Perez tells Autosport. “He very rarely underperforms, but when I was on a good day and feeling happy with my car he was never going to reach me.

“When I’m ahead against Nico [Hulkenberg], I know he can pull out something, but if I had one of those days [at McLaren] I knew Jenson was not going to beat me. He needed time to adapt.

“I think the problem is just not having the car he is happy with. [In this situation] he will probably struggle more than Hulkenberg or Alonso. But when he has the car that he feels happy with he will be as quick as anyone, and he will be very consistent. He is one of those guys who knows how he did it, and can repeat it.

“I think definitely Jenson is one of the best drivers, but I’ve been very lucky to have so many good team-mates. I believe Nico is one of the best five drivers on the grid and certainly Jenson is among that list. He is solid, strong, but if I had to choose one team-mate I think Nico is stronger than Jenson.”

Head thinks that Button has also not been able to dominate and mould a team around him, in the way a Senna, Schumacher or Alonso would.

“I think everybody, myself included, looks back and thinks ‘Could have done better,’” Head argues. “He’s had a pretty outstanding career, [but] every now and then you get circumstances that really show him up.

“In truth, would you put him in the same bracket as Schumacher and Alonso? Probably not, because you don’t really get the impression that he’s made things happen around him.

“He took advantage of a very good car when he won his championship in 2009, but he struggled with Honda for years. I don’t think he’s taken it by the scruff of the neck and sorted the team out around him in the way that Michael did.” >>

Compared to some rivals, Button struggles more when the car is unbalanced

WHY HE'S BETTER THAN PEOPLE THINK

Button's longevity stands as testament to how good a driver he is. He is definitely not the absolute fastest guy on the grid, but he possesses traits that put him certainly among the best racing drivers in the world.

He has driven some truly stunning races in his time, often in the most challenging of mixed conditions — where the feeling is that drivers can make more of a difference and are less beholden to their equipment. Button's aptitude in these kinds of races marks him out as an elite driver in the right circumstances.

"His experience comes into play in those situations," argues Davidson. "I don't think he is necessarily streets ahead of anyone in terms of seat of the pants driving in changeable conditions, but he has got a good handle on reading what's going to happen to the track — 'Is it drying? Will it get wetter? Can I keep these tyres switched on?'"

"And when the going gets tough, he's got a good level of survival mode to get the thing back home. I think he should just stop Formula 1 and become a sportscar driver, because he's got so many key attributes that a sportscar driver needs."

Button's general discomfort with rear instability will generally lead him towards finding an understeering balance with the car, which arguably helps him in mixed weather where the front tends to slide before the rear. Shovlin reckons Button also possesses an excellent feel for finding grip from the tyres as it's falling away or ramping up suddenly.

"He was always very good at feeling whether the tyres had come in or not," Shovlin explains. "He had an incredible ability to do the out-lap and know just where the grip was."

"I think one of the reasons he's so good in the wet is that he can very quickly work out how much grip there is and exploit it. That's something you see as a career trait really, because he rarely gets it wrong."

"Jenson was also very good at winning the races that other people got wrong. He often does his own thing — that's where he's useful to have in a team. If you've got two guys who are neck and neck and always battling, Jenson would take the fight elsewhere. On the days that the team-mate wasn't performing he'd have one of his best races."

Button also drives in a way that buys extra thinking time. Where others are at 95-100% of their mental capacity, Button's way reduces the risk of errors. This allows him to be ultra-consistent in races, and see how they unfold without necessarily being told what to do by his team.

"He was very good at reading a race," adds Shovlin. "You wouldn't need to tell him much to get everything into place. He was always very switched on and good at processing what was happening."

"When I engineered with him he was a points scorer. You could get through a year with him and he would make no mistakes. He didn't crash. Quite often he would get through weekends without flat spots — those bits are difficult to put value on."

"He is quite useful in a team as he just gets the job done. Jenson is a brilliant test driver. He's so consistent, has a great feel for what the car's doing, and can tell you every single thing that happened in corners, lap-by-lap, over a 10-lap run."

"The question with Jenson was always 'Has he got that last bit in qualifying that people like Lewis or Vettel do?' but he's had a string of strong team-mates and he's always done well against them."

It's important also to not underestimate the strength of Button's character. Those who've worked with him closely paint the portrait of a likeable, down-to-earth guy, with a wicked sense of humour. Someone who is inclusive, charismatic, naturally endears himself to those around him, and can easily overcome disappointments and frustrations without letting them affect his driving.

"He's one of those drivers you could drop in any team and he would get on with people and his team-mates," adds Shovlin. "In my experience he was never working behind the scenes trying to manipulate anything. He was pretty straightforward."

There were times during his McLaren days that Button could outwit Hamilton by selling him a dummy on set-up and going the opposite way — but these are the sorts of tricks every driver performs from time to time. Button is certainly not shy of a straight fight, and is easy to underestimate, given his unassuming style of racing.



Button's first McLaren win in Australia 2010 was a result of an intelligent tyre call



Button's record against top-level team-mates is strong



FERRARO/LAT

“Jenson is not the fastest driver in the world, but he’s the best in the world”

“He is quicker than he gets credit for,” says Magnussen. “I didn’t know Jenson was that good. I think everybody was a bit surprised when he was up against Lewis – people expected Lewis to just destroy Jenson and he really didn’t.”

“He knows his weaknesses and strengths, that’s what is really good about it. He doesn’t get frustrated if he isn’t good in qualifying. He knows what it takes to beat somebody.”

“His dad said something that I really understand. He said: ‘Jenson is not the fastest driver in the world, but he’s the best in the world! I completely see where he’s coming from. There are probably one or two drivers that are faster – on a qualifying lap perhaps – but Jenson is better over a season.’”

His record against Hamilton and Alonso shows he is right up there with the absolute best on his day, but that greater dependency on a well-sorted car – a lack of absolute dynamism behind the wheel in difficult technical circumstances – perhaps holds him back from being regarded as among the true elite.

“It depends on what people look for,” argues Neale. “The guys who are more edgy and aggressive grab the headlines, but it’s easy to overlook and underestimate him. I think he’s a really class act.”

“I always thought – a little bit unfairly – that he was a little bit underrated in the F1 circles,” adds Davidson. “Although he didn’t have the full spark of, say, Lewis Hamilton on fire at his best, or Fernando Alonso – where they create those fireworks, Jenson has his own way, a subtle way, that didn’t capture the imagination, or spark the perception of a driver.”

“He goes about it in a very Prost-esque way – a very clinical, undramatic way. But he gets results. He can outscore Lewis Hamilton in a season; he would take the fight to Alonso in lap times and racecraft.”

“He will never be, in an unfair way, I feel, regarded as one of the best of the best. But he gets the job done, and I strongly believe he still very much has his place in Formula 1.” ❄

How Button defies his age

ALL FORMULA 1 DRIVERS are required to be athletes nowadays. It may not be as heroic as collapsing – Nelson Piquet-style – on the podium after giving your all on the track, but science (and Michael Schumacher) now proves those in better physical condition are more likely to succeed.

Jenson Button is a dedicated athlete, competing in triathlons around his Formula 1 commitments. This was something McLaren found odd at first, but now encourages because of the effect it has in helping Button drive at a consistently high level well into his 30s.

Button’s human performance coach, Michael Collier, has worked with him since 2008, and says triathlon feeds Button’s competitive nature and helps him be physically overprepared for F1.

“There’s a lot of crossover from triathlon to F1, although it may not be that obvious,” Collier says. “If you are competing and doing super-sprints, or even

Olympic-distance triathlons, the workload on your body is over and above what you would go through in an F1 car.

“There’s a whole load of research in terms of the benefits of being fitter when you come to undertaking physically and psychologically demanding tasks. It means you have greater

“His body’s strength is able to reduce the strain on his mind”

capacity to do more.

“They are challenging, technical cars, and if you can overtrain for what you have to do on a day-to-day basis, that day-to-day activity will become [more] straightforward.”

This helps explain why Button is able to read complex races so well as they unfold, because his body’s strength is able to reduce the strain of F1 on his mind.

Of course, it is

impossible to cheat Father Time forever, but Button’s dedication means his body’s natural degradation is showing no signs of slowing him down in the car just yet.

“There’s just a natural regression in certain aspects of your physical ability as you get older, but with the right type of training that can be delayed,” adds Collier.

“How does he stack up? Well, last year he did a load of tests in relation to physical capability at a GSK [GlaxoSmithKline] performance centre. He did a piece with the Brownlee brothers [top Olympic triathletes], who obviously are exceptional athletes. What was clear is that there are quite a few similarities in terms of their physical qualities.”

“One of the big drop-offs is reaction and strength when you get older, but actually all of the traits from last year demonstrate that Jenson is one of the quickest in reactions on race starts. In Jenson’s case, age doesn’t impact reaction time.”



XPIIMAGES



Hinkelsteins (top half of pic) triggered shunt...

...that resulted in a very badly damaged Citroen

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Lefebvre and Moreau in

NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE WORLD Rally Championship held its breath following an accident on Rally Germany's infamous Panzerplatte stage last weekend.

The hinkelstein rocks lining the roads have been there since the Americans took control of the Baumholder military testing area in the 1950s. Designed to keep tanks on the road, they're not about to move for an out-of-control World Rally Car at 100mph. Stephane Lefebvre and Gabin Moreau discovered this to their cost on Saturday when their Citroen DS 3 WRC bounced off the stones and into the trees.

Lefebvre escaped with two broken ribs and a punctured lung, while Moreau, who was trapped in the car, suffered a broken hand and foot, a fractured tibia, cracked vertebrae and a displaced collarbone. The impact was logged at 166km/h (103mph).

Since Germany joined the WRC in 2002, the Panzerplatte stages have been a controversial part of the event. Petter Solberg and Phil Mills escaped a terrifying crash two years later, when their Subaru landed on its roof on top of one of the stone blocks. The FIA has launched an investigation into how to improve safety.

There were calls for the stage to be removed from the route at the time, but Germany's own two-time world champion Walter Rohrl said such a plan would take away from the challenge of the event. Rohrl said the hinkelsteins taught young drivers to take a clean line.

"They are," said Rohrl at the time of Rally Germany's arrival in the WRC, "good for building the character of the drivers."

But with speeds higher than ever on the German stages — and set to rise again next season — the sport's governing body is looking at ways to reduce the risk.

Lefebvre explained the accident that hospitalised him and Moreau.

"I can remember the whole thing very clearly," he said. "I had noted a right-hand turn with a corner that could be cut. Given the marks left by the other competitors, I had turned in slightly early but the car drifted onto the outside of the corner and we hit a row of hinkelsteins. The last rock turned the car around and sent it flying into the trees."

On seeing the remains of the DS 3, Moreau said: "When you look at the state of the car, I feel pretty fortunate. The survival cell and the



Lefebvre (left) and Moreau hospitalised with injuries



2016 CALENDAR

WHY WAS RALLY CHINA DROPPED?

QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN raised over the reason for the cancellation of next month's Rally China.

Chao Fei, a journalist at motoring website Auto Ifeng, has followed the story closely.

He told Autosport: "If there was not bad weather leading to the road damage, the event would be cancelled due to the lack of the necessary budget. As everyone knows, the Chinese government can fix the roads within two days, but it is very difficult to find a sponsor to support motorsport."

"The real reason is there was not the budget."

WRC Promoter's Oliver Ciesla said: "As WRC Promoter, I'm in regular contact with the federation and the local promoter and I had no such indication [of financial issues]."

Ciesla's stance was backed up by FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen, who told Autosport: "There have been many, many rumours."

"I am only interested in the facts. We sent people to China, they reported the damage to the roads, and there was nothing we could do. We had no option but to cancel."

The teams are counting the cost of cancellation. Private team M-Sport is £126,000 out of pocket, while Volkswagen's loss is closer to half a million.

The teams have requested China only returns to the calendar after a candidate event has been held.

DAVID EVANS

massive Germany crash

various items of equipment did their job, especially the reinforced sections which are not mandatory, but which were added to improve safety for the crew."

Lefebvre added: "Like Gabin, I think we were well protected by the car. You can never control the outside environment in rallying and on this occasion we paid a fairly heavy penalty for going off."

FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen told Autosport that an investigation into the crash and the continued use of the Panzerplatte stages began immediately.

"There have been cases [of crashes like this] previously in Panzerplatte," he said. "We have the hinkelsteins in so many places and then there are sections where we have the trees like this. We always say that these dangers are part of the sport, but nobody wants this to happen, especially not with those stones. We are really, really looking at this. We will investigate and, in fact, we already had discussions straight away on the day of the crash and this will continue."

"We are going to need some time to get back on our feet"

"One thing which is possible is to build a chicane on the straight before the corner and then you come through this corner accelerating from zero. But how many corners are like this?"

Rally Germany winner Sebastien Ogier said he was encouraged by the FIA's investigation, adding: "We all know that zero risk will never happen in rallying and, of course, these

hinkelsteins are one of hardest things that we can hit. Maybe an idea is to try to protect them with a wall? It's not so many sections, it's just a few where the speed is very high."

Moreau has undergone surgery on his injuries and is understood to be remaining in hospital in Trier. Lefebvre was

expected to be allowed home earlier this week.

"We're going to need some time to get back on our feet," Lefebvre admitted. "The only thing which is getting to me is the fact that I might not be able to take part in the Tour de Corse."

His home French round of the championship begins on September 29.

DAVID EVANS



FORMULA E TESTING STARTS Testing for the 2016-17 Formula E season got under way at Donington Park on Tuesday with the first of two three-day sessions. The new Jaguar team made its debut, with GP2 race winner Alex Lynn (above) and former A1GP champion Adam Carroll driving on Tuesday. Ford-contracted Harry Tincknell and GP2 ace Mitch Evans are also due to test the Jaguars, with all four drivers in contention for the pair of available race seats. Also in action for the first time was the new Techeetah squad, which has taken over Team Aguri. Techeetah has signed ex-DS Virgin driver Jean-Eric Vergne for the upcoming season. Among the new drivers running in the test were WTCC king Jose Maria Lopez (DS Virgin) and Maro Engel (Venturi). The first round of the championship will be held in Hong Kong on October 9. **Photograph by Adam Warner/LAT**

FORMULAE

Rosenqvist lands Mahindra drive

MERCEDES DTM AND GT DRIVER Felix Rosenqvist will contest the 2016-17 Formula E season after joining Nick Heidfeld at Mahindra.

The Indian team has confirmed that the reigning European Formula 3 champion replaces Bruno Senna alongside the returning Heidfeld.

“Racing in Formula E will be something genuinely new to me, and I’m thrilled to be making this move at an exciting time of my career,” said Rosenqvist, who also made his DTM debut last weekend.

“It’s a step into the unknown and I’m sure it will be very different to anything I’ve done before. But I’ve had a very warm welcome from Mahindra Racing and I have a strong and experienced team-mate in Nick.

“I’m fully aware that it will take some time to learn the trade of electric racing, and I’m up against an exceptional field.

“I do expect a steep learning curve,

particularly with the technology in Formula E being so different to what I’m accustomed to.”

In addition to his Mercedes commitments, Rosenqvist has undertaken an Indy Lights campaign for Belardi Auto Racing and recently completed his first IndyCar test at Mid-Ohio for Chip Ganassi Racing.

Mahindra Racing team principal Dilbagh Gill said: “As an F3 champion and accomplished driver across a number of race series, Felix has proven his skill on many levels and, crucially, tight street circuits such as Macau [where he is a two-time winner].”

Heidfeld stays on for a second season with Mahindra, having finished 10th in the 2015-16 standings.

He scored a podium on his first appearance with the team in Beijing last year, but his campaign was disrupted by a hand injury picked up in the second race in Putrajaya.

SCOTT MITCHELL



Rosenqvist will line up alongside Nick Heidfeld in 2016/17

IN THE HEADLINES

PITSTOP SAFETY MOVE FOR MOTOGP

MotoGP mechanics will be required to wear helmets when assisting riders with bike changes in flag-to-flag races from 2017. A decision made by the grand prix commission at Brno will also reduce the number of personnel present for each bike change to a maximum of four. The changes have been made for safety reasons.

MANOR TEMPORARILY DROPS TO ONE CAR

The Manor LMP2 team will trim its World Endurance Championship entry to one car for the next race in Mexico City on September 3. It is expected to be a one-off move, with sometime Formula Acceleration 1 driver Alfonso Toledano Jr joining regulars Matt Rao and Richard Bradley.

CONWAY GETS LMP2 OUTING

Toyota World Endurance Championship driver Mike Conway will make a return to the LMP2 ranks in the European Le Mans Series at Paul Ricard this weekend with TDS Racing. He will fill in for Ryo Hirakawa, who is competing in the Suzuki 1000Km with the TOM'S team.

CHIYO SUFFERS SPINAL INJURY...

Blancpain Endurance Series champion Katsumasa Chiyo suffered a spinal injury in his brake-failure-induced crash in the Super GT round at Fuji two weeks ago, it has emerged. He is set to make a full recovery.

...SO NISSAN BRINGS IN ORDONEZ

Lucas Ordonez will race the lead RJN Nissan GT-R NISMO GT3 alongside Alex Buncombe in the Blancpain GT round at the Hungaroring this weekend. This is because regular driver Mitsunori Takaboshi has been drafted in to replace Chiyo in the MOLA Nissan line-up for the Suzuki 1000Km.

NEWSHAM GETS SECOND BTCC OUTING

Dave Newsham will return to the British Touring Car Championship for a second outing of the season at the wheel of a Power Maxed Racing Chevrolet Cruze at Rockingham this weekend. He will continue to deputise for Kelvin Fletcher, whose wife is due to give birth.

GILHAM RETURNS IN PLACE OF CAINE

Team Hard owner Tony Gilham will make his first BTCC appearance of the season at Rockingham this weekend. He takes the place of Michael Caine, who has had to step down temporarily because of an injury aggravated at Knockhill, in the Toyota Avensis.

WILLIAMSON SETTLES IN AT STRAKKA

Lewis Williamson, McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner in 2010, will complete the World Endurance Championship season with the Strakka Racing LMP2 squad. The 26-year-old first replaced Danny Watts alongside Jonny Kane and Nick Leventis at the Nurburgring last month.



F1 PREVIEW

Belgian Grand Prix

August 26-28



CIRCUIT DE SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS

LENGTH 4.352 miles NUMBER OF LAPS 44

2015 POLE POSITION Lewis Hamilton 1m47.197s

POLE LAP RECORD Mark Webber 1m45.778s (2010)

RACE LAP RECORD Sebastian Vettel 1m47.263s (2009)



Tyre allocation



UK start times

LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1 AND CHANNEL 4

FRIDAY

FP1 0900 FP2 1300

SATURDAY

FP3 1000 QUALIFYING 1300

SUNDAY

RACE 1300

RADIO COVERAGE

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE & BBC F1 WEBSITE

Previous winners

2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull
2013	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2012	Jenson Button	McLaren
2011	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2010	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren
2009	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari
2008	Felipe Massa	Ferrari
2007	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari
2005	Kimi Raikkonen	McLaren

Themes to watch

RED BULL v FERRARI

Red Bull caught and passed Ferrari in the standings with a double podium in Hungary. The configuration of Spa could allow Ferrari to hit back.

ROSBERG'S RESPONSE

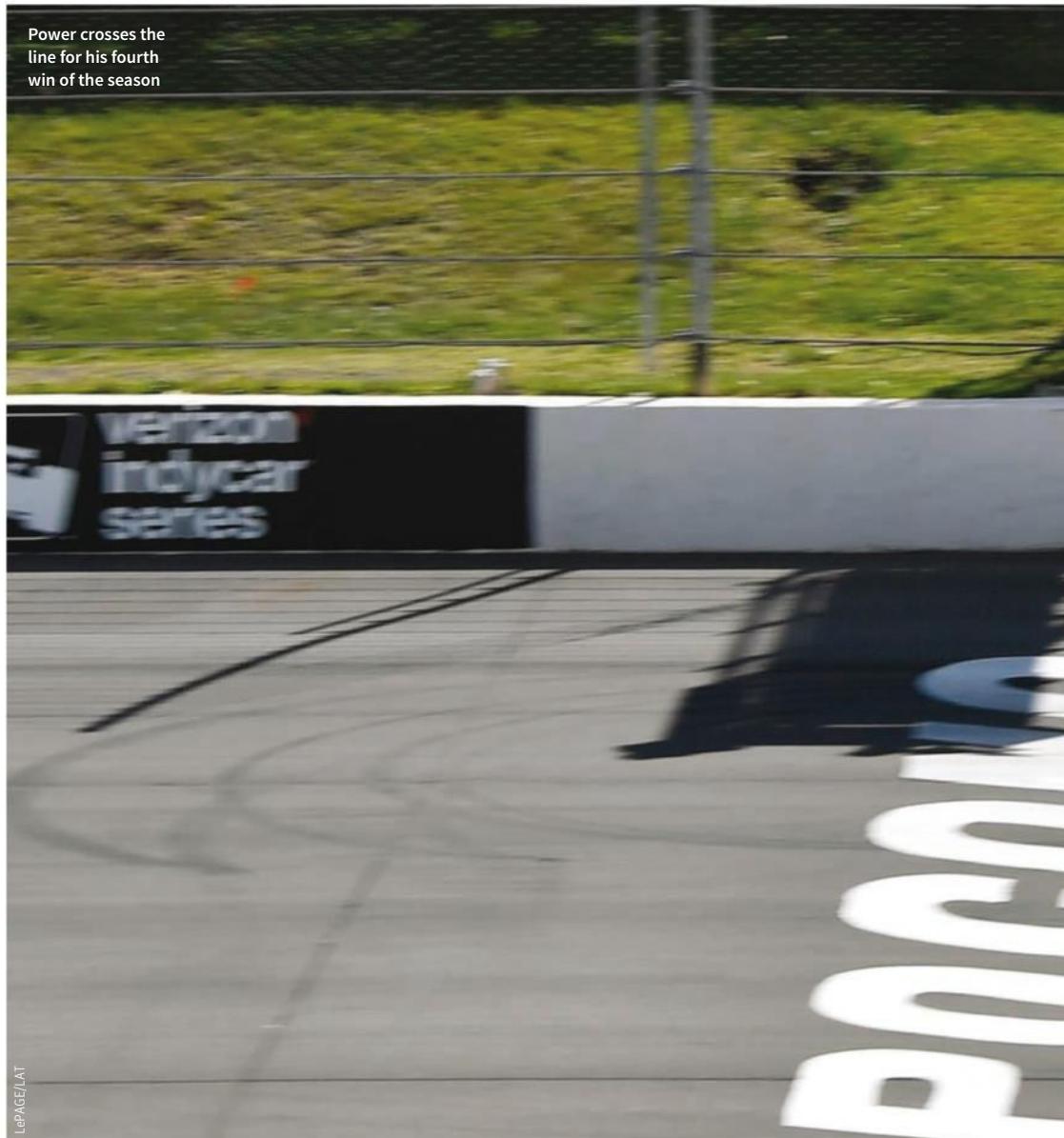
Lewis Hamilton has won the past four races to move 19 points clear of Nico Rosberg. Can his team-mate respond at a track where he has never won?

FORCE INDIA v WILLIAMS

The battle for fourth in the constructors' championship is intensifying. How will Williams respond after the August break, having lost ground to its rival?

RACE CENTRE

INDYCAR • MASTERS OF F3 • DTM • SUPER FORMULA • NASCAR



IndyCar can't stop the

INDYCAR SERIES
POCONO (USA)
AUGUST 22
ROUND 13/15

WILL POWER CONTINUED AS INDYCAR'S 'Mr Monday' as the charging Team Penske driver scored victory in the rain-rescheduled 500-mile race at Pocono Raceway. More importantly, Power's fourth win of the season combined with team-mate Simon Pagenaud's crash in Turn 1 on lap 158 – which dropped the Frenchman to an 18th-place finish – allowed Power to cut another 38 points out of Pagenaud's lead with just three races remaining.

"I must say every time we race on Monday, I win, seems to be," said Power. "If you go back and look at the last six years, I'll bet you I've won every Monday race. I can think of today, Brazil [2011], St Pete [2010], all run on Mondays."

Power, who missed the first race of the year with concussion-like symptoms, is charging and his latest victory leaves him just 20 points behind Pagenaud. "We will give it everything because we really want to win this championship, especially after such a rough

half of the year where I was feeling horrible and could hardly complete a race physically," he said. "So we are really coming back strong."

Power drove to a steady victory, waiting for the race to come to him at the end rather than forcing the issue. While Mikhail Aleshin and Ryan Hunter-Reay set the pace for much of the race, it was Power who lurked in the background until the final stages. He took the lead for good with 35 laps remaining and drove to the win after leading 55 of the 200 laps, his Dallara-Chevrolet defeating Aleshin's Honda-powered Schmidt Peterson Motorsports car by 1.1459 seconds.

"The start of the race, our car was not that good," Power explained. "We had to make a lot of adjustments throughout. I have to say after around lap 100 the car really started coming on, and then it became really strong. I was able to pass anyone I wanted. The car was fast. People couldn't tow up to me."

Aleshin's second place from his maiden IndyCar pole was the best finish of his Indy career. The Muscovite led 87 of the 200 laps before handling issues set in, but entertained with a fierce fight with Ryan Hunter-Reay.

Hunter-Reay had started from the rear of the

AT A GLANCE

- 1 Power Penske
- 2 Aleshin Schmidt Peterson
- 3 Hunter-Reay Andretti

➔ P30 RESULTS



showers, and can't stop Power

field after crashing his Andretti Autosport car in Saturday practice, and had already raced from 22nd to 14th before third qualifier Takuma Sato slammed into the Turn 3 wall at the conclusion of the opening lap. When the race resumed, Aleshin and Josef Newgarden took part in a spirited battle before Indianapolis 500 winner Alexander Rossi raced his way into contention.

After the first stops Hunter-Reay was second, fighting Aleshin, before Rossi's bid was derailed at the second stops. He was leaving the pits out of the slow lane and, as Rossi went into the fast lane, he made contact with Charlie Kimball, sending Rossi airborne over the top of Helio Castroneves. Kimball was the only driver who could continue in the race.

Castroneves believed the crash looked worse than it was when Rossi's car essentially landed just over his head. "Inside the car, I was actually more protected than what it looked like," Castroneves said. "Sometimes people don't

realise the Verizon IndyCar series is so much about safety and today is the proof of that. I'm very glad that nobody got hurt."

Aleshin and Hunter-Reay continued to battle, with Newgarden not far adrift, before an electronic issue with 36 laps remaining caused Hunter-Reay's engine to lose power. He dropped onto pitlane before the engine finally responded but by then he was one lap down in 12th place. Then he got a reprieve when a winglet from Tony Kanaan's car on the track in Turn 1 turned the yellow light on for another caution period, putting Hunter-Reay back on the lead lap after everyone pitted.

Kanaan went very low to pass for second place on the restart, but with 18 laps to go Aleshin blasted past the Brazilian. He cut the gap to Power, who had hit the front after a round of stops, but the 2014 champion kept his pursuer at bay. "Will deserved it more because he was just faster," said Aleshin. "I caught him, but it was just impossible to overtake. I was like going sideways, almost

Aleshin: "I was going sideways, almost lost my car"

lost my car couple of times."

Hunter-Reay scorched from the back of the lead lap, via a fierce battle with Juan Pablo Montoya. He passed Scott Dixon for fifth with 10 laps to go, got ahead of Sebastien Bourdais for fourth three laps later, and finally dispossessed Newgarden of third on the penultimate lap.

"There are very few times in your career when you get a car that you're completely in line with and it's doing everything that you need it to," said Hunter-Reay. "That's what I had today. It was like a 2014 Indy 500 car. I could sit here and sound like a whiner about it, but it's frustrating."

At least he was better off than Pagenaud, who faces a resurgent Power in the points battle over the three remaining races. "The car bottomed and I went straight to the wall," he said. "It was really weird because I had bottoming but not to that extent. It felt OK leaving the pits but I just lost control of the steering. It [the championship] is out of our control now."

Is it in Power's control? "That is as good as it gets," he concluded. "No mistakes. Great stops. As an overall team effort, that was as good a day as you could possibly get."

BRUCE MARTIN

Eriksson managed to hold off Kari



CHRIS SCHOTANUS

Eriksson mobile to Masters glory

MASTERS OF FORMULA 3

ZANDVOORT (NL)

AUGUST 20-21

THIS ONE WAS ALWAYS GOING to be decided at the start. With overtaking at Zandvoort far from easy, as soporifically proven in the recent Formula 3 European Championship rounds, Joel Eriksson knew that he had to convert pole position into the lead. That he did, but only just.

Eriksson, who had earned his pole by winning Saturday's qualification race in his Motopark Dallara-Volkswagen, bolted away and moved across to defend the inside line from fellow front-row starter Callum Ilott on the run to the Tarzanbocht. As Eriksson moved across, the way opened up for team-mate Niko Kari – the Finnish Red Bull Junior had started third and was able to swoop around the outside of Ilott to secure second, and oh so nearly passed the Swede for the lead.

"I knew I had to get a good start," said Kari. "I nearly got Joel as well,

but I just couldn't do it."

Eriksson knew that it had been close, but his inside line was the quicker and he came out of Tarzan ahead. "It was tight at the start, but I knew that it would be decided there," he said. "Once I came out ahead, I pushed hard to build a gap and then I was able to slow the pace and look after my tyres."

Eriksson's was an intelligent drive. He was conscious that the 25-lap race would work the Kumho rubber hard, and equally he knew what Kari was up to behind – every time his pursuer pushed, Eriksson upped his pace once more.

Motopark's domination didn't end with a one-two, as Timo Rumpfkeil's squad locked out the top three: Sergio Sette Camara bagged third having started fifth on the grid, his progress being thanks to a good start and then a brave pass around the outside of Ilott at Tarzan on the second tour. The Brazilian set after Kari, but his Red Bull stablemate was too far up the road. Sette Camara's pace was affected late in the event, just as it had been in Saturday's qualifying race.

AT A GLANCE

FINAL

- 1 Eriksson Motopark
- 2 Kari Motopark
- 3 Sette Camara Motopark

QUAL RACE

- 1 Eriksson Motopark
- 2 Ilott Van Amersfoort
- 3 Kari Motopark

➔ P31 FULL RESULTS

"My car was better at the start of the race," he explained. "It was the same yesterday: the car lost its edge at the end. I could see early on that I had more grip than Ilott so I took my chance but I struggled at the end of the race."

Ilott, who had topped practice and qualifying with the local Van Amersfoort Racing team, saw his weekend start to unravel in the qualifying race when he was caught out by the start lights. Rather than the usual FIA style of five individual lights, it was a quick on-off process that surprised him and allowed Eriksson to jump ahead. Life got no better in the main race as, struggling for grip, he dropped to fourth and was nearly caught by a charging Alex Albon – the GP3 star making an F3 comeback with Hitech GP – right at the end.

Sixth fell to Pedro Piquet, who fended off the challenge of VAR team-mate Anthoine Hubert. Alessio Lorandi was the best of a muted Carlin attack in eighth, while Sam MacLeod impressed for Fortec Motorsports as he hustled up from 14th with a demon move to wrestle ninth place away from Mucke Motorsport's David Beckmann at Tarzan. Late Hitech call-up Harrison Scott was another who got stuck in as he tried to recover from a duff start and fell to the rear of the field: 12th was his reward.

The weekend, though, belonged to Motopark, which had been able to get a handle on the Kumho rubber better than its rivals. Just to underline the pace of its cars, it elected to get Guan Yu Zhou out of traffic and fit him a fresh set of boots: he set the fastest lap on the penultimate tour. Three weeks after Eriksson's maiden Euro F3 win, if ever there was a weekend that marked out the team as a major force in the category, this was it.

DAVID ADDISON

Motopark domination. L-r: Zhou (fastest lap), Sette Camara, Eriksson, Kari



CHRIS SCHOTANUS

Russian evolution for Wittmann

DTM
MOSCOW RACEWAY (RUS)
AUGUST 20-21
ROUND 6/9

DINAH WASHINGTON'S *WHAT A Difference a Day Makes* could scarcely have been more appropriate, yet at the same time so ill-fitting, in summing up the DTM's visit to Moscow Raceway.

Polar opposite (not quite) weather conditions threw up two completely different races – two of total domination by first Mercedes and then BMW – but continuity at the head of the points standings. Marco Wittmann's point-less first race meant his championship lead was initially squandered, but 24 hours later the German had it back again thanks to a dominant race two win.

He had to wait for his chance, though, for Saturday was a Mercedes whitewash.

Pole for the opening race could have gone the way of any of the first three starters, but it was Gary Paffett, last across the line to start his flying lap in moist conditions, who clinched top spot by 0.605s on rain tyres from title hopeful Robert Wickens and Paul di Resta.

Rain intensified significantly in the two and a half hours between qualifying and the race, and was sufficient to warrant a safety car start – although conditions were deemed favourable enough after three laps to allow the field loose.

Eager to get his title challenge back on track after puncture disappointment at Zandvoort, Wickens made a sensational start, tailgating Paffett through the first two corners before sweeping ahead at Turn 3. Gone in a flash, Wickens romped clear and was out of sight at the flag, winning by 10.955s, the 25 points for victory moving him to the top of the pile.

The Canadian's win was ahead of di Resta, who also worked his way past Paffett and edged clear – despite a brief excursion at the final corner midway through the race – while fourth qualifier Maximilian Gotz held station to complete a Merc 1-2-3-4 lockout behind Paffett.

What of Wittmann? The 2014 champion clearly had pace in his pocket



Wittmann heads into a Russian forest

XPB IMAGES

in Russia – at least on the evidence of Friday's first free practice session – but the torrents thereafter on Saturday dulled his performance, the Team RMG BMW driver only able to qualify 20th and driving to a low-key 19th in the race.

But Sunday (briefly) brought the sun, and with it a change in Wittmann's fortune. BMW was despondent after a sole points finish on Saturday – thanks to Maxime Martin's sixth place – but a 1-2-3 in qualifying, led by Wittmann, augured better.

Three cars at the front was narrowed to two before the race start, with Martin taking the start from the rear of the field in his rebuilt Team RBM M4 after crashing out of qualifying. That mattered not to Wittmann, who scampered clear

at the start as second-placed Tom Blomqvist's mirrors were filled by Wickens's HWA Merc.

Try as he might, Wickens simply could not find a way through. And as Blomqvist gradually eased away, shadowing Wittmann in a comfortable second phase of the race after their respective pitstops, Wickens's race began to unravel.

Power-steering issues had set in by lap eight and, although Wickens initially looked capable of managing that, his steering assist had disappeared completely four laps later. A slow stop compounded his woes, as did an altercation with the yet-to-pit Martin Tomczyk, and Wickens eventually ceded places to Bruno Spengler and Augusto Farfus, who completed a BMW top four.

Those struggles may have dropped Wickens out of podium contention, but he at least clung on to fifth – and 10 precious points – in the closing laps, with a great deal of thanks owed to Dani Juncadella, who sacrificed a possible podium of his own by protecting his team-mate.

Wittmann was just relieved to have turned his fortunes around, having returned to the summit. What a difference a day makes.

"After a tough day yesterday, today's race was much more to my liking," he said. "The pace was there all day long – I'm really happy."



Wickens was on top in wet on Saturday

XPB IMAGES

AT A GLANCE

RACE 1

- 1 Wickens Mercedes
- 2 di Resta Mercedes
- 3 Paffett Mercedes

RACE 2

- 1 Wittmann BMW
- 2 Blomqvist BMW
- 3 Spengler BMW

P31 FULL RESULTS

Rookie Sekiguchi grabs his first win

SUPERFORMULA
MOTEGI (J)
AUGUST 21
ROUND 4/7

YUHI SEKIGUCHI STOLE A MARCH ON Stoffel Vandoorne by becoming the first rookie to win in Super Formula this year.

The 28-year-old Japanese earned pole position in his Dallara-Toyota run by the Team Impul squad, and apart from during the pitstop sequence he stayed in front throughout the race at Twin Ring Motegi.

This was the first Super Formula race to mandate the use, GP2-style, of two specs of control tyre, in this case the soft and the medium. Sekiguchi made a good start and pulled away, while front-row partner Hiroaki Ishiura didn't get the best of getaways, the Cerumo-Ingling Dallara-Toyota dropping to fourth.

The TOM'S machine of Andre Lotterer went from fourth to third, then passed



leading Honda runner Tomoki Nojiri (Dandelion Racing) at Turn 2 for second.

Paddleshift failure dropped Nojiri out of the race on lap five, so it was up to Ishiura to challenge Lotterer. The duo pitted together with 16 laps remaining, the Cerumo-Ingling crew doing a great job to turn the reigning champion round 1.3s faster than TOM'S did Lotterer, but a great out-lap from the Audi star meant he clung onto second place.

Sekiguchi set very consistent laps to win, and take the points lead, while Lotterer struggled with loss of tyre grip but just fended off Ishiura, with the last-named's team-mate Yuji Kunimoto coming home in fourth place.

A big battle raged for fifth place, with

Sekiguchi was the Super Formula master at Twin Ring Motegi

Dandelion driver Vandoorne emerging from the pits ahead of Kondo Racing-run James Rossiter, but the Brit moved closer and then got in front to grab fifth. Joao Paulo de Oliveira, winner last time out at Fuji, was another to suffer paddleshift failure early on and retired.

JIRO TAKAHASHI

RESULTS

1 Yuhi Sekiguchi (Dallara-Toyota) 52 laps in 1h25m17.584s; 2 Andre Lotterer (D-T) +6.127s; 3 Hiroaki Ishiura (D-T); 4 Yuji Kunimoto (D-T); 5 James Rossiter (D-T); 6 Stoffel Vandoorne (D-Honda); 7 Kazuki Nakajima (D-T); 8 Naoki Yamamoto (D-H); 9 Kamui Kobayashi (D-T); 10 Daisuke Nakajima (D-H). **Points 1 Sekiguchi 17;** 2 Lotterer 15.5; 3 Ishiura 15; 4 Kunimoto 14.5; 5 Yamamoto 14; 6 Rossiter 11.

Evans emulates dad with BRC title success

BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
ULSTER RALLY (GB)
AUGUST 19-20
ROUND 6/7

ELFYN EVANS CONTINUED HIS dominant form of 2016, winning the Ulster Rally and in the process taking the British Rally Championship title.

Evans's father Gwyndaf also won his first BRC title on the Ulster, 20 years ago. On that event, Irish Tarmac Championship

legend Bertie Fisher won the event, and 20 years on his nephew Alastair led the charge of the same championship.

Both Ford Fiesta R5 drivers had to contend with tricky conditions. The stages were barely a car's width and, after heavy rain in the build-up to the event, standing water and mud were a serious problem.

So much so that the drivers and team bosses successfully lobbied the organisers to declare a wet rally, allowing the use of any tyres, in the process making tyre

One family, two champions: Evans (left) with dad Gwyndaf

choice key to the result of the weekend.

Fisher charged early, but a spin and then a puncture in SS4 and SS5 curtailed his charge. Instead, treble BRC champion Keith Cronin came to the fore and was within four seconds of Evans by the end of the day.

But after the first loop of stages on the concluding day's action (Saturday), Cronin's gearbox went and he was out of the action.

Fisher stormed back through the top five to take second, while Cronin's team-mate Jonny Greer rounded out the podium.

Evans's three main title rivals all suffered trouble. Tom Cave had a puncture and driveshaft failure. Swede Fredrik Ahlin went off after two missed notes from his co-driver and Josh Moffett broke an engine manifold.

JACK BENYON

RESULTS

1 Elfyn Evans/Craig Parry (Ford Fiesta R5) 2h11m15.4s; 2 Alastair Fisher/Gordon Noble (Ford) +1m07.6s; 3 Jonathan Greer/Kirsty Riddick (Citroen DS3 R5); 4 David Bogie/James O'Reilly (Skoda Fabia R5); 5 Keith Cronin/Mikie Galvin (Citroen); 6 Marty McCormack/David Moynihan (Skoda Fabia S2000). **Points 1 Evans 135;** 2 Tom Cave 74; 3 Greer 66; 4 Fredrik Ahlin 65; 5 Josh Moffett 52; 6 Bogie 36.





Mardenborough takes double

JAPANESE FORMULA 4

MOTEGI (J)
AUGUST 20-21
ROUND 6/8

JANN MARDENBOROUGH TOOK A BIG STEP towards the title with victory in both the wet and the dry at Twin Ring Motegi.

The Welshman qualified his B-Max Dallara-Volkswagen second for Saturday's soggy encounter, and ran second for much of the race behind the Toda-powered car of Formula 4 graduate Tadasuke Makino. But Makino couldn't quite hold on for his first F3 win, and Mardenborough made a very nice feat with four laps remaining to take a lead he would extend to the flag.

Mardenborough claimed pole for the second race from main title rival Kenta Yamashita, and he pulled away from the TOM'S/Toyota protege

throughout to complete a weekend double.

The second TOM'S car of reigning F4 champ Sho Tsuboi was third in race one, and Tsuboi repeated that position on Sunday after re-passing Makino late in the race. Hong Li Ye, in a B-Max car, put in by far his best performance by also passing Makino to finish fourth.

JIRO TAKAHASHI

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Jann Mardenborough (Dallara-Volkswagen F314) 14 laps in 31m28.195s; 2 Tadasuke Makino (D-Toda F314) +4.765s; 3 Sho Tsuboi (D-Toyota F314); 4 Keishi Ishikawa (Dallara-Toda F316); 5 Kenta Yamashita (Dallara-Toyota F312); 6 Sena Sakaguchi (D-Mugen Honda F312). **Race 2 1 Mardenborough** 20 laps in 35m44.454s; 2 Yamashita +8.121s; 3 Tsuboi; 4 Hong Li Ye (Dallara-VW F315); 5 Makino; 6 Sakaguchi.
Points 1 Mardenborough 85; 2 Yamashita 66; 3 Tsuboi 63; 4 Katsumasa Chiyo 34; 5 Makino 31; 6 Daiki Sasaki 29.

Yaco Audi wins a tyre lottery

ADAC GT MASTERS

ZANDVOORT (NL)
AUGUST 20-21
ROUND 6/7

PHILIP GEIPEL, RAHEL FREY AND YACO Racing were the collective stars of the second race at Zandvoort as the team made an inspired tyre call at the right moment in rainy conditions.

As a brief shower soaked the track before the pit window opened, 17th qualifier Frey was called in for rain tyres. She was up to second place before peeling in to hand over to Geipel, and he took over at the front after race leaders Luca Ludwig/Sebastian Asch (Zakspeed Mercedes) lost valuable seconds in a crowded pitlane. The Mercedes was jumped too by the Lamborghini of Norbert Siedler and Jaap van Lagen.

Saturday winners Kevin Estre and David Jahn retired after Estre elected to stay out on slicks

until the pit window and slid the Team75 Bernhard Porsche into the gravel. "I tried to give the Audi [Frey] enough room and just touched the grass," he said. The damage caused the car to terminally overheat at the pitstop, denying Jahn a race and costing him a shot of the title.

Fourth for Connor de Phillippi/Christopher Mies in race two gave the Audi pair the championship lead with the nearest opposition, Jules Gounon/Daniel Keilwitz (Callaway Corvette), fifth.

Despite late-race oversteer, Estre won on Saturday, scorching clear with Mies chasing in the Land Audi, while third went to Martin Ragginger/Robert Renauer (Porsche 911 GT3-R), who lost ground with a sluggish pitstop.

DAVID ADDISON

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Kevin Estre/David Jahn (Porsche 911 GT3-R) 34 laps in 1h03m12.573s; 2 Connor de Phillippi/Christopher Mies (Audi R8 LMS) +1.245s; 3 Robert Renauer/Martin Ragginger (Porsche); 4 Marvin Dienst/Christopher Zanella (Porsche); 5 Frederic Vervisch/Christopher Haase (Audi); 6 Fabian Hamprecht/Christor Jones (Bentley Continental GT3). **Race 2 1 Philip Geipel/Rahel Frey (Audi)** 32 laps in 1h01m58.902s; 2 Norbert Siedler/Jaap van Lagen (Lamborghini Huracan GT3) +1.510s; 3 Luca Ludwig/Sebastian Asch (Mercedes-AMG GT3); 4 de Phillippi/Mies; 5 Jules Gounon/Daniel Keilwitz (Chevrolet Corvette C7 GT3-R); 6 Renauer/Ragginger.
Points 1 de Phillippi/Mies 146; 2 Gounon/Keilwitz 144; 3 Jahn 116; 4 Ludwig/Asch 104; 5 Estre 100; 6 Ragginger/Renauer 98.



IN BRIEF

VLN

Uwe Alzen took the chequered flag at the Nurburgring Nordschleife to give the Haribo Racing team its first VLN win in six years. Sharing with Jan Seyffarth and Lance David Arnold, Alzen brought the Mercedes home victorious in a dramatic race to win by 12 seconds from the Walkenhorst BMW of Jorg Muller, who drove with Christian Krognegs and Victor Bouveng. The sister M6 of Jordan Tresson, Michele di Martino and Matias Henkola was third from the Falken Porsche of Peter Dumbreck and Alexandre Imperatori.

GERMAN FORMULA 4

Van Amersfoort Racing couldn't win the Masters of F3 on home ground at Zandvoort, but at least Joey Mawson gave the Dutch squad another win in the junior class. The Australian led home Mike David Ortman, with Mick Schumacher jumping Lirim Zendeli on a restart for third. Ortman beat Zendeli in race two for a Mucke Motorsport one-two, with Schumacher third again, as Mawson went out in a collision. Canadian Kami Laliberte (VAR) won a wet, red-flagged, half-points reversed-grid race.

TCR GERMANY

A last-lap pass on the Target Honda of series leader Josh Files gave Antti Buri victory in a thrilling first race at Zandvoort in his LMS Racing SEAT, as Hari Proczyk took third in another SEAT. Proczyk won a red-flagged, wet second race from Buri, with Files fifth.

SMP FORMULA 4

In-form Red Bull junior Richard Verschoor scored a triple win supporting the DTM at Moscow Raceway. The first victory came in the wet over Finn Tuomas Haapalainen. Sunday's races were dry, with Verschoor leading home a hectic scrap in which Rasmus Markkanen beat F4 returnee Nerses Isaakyan, only to lose the position due to a track-limits offence. Jarno Opmeer chased Verschoor home in the finale, and in the process lost his points lead to his fellow Dutchman.

ASIAN GT

An amazing finish to the first race at Shanghai gave the BBT Ferrari team victory. In the car started by Davide Rizzo, Anthony Liu entered the final lap third, but passed Alex Au (Phoenix Audi, started by Alex Yoong) for second, and then pipped the Absolute Bentley of Vutthikorn Intraphuvasak (who took over from Duncan Tappy) in a drag race to the line. Absolute won the second race, with Jonathan Venter hopping in for Keita Sawa and passing Tim Sugden early in his stint. Edoardo Liberati and Andrea Amici were second in their Lamborghinis from Tappy, as Sugden took a penalty.

TCR BENELUX

Matt Neal took a best of fifth on a one-off outing at Zolder in the Boutsen Ginion Honda, but it was Vincent Radermecker who won both races in Millo Racing's VW Golf. Pierre-Yves Corthals (Opel Astra) also scored two wins.

RESULTS

INDYCAR

ROUND 13/15 POCONO (USA) AUGUST 22 (200 LAPS – 500.000 MILES)

1	Will Power (AUS) <i>Team Penske</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	2h46m28.9856s
2	Mikhail Aleshin (RUS) <i>Schmidt Peterson Motorsports</i> • Dallara-Honda	+1.1459s
3	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA) <i>Andretti Autosport</i> • Dallara-Honda	+5.9076s
4	Josef Newgarden (USA) <i>Ed Carpenter Racing</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	+7.0750s
5	Sebastien Bourdais (F) <i>KVSH Racing</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	+7.5285s
6	Scott Dixon (NZ) <i>Chip Ganassi Racing</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	+7.8896s
7	Carlos Munoz (CO) <i>Andretti Autosport</i> • Dallara-Honda	+11.5938s
8	Juan Pablo Montoya (CO) <i>Team Penske</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	+13.4345s
9	Tony Kanaan (BR) <i>Chip Ganassi Racing</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	+13.7988s
10	James Hinchcliffe (CDN) <i>Schmidt Peterson Motorsports</i> • Dallara-Honda	+14.2235s
11	Graham Rahal (USA) <i>Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing</i> • Dallara-Honda	+14.3471s
12	Marco Andretti (USA) <i>Andretti Autosport</i> • Dallara-Honda	+16.3334s
13	Max Chilton (GB) <i>Chip Ganassi Racing</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	+17.1907s
14	Jack Hawksworth (GB) <i>AJ Foyt Enterprises</i> • Dallara-Honda	+18.5585s
15	Charlie Kimball (USA) <i>Chip Ganassi Racing</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
16	Conor Daly (USA) <i>Dale Coyne Racing</i> • Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
17	Pippa Mann (GB) <i>Dale Coyne Racing</i> • Dallara-Honda	-3 laps
18	Simon Pagenaud (F) <i>Team Penske</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	157 laps-accident
19	Helio Castroneves (BR) <i>Team Penske</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	63 laps-accident
20	Alexander Rossi (USA) <i>Andretti Herta Autosport</i> • Dallara-Honda	63 laps-accident
21	Ed Carpenter (USA) <i>Ed Carpenter Racing</i> • Dallara-Chevrolet	57 laps-engine
22	Takuma Sato (J) <i>AJ Foyt Enterprises</i> • Dallara-Honda	1 lap-accident

Winner's average speed 180.198mph. **Fastest lap** Power 41.1901s, 218.499mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Aleshin 220.145mph; **2 Newgarden 220.195mph**; **3 Sato 220.067mph**; **4 Castroneves 219.781mph**; **5 Munoz 219.647mph**; **6 Hinchcliffe 219.463mph**; **7 Rossi 219.326mph**; **8 Power 218.617mph**; **9 Kanaan 218.606mph**; **10 Carpenter 218.424mph**; **11 Rahal 218.204mph**; **12 Hawksworth 218.051mph**; **13 Andretti 218.012mph**; **14 Pagenaud 217.721mph**; **15 Montoya 217.284mph**; **16 Kimball 216.917mph**; **17 Chilton 216.689mph**; **18 Bourdais 216.263mph**; **19 Dixon 215.337mph**; **20 Daly 214.757mph**; **21 Mann 211.267mph**; **22 Hunter-Reay no time.**

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Pagenaud 497; **2 Power 477**; **3 Newgarden 397**; **4 Dixon 386**; **5 Castroneves 384**; **6 Kanaan 380**; **7 Munoz 354**; **8 Hinchcliffe 349**; **9 Rahal 343**; **10 Kimball 333.**



Aleshin took pole and was a long-time leader



Harvick leads at Bristol from Kurt Busch

Harvick gets there after long delays

NASCAR SPRINT CUP
BRISTOL (USA)
AUGUST 20-21
ROUND 23/36

THE SPRINT CUP'S SECOND VISIT OF THE SEASON TO the half-mile Tennessee bullring of Bristol was, as a race, fairly straightforward. But stoppages due to heavy downpours, amounting to nearly six hours over the weekend, made everything seem much harder to follow. And that's before the matter of the Chase grid is touched upon.

Kevin Harvick looked solid in claiming his second Sprint Cup win of the year in his Stewart Haas Chevrolet, but this owed much to the misfortune of the dominant Kyle Busch, punted into retirement by Justin Allgaier.

The Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota of Busch led over half of the 500 laps until a right-rear shock gave way midway through and he was collected by the unsighted HScott Motorsports driver. This left the way clear for 2014 champion Harvick to hold off Denny Hamlin at the final restart to net Stewart Haas's first win at Bristol.

Ricky Stenhouse Jr and Hamlin finished second and third respectively after they both fought back from two laps down for early pitlane speeding penalties. Austin Dillon was fourth despite a late challenge for the lead.

But it was shock Pocono victor Chris Buescher who really threw the standings into the air. Despite winning two weeks earlier, he had still to put himself inside the top 30 to be eligible for the Chase, but fifth at Bristol put him right into the mix.

That means that others such as Kyle Larson now face a serious fight to make the Chase — Larson got caught up in the Busch shunt and finished 24th. Likewise, rookie Ryan Blaney — not far adrift of the cutoff while Buescher was outside the Chase — now has major ground to make up after he retired in a 10-car shunt initiated by a loose Kurt Busch midway through.

The rain caused a lot of headaches last weekend but, as the final three rounds before the Chase cutoff approach, a little water may be the least of the drivers' worries.

RESULTS

1 Kevin Harvick (Chevrolet SS) 500 laps in 3h25m05s; **2 Ricky Stenhouse Jr (Ford Fusion)** +1.933s; **3 Denny Hamlin (Toyota Camry)**; **4 Austin Dillon (Chevy)**; **5 Chris Buescher (Ford)**; **6 Carl Edwards (Toyota)**; **7 Jimmie Johnson (Chevy)**; **8 Jamie McMurray (Chevy)**; **9 AJ Allmendinger (Chevy)**; **10 Joey Logano (Ford)**. **Chase grid 1 Brad Keselowski 4 wins/735 points**; **2 Kyle Busch 4/674**; **3 Harvick 2/762**; **4 Edwards 2/689**; **5 Hamlin 2/659**; **6 Johnson 2/612**; **7 Matt Kenseth 2/604**; **8 Kurt Busch 1/692**; **9 Logano 1/684**; **10 Martin Truex Jr 1/630**; **11 Tony Stewart 1/400**; **12 Buescher 1/328**; **13 Dillon 0/596**; **14 Chase Elliott 0/588**; **15 McMurray 0/583**; **16 Ryan Newman 0/576.**

ROUND - UP

MASTERS OF F3

ZANDVOORT (NL) AUGUST 20-21 (25 LAPS – 66.906 MILES)

1	Joel Eriksson (S)	Motopark · Dallara-Volkswagen F315	38m53.053s
2	Niko Kari (FIN)	Motopark · Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+0.838s
3	Sergio Sette Camara (BR)	Motopark · Dallara-Volkswagen F316	+5.816s
4	Callum Ilott (GB)	Van Amersfoort Racing · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+6.625s
5	Alexander Albon (T)	Hitech GP · Dallara-Mercedes F315	+7.256s
6	Pedro Piquet (BR)	Van Amersfoort Racing · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+9.135s
7	Anthoine Hubert (F)	Van Amersfoort Racing · Dallara-Mercedes F312	+9.523s
8	Alessio Lorandi (I)	Carlin · Dallara-Volkswagen F312	+17.195s
9	Sam MacLeod (GB)	Fortec Motorsports · Dallara-Mercedes F312	+18.375s
10	David Beckmann (D)	Mucke Motorsport · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+19.428s
11	Tom Randle (AUS)	Double R Racing · Dallara-Mercedes F312	+27.448s
12	Harrison Scott (GB)	Hitech GP · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+27.937s
13	Colton Herta (USA)	Carlin · Dallara-Volkswagen F312	+33.652s
14	Ricky Capo (AUS)	Fortec Motorsports · Dallara-Mercedes F312	+58.806s
15	Ameya Vaidyanathan (IND)	Carlin · Dallara-Volkswagen F312	+59.768s
16	Guan Yu Zhou (PRC)	Motopark · Dallara-Volkswagen F314	+1m02.857s

Winner's average speed 103.239mph. Fastest lap Zhou 1m31.709s, 105.055mph.

GRID Decided by result of qualification race.

QUALIFICATION RACE (12 LAPS – 32.115 MILES)

1 Eriksson 18m33.323s; 2 Ilott +1.461s; 3 Kari +2.251s; 4 Albon +5.793s; 5 Sette Camara +7.670s; 6 Piquet +9.792s; 7 Hubert +10.753s; 8 Lorandi +12.022s; 9 Beckmann +12.831s; 10 Zhou +13.223s; 11 Scott +19.112s; 12 Randle +25.262s; 13 Capo +31.617s; R MacLeod 8 laps-bent wishbone; R Vaidyanathan 2 laps-misfire; R Herta 2 laps-misfire.

Winner's average speed 103.845mph.

Fastest lap Eriksson 1m31.826s, 104.921mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Ilott 1m29.820s; 2 Eriksson 1m29.832s; 3 Albon 1m29.849s; 4 Kari 1m29.928s; 5 Zhou 1m30.045s; 6 Piquet 1m30.069s; 7 Sette Camara 1m30.098s; 8 Hubert 1m30.189s; 9 Lorandi 1m30.234s; 10 Beckmann 1m30.450s; 11 Scott 1m30.807s; 12 Herta 1m31.198s; 13 MacLeod 1m31.398s; 14 Capo 1m32.195s; 15 Randle 1m32.325s; 16 Vaidyanathan 1m32.408s.



Albon claimed fifth on his return to F3

DTM

ROUND 6/9, MOSCOW RACEWAY (RUS), AUGUST 20-21

RACE 1 (22 LAPS – 53.737 MILES)

1	Robert Wickens (CDN)	HWA · Mercedes C63	42m29.196s
2	Paul di Resta (GB)	HWA · Mercedes C63	+10.955s
3	Gary Paffett (GB)	ART Grand Prix · Mercedes C63	+12.293s
4	Maximilian Gotz (D)	HWA · Mercedes C63	+25.270s
5	Mattias Ekstrom (S)	Abt Sportsline · Audi RS5	+25.874s
6	Maxime Martin (B)	RBM · BMW M4	+27.243s
7	Jamie Green (GB)	Team Rosberg · Audi RS5	+27.752s
8	Edoardo Mortara (I)	Abt Sportsline · Audi RS5	+30.108s
9	Timo Scheider (D)	Team Phoenix · Audi RS5	+31.671s
10	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	ART Grand Prix · Mercedes C63	+32.848s
11	Timo Glock (D)	RMG · BMW M4	+35.243s
12	Adrien Tambay (F)	Team Rosberg · Audi RS5	+36.197s
13	Nico Muller (CH)	Abt Sportsline · Audi RS5	+38.287s
14	Augusto Farfus (BR)	MTEK · BMW M4	+42.822s
15	Bruno Spengler (CDN)	MTEK · BMW M4	+44.030s
16	Mike Rockenfeller (D)	Team Phoenix · Audi RS5	+44.781s
17	Miguel Molina (E)	Abt Sportsline · Audi RS5	+46.951s
18	Lucas Auer (A)	Mucke Motorsport · Mercedes C63	+49.944s
19	Marco Wittmann (D)	RMG · BMW M4	+50.288s
20	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Team Schnitzer · BMW M4	+51.313s
21	Martin Tomczyk (D)	Team Schnitzer · BMW M4	+59.926s
22	Tom Blomqvist (GB)	RBM · BMW M4	+1m02.697s
23	Christian Vietoris (D)	Mucke Motorsport · Mercedes C63	+1m07.259s
24	Daniel Juncadella (E)	HWA · Mercedes C63	+1m10.016s

Winner's average speed 75.888mph. Fastest lap Juncadella 1m48.220s, 81.254mph.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Paffett 1m41.443s; 2 Wickens 1m42.048s; 3 di Resta 1m42.130s; 4 Gotz

1m42.164s; 5 Ekstrom 1m42.450s; 6 Martin 1m42.506s; 7 Scheider 1m42.631s; 8 Glock 1m42.631s; 9 Rosenqvist 1m42.647s; 10 Green 1m42.870s; 11 Tambay 1m43.015s; 12 Mortara 1m43.024s; 13 Spengler 1m43.076s; 14 Farfus 1m43.140s; 15 da Costa 1m43.472s; 16 Molina 1m43.500s; 17 Muller 1m43.521s; 18 Auer 1m43.660s; 19 Tomczyk 1m43.830s; 20 Wittmann 1m43.856s; 21 Blomqvist 1m43.881s; 22 Juncadella 1m43.985s; 23 Rockenfeller 1m44.488s; 24 Vietoris 1m44.800s.

RACE 2 (40 LAPS – 97.704 MILES)

1 Wittmann 1h02m03.216s; 2 Blomqvist +4.123s; 3 Spengler +18.119s; 4 Farfus +24.650s; 5 Wickens +38.818s; 6 Mortara +38.885s; 7 Muller +39.158s; 8 Tambay +41.193s; 9 Ekstrom +41.223s; 10 Auer +42.138s; 11 Molina +42.245s; 12 Juncadella +42.562s; 13 Scheider +42.641s; 14 Vietoris +46.076s; 15 Rockenfeller +47.432s; 16 Gotz +48.338s; 17 Martin +51.310s; 18 Paffett +52.078s; 19 da Costa +55.563s; 20 Rosenqvist +57.979s; 21 Green +1m01.627s; 22 Tomczyk +1m04.773s; 23 di Resta +1m27.467s; 24 Glock 31 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 94.470mph. Fastest lap Muller 1m30.269s, 97.413mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Wittmann 1m28.776s; 2 Blomqvist 1m28.878s; 3 Wickens 1m29.180s; 4 Spengler

1m29.371s; 5 Juncadella 1m29.397s; 6 Farfus 1m29.411s; 7 Glock 1m29.522s; 8 Gotz 1m29.604s; 9 Auer 1m29.650s; 10 da Costa 1m29.759s; 11 di Resta 1m29.760s; 12 Muller 1m29.768s; 13 Rosenqvist 1m29.811s; 14 Ekstrom 1m29.812s; 15 Molina 1m29.815s; 16 Vietoris 1m29.935s; 17 Mortara 1m29.987s; 18 Tambay 1m30.057s; 19 Green 1m30.081s; 20 Rockenfeller 1m30.114s; 21 Paffett 1m30.122s; 22 Tomczyk 1m30.158s; 23 Scheider 1m30.424s; 24 Martin 1m29.027s*.

* Excluded from qualifying.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Wittmann 130; 2 Wickens 118; 3 Green 104; 4 Mortara 100; 5 di Resta 92; 6 Blomqvist 71; 7 Martin 71; 8 Ekstrom 70; 9 Muller 68; 10 Paffett 67.



Unadulterated joy for BMW's podium trio

XPB IMAGES



The Emperor strikes back

Sebastien Ogier hadn't won for six months, but he put that right in Germany after a battle with Andreas Mikkelsen

By David Evans, Rallies Editor

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Sebastien Ogier doesn't do losing. Which means the last six months of his life have been — professionally speaking — pretty tough to take. He's questioned his future in the sport, and some have questioned his motivation.

All of that was forgotten in Trier last Sunday when, for the first time since February, he was a winner again. But the weather and the Norwegian in the car next door didn't make it easy.

Day one: 61.49 miles; 5 stages

Lady luck thought about it for a moment, then threw a smile and a lifeline in Andreas Mikkelsen's direction. The Norwegian Volkswagen Polo came off the kerb and back to the road with both right-sided wheels badly scored, but still wrapped in inflated Michelin.

"I was lucky," said Mikkelsen at the end of the stage with a rueful grin. "The corner tightened, but because of the camber we'd already missed the apex. And we were in fifth gear. It made a terrible noise! The next corners were

really quick downhill and I kept thinking, 'Please, no puncture! I was sitting there waiting. But it didn't come. Lucky!'"

With luck on his side, Mikkelsen pushed it. Ogier had won the opener in commanding fashion, but overcooked it in a second-stage junction and was forced to reverse. He dropped the lead and would trail his VW team-mate at the end of the day, narrowing the gap with fastest times in stages four and five.

Mikkelsen's third-stage scratch was a beauty. And he knew it.

"Not bad for a Norwegian, eh," he said at the finish. Ogier was surprised to see his rival best him by 4.6s.

"He must have driven well," said Ogier thinly. "My car's OK, but I must be missing some speed."

Having waited a long time to enjoy the cleanest of roads at the front of the field, instead of sweeping loose surfaces for rivals as he has done in recent rallies, Ogier found his day wasn't exactly going to plan. Naturally, and quite correctly, he was slashing his way through corners trying to pull as much dirt and gravel into Mikkelsen's line as possible.

It did, however, stick in the throat a little bit when he heard folk behind him



Volkswagen signed off Jost Capito's reign with a victory

complaining about a dirty line.

"I don't have much to say about that," said the Frenchman dryly.

In all honesty, Ogier looked a little out of sorts through Friday. He wasn't the dominant force he had been on this rally 12 months ago and he admitted as much himself, conceding that his driving hadn't been perfect and that he'd kept a little in reserve. Mikkelsen sensed an opportunity and was bouncing when he arrived in Trier 4.3s up.

"I've gone as hard as I could," he said. "And it felt good."



By some distance, Friday was Mikkelsen's best day on asphalt. And being at the sharp end had carried him higher and further in the fight.

His engineer Richard Browne was full of admiration at what his driver had done on asphalt with changeable grip levels.

"Don't forget what Seb can do on asphalt," Browne said. "Remember his fightback when he won the title in Alsace? That was incredible. That's what he's capable of, so for Andreas to be where he is is very good."

And don't go thinking this was a Volkswagen walkover from the very start. It very much wasn't.

Granted, it wasn't exactly a marathon day at a shade over 60 miles, but still the top four were split by just 12.7s. Hyundai men Thierry Neuville and Dani Sordo were both firmly at the races. Had Neuville not spun in the morning and had a car that was a little calmer over the bumps, he could well have been P1 on an event he won in 2014.

Sordo was flat-out again for the first time since his vertebrae-fracturing pre-Finland testing shunt. A little slack for some missing confidence early on was the least he was entitled to.

Both teams were a man down early on after Jari-Matti Latvala's gearbox lunched itself after just a handful of miles, while Hayden Paddon's learning curve took a sharp incline. On only the Kiwi's second start in a World Rally Car in Germany, he looked intent on collecting more than the odd sample of grapes for his vineyard-owning co-driver John Kennard.

Ott Tanak drove fabulously to place his DMACK-shod Ford Fiesta RS WRC >>

JOST CAPITO

ON KRIS MEEKE, ROAD SWEEPING AND LEAVING THE WRC

WHAT AN INCREDIBLE WAY TO END MY TIME AT Volkswagen Motorsport: another win. Another home win. I'm so proud of what we've built and what we have achieved together since 2013.

There really wasn't a better way for me to sign-off last Sunday.

But, just before I leave the service park for the final time, I wanted to bring a little bit of clarity to some of my words regarding Kris Meeke's wins in Portugal and Finland this year.

Anybody who knows me knows how well Kris and I get on and always have done; nothing I said was aimed at him. Nothing I said was personal against Kris. What I said was aimed at a regulation [the championship leader running first on the road for two days] that I absolutely maintain is completely unfair.

I'm sure there will be some people out there who are reading this and thinking that I'm only interested in making sure a Volkswagen wins every time. You're wrong. Of course, I want my team to win – it's my job to make sure this happens, but what I want to see is a fair race.

I have absolutely no doubt Kris has the speed and ability to win against Seb [Ogier], Jari-Matti [Latvala], Andreas [Mikkelsen] or anybody else from the front of the field without the advantage of being in a better place on the road.

And I honestly believe when he wins this way, he will feel even better for it. What I don't understand is why the [WRC] promoter feels people don't want to see the best winning.

Tell me, what was the most watched race at the Rio Olympics for the past couple of weeks? Exactly, men's 100 metres. And now tell me, four years ago in London, did we know – if he was fit – who would win the 100m? Of course we did. We knew it would be [Usain] Bolt. This was one of the most predictable, one-sided races, but still the world watched in its millions and millions.

Doesn't this show that people still want to appreciate the best winning? And don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying Ogier will



Capito is moving to McLaren

win every time – he won't. But whoever does win on a level playing field can claim to be a true champion. How many people would have watched Bolt race if he'd been forced to run 110 metres? Or run on the grass? Or run in trainers?

Not many. People would have said that was stupid. Well, this is stupid.

That's it. Enough from me.

Now it's time for me to go. I have loved every second of my time in the World Rally Championship but now it's time for a new and very different challenge.

I might have my hands full with my new job at McLaren, but I will always keep an eye on what's going on in the WRC. Part of my heart will always be with this Volkswagen team and I wish them every success in the future.

More than that, I wish the World Rally Championship every success in the future.



ahead of the works cars. In the case of Eric Camilli, that wasn't hard. Despite his own pre-event predictions of this being his chance to shine, he went off on the first stage. Came back on. Then went off properly, barreling way too fast into a left that tightened over a crest.

The Frenchman was greeted by Malcolm Wilson's disappointed face when he got back to service.

END OF DAY ONE

1 Mikkelsen/Jaeger +59m42.6s; 2 Ogier/Ingrassia +4.3s; 3 Neuville/Gilsoul +5.9s; 4 Sordo/Marti +12.7s; 5 Tanak/Molder +55.4s; 6 Lefebvre/Moreau +1m06.6s

Day two: 95.32 miles; 9 stages

Panzerplatte. One word, 96 junctions, 25 miles. The hinkelstein-lined tank testing grounds of Baumholder were, once again, at the heart of this event. They were also at the heart of Ogier's battle plan.

The one thing nobody could plan for was the weather. Volkswagen's service area is usually a fairly high-spirited place, but this morning teams Mikkelsen and Ogier were locked down and talking to nobody. Certainly not each other.

As he emerged to get in the car, Ogier smiled. "We share everything in the team," he said, "all the data and everything for the set-up. But not this. The tyres we keep for ourselves."

A mid-morning tyre zone complicated the matter further, offering yet more choice and another opportunity to get it wrong. Or right.

Ogier got it wrong, but made it right.

He went with a mixture of hard and soft, but when the rain came Mikkelsen's four soft covers helped him add another 1.5s to his lead in the first of two stages through the Saarland countryside. The leader should have had more time on the next one, but outbraked himself into a junction, locked up, slid into a bank, and was lucky not to suffer any damage to the cooling apparatus at the front of the car.

The lead was down to two-tenths of a second. After the first run at the mile-and-a-bit Panzerplatte crowd-pleaser, Ogier turned a 0.2s deficit into a 0.2s lead. Then lost it on the rerun. Mikkelsen arrived at the start line of

the 25-miler three tenths up. Typically, Volkswagen's Jost Capito was loving the intensity of the battle in what would be his last WRC round with Volkswagen (he moves to McLaren next week).

"I just spoke to Andreas," said Capito. "I told him, 'Now you hold position!'"

Determined not to be overshadowed, the weather stepped in and played a part in the long stage. All indications were that if rain were coming, it would arrive later in the morning. The two VWs took to the stage with a combination of hard and soft. The rain didn't show and the softs were ragged on the abrasive surface.

"I got it wrong again!" said Ogier.

With no split times and no benchmark, Ogier wasn't sure what to expect. There was, however, a self-confidence there. As with any world champion, Ogier rarely doubts his own ability; this was Baumholder and the key here would be tyre preservation.

Ogier would be OK. He was more than that. He was his usual sure-footed, sublime self. Nobody could get within 10s of him. Mikkelsen dropped 13s and the fight was fought.

"In Panzerplatte, there's no secret," said Ogier. "You have to be able to manage the tyre and to do this, you need three things. You need to be soft with the brakes, soft with the throttle and soft with the steering wheel, those are the three points that help you control and influence the tyre wear."

But how do you do that?

"This one, I keep for myself, I need some secret," said Ogier. "But I can tell you, it's not easy to do these three things softly and still be fast."

Watching Ogier's approach to one of the tighter junctions in the stage offered an insight. The #1 Polo's nose dipped at least as late as any other and once the anchors were on, the car stayed arrow-straight and completely balanced. There wasn't a whiff of tyre smoke and not a hint of a snatched brake. A trace of mid-corner understeer was dealt with on the throttle and once the loud pedal was pressed it just got louder.

Panache delivered where it was needed most, Ogier faced another challenge further into the stage with a couple more



After putting in some of his best ever performances on asphalt, Mikkelsen then slid down the table on the last day

gears and a stack more speed onboard: a fast left-right sequence that demands an ability for high-speed hustling.

He delivered there too. Ogier chopped his Polo across the corner, with absolute belief and total confidence in the car beneath him. Knowing exactly when to deploy those two very different styles is as much a part of the battle. Ogier knew exactly when.

As the itinerary returned for the second loop of the long one, 20s split the top two. Mikkelsen had to gamble and the weather gave him a seat at the table. It had rained, but it was drying. The question was how much it would dry.

Mikkelsen went with hard tyres, Ogier soft. A 10-minute delay at the start of the stage looked to be playing into Andreas's hands. The clouds were parting, the late sun returning. Certainly meteorological confidence in the Norwegian-piloted car was higher than in the French one.

Panzerplatte's not all about the myriad grip changes – you have to drive this place to understand just how many surfaces come under the asphalt umbrella. There are long stretches under the trees in the forested area. The sun wasn't shining there and Ogier gratefully used the damp surface to cool his covers.

Fastest again. Nothing was going to stop him now.

The Panzerplatte stage was stopped, however, following Stéphane Lefebvre's big crash in SS10. Lefebvre and co-driver Gabin Moreau were both hospitalised after the incident.

END OF DAY TWO

1 Ogier/Ingrassia 2h25m10.5s; 2 Mikkelsen/Jaeger +33.4s; 3 Sordo/Marti +37.0s; 4 Neuville/Gilsoul +37.4s; 5 Paddon/Kennard +3m33.9s; 6 Ostberg/Floene +4m06.4s

Day three: 36.82 miles; 4 stages

With Ogier half a minute up the road, the final-day focus switched to the fight to



Day three was profitable for Hyundai

ALL PICS: MCKLEIN/DE



be best of the rest. Mikkelsen started the day with 3.6s on Sordo and a further four tenths on Neuville.

It didn't last. The Polo's brakes started to overheat in the first run through Dhrontal, and that, combined with a superb charge from Sordo, eased the Spaniard into second. Mikkelsen's misery was complete on the second stage of the loop when Neuville went quickest and also elbowed his way by to take a 1.4s advantage into the second run. In a little over 24 hours, Mikkelsen had gone from being an absolute hero to fourth – a result that offered little return on what had been one of his fastest and most focused ever outings on asphalt.

"It was the tyres yesterday," he said, disconsolately. "OK, I'm not saying we could have beaten Seb, but every time we were making the decision absolutely at the last moment and maybe we didn't get it right enough."

Unsurprisingly, such a compelling fight pulled more people into the stages and overcrowding in the penultimate test forced the organisers to cancel it.

And so to the powerstage...

But first, to Hyundai to ask what team boss Michel Nandan had told his drivers.

"What can I tell them?" he said. "They are 2.7s apart fighting for second place. What can I tell them? Nothing."

As the Korean camp crossed its fingers, Neuville put the hammer down. And drove magnificently, winning the three-pointer, but missing second by a tenth of a second.

"I couldn't believe it," he said at the finish. "But OK, for us as a team this has been quite a good event. Without some mistakes, without powersteering trouble or me going into the field twice yesterday, maybe it could have been better..."

It couldn't be better at the front. For the first time since Rally Sweden in February, Ogier stood on the roof of his Polo. The victor. 🌟



Ostberg finished highest of the Fords

RESULTS ROUND 9/13, RALLY GERMANY (D), AUGUST 19-21

POS	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Sebastien Ogier (F)	Julien Ingrassia (F)	Volkswagen Motorsport · Volkswagen Polo R WRC	3h00m26.7s
2	Dani Sordo (E)	Marc Marti (E)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 WRC	+20.3s
3	Thierry Neuville (B)	Nicolas Gilsoul (B)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 WRC	+20.4s
4	Andreas Mikkelsen (N)	Anders Jager (N)	Volkswagen Motorsport II · Volkswagen Polo R WRC	+27.2s
5	Hayden Paddon (NZ)	John Kennard (NZ)	Hyundai Motorsport N · Hyundai i20 WRC	+3m34.8s
6	Mads Ostberg (N)	Ola Floene (N)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+4m31.2s
7	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)	Janne Ferm (FIN)	Skoda Motorsport · Skoda Fabia R5	+8m36.8s
8	Pontus Tidemand (S)	Jonas Andersson (S)	Skoda Motorsport II · Skoda Fabia R5	+8m52.5s
9	Jan Kopecky (CZ)	Pavel Dresler (CZ)	Skoda Motorsport · Skoda Fabia R5	+9m44.2s
10	Armin Kremer (D)	Pirmin Winklhofer (D)	BRR Baumschlagery Rallye & Racing Team · Skoda Fabia R5	+10m10.6s
OTHERS				
23	Ott Tanak (EST)	Raigo Molder (EST)	DMACK World Rally Team · Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+23m13.4s
48	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)	Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Volkswagen Motorsport · Volkswagen Polo R WRC	+36m33.3s
50	Eric Camilli (F)	Benjamin Veillas (F)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+38m30.0s
R	Stephane Lefebvre (F)	Gabin Moreau (F)	Abu Dhabi WRT · Citroen DS3 WRC	SS10-crash

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ogier 169; 2 Mikkelsen 110; 3 Paddon 94; 4 Neuville 94; 5 Latvala 89; 6 Sordo 86; 7 Ostberg 78; 8 Tanak 52; 9 Meeke 51; 10 Breen 25.

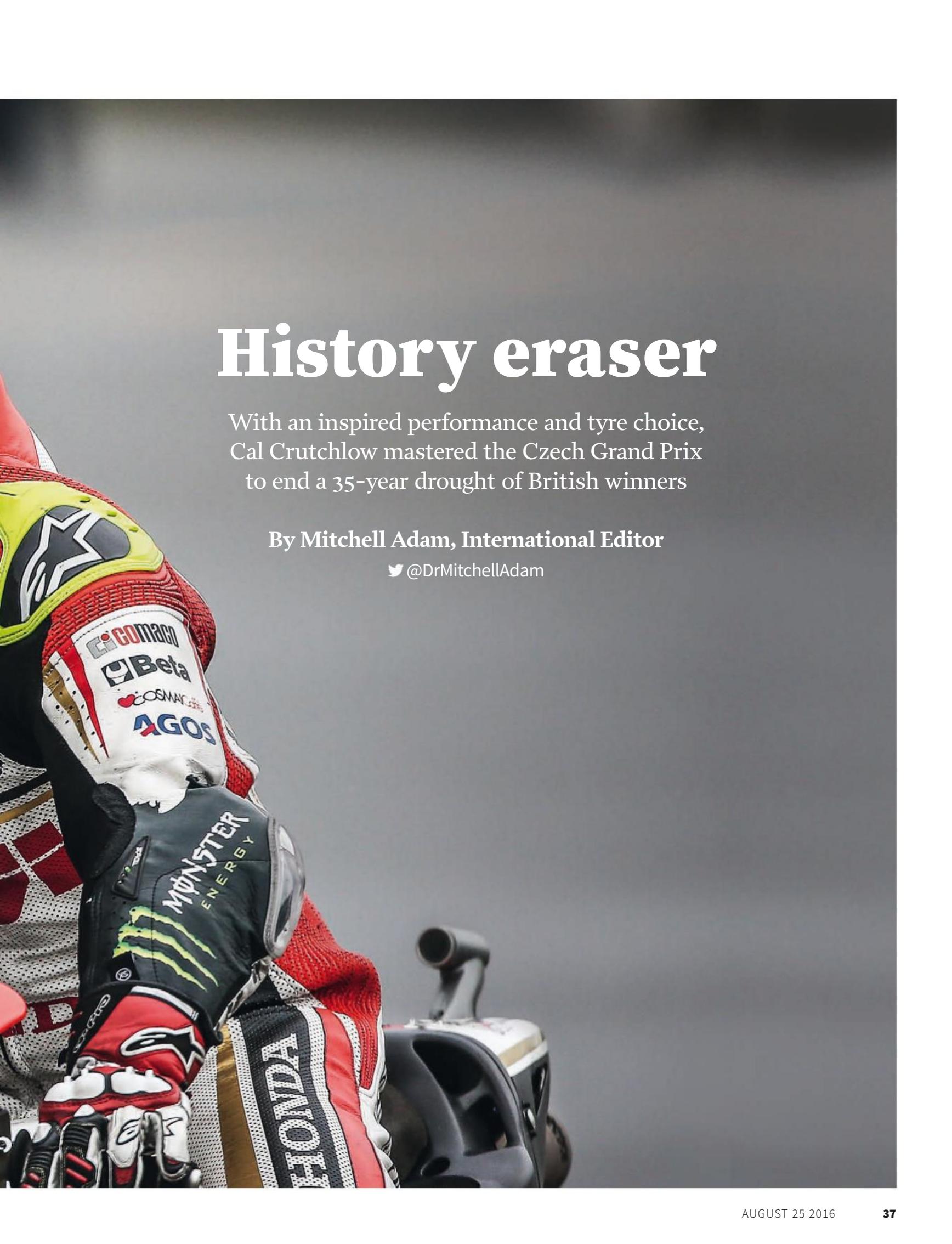
MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Volkswagen Motorsport 265; 2 Hyundai Motorsport 217; 3 M-Sport WRT 130; 4 Hyundai Motorsport N 96; 5 Volkswagen Motorsport II 96; 6 DMACK World Rally Team 46.

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Mittelmosel 1 (13.67 miles)	Ogier 13m04.8s	Ogier	Mikkelsen +1.9s
SS2 Moselland 1 (14.53 miles)	Neuville 14m32.7s	Mikkelsen	Neuville +2.7s
SS3 Mittelmosel 2 (13.67 miles)	Mikkelsen 12m57.6s	Mikkelsen	Neuville +5.2s
SS4 Moselland 2 (14.53 miles)	Ogier 14m17.3s	Mikkelsen	Neuville +2.9s
SS5 SSS Ollmuth (5.10 miles)	Ogier 4m40.3s	Mikkelsen	Ogier +4.3s
SS6 Freisen-Westrich 1 (9.15 miles)	Mikkelsen 9m02.3s	Mikkelsen	Ogier +5.8s
SS7 Bosenberg 1 (8.98 miles)	Ogier 7m42.6s	Mikkelsen	Ogier +0.2s
SS8 SSS Arena Panzerplatte 1 (1.78 miles)	Lefebvre 1m48.2s	Ogier	Mikkelsen +0.2s
SS9 SSS Arena Panzerplatte 2 (1.78 miles)	Latvala 1m46.4s	Mikkelsen	Ogier +0.3s
SS10 Panzerplatte Lang 1 (25.35 miles)	Ogier 23m09.8s	Ogier	Mikkelsen +13.2s
SS11 Freisen-Westrich 2 (9.15 miles)	Ogier 9m01.1s	Ogier	Mikkelsen +19.9s
SS12 Bosenberg 2 (8.98 miles)	Neuville 7m42.9s	Ogier	Mikkelsen +19.8s
SS13 SSS Arena Panzerplatte 3 (1.78 miles)	Neuville 1m48.0s	Ogier	Mikkelsen +20.3s
SS14 Panzerplatte Lang 2 (25.35 miles)	Ogier 23m14.0s	Ogier	Mikkelsen +33.4s
SS15 Dhrontal 1 (9.19 miles)	Sordo 9m27.6s	Ogier	Sordo +22.1s
SS16 Sauertal 1 (9.22 miles)	Neuville 7m57.5s	Ogier	Sordo +20.3s
SS17 Dhrontal 2 (9.19 miles)	Cancelled (overcrowding)		
SS18 Sauertal 2 (powerstage) (9.22 miles)	Neuville 7m54.9s	Ogier	Sordo +20.3s





History eraser

With an inspired performance and tyre choice, Cal Crutchlow mastered the Czech Grand Prix to end a 35-year drought of British winners

By Mitchell Adam, International Editor

[@DrMitchellAdam](#)



If Ducati thought its run of nearly six years between tasting success in MotoGP was a long time, it should probably spare a thought for British fans. Not since Barry Sheene won his final grand prix at Anderstorp on August 16 1981 had a British rider won a premier-class race.

Of the riders on the grid in the 2016 Czech GP when that 35-year drought ended, only Valentino Rossi had been born, and even he was only an infant. But just seven days after Andrea Iannone ended Ducati's winless run, Cal Crutchlow secured his own slice of history.

Either side of Italian Giacomo Agostini's record-breaking career, Britain dominated the first three decades of the world championship, winning 500cc crowns with the likes of Geoff Duke, John Surtees, Mike Hailwood, Phil Read and then Sheene. By the end of Sheene's career, Americans had emerged as the riders to beat, followed by eras of success for Australians, Italians – Rossi, specifically – and lately Spaniards.

Of course, Britons remained on the grid throughout and Crutchlow has recorded podiums, most recently with

second at the Sachsenring in July, a race he might have won with an earlier bike swap. Countrymen Bradley Smith and Scott Redding have also visited the rostrum in the last 12 months. Crutchlow entered MotoGP from World Superbikes, but Smith and Redding followed the traditional grand prix path, up through 125cc (before it was replaced by Moto3) and Moto2, winning races along the way. And the reigning Moto3 champion is another British rider, Danny Kent.

But a win in 500cc and then MotoGP proved elusive for 532 grands prix, until the rider sporting #35 made it stick by mastering Brno's changeable conditions.

Crutchlow has endured a challenging campaign with the LCR Honda squad. Honda has struggled with the shift to this year's new control electronics – its engine was already considered difficult to tame, and a 2016 overhaul has not helped.

So, to counter an acceleration deficit, its riders are having to genuinely attack braking areas. And while Marc Marquez is, somehow, able to pull that off on a regular enough basis to lead the championship and rack up a catalogue of miraculous saves (find his Friday effort at Brno online), life is significantly harder for the other Honda riders.

Crutchlow and LCR Honda celebrate win – the third new winner in four races

In Crutchlow's case, that translated to crashing out of four of the first five races of the year, along with his share of offs in practice and qualifying sessions. One of those, on Saturday at Brno's Turn 11 in fourth practice, summed up the situation.

"It's the same old story, it's not an easy ride," he said. "We are pushing the front because we have no rear grip, we have no speed. So I braked a little later than normal and crashed. Yesterday, Marc was braking 30 metres later than me, so maybe I braked two metres later and crashed."

The engine from that original bike, which actually vaulted the catch fencing, is the only element that was not "completely destroyed", and LCR faced a long overnight rebuild to ensure Crutchlow had two Hondas at his disposal again on Sunday morning.

They finished at around midnight and dawn broke to rain. And lots of it, as that great leveller appeared again for the third time in four summer MotoGP races. In the two previous occasions, at Assen and the Sachsenring, Crutchlow was seriously quick. He is a member of a small group – Redding is another – that always is in wet or drying conditions, negating some of the bike's shortcomings.

The morning warm-up was run amid



SOFT ISSUES HIT HARD

FOR MUCH OF THE 22 LAPS, A SECOND DUCATI MotoGP victory in as many weeks was on the cards. While Marc Marquez led the first lap, Andrea Dovizioso and then factory partner Andrea Iannone took control. Iannone led 12 laps and, even when Cal Crutchlow was charging from the midfield to the lead pack, another rain shower could still have stymied his day.

But Crutchlow's progress was not the most significant warning Ducati received in the first half of proceedings. Running third behind Iannone and between Ducati satellite pair Scott Redding and Hector Barbera, Dovizioso headed wide at the first corner and slowed on lap 10. He trundled back to pitlane to change bikes, and word emerged of a piece missing from the front of his soft front tyre, which had started to "deteriorate in an abnormal way".

"I was the first rider that had the problem but there were also other riders who had the problem," he said. "When you lose a piece of the tyre it is dangerous."

The Italian returned to the track on intermediates, but the track was not dry enough, and he later parked up for the day. But similar issues then hit Iannone, Redding and Yamaha's Jorge Lorenzo in the final third of the race.

Lorenzo, like team-mate Valentino Rossi, was on the harder rear tyre and had started to make progress after a slow start. But he pitted from 10th, and there was confusion in pitlane about the Spaniard's request to change bikes. Part of that was due to Rossi's progress, the other due to where the front wheel of Lorenzo's M1 ceased

rotating when he stopped, with the "torn up" part of the tyre on the asphalt and not visible to his crew. He went out on slicks for a single lap, then returned to get back on his original bike but, with a new wet front tyre fitted, finished the day a lapped 17th.

"We can have degradation, especially on the sides, but that pieces go out of the tyre, it shouldn't happen," Lorenzo said.

A struggling Iannone fell from third over the last three laps to finish eighth, while Redding fared even worse, dropping to 15th after experiencing a similar moment to his slick rear-tyre blowout in Argentina in April, a moment that prompted stiffer constructions from Michelin.

"I came out of Turn 1, I shifted third, fourth, fifth and all of a sudden it was like Argentina when the tyre let go," he said.

"Then every time I went on the gas I had loads of vibration. First it was juddering, then it was into a full tankslapper and I couldn't understand if it was the rear. I looked back and it all seemed all right and so then I tried again and as soon as I opened the gas it shook to pieces, I looked at the front and I could see a gap in the tyre.

"It was basically big chunks. First the centre piece came out and then big chunks of tyre also came out, which led to the tyre being out of balance and it cost me the race."

Amid the mayhem, Loris Baz – the only rider other than Crutchlow on two hard tyres – cashed in to rise to finish in fourth place ahead of Avintia Ducati team-mate Barbera, Eugene Laverty and Danilo Petrucci.

heavy rain, but by race time in the afternoon it hadn't rained for the best part of an hour. Wets were still the only option, but the track itself was much drier, and there was the prospect that 20 MotoGP bikes barrelling around Brno would help it dry enough for riders to consider stopping to change bikes for intermediates or slicks.

That fuelled uncertainty on the grid, and most riders set off on the soft-front and rear-wet tyres. But Crutchlow had decided on the grid to run the harder compound at both ends of his bike, and only eventual fourth-place finisher Loris Baz did the same. Yamaha pair Rossi and Jorge Lorenzo went for the middle ground of throwing on the harder rear.

The upside was that the harder tyres would be better for longer into the race as the water on the track surface reduced, the downside being that getting heat into them and therefore grip out of them would be more of a challenge early on. That was reflected on lap one. Lorenzo fell from second to 10th; Rossi from sixth to 12th; Crutchlow from 10th to 15th.

Of that trio, Lorenzo continued to fall, in line with his recent struggles on Michelin's wets, Rossi stabilised, but Crutchlow was first to find his feet. >>



Crutchlow (l) gambled on two hard tyres in the drying conditions

On lap five Crutchlow was 13th, and 11 seconds behind Iannone, who led fellow Ducati riders Redding and Andrea Dovizioso at the front. That group was pulling away effortlessly on the soft tyres. But by lap 16, Crutchlow was in the lead.

“The first five laps, I was a bit like, ‘This is ridiculous, we’ve made the wrong choice,’” Crutchlow said. “But I think Valentino was feeling the same and I knew if I could stay with him that I would have a chance.

“It was really difficult, not with the front, but the rear tyre on the left-hand side was really difficult to heat, but then once it started to dry it was perfect.”

Crutchlow cut through the field with ease, lapping the best part of two seconds faster than Iannone at times, even as he passed three riders on lap eight and another three on lap 10. That was aided to a point by Dovizioso becoming the first to hit trouble with the soft front tyre, which started to shed pieces. The same problem would affect more riders by the time the race was done. Many had banked on the track drying sufficiently for a bike swap, with another – mostly slick-shod – grid’s worth of machinery lined up in pitlane, but that crossover point never quite arrived.

Without the soft-tyre headaches of those he later called “wimps”, Crutchlow caught and then passed riders in the lead pack and, after spending a couple of laps waiting for the right moment to get Iannone, he pounced with seven to go. By the end of the lap he was 1.5 seconds clear, then 4.8s as Iannone’s front tyre fell apart. From there, the race was Crutchlow’s and he made sure of it.

“It’s been a long, long time coming,” he said. “I’ve been close in a couple of races.

“Sure, we won a tricky race but I made the best tyre choice on the grid. I was playing with them. I had so much grip compared to the other guys who did not have the same tyre choice as me.

“I felt Sachsenring three years ago was



a missed opportunity [to win], because I never passed Valentino early enough and I was catching Marc quite a lot in that race. This year’s Sachsenring was the same because I should have pitted two laps earlier, but you can’t make excuses.

“Today we had no excuses and we won – they will all have excuses because they chose the wrong tyre.”

Crutchlow did admit to scaring himself four laps from home, when he was pushing, fearing a late challenge from Rossi, but he kept it upright and in the end the Rossi worry was also a false alarm – seven seconds was Crutchlow’s final winning margin.

“I looked on the big screen and I thought I saw Valentino and I said, ‘OK, I have to go now, because I’m in trouble,’” he said.

“I didn’t know if Vale had the hard front tyre, so I started to push a little and then I saw the gap going up. It was 1.5s,

Iannone, Marquez and Lorenzo led away at the start but would soon drop back

and then a few laps later it was four seconds. But with four laps to go I nearly crashed. Then I just thought, ‘Now calm down,’ but I was just cruising around.”

All of a sudden, MotoGP has three new race winners in a single season, the first time that has happened since 2006, while LCR’s first victory in its 10th campaign means two satellite teams have won races this year, following Jack Miller’s Assen win for Marc VDS Honda.

A month ago, winning his maiden MotoGP race probably would’ve gone straight to the top of Crutchlow’s list of memories. But he became a father for the first time in early August, so breaking the Sheene drought will have to settle for being “the best day of my racing career”. And next up is his home event, the British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

“Carmelo [Ezpeleta, CEO of MotoGP promoter Dorna] reminded me that it was 35 years since Barry Sheene won a grand prix – and even to be mentioned in the same sentence as Barry Sheene is something really nice.

“And I said it’s perfect timing for the crowd for Silverstone. I should be having a commission of the gate money, I reckon!”

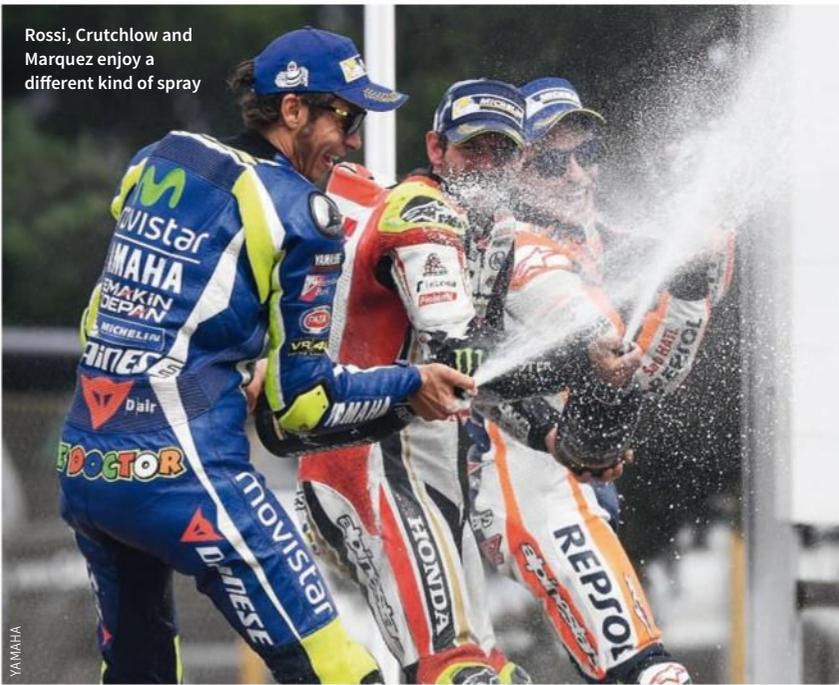
Behind Rossi in second, Marquez did as Marquez has been doing in 2016 and was the best of the riders on soft tyres to complete the podium. Lorenzo and the Ducatis were hit hard by front-tyre issues late on (see panel, page 39) and the reigning world champion finished a lapped 17th.

With that, Marquez extended his championship lead to a season-high 53, with Rossi now his closest challenger and Lorenzo 59 behind. Crutchlow defined his breakthrough day as a “tricky race”. In MotoGP’s three tricky races in the past two months, Marquez has scored 61 points compared to Rossi’s 28 and Lorenzo’s seven. Marquez, it seems, is on his way to a third title. ❄



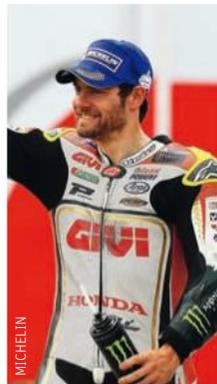
Rossi (l) and Lorenzo experienced different races thanks to tyres

Rossi, Crutchlow and Marquez enjoy a different kind of spray



RESULTS ROUND 11/18, CZECH GP, BRNO, AUGUST 21, 22 LAPS – 73.860 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Cal Crutchlow (GB)	LCR Honda	47m44.290s
2	Valentino Rossi (I)	Yamaha	+7.298s
3	Marc Marquez (E)	Honda	+9.587s
4	Loris Baz (F)	Avintia Ducati	+12.558s
5	Hector Barbera (E)	Avintia Ducati	+13.093s
6	Eugene Laverty (IRL)	Pull & Bear Aspar Team	+13.812s
7	Daniilo Petrucci (I)	Pramac Ducati	+23.414s
8	Andrea Iannone (I)	Ducati	+24.562s
9	Maverick Vinales (E)	Suzuki	+24.581s
10	Tito Rabat (E)	Marc VDS Honda	+37.131s
11	Yonny Hernandez (CO)	Pull & Bear Aspar Team	+39.911s
12	Dani Pedrosa (E)	Honda	+41.097s
13	Pol Espargaro (E)	Tech3 Yamaha	+43.202s
14	Stefan Bradl (D)	Aprilia	+45.687s
15	Scott Redding (GB)	Pramac Ducati	+1m02.201s
16	Alvaro Bautista (E)	Aprilia	+1m18.841s
17	Jorge Lorenzo (E)	Yamaha	-1 lap
R	Andrea Dovizioso (I)	Ducati	15 laps-tyres
R	Bradley Smith (GB)	Tech3 Yamaha	14 laps-technical issue
R	Aleix Espargaro (E)	Suzuki	13 laps-engine



Winner's average speed 92.831mph. **Fastest lap** Crutchlow 2m08.216s, 94.264mph.

Qualifying 2 1 Marquez 1m54.596s; 2 Lorenzo 1m54.849s; 3 Iannone 1m55.227s; 4 A Espargaro 1m55.324s; 5 Barbera 1m55.437s; 6 Rossi 1m55.509s; 7 Dovizioso 1m55.748s; 8 Vinales 1m55.787s; 9 Pedrosa 1m55.841s; 10 Crutchlow 1m55.930s; 11 Smith 1m56.115s; 12 P Espargaro 1m56.522s.

Qualifying 1 1 Pedrosa 1m55.793s; 2 Smith 1m55.857s; 3 Petrucci 1m56.148s; 4 Redding 1m56.263s; 5 Laverty 1m56.535s; 6 Bradl 1m56.718s; 7 Baz 1m56.797s; 8 Hernandez 1m56.805s; 9 Bautista 1m57.062s; 10 Rabat 1m57.606s.

Riders' Championship 1 Marquez 197; 2 Rossi 144; 3 Lorenzo 138; 4 Pedrosa 109; 5 Vinales 100; 6 Iannone 96; 7 P Espargaro 81; 8 Dovizioso 79; 9 Barbera 76; 10 Crutchlow 66; 11 Laverty 63; 12 Redding 54; 13 A Espargaro 51; 14 Miller 42; 15 Smith 42; 16 Bradl 39; 17 Petrucci 38; 18 Bautista 35; 19 Rabat 26; 20 Baz 24; 21 Pirro 23; 22 Hernandez 8.

Manufacturers' Championship 1 Yamaha 222; 2 Honda 221; 3 Ducati 162; 4 Suzuki 106; 5 Aprilia 53.



McPHEE SPLASHES TO BREAKTHROUGH

SUNDAY AT BRNO STARTED WITH MOTO3 AND A maiden grand prix victory for John McPhee, who became the first Scottish rider to win since Bob McIntyre claimed a 250cc victory at Spa in 1962. In the day's most rain-affected race, McPhee joined a lead group of four from ninth on the grid, then broke clear with championship leader Brad Binder.

Binder edged away to lead McPhee by two seconds, but the 22-year-old clawed back some ground before Binder crashed his KTM at the first corner with five laps to go. McPhee nearly lost it all with a wild moment two laps later, but brought his Peugeot-badged Mahindra home to win, his previous best result in 71 starts having been second at Indianapolis last year.

"I feel really bad for Brad because he was riding really well and if he hadn't crashed he would have had the win for sure today," McPhee acknowledged.

"Then there was pressure, because all of a sudden you've got a chance to win your first GP and I was just waiting – I wanted the laps to come down. The last few laps I was smiling in my helmet but trying to keep focused and concentrated.

"It's unbelievable, I've been dreaming of this for years and finally it's come true – I couldn't be any happier."

McPhee has had a tough season on the Mahindra, which lacks horsepower, but victory moves him up to 15th in the points. Even with his first DNF of 2016, Binder still leads Jorge Navarro – who finished 10th – by 61 points in the title fight.

Moto2 is now closer, following Johann Zarco's lowly 11th-place finish. Jonas Folger, Zarco's 2017 MotoGP team-mate with Tech3 Yamaha, won his first race in more than a year, while Alex Rins and Brit Sam Lowes finished second and third to move back to within 19 and 44 points of the reigning champion.



McPhee took his maiden win

FEEDBACK

Spec formula is key to decent racing in F1

Respect to Ben Anderson for finally grasping the nettle by introducing the no-no thought of all thoughts – that F1 should maybe become a spec formula in order to reintroduce some decent racing (August 18).

It's bound to earn Anderson some hefty brickbats in the F1 paddock in which he operates, so it was a brave move. But surely few can argue with the ultimate logic, especially as the vast majority of fans follow drivers rather than their cars or – way down the list – technology.

It's all very well for those who live in the F1 bubble to stubbornly argue that it must always be at the cutting edge of technology. But most fans simply don't see it this way.

Which is the most exciting and unpredictable series this year – F1 or GP2? No contest. Imagine, then, it was being fought out by Hamilton, Vettel and Alonso. Ooya!

Chris Hockley

Walton on Thames, Surrey

Innovation is at the heart of F1

I must disagree with Ben Anderson regarding a 'spec' or single-make future for F1. The heart of F1 has always been

the spirit of innovation. It seems to be the current thinking to lay blame at the engine manufacturers' doors, and Mercedes in particular, for the apparent lack of competition, but I believe this to be totally wrong.

F1 has always relied on manufacturers to periodically re-energise the sport, from Mercedes in 1954, Ford in '68, Renault in '79, Honda in '88 and so on, and each time it took others a while to catch up. But you cannot criticise the successful outfits for their success – it's what they're there to do.

The roots of F1's problems are in the self-interests at play: the hiving off of the commercial rights to money men, and the inability of some participants to subsume their short-term interests in favour of the greater good of the sport.

F1 doesn't need 'spec' cars, weight penalties, or even DRS to improve the show. If the problem is a lack of overtaking, remove the source of the problem. Front wings don't work when following another car through a corner, which means you can't overtake down the straight. So lose them!

Why have the vested interests refused to consider this? Could it be because they might lose revenue from the ads on the



Does one-make racing represent a viable future for Formula 1?

wings and endplates? Better that than the essence of the sport, surely.

Phil Oakes
Portishead

Don't forget Michele Mouton

Much as I enjoyed David Evans's recollection of the great days of Group B rallying (August 18), it would have been more accurate if he had dispensed with the overly masculine characterisation of the drivers of the time – "out of these cars came real men", etc – for nowhere does he mention Michele Mouton, who won Rallye Sanremo in 1981 and drove to three more overall wins for the Audi works team the following year.

She did not become a works driver in the dominant team of the period to fulfil some PC quota. Ms Mouton was one hotshoe and able to handle these brutally fast cars as well as any 'real man', as her rallying record proves, to say nothing of her record-breaking win at Pikes Peak in 1985 or her fine class win at Le Mans in '75.

David D Hebb
Islington

Give it a rest, Plato

After hearing Jason Plato moaning again about the world and its brother plotting against him and his Subaru, it's a good job his Levorg is an estate, which is only just big enough for both him and his ego!

No driver is bigger than the series, and isn't it odd that his team-mate is just getting on with it, without the moaning? Drivers come and go in the BTCC and Plato has been one of the best, but give the moaning a rest.

Mark Roberts
Ely, Cambridgeshire

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Driver rivalry

The emerging battle between Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen could turn out to define the 2017 season

By Lawrence Barretto, F1 Reporter

[@lawrobarretto](#)

THE EXPLOSIVE RIVALRY BETWEEN LEWIS HAMILTON and Nico Rosberg has been the Formula 1 talking point this year, but only just behind them a different intra-team rivalry has been developing and is set to take centre stage.

If Red Bull's driver line-up of Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo isn't currently the best on the grid, it isn't far off.

In Verstappen, Red Bull has the youngest winner in F1 history, who scored in his first race with the team no less, and has been the squad's top-scoring driver since he was promoted from Toro Rosso and handed a new long-term contract.

Ricciardo has proven himself to be one of the fastest and most consistent drivers on the grid. He outperformed his more decorated team-mate Sebastian Vettel in his first season and has since been outstanding in his role as team leader.

Both drivers have the potential to be world champion. But as has been shown at Mercedes and the Ayrton Senna/Alain Prost McLaren era, it isn't easy to keep two title contenders happy.

Should Red Bull respond well to the 2017 regulation changes, as you would expect, boss Christian Horner will have his hands full trying to manage the duo.

Verstappen asserted his authority when he took a maiden grand prix win on his first race weekend with Red Bull. It was a double blow for Ricciardo, who could and should have won that race had he not been put on an inferior strategy. Ricciardo's misery continued as he lost another win in Monaco and his form took a dip. Verstappen outperformed him in three of the next four races.

Ricciardo's head dropped. Verstappen was giving him more to think about after replacing Daniil Kvyat. At least in the short term, the Australian was failing to respond.

But on arriving in Hungary something changed. Ricciardo's head was back in the game. He was 0.25s quicker in qualifying and outpaced Verstappen in the race to take third.

In Germany, the qualifying gap was only a tenth and, although he spent more than a third of the race behind his team-mate, Ricciardo ended up ahead and his superior relative pace in a comparable final stint proved he had the edge.

The way he reacts to disappointment publicly has changed. This season, he has made no attempt to mask it with his trademark smile. He knows his opportunities to win the world title are running out and he is not prepared to let his chance go. In his own words, he is "not just going to get walked over".

Come the summer break, he was just five points shy of Verstappen's points total in their eight races together. That

doesn't take into account the lost points in Spain and Monaco, where wins beckoned. In qualifying, he holds a 7-1 advantage.

It has been a good response to the threat posed by Verstappen. But how will the Dutchman respond to Ricciardo's recent form?

Verstappen found himself in a fortunate situation on joining Red Bull. If he was slow to get on the pace it could be put down to him changing teams mid-season. If he was quick straight away he would be lauded as a future great.

Verstappen achieved the latter and has continued to display his spectacular racecraft, including a brilliant move around the outside of Ricciardo in Germany. He even obeyed team orders by moving over for Ricciardo at Hockenheim, something he refused to do for Toro Rosso in Singapore last year.

Horner said that Verstappen proved he is a team player in doing so, but would he be so accommodating if a race win were on the line or if he were in the midst of a title battle?

His attacking and aggressive approach to racing has been a huge plus for F1, but his antics under braking have come under scrutiny from his rivals. Verstappen says he is unfazed by such criticism, and doesn't intend to change the way he drives. It provides an intriguing prospect for the future.

How Red Bull deals with the rivalry will come to define 2017. Verstappen's former team-mate Carlos Sainz Jr believes Toro Rosso has become "more of a team" since Verstappen joined Red Bull.

Motorsport advisor Helmut Marko said there was "considerable unrest" at the team before the change. The same cannot happen at Red Bull. Things are starting to get serious.

Red Bull has emerged as Mercedes' closest challenger, jumping ahead of Ferrari at the last race. Given its strengths on the chassis side, it should provide a sterner challenge in 2017.

The team cannot afford unrest. It last encountered such a situation when Vettel and Mark Webber were team-mates. Horner concedes it was a challenge to manage the situation effectively, but ultimately it came out of the period with four drivers' and four constructors' championships.

That said, it had the strongest car for those seasons (which it is unlikely to have next year) and that provided a little cushion.

It will have to sharpen up how it deals with the situation this time around, learning the lessons from that experience, as well as the one Mercedes is currently enduring.

If Red Bull gets it right, next year could turn out to be a phenomenal year. But if it gets it wrong the team could be in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. ✂

“Horner will have his hands full trying to manage the duo”

F1 2016

It's so good, it pains us to have to stop playing it to write about it

Codemasters has used last year's OK-but-not-great offering as a platform for a massive step forward in Formula 1 gaming

By Glenn Freeman, Autosport.com Editor

[@glenn_autosport](#)



Who would want to make a Formula 1 game? Sure, it sounds fun, but the moment your latest masterpiece breaks cover, it's bound to be picked apart by people who had their own set of demands and expectations that

have not been met. You're never going to please everyone, particularly a fanbase as diverse as F1's.

So why do the people at Codemasters put themselves through it? Because they are fans too, and they want the perfect F1 game just as much as their most volatile critics do. F1 2016 is convincing proof of that.

Last year's F1 2015 title featured an overhauled handling model and the best artificial intelligence (AI) opponents ever seen in a racing game, but that was overlooked by many players because of the game's lack of depth. There was little more you could do than simply play through a season.

But F1 2015 was a brilliant foundation to build upon, and that's where the masterstroke in strategy for this year's title came in: if you can't please them, join them.

Codemasters reached out to its community – including the critics – shortly after the release of the 2015 game, with all eyes on 2016. What did the fans want? Keyboard warriors were invited to come out from behind their screens and actually participate in highlighting features that were most sought-after.

"We had all these features that everyone was requesting, so we went through and checked the boxes on as many as we could," says senior game designer Gary Richards. "The core mechanics of the game were spot on in 2015, so working with the community was one of the key goals this time. They are very vocal, and they know what they want."

Not that the Codemasters team was sat there with an empty bucket of ideas before the requests for features such as the safety car and a return of career mode came in.

"We got some cool stuff from them, but most of it was already fully developed and working before we even spoke to them," adds Richards. "That was cool, because it told us we were doing what the fans wanted."

"What did fans want? Keyboard warriors were invited to participate"

Even the people asking for a career mode (more than 60% of the feedback from fans focused on this feature) could not have envisioned it being as immersive as the one featured in F1 2016. It's so good, it pains us to have to stop playing it to write about it.

"Career was the big one people wanted," says principal game designer Lee Mather. "But we didn't just want to do the career as we'd done it in the past. That wasn't going to cut it, so we wanted to make sure it was as rich and full-featured as it could be."

Ten seasons of Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg fighting an exclusive battle for the championship during your career wouldn't be much fun, but that's where F1 2016 steps up to the plate with its most significant new feature: the development race.

All 11 teams are constantly updating their cars throughout the career mode, with your team's progress largely down to your performance at grands prix. This includes another big step forward for the series, with free practice becoming a vital part of the race weekend. Track acclimatisation, tyre-life testing and a qualifying simulation – all jobs based on the real programmes teams work through in practice – are crucial to helping develop your car. You can work with the R&D engineers to choose which areas of the car to improve – the chance to drive for McLaren and focus on engine development, for example.

"If you pick Haas or Renault, you're starting off lower >>

down, but you've got the ability to take them up the order," says Richards. "Then you see the big teams put loads of resources in to move back ahead.

"You can build up a smaller team over multiple seasons and it feels like you've really achieved something. It's a long game now, you have to put time into it – it gives you a reason to keep coming back."

Different teams and drivers can win world championships in the game, which gets F1 2016 over one of the big hurdles that has held the series back recently – the fact that it has to accurately represent the real performance levels of the teams. Now, that's just the starting point.

"Formula 1 is only 50% about race day, and with the career mode now you want to spend time working on the other 50%," says Mather. "The teams have so many things they have to do, so that gave us the chance to build really meaningful gameplay. You want to spend time working on your upgrades.

"We've always wanted to fill practice with important stuff because it's a massive part of F1 and finally we've given it a real purpose in the game. Casual fans might not understand why practice is important in F1, but now they will see why."

Codemasters has added so much to the career mode that there are only two major omissions left: drivers being able to switch teams, and players being able to create their own teams. Don't lay the blame for either of those being absent at Codemasters' door. All they can do is "keep asking the question" to get F1's big bosses to loosen the shackles on what is allowed under their contract.

Of the other new or returning features, the safety car and virtual safety car are a big step up from anything similar tried before. The player has full manual control, meaning maintaining pace and position either in a safety car queue, or under VSC conditions, is completely your responsibility. Keeping to that VSC delta lap time is harder than you might think.

The full-control element doesn't stop there. One of the most impressive in-race additions to the game is manual starts, which involve holding the clutch in and getting to optimum revs when the lights come on, and of course timing the release of the clutch and moderating the throttle pedal to get the perfect launch. Not only are the player's starts far more varied now, but the same thought process has been applied to the AI cars, meaning there is always variation in how the other 21 cars get away from the grid. And don't expect to be able to bully your rivals out of the way on the brakes for Turn 1 anymore either – that element of F1 gameplay is definitely a thing of the past.

If you're feeling really brave, take on the manual pitlane speed challenge as well, where it is entirely up to you to get down to the speed limit before reaching the white line. It's incredibly frustrating when you get it wrong and have to serve a penalty.

It's not all about new features, though. In some cases, there were elements of the game that have been under the surface for years that simply weren't made obvious to the players. The tyre-life free practice test, for example, brings to the fore a tyre-wear model that has long been a part of the series, making it clearer to the player just how much tyre life really is influenced by your driving style. It took the arrival of new faces



Getting the clutch right at the start is tricky – just like in the real world of F1

such as Richards, who joined the team last year, to make some of the longer-serving members of the project realise that a lot of these elements weren't particularly obvious to the outside world.

"When I came in I realised there were so many features that were hidden," he says. "They had put so much work into this game, so how could we surface all of that? The hardcore players knew these things were in there, but you want to get everyone else to appreciate it too."

The more the Codemasters team got its teeth into piling as many features as it could into this year's game, the more obvious it became that you don't need to scratch very far beneath the surface of the real world to come up with ideas. F1 is often criticised for being too complex these days, but if you're making a game, such complexity gives you a lot to work with.

"Formula 1 is this massive thing that people watch on TV, and there's so much you can do with it," says Mather. "We've added lots of little things from the real world to enhance the game. We've taken exactly what happens in F1, and presented it in a way that hopefully everyone can understand. I would never want to dumb down an F1 game – it's not right to simplify something when you can bring people up to that level instead."

This seems a silly question to be asking in the week the latest game in this series comes out, but where do the F1 games go from here? F1 2016 marks a major shake-up, and the attitude from Codemasters, no matter how tired the people behind the game are feeling as this year's pride and joy hits the shelves, suggests feature-rich F1 gaming is here to stay.

"There is a lot of expansion to be done around F1 as a whole, not just the racing," says Mather. "Racing games don't just have to be about the on-track. You want the player to feel personally invested."

"When we had our vision for F1 2016 we were incredibly confident we were making not only a game that we loved, but one that fans would go wild for. So far the response has been amazing, and that gives the team a big boost as well.

"We've got a roadmap of what we want to do in the future, and the community's involvement can help us to reaffirm that we're doing the right thing."

If F1 2016 was a result of community feedback, and that process is remaining in place for 2017, then the future looks very bright for F1 gaming. ✨



Just like Kimi, you can keep racing forever



F1 2016 WHAT'S NEW?



CAREER MODE

Back after a one-year absence, the career part of the game has been overhauled. It now spans 10 seasons, with a full development race between all 11 teams being one of the major focuses.

FREE PRACTICE PROGRAMMES

Just like in the real world, your team will give you a selection of 'jobs' to carry out during free practice. Track acclimatisation, tyre life and qualifying simulations are all important tasks to complete.

PITLANE SPEEDING

It's now up to the player to attack the pitlane speed-limit line in a bid to gain crucial time at pitstops. Get it wrong and you'll be serving a drivethrough penalty.



SAFETY CAR/VIRTUAL SAFETY CAR

The safety car returns by popular demand, and it's bringing the VSC scenario with it. Both require the player to maintain the correct speed and position in the field under full manual control.

MANUAL STARTS

Hold (or press, depending on your controls) the clutch in, find optimum revs and then release at the right time as the lights go out. It's no longer a case of sitting there at full revs waiting for the computer to release you when the race starts.

DAMAGE MODEL

Realism is increased by a refined damage model, so you can expect more small pieces of carbonfibre to fall off your car in minor collisions. For the bigger shunts, wheel tethers have been introduced, too.



RACING IN THE RAIN

A lot of work has been done to refine the wet-weather handling model, so it no longer feels like simply racing in the dry with less grip.

TIME-OF-DAY EDITOR

Choose a variety of start times for each grand prix in every mode except the career mode.

FORMATION LAP

Players can now take responsibility for getting the key parts of the car up to temperature before the start, although lining up in your grid box is controlled by the computer.



You can work on building small teams into bigger F1 players



"How were the tyres?" Driving style is critical

The BTCC's new rising star?

Halfway through his rookie BTCC season, Ashley Sutton became a race winner. His rise from scrapping, underfunded hopeful to factory-backed tin-top star – via a road-car accident – is an inspiring one

By Stephen Lickorish, Special Correspondent

[@SDLickorish](#)

Ashley Sutton's road to British Touring Car Championship race winner has been far from straightforward. While some drivers are able to reach the top with just the odd bend along the way, Sutton has had a seemingly insurmountable bump and more than a fair share of violent turns.

It all started out simply enough. Sutton was a karting champion in the early days of his career, claiming several National Mini Max titles. Then he seemed to take a detour by switching to Formula Vee, the 750 Motor Club's Volkswagen-based single-seater category, for his first season of car racing in 2010 – not the most obvious route.

But for Sutton a year in the series made perfect sense. "The idea was to just learn the tracks and the racecraft at a low-cost level as budgets were tight," explains Sutton.

In fact, he did a lot more than that as a string of good results put him into contention for the championship. "We thought we might win the title until Cadwell Park, which unfortunately was a double header," recalls the 22-year-old. "In free practice we blew the engine up and missed the two races. We didn't let it affect us too much and took it on the chin."

That disappointment proved to be a sign of what was to come. Sutton had planned to make a complete change of direction for 2011, with a switch to the Renault UK Clio Cup.

"We made the choice of trying to get into a tin-top," Sutton says. "The best route for me was the Clio Cup – I did a test with Westbourne Motorsport but couldn't quite reach the budget required, so jumped into the Ford Fiesta Championship."

Then disaster struck and threatened to leave Sutton's career stuck in a cul-de-sac. A road car accident left him injured and a lengthy spell on the sidelines followed.

"After a few scans, the doctors realised I did internal damage to my kidney, so they said I had to stop all activities for the following year," he says. "I had instantly lost two years of racing. The kidney's something that can heal itself and they monitored it over the year. Unfortunately, I had to have an operation at the start of 2012 and then had recovery time. Before we knew it, it was the end of 2013."

"It wasn't easy being told you can't go racing – it was hard to sit out and watch the sport you love on the box. It wasn't nice at all. But it made me more hungry to get back in the car."

And sure enough, Sutton did make a comeback – and this time he did secure a slot on the TOCA package. His 2014 came in British Formula Ford with the inexperienced Meridian >>



First BTCC win came in tricky conditions at Croft

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Sutton was a race winner during his rookie Formula Vee campaign in 2010

HAWKINS

squad, but once again things didn't quite go to plan.

"Meridian put together a really good deal and we couldn't really refuse it," says Sutton. "Without them we wouldn't have made it on the TOCA package but you have to think for yourself and I wasn't quite comfortable. The team were very new to the championship and were in a learning year. I was there to try and make an impact and needed to get involved in a team that could engineer a car to win."

Just before the second round at Donington Park, Sutton left the team in search of better results elsewhere. But, out of courtesy to Meridian, he delayed his joining of the Jamun/MBM team until the next round at Thruxton.

"We thought it was best not to turn up at Donington Park just to keep the peace in the paddock, but it stopped us having any shot at the championship," admits Sutton.

"It was still a learning curve with the power of the car but Jamun made that a bit easier for me. [Team boss] James Mundy and I got on like a house on fire and that really showed."

Mundy has fond memories of the season with Sutton. "He was great to work with – you couldn't have asked for more from a driver," he says.

"The first time we ran him at Thruxton, straight away you could tell that he was going to be good. He's one of those natural racers. Once we got the the car to his liking there was no stopping him."

Sutton quickly became one of the fastest drivers on the grid and backed that up with five wins. But even then there were setbacks. A rear-brake failure at Knockhill led to a big accident from which Sutton was fortunate to escape injury.

After all the tribulations, Sutton still finished third in the

points table, behind champion Jayde Kruger and current Formula Renault Eurocup frontrunner Harrison Scott.

"I feel we would've been in with a shot of the title [without missing Donington], but people understood what we were doing," he adds. "I was there to gain respect and not cause any upset."

One person he certainly earned the respect of was Team BMR boss Warren Scott. Sutton's impressive performances caught his attention and he soon attempted to sign the youngster to race Clios with him the following season.

But Sutton took some convincing to go down this road. "I did have everything in place for another year in MSA Formula [FFord's replacement] – I had all the budget for 2015," he says.

"Then Warren came along. I kept refusing because I had

everything in place and he kept pestering me. That meant something to me and I had to think of my career. I couldn't see a better opportunity than to do it with Warren. He took me under his wing but I still had to bring the budget. Warren made sure I was well looked

after and had the equipment I needed. I can't thank him enough."

A seat at crack Clio squad Team Pyro ensured Sutton had the best chance possible to make a successful transition from single-seaters to tin-tops. But even he wasn't prepared for what happened next.

"We had some great winter testing and we came in with a real big bang," he says. "To be fighting for your first win in the first race was fantastic. That momentum carried on throughout the season."

Sutton quickly emerged as a title contender in a thrilling year that featured a three-way battle for the championship with Ash Hand and Ant Whorton-Eales going into the last race.

Sutton won when it mattered and snatched the title in the finale, despite not having led the standings before then. >>

"I want to leave the British Touring Car paddock as champion"

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Nasty Formula Ford crash at Knockhill came in 2014



Sutton (leading) starred on his way to Clio Cup crown

But his unexpected victory then posed a new problem – his destination for 2016.

“Originally it was a two-year plan in Clios: win the Graduate championship and then go for the overall title,” he says. “That plan was in place until the very last lap of the last race.

“We had nothing else to prove in the Clio Cup [after winning the title] – I always like to make an impact in a series and move up. So I spoke to Warren and looked at touring cars.

“I didn’t expect to be a factory BTCC driver [with MG] two years after returning to racing. It had always been my ultimate dream to get into touring cars, let alone a factory drive. If someone offered me that two years ago, I would’ve bitten their arm off for it. It all happened very, very quickly and without the momentum [from winning Clios] it wouldn’t have happened.”

Suddenly he found himself at Triple Eight, racing an MG alongside fellow Clio Cup graduate Josh Cook. There was no time for him to test pre-season, so his second place in the media day test was a “big shock”.

But for those who had followed his road through the junior ranks it was no surprise that he instantly seemed at home in the BTCC. Sutton was pleased with fifth in qualifying for the first race at Brands Hatch and more was to come, including a first pole at Donington and that maiden win at Croft (see panel).

Having now reached his dream category, Sutton has no plans to go anywhere else soon. “I want to become a household name in the series,” he states. “I want to leave the British Touring Car paddock being a British Touring Car champion.”

Success in karting, single-seaters and tin-tops have certainly marked Sutton out, even if his route has been unconventional. The way he has overcome all the challenges that have been presented to him bears the hallmarks of a strong competitor.

The man himself seeks no sympathy for those difficulties, instead focusing on the positives. “I’m not here to get a sob story,” he asserts. “For sure, we’ve had struggles but we’ve pulled through them and achieved what we wanted.”

And few would bet against him achieving a lot more in the years to come. ❄



TRIPLE EIGHT’S BTCC DUO

THE DRIVER PAIRING at the Triple Eight Racing MG squad is one of the most intriguing on the grid.

Ash Sutton, 22, and Josh Cook, 25, are very closely matched and have forged a strong friendship. Cook had established himself as a podium finisher in his maiden season in the category in 2015 but Sutton has pushed him hard this year.

It was Sutton, too, who landed the team’s only triumph so far this season when he claimed a win at Croft.

“We thought Croft was going to be quite a hard circuit for us but I came away with a third, a fifth and a win,” says Sutton.

“It was a bit surreal taking my first win.”

The MG is the only

car on the grid with a hybrid of the newer-spec RML parts and the older GPRM kit. It has been an effective compromise, particularly when the road is greasy, but the MG6 has struggled

“We all have our goals and I’ve done three of mine”

against newer cars. Such hybrid machines will be outlawed next year and the car will need a full upgrade.

“Everyone has their goals at the start of the year and I’ve done three of mine,” adds Sutton. “I wanted my

first pole, first podium and first win and the next one is the Jack Sears Trophy [for top rookie]. That would be a memorable moment for me as it would be an honour to win after Jack’s passing.”

And Sutton is a shoo-in for the JST. He has taken 13 wins from the 21 races so far, and team boss Ian Harrison has been impressed.

“I want to keep both Ash and Josh for next season if possible,” says Harrison. “We have had a great campaign. There are certain areas lacking on the engineering front, but you expect that with a new pairing and that will only improve with another year at this level.”

MATT JAMES



Cook and Sutton are a promising BTCC line-up for MG

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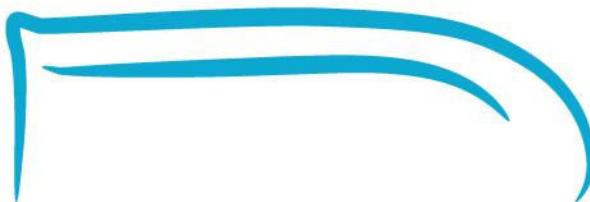
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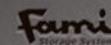
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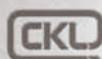


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Ticktum plans to take on Macau after his ban is served



EBREY/AT

Ticktum in line for Macau Grand Prix drive

BRITISH TEENAGER DAN TICKTUM is set to end his 12-month ban from competition with an attack on the Macau Grand Prix.

The 17-year-old, who earned his motorsport exclusion after an incident with Ricky Collard in the penultimate round of the 2015 MSA Formula series at Silverstone, has been driving in private tests – for which a licence is not required – this year with Formula 3 team Double R Racing.

Ticktum will likely join up with Spa 24 Hours winner Alexander Sims, who finished on the podium in Macau last November with Double R, for the Far Eastern F3 classic in what team boss Anthony 'Boyo' Hieatt describes as "a really exciting line-up".

Ticktum's manager Harry Soden, whose Infinity stable also looks after European F3 aces George Russell and David Beckmann, said: "If Dan does Macau, it's the type of circuit that should suit his nature – he's not scared of stuff."

"I wouldn't advise everyone to do it, but I've got no problems with Dan – he just gets on with it. It would also be a taster for next season, where the plan is to do European F3."

Ticktum and Sims would have to meet the Macau qualification criterion of contesting at least two F3 races this year. It is understood that for Ticktum this would most likely be the MSV F3 Cup finale at Snetterton on October 8-9, which takes place after his ban ends.

Double R hopes to use Macau as a launchpad back into the top tier of F3 on a full-time basis in 2017.

Double R, Fortec return

Both Double R and Fortec Motorsport returned to top-level F3 last weekend in the non-championship Masters of F3 at Zandvoort.

F3 returnee Sam MacLeod rose to ninth place in the final with Fortec, while Australian team-mate Ricky Capo claimed 14th. Another Aussie,



SCHOTANUS

Zandvoort F3 Masters field included returning British teams Double R and Fortec

BRDC British F3 title contender Tom Randle, brought the solo Double R machine home in 11th.

Carlin's junior-level racers Colton Herta and Ameya Vaidyanathan were 13th and 15th respectively, while Formula Renault Eurocup ace Harrison Scott was a last-minute replacement for the unwell Nikita Mazepin at Hitech GP and placed 12th.

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MINI CHALLENGE Championship contender Charlie Butler-Henderson was forced to sit out the majority of the series' action at Oulton Park last weekend after he was involved in a high-speed shunt at the start of the first race. Butler-Henderson had led the championship coming into the weekend, but failed to score a point after he was hit on the first lap as the pack ran through Dentons, with his factory Mini UK-backed car spearing left before hitting the barrier and rolling multiple times. The car was written off in the crash. Butler-Henderson now trails David Grady by 12 points in the championship, with three races at Snetterton still to run this season. **Photographs by Mick Walker**

PROTOTYPE CUP

Tockwith signs up to Cup

TOCKWITH MOTORSPORT HAS BECOME the second team to sign up to the new Prototype Cup series, and could be followed by Porsche Carrera Cup dominator Redline Racing.

The team will field a single Ligier JSP3 into the Prototype Cup preview race at Snetterton on October 8/9 for Nigel Moore and Phil Hansen, and will step up to the LMP3 class of the European Le Mans Series with immediate effect, having previously campaigned an Audi R8 LMS GT3.

Tockwith will also contest the full UK-based LMP3 class next year, alongside its ELMS campaign.

Team head Simon Moore said: "We've had enough of GT racing in Europe and LMP3 is the next step for us, so we'll do double duty next season in Europe and the Prototype Cup as the two series complement each other.

"The Ligier P3 is much easier to work on than the Audi and component-wise it lasts much longer, too, as it goes through far less brake pads and consumables, and the engine and gearbox are guaranteed for 10,000km, which is more than enough for both classes."

United Autosports will also run a minimum of two Ligiers in the Prototype Cup, while Redline Racing is the latest team showing an interest.

Simon Leonard's squad currently leads the Porsche Carrera Cup GB with Dan Cammish, and won seven of the last nine drivers' titles. Redline also looks after GT Cup dominator Jordan Witt's Bentley Continental GT3.

"I've watched the development of the Prototype Cup and it seems to be gaining a lot of momentum; the cars are gorgeous," said Leonard.



BRITISH F3

Pull to Carlin for F3 finale at Donington

BRITISH F4 TITLE CONTENDER JAMES PULL WILL race in the final round of BRDC British F3 at Donington Park next month.

The 16-year-old, who drives for Carlin in the F4 championship, will deputise for Lando Norris at Carlin in Leicestershire and will use the races to help evaluate his options for 2017.

"It's going to be a challenge but I'm ready for it," said Pull. "I have done some testing in an F3 car and my times have been good so I'm excited to be getting this opportunity to race.

"The race is at Donington, which is my favourite track so that's an added bonus for me. If I can get a couple of good results I'll show my potential for next season."

Carlin boss Trevor Carlin added: "We've watched James develop and drive well over the course of the season in the Formula 4 car and we're pleased to give him the opportunity to race with us at Donington."

Pull is currently fifth in the British F4 standings, 22 points behind Carlin team-mate Max Fewtrell. He has a best result of second place, achieved on two occasions in 2016, and has claimed four further podiums.

FORMULA FORD 1600

Medina-built car makes test debut

LEADING FORMULA FORD 1600 TEAM Medina Motorsport has begun testing a new car that it has built from scratch.

Medina has previously converted Van Diemens to Kent specification to create its JL range of cars, but this is the first time that team boss John Loebell has designed his own.

The car, as yet unnamed, was given a shakedown run last week at Oulton Park with Martin Short and more testing is now planned.

“Our market has always been the conversion from Zetec to Kents but there aren’t enough cars now,” said Loebell. “It’s something I’ve always wanted to do – it was on my bucket list.

“We’ve won the Festival and Walter Hayes



but this is something we’ve never done.”

Loebell now plans to build two more cars this winter but doesn’t want to rush into racing them.

IN BRIEF



MARVIN MASTERS BRABHAM AT SECA

Dan Marvin won the Masters USA event in a Brabham BT44 at Laguna Seca last weekend, ahead of the 1980 Williams FW07 B of Charles Nearburg. Derek Hill, son of 1961 Formula 1 world champion Phil, won the race for Pre-War cars in a Delage ERA. The event was part of the Monterey Motorsports Reunion.

SURTEES KARTING ENTRIES OPENED

Entries have opened for this year’s Henry Surtees Challenge. The karting event will take place at Buckmore Park on October 26, with prizes on offer including a BRDC British F3 test with Hillspeed, a Formula Renault 2.0 test in Spain and a tour of the Red Bull F1 factory.

STANBRIDGE ENDS MINI ABSENCE

Endurance racer Tim Stanbridge made his first appearance in the Mini Se7en Championship for 20 years at Oulton Park last weekend. Stanbridge, who races a SEAT Leon TDi in the Creventic 24 Hour Series and his classic Mini Cooper in historic events, qualified 16th before a transmission problem ended his participation.

REID STARS WITH MINI WEEKEND WINS

Scottish racer Kyle Reid celebrated victories in two different Mini championships at two circuits last weekend. Reid was a guest entry in the Mini Challenge’s Cooper Class at Oulton Park last Saturday with Coastal Racing and took victory in race one, ending Max Bladon’s 11-race winning streak. He then travelled to Knockhill to race in the Scottish Mini Cooper Cup on Sunday, and again won the first race.

GOUGH WINS ON DEBUT DOWN UNDER

Ian Gough took a win and a podium on his debut in the Australian National Formula Ford Championship. Brother of 2014 National Formula Ford champion Stuart, Gough won his first race in the series and added a second place in race three, having finished sixth in the second outing. He will continue to contest selected events in Australia with Ellery Motorsport, and intends to contest November’s Walter Hayes Trophy with Oldfield Motorsport.



MIGHTY MINIS

Rule change to allow Mini Clubmans

MIGHTY MINI ORGANISERS have opened up the championship’s regulations to allow a wider range of donor cars to be converted to race in the category, including the Mini Clubman.

Currently only post-1991 Rover Mini shells can be used but from 2017 this will be changed to allow post-1976 models to enter, including

the Clubman – which currently can be raced in very few one-make series.

Championship co-ordinator Rodger Tello feels the change will make the series more attractive to racers as the donor cars should become more affordable.

“From next year we’re allowing people to convert any post-1976 Mini with a front

rubber-mounted subframe into a Mighty Mini to be able to compete, including the Mini Clubman,” he said. “This is great news as it opens up a number of doors for us and I think that’s going to build the grids.

“This opens up the range of donor cars; generally, feedback has been positive. It means we embrace the Mini as a saloon car irrespective of its guise.”



FORMULA 5000

Brashaw prepares for F5000

HISTORIC SINGLE-SEATER RACER Jamie Brashaw plans to make his Formula 5000 debut in the Derek Bell Trophy race at this weekend’s Oulton Park Gold Cup meeting, at the wheel of a March 73A.

“I haven’t raced much this season due to problems with my Arrows F1 car,” said the former Classic F3 champion. “Then I

was told a [F5000] car in New Zealand was available.”

Brashaw drove the ex-Peter Dunn car for the first time at Donington Park recently. “It’s a short-block Chevrolet engine and it feels great and I was soon doing my quickest times around Donington,” he said.



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BMW A variety of classic and contemporary BMWs were on display at Laguna Seca last week as part of the Monterey Motorsports Reunion. The German marque was the event's featured brand, to celebrate the centenary of its founding. The 17-strong BMW art car collection was also on show, including Alexander Calder's 3.0 CSL from 1975 (front left), while 64 BMWs were entered across the weekend's 15 races. **Photograph by Eric Sawyer**

RADICAL CHALLENGE

OLYMPIC CHAMPION KENNY TO RADICALS

SIX-TIME OLYMPIC GOLD medallist Jason Kenny will race a Radical SR3 RSX in the Radical Challenge at Brands Hatch this weekend.

Kenny, who became Great Britain's joint most successful Olympian with a third gold of the Rio games last week after winning the men's Keirin track cycling event, has previously raced an SR3, finishing on the podium in a Radical European Masters race at the Nurburgring in 2014.

Having returned from Brazil, Kenny will compete in the sixth round of the eight-event Radical season on the full Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit in one of the championship's second-tier machines.

Kenny is tied with Sir Chris Hoy as the most successful Olympian in British history. Hoy has also raced in Radicals, starting in 2013 in the SR1 Cup before competing in British GT and, more recently, the Le Mans 24 Hours.

The pair will race together later this year, contesting the Radical European Masters at Jerez on the October 28-30 weekend.

MINI CHALLENGE

O'Brien considers Mini switch

HISTORIC RACING REGULAR MICHAEL O'BRIEN IS weighing up a move into the Mini Challenge for 2017 after making his debut in the class at Oulton Park last weekend.

O'Brien, the 22-year-old son of Speedsport founder Mike, raced in an F56 JCW machine run by the Sussex Road and Race team for a one-off as he assesses his 2017 options.

Former BRDC Formula 4 racer O'Brien, who regularly races in Historic Formula Ford 1600 and sportscar classes, qualified sixth and took a best finish of fifth in race one.

He said: "I'd only done a day and a half of testing before the weekend so I think the speed we had was great. It took a while to adapt to the front-wheel drive and the weight and cornering of the Mini as the last modern car I raced was the F4.

"I want to start stepping towards touring cars as the single-seater route just isn't an option for me. I really enjoyed the Mini and the championship offers good progression, so we're hoping to do it next season."

GOODWOOD REVIVAL

BTCC contenders among impressive St Mary's Trophy entry

THE CURRENT TOP FOUR drivers in the British Touring Car Championship will go head-to-head in Austin A35s at next month's Goodwood Revival Meeting.

Sam Tordoff, Matt Neal, Rob Collard and Gordon Shedden will take time out of the closing stages of the BTCC campaign to race the diminutive cars in the St Mary's Trophy, which will be one of the highlights of the September 9-11 Revival.

Jason Plato and Andrew

Jordan will also be in a star-studded 30-car entry that includes Le Mans ace Tom Kristensen and David Coulthard, as well as celebrities Rowan Atkinson, Theo Paphitis and Sir Chris Hoy.

Joining the grid will be ex-Formula 1 drivers Jean Alesi, Mark Blundell, Danny Sullivan, David Brabham, Karun Chandhok and Rupert Keegan, as well as former touring car stars Stuart Graham, Robb Gravett, Mike Jordan,

Paul Radisich and Steve Soper.

The cars that compete in the HRDC Academy deliver around 85bhp from control engines and will be raced by their owners in the second element of the two-driver race.

Goodwood ace Jordan will race the car built up by his father Mike and will be a leading contender given his prior experience of the car.

"I can't wait to race in a grid full of identical cars. It should be something special," he said.



Touring car stars will contest A35 race at Goodwood

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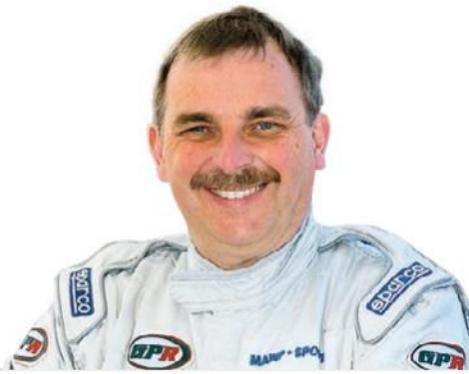
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Formula Vee: More than a load of hot air

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

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FORMULA VEE HAS RIDDEN OUT SOME TURBULENT times since low-cost racing champion the 750 Motor Club adopted what looked to be a terminally sick animal in 1980.

Other organisations would have called the vet, but with the seemingly inexhaustible support of the faithful, the air-cooled VW Beetle-powered single-seater class is thriving again.

Last Saturday's second race on Silverstone's International Circuit, in which the top four competitors were separated by 0.78 seconds, with the next pair on their heels, was a gripper, the best I've witnessed – and I must have seen 150! I could have filled my entire word count chronicling it, but that would have been unfair to 20 other races.

A massive headwind on the Hangar Straight certainly prevented anybody breaking away, but the wet-set grid had also mixed the pack up.

With James Harridge – perhaps the most gifted driver in the field – on pole and Adam Macaulay (the only rival to beat defending champion Paul Smith this year) on a mission from the back, it made for a stunning spectacle.

The pressure was off AHS Dominator driver Smith, whose first win of the day had secured a fourth crown, but when he wasn't leading he remained there or thereabouts.

Harridge, who wrung his perennially underpowered Maverick's neck either side of an excursion, double champ Martin Farmer (GAC), veteran Graham Gant (WEV), Ian Buxton (GAC) and Macaulay (Sheane) also took turns ahead, but Smith took the chequer.

Smith's departure to pastures new for 2017 – RGB is a strong possibility – will open up the competition which, like Formula

Ford, celebrates its 50th anniversary in the UK next summer. Vee may be quirky, with its Type 1 gearboxes its weakest link, but, now it's settled on US-made Hoosier tyres (after many years on Dunlop, which had little other call for 15-inch fitments), the open chassis promotion is here to stay.

Also showing well within the 750MC family is the Tegiwa M3 Cup for E46 BMWs. A year after Luke Sedzikowski displayed the first car, 11 of the good-looking and fine-sounding 3.2-litre beasts populated the largest grid yet. With more aspirants coming off the fence now the cars are sorted, hopefully fields of 20 plus will be achieved next season.

● Formula 1, 2 and Tasman Cup cars of the pre-1966 period will rekindle memories of Oulton Park Gold Cup races of yore when the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association makes a long-awaited return to the HSCC's showpiece at the Cheshire circuit on Sunday and Monday.

Formula Junior ace Sam Wilson steps up to John Chisholm's ex-Jim Clark/Innes Ireland Lotus 18, taking on Peter Horsman (Lotus 18/21) and Rod Jolley (ex-works Cooper T45/51) in a field that includes Andrew Wareing (BRM P261) and Silverstone Classic sensation Richard Tarling (Assegai-Alfa Romeo).

Elsewhere in the spectacular 23-race programme, Shaun Hollamby shares Chris Goodwin's Lotus 23B in the Guards Trophy sports-car race and Benn Simms saddles John Sykes' Merlyn Mk5/7 for his Formula Junior return. Warren Briggs (Ford Mustang) and Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk20) head huge Touring Car and Historic FF1600 fields respectively. 🏁



GREGORY FAMILY'S CLIO 182 SILVERSTONE WOES

Saturday's K-Tec Racing Clio 182 championship round at Silverstone was stopped when 10th-place starter Trevor Gregory's car nosedived into the pitwall at the lights and ricocheted into father Bill's, which had started four ranks further back in the 27-strong field. The 750MC stalwarts have vowed to return for the final round of the season at Rockingham.



VEE CHAMPION SMITH CONSIDERING 2017 RGB SWITCH

Quadruple 750MC Formula Vee champion Paul Smith is looking at RGB among his options for 2017. Having also driven his Crossle 9S sports-racer to two easy wins at Silverstone last Saturday, Smith is keen to remain in the thick of competitive action and has been approached by Scott Mittell to test one of the family's eponymous designs.



Smith seals title with Vee victories

A QUARTET OF INTERNATIONAL Circuit wins for Paul Smith, the first cementing a fourth 750MC Formula Vee title in his AHS Dominator, made a blustery Saturday unforgettable for the Essex plumber.

While Smith's second open-wheel victory was his 12th from 13 rounds, that it capped the modern era's finest Vee race more than validated his last year in the venerable 1300cc category.

A fierce headwind on the Hangar Straight made breaks virtually impossible as adversary James Harridge maxed his Maverick's corner speeds to slug it out with Smith and past master Martin Farmer (GAC). Harridge led the penultimate tour, but Smith snuck past to win by 0.13 seconds. "I was quicker in the final section but there was no last-lap board," rued Harridge. From 14th, Ian Buxton (GAC) grabbed a dogged third after Farmer spun at Club.

Race two was incredible, with Harridge, Smith, Farmer (prior to his engine blowing), Graham Gant (WEV), Irishman Adam Macaulay (Sheane) – from the back again having missed practice through fuel pump failure – and, momentarily, Buxton leading in a breathless series of battles. Macaulay, Buxton and Smith traversed Stowe three abreast on lap 10, but Smith withstood Gant's lunge in the final scramble.

On pole by three seconds in the wet, Smith's dry Classic Interseries victories were formalities in Crossle 9S routs. Fellow front-row starter Bernard Foley's MGB GTV8 was the leading interloper each time, while the Mustang tussles

between Marcus Bicknell and Andrew Knight were entertaining until Bicknell hit oil at Club and smote the pitwall.

Defending Clio 182 Cup champion James Bark beat points leader 'Patch' Fletcher in both races to level the score at six wins apiece. Fletcher's fastest-lap bonuses leave Bark four adrift going to Rockingham's deciding double-header, as last year.

Late series starter Michael Comber and reigning champion Ben Short won splendid Nankang MX5 Cup contests. Short's first victory since Oulton Park in April, when his car was cannoned off in the subsequent race, rewarded his team. Jack Sycamore protected his tenuous points lead.

Adam Shepherd twice beat the largest BMW M3 Cup flock yet, then admitted that, having gone his own way on set-up, finally listening to father Craig's advice had identified the E46's sweet spot. Despite understeer, Tegiwa's Luke Sedzikowski repassed Carl Shield to mirror his earlier runner-up finish in race two.

Billy Albone's sixth straight RGB

Smith left it late to win opening Vee race, but prevailed by 0.13s to clinch crown

victory moved him above factory Spire team-mate John Cutmore in the rear-engined split. Albone's task was eased when Oliver Hewitt (VRM Mittell) went off at Stowe in a heavy shower, delaying Scott Mittell – from ninth, having not switched to slicks in damp qualifying – and the rest.

Mittell again shot from row five to harass Albone on Sunday, yet found no way past. Overall leader (and double champion) Matt Higginson stretched his unbeaten 2016 AB Arion run in the front-engined division to nine races, but David Watson's Saturday fastest-lap point denied him a perfect total.

Neither major Locost title protagonist finished Saturday's round, eventual winner Jack Coveney taking Danny Andrew out at Stowe as head-gasket failure halted Ian Allee.

Andrew and Allee were beaten only by the inspired Tim Neat on Sunday, thus their fight will go to the wire at Rockingham. Martin West shadowed

Shepherd continued fine M3 Cup streak with double





JONES

Coveney on day one.

Adrian Reynard's rapid start – from row five to lead in half a lap – owed more to his motorcycle drag-racing youth than his stellar racecar design career, but the reigning Bikesports champion couldn't keep young Joe Stables (Radical PR6) behind his SR3R in the opener. Stables smashed Tim Gray's 2014 lap record as he howled clear in race two, putting himself into title contention after table-topper Phil Knibb (SR3) went off at Abbey.

Carl Swift bade farewell to his ultra-successful EP3 by aceing both Civic Cup races, the second from 10th on the reversed grid, stretching his unbeaten run to eight races. Martin James, Tim Evans and the feisty Mark Grice kept Swift on his mettle while Ben Sharpe and Chris Coomer imposed their 1600cc cars on the two-litre majority.

A win and a measured fourth (with lap record) kept Jim Davies's MR2 title aspirations on course, although Kristian White and Shaun Traynor remain within striking distance. Cam Walton left the class with an opportunist double pass at Vale to land second to Traynor in the finale.

Jamie Packham and pro pal Phil Keen dominated the season's final Club Enduro, lapping the field twice in 90 minutes in the former's Jtech Automotive BMW E46 M3. In their wake the Tegiwa Cup-spec M3s of Chris Lovett/Kevin Dengate and Andy Marston/Brett Evans shook off the determined Tom Bradshaw in Jonathan Evans's Porsche 968.

MARCUS PYE

➔ P77 FULL RESULTS

KNOCKHILL SMRC AUGUST 21

Returning Reid wins, then bins it

KYLE REID RETURNED TO THE SCOTTISH Mini Cooper Cup after missing the previous round and duly set the pace in qualifying.

He opened up an early lead in race one but came under attack from championship leader Ian Munro approaching half-distance. Munro saw an opportunity at Scotsman corner and took the lead, but Reid retook the place just a few corners later and was never headed. Unfortunately for Reid, his weekend ended in the Scotsman tyrewall in race two, a heavy impact causing him to miss race three.

Munro led almost uninterrupted in race two, although he came under attack late on from title rival Paul Bell, who got his nose ahead once before Munro fought back.

Shane Stoney won the third race after the top eight from race two were reversed on the grid. A mid-race safety-car period only lasted a lap but allowed Malcolm McNab to challenge. McNab got ahead, but Stoney's superior straightline speed allowed him to re-pass and take his third win of the year.

Neil MacLennan continued to dominate the Scottish Formula Ford Championship with two wins in his Ray, although nearest rival Jamie Thorburn briefly got ahead at the start of race two. Sebastian Melrose and Matthew Cowley twice fought for third, Melrose holding on both times.

David Hunter returned to the Legends field and took two wins, with championship leader John Paterson forced to admit that he didn't have the pace to beat him.

Paterson did win the second heat, though, after grabbing the lead from Ivor Greenwood on lap one.

Ford Escort Cosworth driver Robert Drummond took both wins in the Saloons and Sportscar races after pole-position man Paul Brydon suffered a problem with a snapped belt in race one that cost him valuable points in his championship battle with William Robson. BMW driver Brydon fought back in race two, but could not win his class after a spirited drive from Andrew Morrison in his new SEAT Leon Eurocup car, who demoted the M3 on the last lap.

Kevin Whyte increased his Fiesta points advantage with a win and a second place, while nearest rival Wayne Macaulay suffered a gearbox problem in race one – Macaulay came back to win race two, with their battle set to go to the wire. XR2 runner Steven Gray cut into rival Jim Deans's points advantage with two dominant class wins.

Ginetta G4 exponent Harry Simpson took both Classic Sports and Saloons wins, but the highlight was the battle for second in race two. A brief shower helped Raymond Boyd (Porsche 911) grab an early lead and, though Simpson regained the position, Boyd fought off the attention of Andrew Graham (Triumph TR8) and John Kinmond (Rover 3500), who pressed him all the way.

In the BMW Compact Cup, Gary Clark and Lee Elrick claimed the victories.

JONATHAN CRAWFORD

RESULTS

SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CUP (ALL 9 LAPS) 1 Kyle Reid; 2 Ian Munro +0.813s;

3 Morgan Murray; 4 Paul Bell; 5 Malcolm McNab; 6 Dominic Wheatley. **Fastest lap** Hannah Chapman 1m03.255s (72.10mph).

Pole K Reid. **Starters** 30. **RACE 2 1 Munro;**

2 Bell +0.272s; 3 Murray; 4 Chapman; 5 Robbie Dalgleish; 6 John Duncan.

FL Chris Reid 1m03.463s (71.87mph).

P K Reid. **S 28. RACE 3 1 Shane Stoney;**

2 McNab +0.773s; 3 Duncan; 4 Dalgleish; 5 Murray; 6 Bell. **FL** Stoney 1m03.415s (71.92mph). **P** McNab. **S 28.**

SCOTTISH FORMULA FORD (BOTH 12 LAPS) 1 Neil MacLennan (Ray GR14);

2 Jamie Thorburn (Ray GR15) +8.339s; 3 Sebastian Melrose (Ray GR14); 4 Matthew Cowley (Van Diemen JL13); 5 Matthew Chisholm (Van Diemen RF92); 6 David Thorburn (Ray GR15). **Class winner**

Chisholm. **FL** MacLennan 55.216s (82.60mph). **P** MacLennan. **S 12.**

RACE 2 1 MacLennan; 2 J Thorburn +3.676s; 3 Melrose; 4 Cowley; 5 Chisholm;

6 D Thorburn. **CW** Chisholm. **FL** Melrose

55.154s (82.69mph). **P** MacLennan. **S 12.**

SCOTTISH LEGENDS (8 LAPS) 1 David

Hunter; 2 John Paterson +2.356s; 3 Ross

McCulloch; 4 Ivor Greenwood; 5 Billy Wait;

6 Andy Dunn. **FL** Paterson 1m00.107s

(75.88mph). **P** McCulloch. **S 13.**

HEAT 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Paterson; 2 Hunter

+0.804s; 3 Stewart Black; 4 Pino Palazzo;

5 Wait; 6 Ryan McLeish. **FL** Hunter 59.749s

(76.33mph). **P** Greenwood. **S 13.**

FINAL (6 LAPS) 1 Hunter; 2 Paterson

+1.346s; 3 Black; 4 Palazzo; 5 Wait;

6 McLeish. **FL** Hunter 59.692s (76.41mph).

P Jeff Pritchard. **S 12.**

SCOTTISH SALOONS AND SPORTSCARS

(BOTH 12 LAPS) 1 Robert Drummond

(Ford Escort); 2 Andrew Morrison (SEAT Leon Eurocup) +2.482s; 3 Thomson

McIntyre (Subaru Impreza); 4 William Robson (Ford Focus RS); 5 Charlie Fraser

(Westfield); 6 Scott Tollan (Ford Escort

Cosworth). **CW** Morrison; McIntyre; Fraser.

FL Drummond 55.079s (82.81mph).

P Paul Brydon (BMW M3). **S 9.**

RACE 2 1 Drummond; 2 Morrison +2.057s;

3 Brydon; 4 McIntyre; 5 Robson; 6 Iain Sinclair (Westfield). **CW** Morrison; McIntyre;

Sinclair. **FL** Drummond 55.419s

(82.30mph). **P** Drummond. **S 8.**

SCOTTISH FIESTAS (12 LAPS) 1 Kevin

Whyte (ST); 2 Chris Milford (ST) +0.029s;

3 Stephen Ward (ST); 4 Wayne Macaulay

(ST); 5 Liam Robertson (ST); 6 Steven Gray

(XR2). **CW** Gray. **FL** Macaulay 1m02.261s

(73.25mph). **P** Macaulay. **S 14. RACE 2 (8**

LAPS) 1 Macaulay; 2 Whyte +0.293s; 3 Ward;

4 Peter Cruickshank (ST); 5 Gray; 6 Barry Farquharson (XR2). **CW** Gray. **FL** Macaulay

1m02.627s (72.83mph). **P** Whyte. **S 14.**

SCOTTISH CLASSIC SPORTS AND

SALOONS (BOTH 12 LAPS) 1 Harry

Simpson (Ginetta G4); 2 Raymond Boyd

(Porsche 911) +19.303s; 3 John Kinmond

(Rover 3500); 4 Andrew Graham (Triumph TR8); 5 Jimmy Crow (Ford Escort); 6 Bruce

Mitchell (Lotus Europa). **CW** Boyd;

Kinmond; Crow; Ian Daltrey (Alfa Romeo Alfasud). **FL** Simpson 57.264s (79.65mph).

P Kinmond. **S 17. RACE 2 1 Simpson;**

2 Boyd +5.990s; 3 Graham; 4 Kinmond;

5 Crow; 6 Craig Houston (MGB GTV8).

CW Boyd; Graham; Mario Ferrari

(Alfa Sprint Trofeo); Crow. **FL** Simpson

59.002s (77.30mph). **P** Simpson. **S 15.**

SCOTTISH BMW (BOTH 12 LAPS)

1 Gary Clark; 2 Lee Elrick +0.259s;

3 Greig Sutherland; 4 Neil MacInnes;

5 Alistair Smith; 6 David McNaughton.

FL Elrick 1m03.327s (72.02mph). **P** Clark.

S 15. RACE 2 1 Elrick; 2 MacInnes +2.059s;

3 Clark; 4 Sutherland; 5 Smith; 6 Cliff

Harper. **FL** McNaughton 1m03.565s

(71.75mph). **P** Clark. **S 15.**

OULTON PARK
MSVR AUGUST 20

Mini rivals fail to capitalise on CB-H misery

AT ABOUT 1430 LAST SATURDAY Charlie Butler-Henderson looked out of the Mini Challenge title race.

The reigning champion's Mini UK-backed machine lay as a steaming wreck after a mammoth shunt at just the second corner of the first race at Oulton Park. With a non-score from that outing and the written-off car ruled out for the afternoon's second race too, he stood to lose his points lead in a big way.

Only some divine intervention could save his weekend, and by 1730 it had well and truly arrived – somehow, CB-H remains in the hunt.

After his wreck, all of his title rivals failed to fully capitalise as tricky weather made the Mini Festival North a difficult day for both drivers and officials. All series suffered turbulent outings, but the JCW races had by far the most drama.

Butler-Henderson's weekend had started badly anyway, after he opted to stay out on wets on a drying track in qualifying. He topped the session until the final minutes, when he was tumbled down to 10th by the slick-shod runners.

With it all to do, Butler-Henderson made a lightning start to race one before contact in the pack through Dentons fired Ben Seyfried's car wide and straight into CB-H, whose car speared left at high-speed, hit the barriers and rolled repeatedly. His weekend was done and all he could do was sit and watch his points lead fade away. It did, but not half as badly as it could have.

Chief rival Nathan Harrison struggled and his decision on whether to run slicks, wets or a hybrid of both in qualifying left him down in 19th when he didn't get a lap in. He could only fight back to 12th in the opener before a driveshaft bolt let go on the warm-up lap for race two, wrecking any chance of overhauling CB-H.

David Grady took second in the first outing to narrow the points gap, having shadowed BTCC regular Jeff Smith in the closing stages as rain again hit the slick-mounted field late in the race. Luke Caudle did slip past for second briefly, but the red flags flew as conditions deteriorated, handing second back to Grady.

Race two looked to be the turning point, before the weather again played its part. Rain hit as the field lined up, and only the lower half of the grid took the gamble to dive into the pits to fit wets.

Jono Brown and Grady were both in the initial leading pack on slicks, but when the rain intensified both were nowhere on pace



and dropped to 14th and 15th respectively.

With Harrison already sidelined, three of CB-H's rivals were out of the running. A disastrous weekend for Chris Smith, who was elbowed off in race one and hit by another car in race two, made it four drivers to miss the chance to pull clear.

Henry Neal snuck through to lead much of the second race on wets, but Brett Smith pipped him to the flag with a late pass as Rob Smith made up for spinning out of race one from pole to snatch a podium.

Grady's points for 14th gave him the championship lead, but only by a hair ahead of Butler-Henderson.

Carlito Miracco won the second attempt at running the Cooper and S Class race, after the first was canned owing to a multi-car tangle. Race two was reduced to a short sprint at the end of the day and Scot Adam led Miracco home.

Scotsman Kyle Reid ended Max Bladon's 11-race winning streak in the Coopers in race one, before Martin Poole held Bladon off in race two.

Championship leader Ash Davies and reigning Mini Miglia champion Kane Astin shared the Mini Se7en victory spoils.

Both races were frantic, with multi-car battles for the lead. Davies led an early

Butler-Henderson's weekend ended early, but points damage was limited as rivals slipped up

four-car break in race one from Astin, Spencer Wanstall and Max Hunter. The race was neutralised after a short safety car, but on the restart the leaders ran three abreast into Old Hall, where Astin nosed ahead. Lewis Selby grabbed second but contact with Hunter exiting Cascades left the latter sidelined with a broken hub.

Astin couldn't pull clear and was soon demoted to third when both eventual winner Davies and Selby passed him. Selby was later excluded for driving standards, handing Astin second.

Race two was a thriller, with Astin holding off Selby by just 0.008s at the line. Davies had led the initial break from Astin before Hunter and Selby joined in. Hunter dropped back and Davies lost drive, which left the top two to fight it out.

Paul Taylor took another step towards the VAG Trophy title with a double victory. Tyre woes meant early leader Richard Morgan dropped back in race one, with Taylor streaking away from Cascades on the third lap. That left a tight fight for second between Toby Bearne, Stephen Johansen and Darron Lewis. Johansen made it his own as Bearne and Lewis rubbed repeatedly, and Lewis was later excluded from fourth.

A multiple-car shunt exiting Old Hall on the opening lap of race two brought out the safety car and made it a two-lap sprint to the flag. Christie Doran and Simon Tomlinson had led from the reverse grid, but Doran pitted with gear issues and Taylor surged clear of Bearne.

Shayne Deegan made it 10 wins from 12 races in the Mini Miglias. Rupert Deeth threatened briefly in both races before spins, which left Sam Summerhayes with two second places and James Coulson and Robert Howard each with a third.

ROBERT LABROOK AND PETER SCHERER



Astin just held off Selby in tight Miglia finish



READ

PEMBREY
VSCC AUGUST 20-21

Relay run sets off Cawley treble

TEAM TORTOISE WON THE HANDICAP Team Relay Race with its drivers battling treacherous conditions to take victory by one lap on handicap.

It was The Shiny Helmets team that won on track, completing 68 laps even after the first of its drivers, Dougal Cawley, broke his chain.

Cawley then did the double the following day, dominating the Donington Mug Trophy Race in his GN/Ford Piglet as he drifted his way through Pembrey's sweeping curves to take the chequered flag 27 seconds ahead of David Wylie.

Even starting last in the handicap race for Pre-War Cars, the Yorkshireman was not to be denied as Calwey scythed his way through the field to take the lead with half a lap to spare – winning in the end by a comfortable 10s.

Xavier Kingsland took a brace of Formula 3 wins, pulling away from the field lap after lap in a dry opening race to win by a comfortable margin. Race two was a different affair, though, run on a drenched circuit. Kingsland was pushed all the way to the line by Darrell Woods and JB Jones to win by just over 0.1s in a tight finish from Woods.

Tim Kneller won from pole position in the Pre-War Standard & Modified Sports Car race, fighting off an attack from Mike Preston in the Bugatti T35B into Hatchet's Hairpin on the first lap. He then maintained a comfortable lead over the remaining distance to capture the Redgate Mug.

After 10 laps of exchanging friendly fire, it was the Anglo-American combination of Geraint Owen and his Kurtis 500C IndyCar that swept to victory in the Vintage Seaman Trophy race ahead of ERA R4D-mounted Nicholas Topliss. Sadly, the race finished under red flags when Duncan Ricketts locked all four brakes going into Hatchet's Hairpin.

Although the Scratch race for pre-war cars had a slender grid of nine, there was no holding back for Julian Grimwade and Tony Lees as they traded the lead throughout the contest. Grimwade held on to claim the victory after rigorous defending out of Honda Curve to prevent Lees from powering past.

On a slippery track in howling winds Marcus Frieder won the Garry Whyte Trophy Riley Handicap Race by 7s in his Riley 12/4.

Among an eclectic mix of nearly 30 cars there was only one driver who dealt with both the changeable conditions and speed differential in cars to take the third double of the weekend, in Welsh Sports and Saloons.

It looked close at the start of rounds seven and eight of the championship, but Jason Davies aboard his turbocharged and bewinged Ford Sierra Cosworth blitzed the field, among which lay three GT4-spec Ginettas 50s, to extend his points lead. Completing the podium in both rounds was Dave Krayem in his G50, followed by Keith White in his BMW Z4 silhouette, having narrowly taken third from Chris Everill's G50 in both races.

CHRISTOPHER SHARP



Owens' Kurtis 500C won red-flagged Seaman trophy race

READ

Cawley ended weekend with Mug Trophy and Pre-War Handicap success to add to relay win

RESULTS

MIKE STRIPE TEAM RELAY RACE (65 LAPS)

1 The Shiny Helmets; 2 Pistol Knights -1 Lap; 3 Team Tenwheel; 4 Here for the Beer; 5 Team Tortoise; 6 Two Fours and a Six. **Fastest lap** The Shiny Helmets 1m14.25 (70.59mph). **Starters** 11.

DONINGTON MUG TROPHY (9 LAPS)

1 Dougal Cawley (GN/Ford Piglet); 2 David Wylie (Frazer Nash AC) +27.93s; 3 Tom Waterfield (GN Special); 4 Alex Peacop (Frazer Nash AC); 5 Jo Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash Super Sports); 6 Michael James (Riley 12/4 TT Sprite Rep).

FL Cawley 1m22.40 (63.61mph). **P** Cawley. **S** 17.

HANDICAP FOR PRE-WAR CARS (5 LAPS) 1 Dougal

Cawley (GN/Ford Piglet); 2 Anthony Feltham-White (Austin 7 Racing Special) +10.45s; 3 Tim Parker (Lagonda 2 Litre SML); 4 Marcus Frieder (Riley 12/4); 5 David Asplin (Austin 7 Ulster Replica); 6 Michael James (Riley 12/4 TT Sprite Rep). **FL** Cawley 1m21.51 (64.31mph). **P** Ian Fyfe (Alvis 12/70 Special). **S** 21.

F3 500 (8 LAPS) 1 Xavier Kingsland (Staride Mk3);

2 Darrell Woods (Cooper Mk XII) +2.21s; 3 JB Jones (JLR F3); 4 Roy Hunt (Martin 500); 5 Andrew Turner (Cooper MkVI); 6 John Turner (Cooper Mk9).

FL Woods 1m17.53 (67.61mph). **P** Kingsland. **S** 7.

RACE 2 (7 LAPS) 1 Kingsland;

2 Woods +0.13s; 3 Jones; 4 Hunt; 5 Turner; 6 Roy Wright (Flash Special Norton). **FL** Woods 1m27.98 (59.58mph).

P Kingsland. **S** 7.

PRE-WAR STANDARD & MODIFIED SPORTSCARS (9 LAPS) 1 Tim Kneller (Riley TT Sprite);

2 Mike Preston (Bugatti T35B) +7.86s; 3 Mark Brett (Ballamy-Ford (LMB) V8 Sp); 4 Mark Groves (Frazer Nash TT Rep Emery); 5 Simon Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash Super Sports); 6 Ian Standing (Riley Brooklands).

FL Kneller 1m23.70 (62.62mph). **P** Kneller. **S** 20.

VINTAGE SEAMAN, HISTORIC SEAMAN &

FLOCKHART TROPHIES (10 LAPS) 1 Geraint Owen

(Kurtis 500 C); 2 Nicholas Topliss (ERA R4D) +8.79s; 3 Julian Grimwade (Frazer Nash Single Seat); 4 Tony Lees (AC/GN Cognac); 5 Tim Greenhill (Wolseley Hornet Special); 6 Dougal Cawley (GN/Ford Piglet).

FL Owen 1m10.20 (74.67mph). **P** Owen. **S** 9.

SCRATCH FOR PRE-WAR CARS (7 LAPS) 1 Julian

Grimwade (Frazer Nash Single S); 2 Tony Lees (AC/GN Cognac) +0.35s; 3 Tim Greenhill (Wolseley Hornet Spec); 4 Pete Candy (Riley Super Rat); 5 Harry Painter (MG Kayne); 6 James Ricketts (Austin 7 Monoposto).

FL Lees 1m25.75 (61.13mph). **P** Topliss. **S** 10.

GARRY WHYTE TROPHY RILEY HANDICAP (5 LAPS) 1 Marcus Frieder (Riley 12/4);

2 Nick Hayward-Cook (Riley 9 Monoposto) +7.29s; 3 Michael James (Riley 12/4 TT Sprite); 4 David Morley (Riley Special); 5 Tim Kneller (Riley TT Sprite); 6 Edward Harvey (Riley The Densham IM).

FL James 1m26.37 (60.69mph). **P** Robert Barbet (Riley Sports). **S** 12.

WELSH SPORTS & SALOON CARS (15 LAPS)

1 Jason Davies (Ford Sierra Cosworth); 2 David Krayem (Ginetta G50) + 8.46s; 3 Keith White (BMW Z4); 4 Christopher Everill (Ginetta G50); 5 Keith Butcher (Ginetta G50); 6 Fabio Luffarelli (Mini Saloon). **CW** Krayem; Gareth Haycock (VW Golf); Tyrone Luffarelli (Peugeot 106 GTI); Roger Dowden (Davrian Mk6); Alan Smith (Ford KA); Craig Edmunds (Ford Fiesta). **FL** Krayem 1m06.31 (79.05mph).

P Krayem. **S** 28. **RACE 2 (14 LAPS) 1 Davies;**

2 Krayem + 15.98s; 3 White; 4 Everill; 5 Butcher; 6 Luffarelli. **CW** Krayem; Haycock; Luffarelli; Chris Morris (Suzuki Ignis Sport); Dowden; Craig Edmunds (Ford Fiesta). **FL** Davies 1m03.98 (81.93mph).

P Davies. **S** 27.

ANGLESEY

BARC AUGUST 20-21

Team Seventeen romps to 24 Hour win

TEAM SEVENTEEN TOOK A COMMANDING outright win in the 2016 2CV 24 Hour Race while Lien Davies wrapped up the championship crown at Anglesey.

A near-flawless display of speed and consistency allowed Jeremie Deroissart, Eric Bonnan, Gerard de Barbeyrac and Christian Tiggeler to record a second consecutive win at the event for the Euro Hybrid runner.

Strong winds and heavy rain often battered the 1.55-mile Coastal circuit in a topsy-turvy 845-lap affair, which featured no fewer than 16 safety-car periods, a handful of penalties and reliability woes, all of which shaped the outcome of the 27th edition of the race.

With three seconds covering the top three in the early stages, the race-leading Team Seventeen G21 lost out in heavy traffic at the tight-and-twisty downhill Corkscrew.

The BNLL 2 team wasted no time in snatching first place before being sent into a pirouette by hitting standing water along the start-finish straight, gifting GT Racing Team BNLL an opportunity to pass and take control of proceedings.

Having built up a six-lap buffer by nightfall at the 13-hour mark, GT Racing was forced to relinquish its lead when engine problems left the Euro Hybrid twice stuck in the garage for lengthy spells. A recovery drive to eighth would prove scant consolation at the chequered flag.

Team Seventeen took full advantage and regained the lead heading into the second half of the race, which the squad continued to extend as dawn broke on Sunday morning.

Only a drivethrough penalty for exceeding the maximum three-hour window permitted for each driver, and a stop-go penalty for passing cars under yellow flags, threatened to curtail the car's dominance.

Polesitter CGS By Comtoyout overcame a poor start and a three-lap penalty to claim second, albeit 17 laps down on Team Seventeen, while Rent Boys Racing's Citroen C1 marked its debut in the series by completing the overall podium.

Pete Sparrow spearheaded Team Lion's dominant charge to victory in the UK class, but the reigning champion's sublime performance was not enough to prevent Davies and Team Gadget Racing from securing a maiden 2CV title.

A healthy points margin in Davies's favour heading into the final round of 2016 meant, barring a disaster, he was almost certain to win the championship. That failed to deter six-time champion Sparrow from orchestrating a masterful drive.

An issue-free run to a third-successive class victory at the Welsh track – by a margin of 16 laps over Team Gadget Racing – was made all the more impressive by the fact that Team Lion's Citroen had not turned a wheel in anger before the weekend.

Twin Snails rounded out the UK class rostrum in what was only the team's second race outing of the season, while Slarky Malarky took the Mini Grand honours in sixth place overall, fending off fellow Mini runners Team Toyshed and Team Mini-Uns.

LEWIS LARKAM



Moran saved best to last to claim another win

WALDER

SHELSLEY WELSH

HILLCLIMB AUGUST 20-21

Leader Moran shares Shelsley climb spoils

CHAMPIONSHIP LEADER SCOTT Moran and third-place Wallace Menzies exchanged the honours at the Theatre of Hillclimbing with a first and second each.

With Trevor Willis finishing third in the first run and then losing out to the storming Dave Uren in the second, five-time champion Moran took Best Time of the Day on the final run of the weekend and stretched his points lead.

"This was a case of digging deep again, and my crew led by [former Midland Hillclimb champion] Dave Wilson told me I needed BTD as I came to the line," admitted Moran. "Dave Uren's final run-off shot woke us up and he will be a 'Force' to be reckoned with when he gets into Wallace's big Gould next season."

Although Willis maintained his clear second overall, it's clear that if Menzies – winner of the first run by half a second – had not suffered a couple of early-season mechanical maladies the top three positions would be a lot closer.

Uren performed almost as well as at Wiscombe and has taken the little Force further than expected, complementing his podium with a sixth in the first run.

Reigning champion Alex Summers came out in another car, this time the sweet V6 Gould of Mark Coley. He hauled himself into the top 10 twice, claiming a brace of fifths.

Will Hall finally had the Force-AER going properly in the first encounter but dialled down the starting revs on the launch control for Q2. The car stalled off the start and, with all four wheels over the line, his second run-off opportunity was lost.

Richard Spedding maintained his fourth place overall but, despite his car's agility, the big-power demands of the 20 per cent Shelsley Walsh gradient sapped his efforts. Factory Gould drivers Sean Gould and Eynon Price also suffered a power disadvantage, but Gould scored where Price could not.

EDDIE WALDER

➔ P77 FULL RESULTS



Team Seventeen's winning margin was a convincing one

BOURNE

RESULTS

CITROEN 2CV 24 HOUR RACE (845 LAPS)

1 Team Seventeen MCC (Jeremie Deroissart/Eric Bonnan/Gerard de Barbeyrac/Christian Tiggeler); 2 CGS By Comtoyout (Jean-Michel Baert/Alexandre Renaux/Steve Hooerman/Christophe

Hooerman -17 laps; 3 Rent Boys 1 (Meyrick Cox/Philip Myatt/Nick Paton/Caryl Wills); 4 BNLL2 (Claude Crespin/Bernard Crespin/Andre Blaise/Rudy Coppieters); 5 Wingrove Racing (Jeff Wilson/Peter Dalkin/Matthew Cobb/Mark Waghorn); 6 Slarky Malarky (Ian Slark/Neil Slark/Peter Turvet/Steven Miles).

Class winners Rent Boys 1; Slarky Malarky; Team LION (Pete Sparrow/Alec Graham/David O'Keeffe); WDR Team (Staf Mertens/Bjorn de Saeger/Jens Derder); Piga Racing Team (Christophe Beckers/Philippe Minne/Pierre Gaspar). **Fastest lap** Team Seventeen MCC 1m28.876s (62.78mph). **Pole** CGS By Comtoyout. **Starters** 33.

WHAT'S ON

The best drivers-turned-commentators

THERE'S NOW VERY LITTLE motorsport that isn't televised and, as the hours of racing broadcast increase, demand for drivers-turned-pundits/commentators grows too. But skills behind the wheel don't automatically transfer to behind the mic. Which ex-racers have mastered media life best? Here's the result of our Autosport writers' vote:

THE TOP FIVE

1. MARTIN BRUNDLE

Sky Sports F1 commentator

"Spots the sharp stuff and doesn't fear opinions or criticism" – *Scott Mitchell*
 "Still leads the way in terms of insight and on-air poise" – *Stuart Codling*
 "Easily the best pundit and commentator in motorsport and arguably the rest of sports TV" – *Alex Kalinauckas*

2. ANTHONY DAVIDSON

Sky Sports F1 analyst

"Since Sky F1 started, the most trusted and fair pundit. Proper analysis" – *Matt James*
 "Combines unique, modern analysis of key events in F1 with an infectious enthusiasm. He's a cut above the rest" – *Glenn Freeman*
 "Arguably the best analyst of any broadcaster in the F1 paddock" – *Jason Noble*



3. TIM HARVEY

ITV4 BTCC commentator

"Never holds back. He's fundamental to the TV coverage being so good" – *Scott Mitchell*
 "A calm and insightful voice alongside the 'look at all the carnage!' element" – *Ben Anderson*



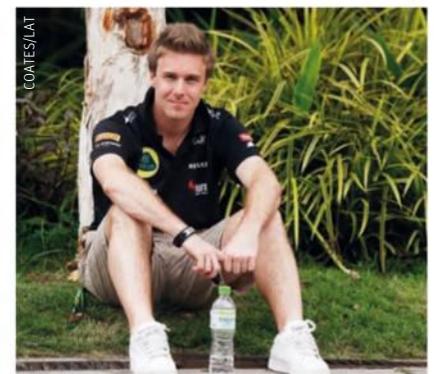
4. DAVID COULTHARD

Channel 4 F1 commentator

"Brings a splash of humour and colour often missing elsewhere, without becoming a clown" – *Alex Kalinauckas*
 "Balances professionalism, insight and wit beautifully, quite underrated as a broadcaster" – *Matt Beer*



Martin Brundle (top left) and Anthony Davidson (above) lead the way in our Top Five



5. DAVIDE VALSECCHI

GP2 world feed commentator

"Good insight, great enthusiasm and hugely entertaining to listen to. Even my motorsport-hating kids think he's funny" – *Marcus Simmons*
 "Hilarious and should commentate on everything" – *Lucy Morson*

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BUBBLING UNDER KARUN CHANDHOK

Channel 4 F1 analyst

“Lives and breathes motorsport, which, combined with his intelligence, understanding of what goes on in and out of the car and connections, makes him a formidable analyst. Only going to get better with experience” – *Edd Straw*

ALLAN McNISH

BBC Radio 5 Live analyst

“Superb on Radio 5, particularly. Very descriptive and can spot trends/changing strategies very quickly” – *Matt James*

DARIO FRANCHITTI

“Still new to commentary but making his mark, and forms a dynamic duo with Jack Nicholls” – *Jack Benyon*

PAST STARS

DAN WHELDON

“When doing TV work between IndyCar drives, he was a total natural. Insightful (as you would expect), humorous and forthright” – *Matt James*

CHARLIE COX

“Lacnic Aussie tones were a natural fit at the peak of BTCC’s Super Touring years and aftermath. The soundtrack to the bonkers 1998 Donington Mansell race and the Muller/Plato dogfight of 2001. Never before or since have castanets been used so accurately as a motorsport analogy” – *James Newbold*

JAMES HUNT

“Had a good commentary voice and was brilliantly cutting at times, even if his overall approach was rather unconventional!” – *Kevin Turner*

BARRY SHEENE

“Sheene was a big part of Ten’s motorsport coverage in Australia. Insightful, opinionated, personable and hilarious” – *Mitchell Adam*

JOLYON PALMER

“Even GP2 drivers themselves were amazed by his ability to foretell what was to happen. Whisper it: better than his dad as a pundit?” – *Marcus Simmons*

JACKIE STEWART

“Impressive insight in a shortlived spell covering NASCAR’s Daytona 500 in the ’70s and ’80s, a golden era for the series” – *Jack Benyon*



HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube CRUTCHLOW TELLS IT LIKE IT IS

Search for: Crutchlow: “They’re all wimps!”

Cal Crutchlow delivers his pithy verdict on the opposition – plus a refreshingly down-to-earth perspective on what’s really important in life – after an inspired performance and tyre call delivered the LCR Honda rider’s maiden MotoGP victory in the Czech Grand Prix at Brno.



TV PICK OF THE WEEK

LIVE BELGIAN GP

Sky Sports and Channel 4 Sunday 1200

After the summer break, Formula 1 returns at one of the best circuits on the calendar, Spa. Before the mid-season rest, Lewis Hamilton had the momentum in the title fight and has a 19-point lead over team-mate Nico Rosberg. Can anyone challenge Mercedes around the rapid Belgian swoops?

ETHERINGTON/LAT

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

BELGIAN GRAND PRIX

Formula 1 World Championship

Rd 13/21

Spa, Belgium

August 28

WATCH ON TV

Live Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4, Sunday 1200

GP2 SERIES

Rd 8/11

Spa, Belgium

August 27-28

WATCH ON TV

Live Sky Sports F1, Saturday 1435 and Sunday 0920

GP3 SERIES

Rd 6/9

Spa, Belgium

August 27-28

WATCH ON TV

Live Sky Sports F1, Saturday 1610 and Sunday 0810

PORSCHE SUPERCUP

Rd 7/9

Spa, Belgium

August 28

INDYCAR SERIES

Rd 8/15 (restart)

Texas Motor Speedway, USA

August 27

WATCH ON TV

Live ESPN, Sunday 0200

BLANCPAIN SPRINT

Rd 4/5

Hungaroring, Hungary

August 27-28

WATCH ON TV

Live ESPN, Sunday 1045

IMSA SPORTSCAR

Rd 10/12

Virginia International Raceway, USA

August 28

WATCH ON TV

Highlights: Motors TV, Sunday TV 2100

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 24/36

Michigan, USA

August 28

WATCH ON TV

Live Premier Sports TV, Sunday 1830

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

Rd 9/14

Sydney Motorsport Park, Australia

August 28

WATCH ON TV

Live BT Sport 1, Saturday 0700 and Sunday 0430

UK MOTORSPORT

ROCKINGHAM BTCC

August 27-28

BTCC, F4, Renault Clio, Ginetta GT4, Ginetta Junior

WATCH ON TV

Live ITV4, Sunday 1045

OULTON GOLD CUP

August 27-29

HGPCA, Super Touring, Derek Bell Trophy, Historic FF2000, Historic FF1600, Formula Junior, Historic Touring Cars, Guards Trophy, Classic Clubmans,

Historic & '70s Road Sports, Jaguars, Classic FF2000

KIRKISTOWN 500MRCI

August 27

FF1600, Saloon/GT, Road Sports, Ford Fiesta, Formula Vee, F Sheane, SEAT, Historic Racing Cars

BRANDS HATCH LOTUS FESTIVAL

August 27-28

F3 Cup, Lotus Cup Europe, Lotus Elise, Lotus Cup,

Radical Challenge & SR1, Sports 2000 Endurance, Prod BMW, Racing Saloons

SILVERSTONE BRSCC

August 27-28

Fun Cup, Fiestas, Fiesta Junior, Intermarque, Production GTi

DONINGTON BRSCC

August 27-28

FF1600, Alfas, Formula Jedi, Compact Cup, MX5s, Open Sports, Porsches

CROFT DDMC

August 27-28

Monoposto, Porsche Club, Northern Sports/Saloons, Scottish Sports/Saloons

CASTLE COMBE CCRC

August 29

FF1600, Ferraris, Saloons, GT, Sports-Racing, Karts

GURSTON DOWN BARC

August 27-28

British Hillclimb Championship





THE ARCHIVE

One of motorsport's greatest combinations: Mark Donohue and the 1973 Porsche 917/30. Here, the turbocharged monster heads to victory at Mid-Ohio, one of Donohue's six wins from eight races during his successful Can-Am campaign.

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INTRODUCING



JULES GOUNON

ALL PICS: ADAC MOTORSPORT

JULES GOUNON IS TAKING HIS FIRST STEPS IN sportscars on a road once trodden by father Jean-Marc, a factory Mercedes and BMW driver in his time. At just 21, and in only his second full season of car racing, he is a close second in the ADAC GT Masters series with Callaway Competition.

Sportscars beckoned for Gounon after a lack of finance curtailed his single-seater career after barely a season and a half. But then his dad, who briefly reached F1 with Minardi and Simtek, had warned of racing's pitfalls.

That was why Gounon wasn't given the chance to begin karting until he was 15: "My dad didn't want me to race. Because we don't have money, he said I had no chance of making it."

The opportunity to race karts came as the result of a family contract. Gounon had to achieve certain exam results at school, and his career has progressed on a similar basis, though it has been results on the track that have counted since.

A short karting career ended in victory as a factory Sodikart driver in the IAME X30 world finals in 2012. The agreement with his father remained in place on his graduation to cars: Gounon would only be allowed to move up if he was successful.

Second place in the French Formula 4 series facilitated a progression to Formula Renault. But that was where his single-seater career stalled after a stop-start season. "My dad was right when he told me that motorsport isn't fair," says Gounon. "I was so disappointed that I didn't want to see another single-seater."

Gounon's start in sportscars has been founded on pace in testing. He won a part-funded drive in last season's French Porsche Carrera Cup via its scholarship shootout, resulting in a race-winning campaign cut short by injury. He then landed a subsidised seat in the new Callaway Corvette C7 GT3-R alongside Daniel Keilwitz for this year's Masters after outperforming other hopefuls.

Three victories have put Gounon and Keilwitz in contention for the title, and the aim now is to get onto the radar of one of the major GT3 manufacturers. "I'm fighting with factory drivers such as Laurens Vanthoor and Guy Smith, and that gives me confidence," says Gounon. "I just want one test day to show what I can do." ❧

GARY WATKINS



- Age** 21
- 2016** 2nd in ADAC GT Masters (Callaway); has also raced in Blancpain GT and Creventic 24H Series
- 2015** 6th in French Porsche Carrera Cup (Almeras)
- 2014** Formula Renault: 2 rounds in Eurocup, 5 in NEC (KTR & AVF)
- 2013** 2nd in French Formula 4
- 2012** 1st in IAME X30 International final; 2nd in European X30 championship
- 2011** 1st in National Rotax France



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PERFORMANCE

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

MASTERING A LOST ART
AND THE TECHNIQUE
BEHIND IT



THE PERFORMANCE PANEL

TECHNIQUE
HEELING-AND-TOEING

ROB WILSON



DRIVER'S EYE
KEY CONTACTS

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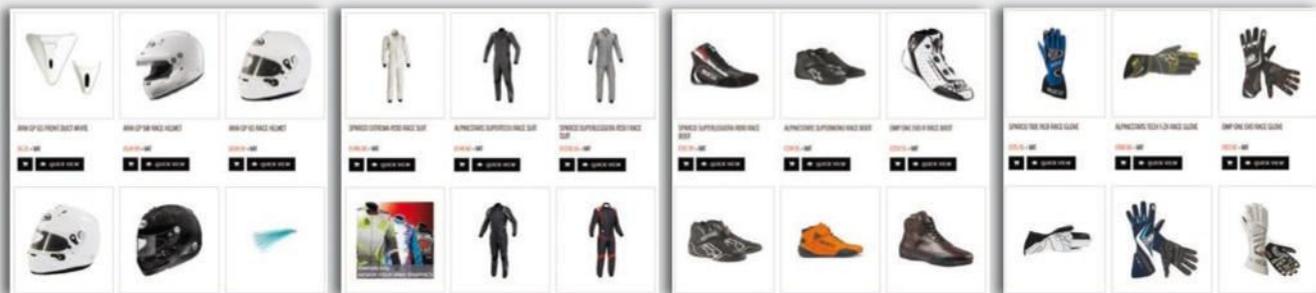


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TEE/LAT

WHY DOES ANYONE FALL IN LOVE

with motor racing? Fast cars, daring drivers, epic overtakes – these are all pretty important when we're young, or when we experience motorsport for the first time.

But when we get older, what becomes important changes. From a spectator's perspective, it's just as easy to be impressed by a stellar defensive drive. From a driver's perspective, trying to find out why you're two tenths slower than your main rival through one corner becomes a bigger priority than resting on the laurels of a good pass.

That's because the finer details of motor racing rest on the specifics. And while they may not be as exciting to the lay person, defensive driving and braking are absolutely crucial components to a successful driver.

This is what inspired this issue of performance. Whether it's Rob Wilson putting heel-and-toe and left-foot braking under the microscope or taking a look at the art of defence, the idea was to delve deeper into these subjects.

Getting the 'basics' right is a lesson that will never become irrelevant. And the more you analyse it, the more important the 'basics' become.

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DUNBAR/LAT



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Our world-renowned driver coach looks at a technique some think is confined to the past – and says that's wrong

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A specialist circuit requires a circuit specialist: and this club ace is the perfect guide to a national treasure



MASTERCLASS

WITH ROB WILSON

THE WORLD-RENOWNED DRIVER COACH REVEALS WHY HEELING-AND-TOEING IS STILL USEFUL FOR MODERN DRIVERS

H

eeling-and-toeing is a lost art, but one that is still of great value – even in two-pedal cars, providing the brake and accelerator pedals are in close enough proximity in the footwell.

Quite a number of today's Formula 1 drivers are very good heel-and-toers, even though they don't use the technique in modern F1 cars, for very good reasons.

When teaching heel-and-toe, I will usually tell drivers that it's a good idea because we're using road cars, even though it isn't possible in a fair percentage of current racing cars. Then, once they have learned, I point out how advantageous it is for their racing careers.

The main reason is that learning the technique makes drivers 'bump-sensitive'. They tend to come through racing from two-pedal karts up to two-pedal cars (with gearshift). Today, commonly, there is a preponderance of sequential boxes or paddleshifts – so it is something of a relief to come across a good old-fashioned 'H' pattern gearbox.

The trouble with paddleshifts is that you may sometimes get mismatched revs on the downshift, certainly if the sequential uses automatic revs.

If you are at the top end of your rev range in one gear on a certain part of the track, the revs might match the downshift. Then you arrive at another corner in the same gear and you aren't maxed out on revs, but the gearbox doesn't necessarily use a smaller blip to change down.

You can't be sure it will automatically adapt to the revs required for the lower gear, and left-foot braking and pumping the throttle pedal with your right foot can also lead to inaccurate rev-matching.

If the revs are a bit too high, the gear will engage, but the car will jump forward. If they're too low, there may be a wait if it's a paddleshift, or it will still engage if it's a sequential. But the change is never 'unfeetable'.

If you are using the clutch and the revs are a bit high, you



Heel-and-toe knowledge is useful even in F1

the car stop better, when you go back to driving your late-model sequential or paddleshift-equipped car you'll feel the difference, and see how bad it is!

I am told sometimes: "We use a sequential box so I don't need to use the clutch when I downshift". But, of course, this doesn't mean that the box isn't engaging a lower gear – the only real difference is that it doesn't go past neutral as it does it. The gearchange would still be better if its revs were matched properly

So, if you drive a race car equipped with a paddleshift, you can ask your ECU people to programme the gearbox to rev a bit longer or build some variations into it. Learning

heel-and-toe, and how learning it will make you a much better test driver for your team. The technique has helped drivers at the very top of the sport – even in Formula 1 – by providing them with the knowledge they need to give detailed feedback to their engineers.

So how do you go about learning to heel-and-toe? The most critical thing to start with is not the amount of revs you use, but braking. Learn how to get the brake pressure right first by taking little stabs at the throttle.

Do it in 'pigeon-toed' fashion, so the big toes on both your feet point towards each other rather than splayed away from each other. The term 'heel-and-toe' is actually a misleading phrase because you aren't specifically using those parts of your foot – you tend to wear out the sides of your racing shoes doing it.

The most critical thing to get right is keeping the pressure on the brake pedal even. On the first application of the brake pedal you are just introducing the brakes; then you push the brake pedal forward, slowly increasing the pressure on it, twisting your right foot, so you can push down on the accelerator with your heel at the same time.

As you begin to turn into the corner, you make the final downshift and release the brake slowly, while also twisting your foot to press down on the accelerator to bring the revs up and accelerate out of the corner.

There is no downside to heeling-and-toeing. You might get a little jump in the downshifts in-between, but if you learn to heel-and-toe perfectly, you won't even get that.

Ayrton Senna, using a normal gearbox in his McLaren, would arrive at La Source at Spa and go down through every gear, not skipping any, so that he could feel the car and get the maximum out of the engine braking.

Once drivers have learned how to do heel-and-toe, they don't want to do anything else.

to heel-and-toe properly helps you to understand gearchanges better and look for ways to improve them.

In categories where you can't alter the revs, when you get a 'bump' on the first downshift, you know you will pay for it through the rest of the braking area. To improve braking, and to give you stability in the critical early part of the corner, you can avoid downshifting – giving up a certain amount of engine braking – and then do three quick downshifts at the end, although this is not as good as actually having a seamless shift for engine braking.

When you realise that there is a penalty to pay from the 'bumps', you will see the benefits of being able to

“Ayrton Senna would arrive at La Source at Spa and go down through every gear because he could get the most out of engine braking”

can come off the clutch a fraction more slowly. If they're too low, you can give the throttle a quick blip and ensure you have a harmonised downshift. But, if you can feel the 'join', then you can guarantee that that's 150kg of load coming off your rear wheels.

Some drivers say they heel-and-toe in the wet but don't need to in the dry. The same process is happening in the dry but it's just not so obvious – the back end will still jump and squirrel around and the car will not slow down as much as it would if that shift was completely seamless.

Once you become an expert in heeling-and-toeing, and understand the value of the perfect downshift that helps



Paddleshifts are now almost ubiquitous

XPB IMAGES



Senna got the most from engine braking



WHICH FOOT?
IS LEFT-FOOT
BRAKING
REALLY FASTER?

There are things you can do if you are a left-foot braker that are perceived to be an advantage. One is that you can go full throttle at the same time as slowing the car down slightly with your left foot for a nearly flat-out corner, which puts some weight on the nose.

What you have to be careful of is that you are pushing both the front and the rear of the car against the middle, which is not necessarily a good thing.

There is also a risk that your survival instinct will kick in and keep your foot on the brake longer than it needs to. That can cause a front-wheel lockup.

With left-foot braking you have to ensure you don't overdo it, and cause a bit of push (understeer). With right-foot braking, you have to make sure you are not coasting for too long and creating some push because of a lack of weight on the nose.

The other point is that, even with left-foot braking, a driver is not always on the brake or on the throttle. You often want a gap while the car rotates.

The moment you start to come off the throttle is the beginning of weight transfer, and the most important thing here is the rate of transfer – this prepares the car for what comes next.

You can overlap full throttle with the brake, but again you are pushing both ends of the car against the middle, and in the process using up fuel and possibly making the brakes too hot. You can certainly argue you are getting a more gradual weight transfer by doing this, but it is not without cost.

There is no fundamental advantage to using the left-foot braking as opposed to right-foot braking – it's simply a matter of where you are getting the feel from.

You can be a world champion if you use left-foot braking and you can be world champion if you use right-foot braking.

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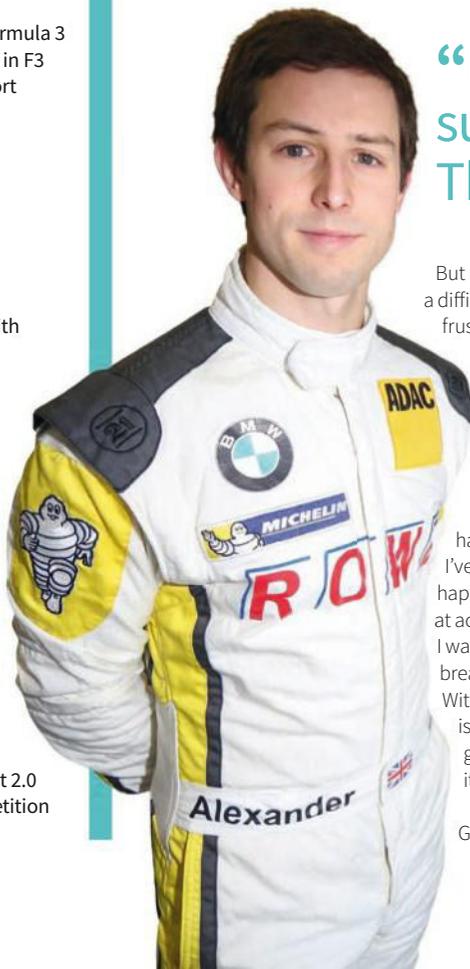
INSIDE LINE WITH ALEXANDER SIMS

THE FACTORY BMW GT DRIVER MADE A CLEAN BREAK FROM SINGLE-SEATER RACING, AND IS NOW A SPA 24 HOURS WINNER

CAREER Highlights

- 2016** Winner Spa 24 Hours with Rowe Racing BMW, 2nd in Blancpain Endurance, and 7th in Blancpain Sprint
- 2015** 2nd in British GT with Barwell/Ecurie Ecosse
2 wins, 4 podiums
3rd in Macau GP with Double R
- 2014** 7th in Blancpain Endurance Series (Pro-Am) and 3rd in British GT with Barwell/Ecurie Ecosse
2 wins, 4 podiums
- 2013** 16th in Blancpain Endurance Series with Hexis Racing
1 podium
8th in GP3 with Carlin/Status Grand Prix (part season)
1 win, 3 podiums
4th in Macau GP with T-Sport
- 2012** Selected outings in Formula 3 and sportscars – 1 win in F3 Euro Series with T-Sport
- 2011** 6th in GP3 with Status Grand Prix
1 win, 5 podiums
18th in British F3 with Motopark (3 starts)
1 win
- 2010** 4th in F3 Euroseries with ART Grand Prix
1 win, 5 podiums
2nd and pole position in F3 Masters with ART Grand Prix
- 2009** 4th in F3 Euro Series with Mucke Motorsport
1 win, 5 podiums
- 2008** 2nd in Formula Renault 2.0 UK with Manor Competition
2 wins, 12 podiums
- 2007** 8th in Formula Renault 2.0 UK with Manor Competition
1 win, 3 podiums

When I switched the focus of my career from single-seaters to GT racing after finishing sixth in GP2 in 2011, it was a conscious decision. My dad wanted me to do GP2, but I had a realistic understanding of the family business and knew it could cripple it to try and stretch to that. I said, 'This is ridiculous, let's call it quits on single-seaters'. I hadn't won the GP3 championship, although I was leading at half distance before a terrible end to the year, so the momentum was gone. Gravity Sport Management, which paid for my racing in 2010 and '11, dropped a load of drivers at the end of that year and I was one of them. I realised I probably wasn't going to make it to Formula 1. So the objective then was to make a career out of racing. From that season, and the year before in the Formula 3 Euro Series, I got the feeling that I wasn't a mega superstar who could destroy everyone. Yes, I was good, but not the absolute best. That's what you need to be to get to F1 on merit, which was my goal. I'd given it my best, and the focus now was on ensuring I could be a professional driver. In F3 in 2010, I was team-mate to Valtteri Bottas. It was hard being up against such a good driver and I struggled to come to terms with being beaten in just about every qualifying – except for the F3 Masters where we were on a different compound of tyre and I was stronger than him.



“I got the feeling that I wasn't a mega superstar who could destroy everyone. That's what you need to be to get to F1”

But in the Euro Series, he beat me. It was a difficult year because I would get quite frustrated, but now I look back on it quite fondly because he's gone to F1 on merit. He's very, very good and that brings a bit of closure. Had I come second to someone who was in F1 but not setting the world alight, it would be harder to deal with.

Bottas is the only team-mate that has beaten me hands down over a year. I've got to say that's fair enough and be happy with it. That's part of being better at accepting my own performance. In F3, I was always trying to find that special breakthrough to be able to dominate. With age and experience, you realise that isn't how it works and you just need to get every single thing right to achieve it – not that I've ever achieved that!

When the time came to move into GT racing in 2012, the opportunity

came about purely because of having won the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award in 2008. It didn't get me the drive as such, but it's how I got my foot in the door. I called up Mark Williams, who was head of engineering at McLaren and one of the award judges. I explained the situation, said I wanted to move into something else and he invited me to a test at Jerez. I was reasonably fast and then it was down to me being good enough and McLaren having a role to fill.

After I won the Award, I made sure I maximised the opportunity. I did some work experience at McLaren and kept in touch with the team. I guess the lesson is that you never know what you are going to need later in your career.

The transition from single-seaters to GTs is not that difficult. You can set a GT car up very well and get it to feel just like a single-seater in terms of getting it to do what you want it to. Yes, they are heavier and a bit lazier and not as quick over a lap, but you can still drive it in the same way. I put to use everything I learned in Formula Renault, F3 and GP3. It doesn't work perfectly all of the time, but then again the same technique didn't work perfectly every time in single-seaters.

I've also had the opportunity to jump back into single-seaters occasionally, both in GP3 and F3. Last year, I was able to have a clean race and finish third in the Macau Grand Prix for Double R. I get a lot out of jumping into other cars. Much as I'm doing a paid job for the team, it's very

useful to remind myself how big an impact tiny differences in your driving can have on laptime.

In F3, it's so critical just to get on the throttle five or 10% earlier, or that little bit more or less at a certain point in the corner – suddenly you can gain half a tenth. That helps when you swap back into the GT car.

I've always been very interested to jump between different cars. It's a short career so you should always grab any opportunity with both hands and give it a go. I might have 10-15 years of being a professional driver to go and those will go by pretty quickly, so take every chance.

Winning the Spa 24 Hours for BMW last month was the highlight of my career so far. I regard Spa as the biggest GT3 race in the world and the depth of the field makes it so competitive. It's on a par with the Nurburgring 24 Hours, if not slightly ahead. I didn't expect to be on the top of that podium after just a few years in GT racing.

I don't know what the plans are for BMW Motorsport right now, but if I can keep racing at a high level in championships around the world, I'm going to be happy.

All in all, the decision for a change in career direction five years ago has worked out very well.

DEFENCE
EXHIBIT
A1

THE CASE FOR

THE DEFENCE

WHAT'S THE RIGHT APPROACH TO BLOCKING AN OPPONENT, AND HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH? WHEN SHARPENING YOUR SKILLSET, DEFENSIVE DRIVING SHOULD BE TAKEN AS SERIOUSLY AS BEING ON THE ATTACK. BY **SCOTT MITCHELL**

D

aring drives steal headlines. And from a driver's perspective there's little more satisfying than pulling off a stellar overtaking move on a rival.

Seemingly in spite of that, the skill of defensive driving is something of a lost art these days. Weaving off the startline, moving around in the braking zone, getting caught unawares in Formula 1 feeder categories and losing a victory – these things happen during almost every race weekend.

But unlike the missed magic of a perfectly executed downshift using a manual gearbox in an F1 car, this part of driving isn't something that's confined to the ages. Like overtaking, defending is an art form that can be mastered. And if you want to win, the chances are you'll spend as much time defending as you do attacking – if not more.

Anticipation is key to defence. While you should avoid driving solely on your mirrors, being aware of an attack is the first step to shielding your position. Blocking off the most obvious way past is the first rule of defending.

"It's always important to cover the inside, but do not try to make the defending move too late," says BMW ace and Spa 24 Hours winner Alexander Sims. "You should try to state your position early on along the straight beforehand."

The problem is that many drivers think hugging the inside line means the job is done going into the corner. That can lead to errors in the braking zone – off-line, braking references will change because there is less grip.

And holding that inside line does not mean you are impervious to attack. "Always remember if someone is

“You can prevent your attacker from cutting back or getting on the power properly by positioning your car correctly”



COATES/LAT

**DEFENCE
EXHIBIT
A2**



Gilles Villeneuve defended from a gaggle of faster cars in Spain in 1981



**DEFENCE
EXHIBIT
A3**



Ayrton Senna beat the charging Nigel Mansell in 1992 Monaco GP

Fernando Alonso held off Michael Schumacher at San Marino in 2005

going to go around the outside of you, if you are ahead it's still your corner," says Sims. This is not an invitation to run a rival off the road entirely – as Nico Rosberg did to Max Verstappen in July's German Grand Prix – but it is a simple matter of positioning. You can prevent your attacker from cutting back or getting on the power properly by positioning your car correctly.

Simply sitting on the inside line is not enough. Let's look at a case study from the Knockhill British Touring Car Championship weekend. ▶

Mat Jackson took many plaudits for the stern defence that earned him victory in the final race of the weekend. And rightly so, because the positioning of his Ford Focus was a lesson in defensive driving – although he was aided by the knowledge that he was enjoying a more powerful engine than his pursuers in Scotland, which would have been a handy tool to protect him down the following straight if he got it wrong.

But you can still use Jackson's drive as a benchmark, much like you can use Jason Plato's drive in race two. Plato's defences were ultimately breached, but he was able to keep the attackers at bay for almost the entire race despite carrying maximum ballast (75kg).

So, what did they do?

“He could in effect corner at his leisure, box in the car behind and then blast off the corners when he chose to do so”

First of all, know where the overtaking spots are. In race two Plato did not need to take a defensive line into Duffus Dip, because it's too fast. He did not risk compromising his own line for the run down to McIntyre, the slow-right hander that presents more of an overtaking opportunity. After this, with a good run through the chicane, he could take a normal racing line through Clark – if under attack, the middle of the road was his friend, but taking as much momentum as possible onto the back straight was key.

This is about playing the long game – not necessarily defending corner by corner as some do and just hugging the inside line, but giving yourself a chance. So with or without a good run, Plato would take the middle of the



Mat Jackson took the middle line when he was most vulnerable

DEFENCE
EXHIBIT
B1

road down to the most obvious place to overtake, the final corner. He would then 'overslow' his car sufficiently to delay the person behind him – if they were alongside him, he would squirt the throttle mid-corner and run his car to the exit kerb, aggressively but fairly taking control, because, as Sims mentioned earlier, it was 'his corner'.

Plato's real genius came when the car behind him was under attack. In this situation, he used that overslow tactic to back up his pursuer. Sometimes this is known as 'parking the car on the apex'. Because he wasn't having to deal with a car coming round the outside of him – as the driver behind was tucked up behind Plato on the inside line – he could slow his Subaru more than would normally

be required. He could in effect corner at his leisure, box in the car behind and then blast off the corner when he chose to do so. This had two effects: it gave Plato breathing space, and put the chasing car under pressure.

Jackson's approach was very similar – the middle-of-the-road approach to the final corner meant he was not being suckered into defending too aggressively. This merely makes it difficult to make the corner, and then come under attack either mid-corner or on the exit and down the following straight. ITV commentator and 1992 BTCC champion Tim Harvey called it perfectly when Jackson had a poor run through the first few turns and had to defend into Clark on lap 21 of the final race at Knockhill.

PROSECUTION
EXHIBIT
A1





Backing an opponent up can put them under pressure

“That leaves him slow onto the back straight,” he said. “He’ll brake on the inside so there’s not an opening there, covers that off, stops the car on the apex. He holds the car to the right to stop someone coming back on the inside and then he drifts to the left to stop anyone coming past.”

Get it wrong, though, and the consequences can be severe. And that goes for any category. Let’s switch the focus back to F1. Verstappen’s defence from Kimi Raikkonen in Hungary, which led to contact between the Red Bull and the Ferrari, prompted many of the Dutch teenager’s contemporaries to voice their displeasure.

“I don’t think I did anything wrong,” Verstappen says of the incidents, in which he switched lines into Turns 1 and 2

on separate occasions while keeping Raikkonen at bay.

“We are fighting in the championship with Ferrari so it’s not like you open the door and let him go – he didn’t do that for me after the first pitstop. You are fighting – we are not on a Sunday drive. That’s how I approach it, we are here to fight and we are there to score points. I think Senna and Prost would have liked it as well. What I did in Budapest was just a racer’s instinct.”

The ire was targeted specifically at the way he was steering his car in the braking zone.

“That was too much moving under braking,” Force India’s Sergio Perez says. “It’s something we need to clarify. We sometimes see drivers overdefending positions and it can be quite dangerous if you’re moving under braking just in the last moment.”

While Perez concedes that inconsistent stewarding means drivers will often push the limit of what is and is not acceptable, 2009 world champion Jenson Button is more to the point. “As drivers we all know that moving in the braking zone is the most dangerous thing you can do, because the [other] guy is at 300km/h [186mph] and he probably hasn’t hit the brakes yet,” says the McLaren star.

“Moving is a no-no, and he [Verstappen] obviously did move in the braking zones.”

Button believes it is crucial that aspiring career drivers understand this message in lower formulas. Initiatives such as the ‘Race ‘n’ Respect’ campaign, launched by the Motor Sports Association, kicked off as a code of conduct for karting. It’s since evolved into something that is pushed in British Formula 4. Button argues that those who focus solely on junior categories are missing the wider lesson, though – that those in F1 should “lead by example”.

“You’re doing 100mph [in junior categories], not 220mph,” he stresses. “It doesn’t mean it’s right that you do it in junior formulas. We’re trying to stamp it out.”

“If we’re doing it then everyone else is going to do it in junior formulas, and there will be more incidents in which cars fly. It’s not right to say, ‘Well you did it’. I probably did do it, but it wasn’t right to do it, so you learn.”

“Moving in the braking zone is not racing, it’s dangerous. The whole time I’ve been in F1 you don’t move in the braking zone. That’s when you have big accidents.” ■



Nico Rosberg was penalised for running Max Verstappen off at Hockenheim



TOP TIPS CHOOSING WHEN TO DEFEND – AND ATTACK

“It’s important to know who you are really racing and then not lose time with the people you are not actually racing,” says Renault’s Kevin Magnussen.

“It’s very much a question of being realistic. Before the race we get an idea of who are our main competitors, who are our targets, who is a threat. Those guys you will always fight as hard as possible. If I am in P5 and Lewis pits leading the race and comes out behind me, there’s no reason for me to block him. You let him go.”

“It’s the same if I’m P12 and the Force India who is P5 has pitted – you need to let them go otherwise you just lose time to the people you are actually racing. It’s a fine compromise and a balance.”

Another element of battling is one that’s crucial in endurance racing: not assuming you can get away with contact.

“I guess the fact that you can maybe rub bodywork a little bit and get away with it in GTs is good, but as soon as you’re turning and touch then you are going to risk breaking a toelink or something,” says Alexander Sims. “You’re not thinking, ‘I can lean on other cars’; you are still trying to do it cleanly. The bigger thing is trying to use the traffic to your advantage, or not lose out because of it. You catch traffic in different places and you can gain or lose.”

In this instance, attack is the best form of defence, says Sims: “Sometimes it’s really difficult to make that correct call coming onto a straight, or a car is coming back across and you have to decide where to go and anticipate where the gap is going to open up.”





HOW TO USE A SIMULATOR TO IMPROVE YOUR BRAKING

AUTOSPORT GUINEA PIG **SCOTT MITCHELL** HEADS TO **POSITION ONE** TO HONE HIS TECHNIQUE IN A VIRTUAL CARRERA CUP. PRO-AM1 DRIVERS, WATCH OUT!

Many drivers consider bravery through fast corners a more desirable trait than proficiency through slower turns. Having a car on the edge through rapid sweeps is a sexier image than downshifting efficiently, rotating the car and accelerating cleanly from a corner's apex.

But with more time spent in a corner if you're travelling through it slowly, that means there's more time to be gained – or, more accurately, lost.

Since I have had opportunities to graduate from my old karting days and test or race cars – or drive different vehicles on simulators – the result has often been the same. The lines are fine, medium-to-high-speed corners are fine, and the general theory is correct. But something is missing – something gets lost in translation from what I know to be right and what I do in the car.

So, on this trip to Position One, the objective is simple: how can I improve my braking?

For those who have followed this series of simulator-based lessons, the Porsche Cup car has become our vehicle of choice. It's a well-sorted model and our on-hand driver coach Ben Barker has masses of experience with the real-world version, too. So we're

back in the 911, but this time at Silverstone National. Why? "You use the same corners more," says our simulator guru Matt Beers. "You don't have to spend two minutes getting back round to the corners again – you can just keep practising and practising."

"The technique you learn for Brooklands you can apply to any braking zone on any circuit," chips in Barker. Duly noted.

Barker's initial run sets a benchmark time but, more importantly, gives us a proper data trace. This is where the simulator comes into its own as a form of driver development – there's no hiding place. And, given we're focusing on a specific technique here, the ability to zero in on our focus is incredibly useful.

Especially as, while I note everything I'm being told, less apparent is my application. My first run isn't promising – OK, my 56.016s is only 1.5 seconds off Barker's pace, but Silverstone National has four corners...

Copse, surprisingly to me, is the best of the quartet. I have that incorrect assumption that as the fastest it should be the trickiest, yet I'm only two tenths off from entry to halfway down the next straight. But when you compare our best sectors, through Becketts I lose three tenths (and carry that down the Wellington Straight), through Brooklands 0.6s, and in Luffield I lose another 0.4s.

One thing that throws me is that my braking point feels too early – by the time I reach the apex, I'm just waiting for the corner to end. I'm not braking, but I have to coast because I can't apply the throttle this early in the corner.

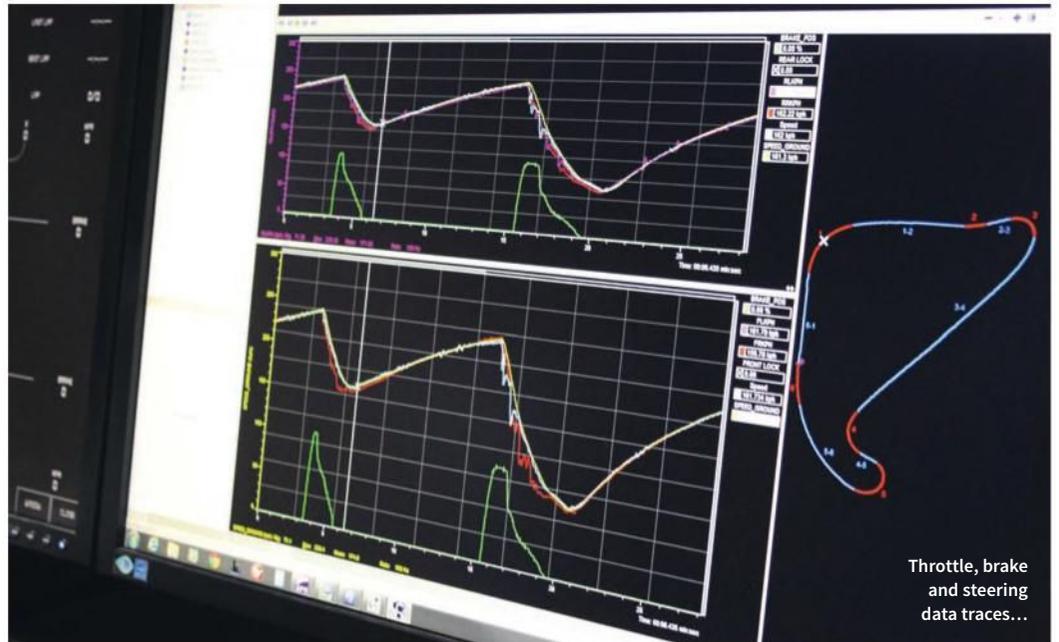
It's obvious that I'm slowing the car down too much. But, interestingly, when I try to brake later I mess the corner up entirely.

Barker and Beers are watching all the time, but this run isn't about 'live' driver coaching. They are just observers. The in-session input comes later – first, we need to have a proper debrief.

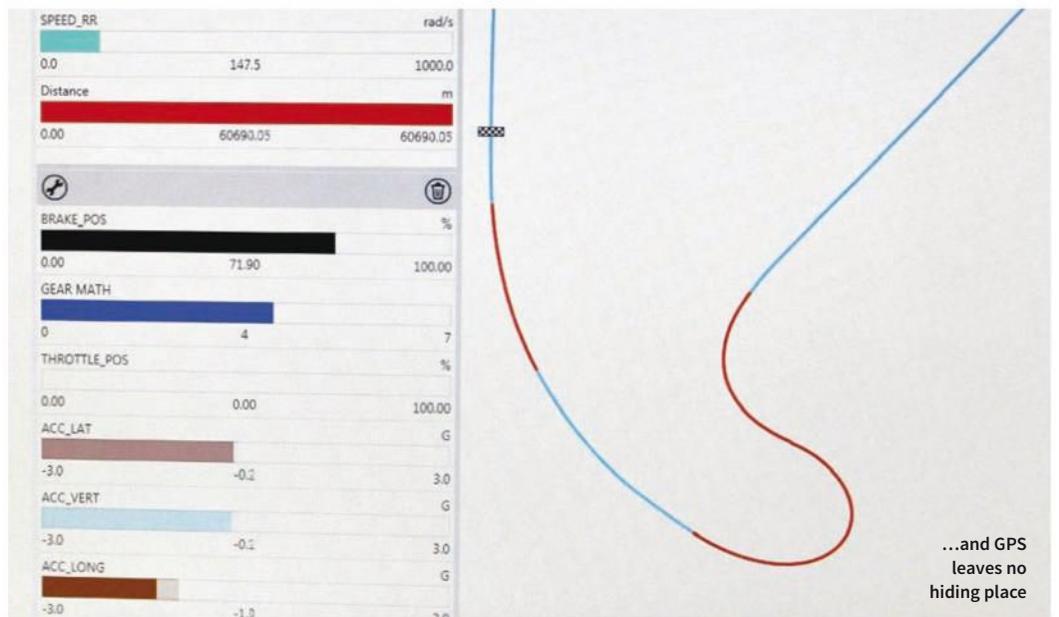
Immediate analysis reveals that the reason I'm slowing the car excessively is not because I'm braking too much, but because I'm braking incorrectly. I'm actually braking for too long, and releasing the pedal too suddenly.

Luffield is the perfect case study – my peak brake pressure is lower, but I hold it at that peak for a further 20 metres. And Barker is trailing the brake for an additional 23 metres compared to me. That's a trait more crucial in the Cup car, because, if the brakes aren't being applied, the weight of the car is shifted more to the rear – and the 911 needs to be loaded more at the front to give the tyres a helping hand.

It also means that my steering inputs are all over the



Throttle, brake and steering data traces...



...and GPS leaves no hiding place

place. I'm actually putting much more lock on, because that poor weight transfer is making it difficult to rotate the car, so I'm trying to force the nose of the car to the apex. This is a crucial lesson if I'm going to make the corner properly once I start braking later – 'understeer' isn't being induced by the car, it's being induced by the poor braking technique.

For the second run, there's improvement all round. I get down to a 55.375s, halving the deficit, and most of my times are in the 55s. The time losses at Copse and Becketts are now minimal, even if the technique is still lacking at the latter. But Brooklands and Luffield are my downfall – 0.3s and 0.2s given away respectively. At Brooklands I'm arriving at the apex completely lost because I'm still overslowing the car. A look at the data reveals that my minimum speed comes much earlier in the corner than Barker's, I'm still holding on more lock. While my trail braking has improved, I've not combined this with steering into the corner. I'm still very much driving in a 'step one... step two... step three...' fashion. What I need to do is combine these elements.

Luffield is quite simple, but a source of great frustration (as it is in reality, thanks to its extended horseshoe design). Barker suspects I'm not looking far enough round

the corner, and that means I'm braking too early and too hard, because I'm slowing for the 'first' apex. Fortunately, that gives me a clear instruction to improve.

Knowing Copse/Becketts are pretty much sorted is a welcome feeling heading into the final run. This is where testing on the National circuit pays dividends – I face the two big tests of my technique on a regular basis. There's enough time to quickly digest what's going wrong and what can be improved – with the help of the live radio link to Barker – but then it's right back at it. As an aside, we clocked up 34 laps in about two hours. Not bad going.

Even after the final run, it's clear there's work to be done – but far less than before. I end the day with a 55.159s, 0.5s slower than Barker (and with a quicker first sector – thanks to a good run through Copse and my day-long decision to grab sixth on the run into Becketts). That time loss is limited to pretty much 0.3s across Brooklands and Luffield. I can still trail the brake more, but the trace is better – "a hill, not cliff", points out Beers. And at Luffield I bite the bullet and dab the brakes later, with less intensity. The result is an entry speed 9km/h (5.6mph) higher!

The bottom line is that you can't avoid the fact that braking is utterly fundamental to cornering. And while that may seem obvious, consider how many people view

braking and cornering as independent things – they are intrinsically linked. And this was at the heart of the lesson.

It's easy to get lost with jargon such as 'trail braking', 'feel' and 'apexes' – just as it's easy to find yourself going around in circles because buzzwords like 'understeer' are misunderstood.

Set-up is not the only thing that stops a car going through a corner quickly. It's incredible just how much performance can be found in the flesh behind the wheel.

	TIMELOSS	RUN1	RUN2	RUN3
Copse		0.2s	0.1s	0s
Becketts		0.3s	0.1s	0.1s
Brooklands		0.6s	0.3s	0.15s
Luffield		0.4s	0.2s	0.15s
Total		1.5s	0.7s	0.4s



CONTACT POSITION ONE
+44 (0)20 8123 7245
or info@position-one.co.uk



AUTOSPORT

PERFORMANCE

IS GOING ONLINE...

26.08.2016

As of August 26, Autosport Performance will be part of autosport.com. Our dedicated guide to helping you become a better driver will continue to run in the magazine, but we'll now be bringing more advice more regularly through the website as well.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Video track guide in conjunction with Racelogic
- Advice on the best safety gear from SCHROTH
- Columns from the best coaches and drivers
- Bespoke features on technique, fitness, nutrition and more...



10

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

SHR FLEX

THE CUTTING EDGE HEAD AND NECK SAFETY DEVICE FROM SCHROTH



01 What safety standard is the SHR Flex made to meet?

Designed to pass the US-standard SFI Spec 38.1, the device is eligible for competition in the States and non-competition use in the UK.

02 What kind of customers should consider buying one?

The dynamic articulating collar and angle-independent low-collar design means it's not restricted to a specific type of car or seating position – making it perfect for trackday use.

03 How wide a range of cars can the SHR Flex be used in?

It can be used in virtually any vehicle that uses two FIA or SFI shoulder belts as part of the driver restraint harness.

04 How versatile is it in terms of fitting varying body positions?

An integrated padding system, and the pliable legs that form-fit the device to your upper body and chest, allows for enhanced comfort compared to a traditional, more rigid, FHR.

05 How does the SHR Flex have an advantage with belt retention?

The retention winglets at the top of the device and the patented SCHROTH SlipStop System on the lower legs combine to aid belt retention – perfect for running off-road vehicles.

06 How flexible is your head while wearing the system?

The floating tether allows a full range of motion of the head to the left and right while also adding some side stability.

07 How wide a range of sizes and fittings are available?

Available in medium and large sizing, which is based on body size and shape.

08 Is the SHR Flex compatible with all belts, or are there limitations?

Any SFI or FIA-approved harness system works with the Flex. Standard three-inch racing belts and frontal head restraint specific two-inch shoulder belts, as well as 4-5-6 or more multi-point systems, are all fine.

09 Are there any types of equipment that aren't compatible?

To avoid risking serious injury, avoid using the device with double-shoulder belts and/or with any type of sternum strap.

10 How much does the SHR Flex cost?

At \$575 (£438), the SHR Flex falls into the middle of the price range for SCHROTH-produced HANS devices – which, by the nature of their design, are restricted to specific types of racing.



CONTACT
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or germany@schroth.com

WEBSITE www.schroth.com

GRAND PRIX RACEWEAR EXPANDING YOUR CHOICES

Number one at Silverstone's industrial park. It's a fitting location for the imposing, two-storey steel and glass-fronted headquarters of "the racewear emporium". This is Grand Prix Racewear's home – but soon it will not be its only location.

The racewear specialist is expanding further along the M1, with another fully fitted bricks-and-mortar shop inside the paddock area at Donington Park. It's a key move for the company, and should benefit competitors too.

"An opportunity presented itself to locate a new shop in another prime location that will provide much easier access for those already inside the circuit," says GPR. "This will

allow GPR to interact more directly with our customers, as well as give us the chance to expand our ranges to accommodate different types of clientele and motorsport categories that attend Donington."

The shop will stock a range of racewear carefully selected from the main store at Silverstone initially, with scope to move into other relevant product areas for track users in the near future.

An added benefit of the new site will come during the pre-season period. Donington Park, like Silverstone, is one of the circuits used the most for testing – and that makes an on-site racewear specialist very useful. It also means that GPR's move is a sensible one.

GPR FACTS

DONINGTON PARK

WHERE?

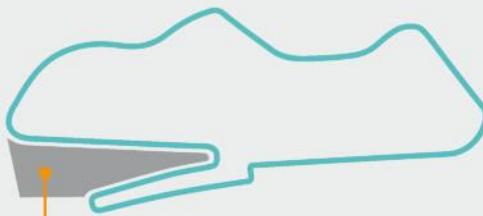
You can find GPR centrally located between paddock 1 and 2 opposite the Scrutineering Bay

WHAT DOES GPR SELL?

Helmets, seats and more

CONTACT DETAILS

Grand Prix Racewear
Melbourne Suite
Donington Park
Race Circuit
Derby
DE74 2RP
01327 855 585



NEW DONINGTON STORE

WHEN?

The new store is set to launch in September

FEATURED PRODUCTS



2015 Alpinestars KM9 Kart Suit
£124.96 + VAT



OMP FIRST Evo Race Boot 2016
£106.10 + VAT



OMP Tecnica Evo Race Boot 2016
£129.00 + VAT



OMP FIRST EVO RACE SUIT 2016
£312.20 + VAT



Alpinestars Tech 1-Race Glove 2016
£75.00 + VAT



Alpinestars Tech 1-Z Glove 2016
£95.80 + VAT



Alpinestars Tech 1-ZX Glove 2016
£104.13 + VAT



Corbeau Sprint Seat
£365.00-£585.00 + VAT



GPR

SILVERSTONE STORE

BUSINESS AS USUAL

The Silverstone store will still be GPR's flagship site and headquarters of the business. It will be open as usual, giving you more places you can go to shop for your racewear essentials and accessories. Grand Prix Racewear will soon be the exclusive dealer for a new standard range of racewear from Italian brand HRX. GPR already has examples in the Silverstone store, with more products due to launch soon.

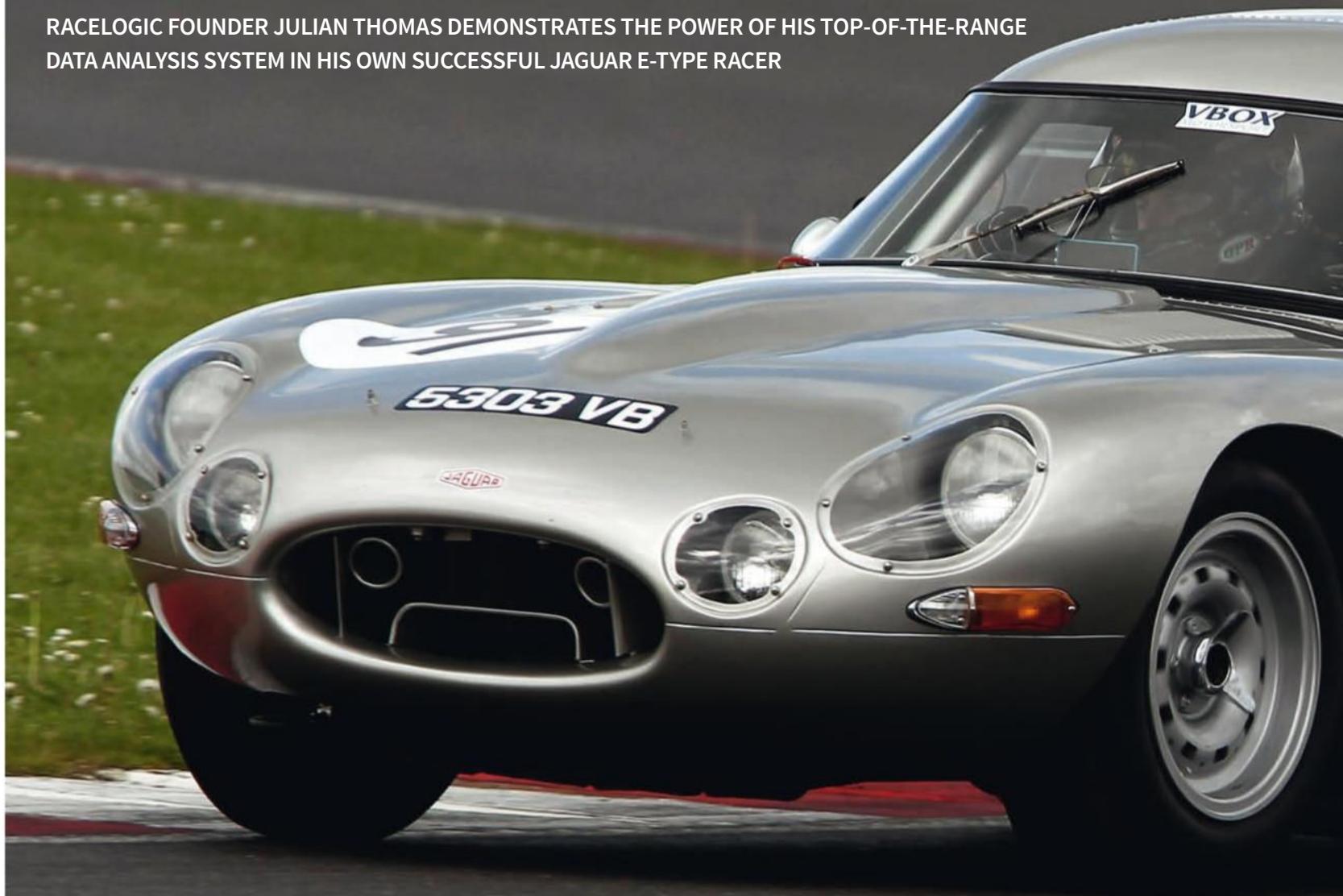
S.BLOXHAM/LAT



LATEST GEAR

RACELOGIC VBOX HD2

RACELOGIC FOUNDER JULIAN THOMAS DEMONSTRATES THE POWER OF HIS TOP-OF-THE-RANGE DATA ANALYSIS SYSTEM IN HIS OWN SUCCESSFUL JAGUAR E-TYPE RACER



Racelogic's Julian Thomas campaigns a Jaguar E-type



GPS-enabled LapTimer has a predictive function

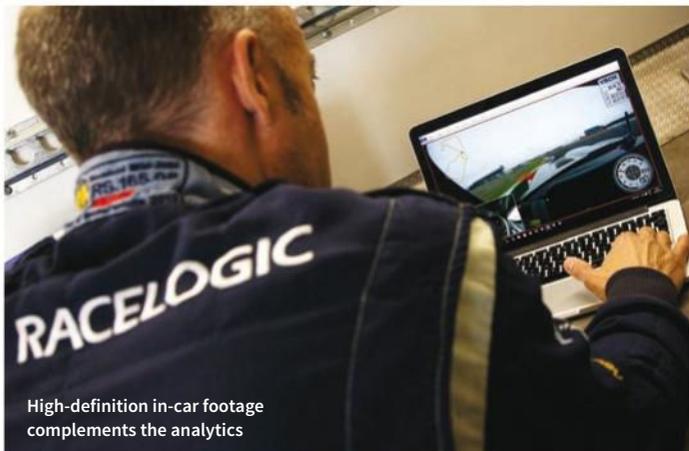


The business end is one easily mounted box



KEY VBOX HD2 FEATURES

- Dual camera 1080p system
- 10Hz GPS data logging
- Records to SD card or USB
- Predictive Lap Timing (with OLED display)
- Real-time, high-definition graphic overlay
- MP4 video & audio recording
- Internal power backup for reliable recording
- Powerful data analysis software
- Up to 32 CAN channel inputs
- USB 2.0 host interface (for recording to USB flash drive)
- Camera preview over Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth LE connectivity



High-definition in-car footage complements the analytics

The Racelogic VBOX HD2 is a top-of-the-range data analysis tool that allows drivers to develop their skills behind the wheel.

Using global positioning systems accurate to just a few centimetres, it can give real-time information about speed, lap time – and, often more crucially, technique. The system uses side-by-side video comparisons to make it easy to spot where improvements can be made. It also automatically recognises and plots 500 circuits around the world.

Such tools are now invaluable even to those racing at the lower levels of motorsport. They allow the biggest performance differentiator of all – the person behind the wheel – to continuously improve and refine their own performance to get more out of the machinery.

Club racer Julian Thomas's Racelogic company has developed the system, which allows thorough analysis of every aspect of a car on track. Originally, the technology was developed for use in karting and provided a narrow range of data, but in the following 24 years it has come a long way.

The VBOX Video HD2 is Racelogic's top-of-the-range product, although more than 8500 examples across its comprehensive range have been sold to date. Using robust and accurate global positioning systems, it can give real-time information about both technical and human performance parameters. The system uses side-by-side video comparisons to make it easy to spot where improvements in technique can be made.

The key to the success of the system is that it's simple to use. Despite the wide range of parameters it monitors, it's easy even for those unfamiliar with such data systems to find gains. As well as giving you simple indicators such as top speed, which supplies a clear picture of how well you are coming off a corner, it also helps you to analyse lines and car positioning. So if you are trying to balance up whether you should take the exact geometric racing line or compromise, this is the tool that will enable you to prove definitely which way of taking a corner is fastest. Work on multiple lines, and it will help you calculate the best option.

The basic VBOX Video HD2 consists of a single main data box, an aerial and two 1080p cameras, making it easy to install or move between cars. That allows the driver plenty of time to focus on what really matters – going quickly.

"I can pick out my fastest sector times and then overlay the video and check the speed and track data traces to see if that sector links in with the next, and sometimes the biggest gain in a slow corner can be the tighter line since you cover less distance," says Thomas.

"Some drivers swing out wide for slow turns, but that can cost you an extra 40 metres of lap length, so the system can weigh up whether it's worth travelling that extra distance for the speed you'll carry through the corner. By using the combination of video and data you can work out what works and what doesn't.

"The system is very easy to transport and install – it's one box under the dash, an antenna on the roof or back shelf and that gives you all of your geographical mapping data and time and speed.

"Everything downloads to an SD memory card and the software will allow you to overlay a lap from today, yesterday or a few years ago at the same time. That's incredibly useful to see how far you've come as a driver over time, because all of the data is stored and instantly accessible."



CASTLE COMBE

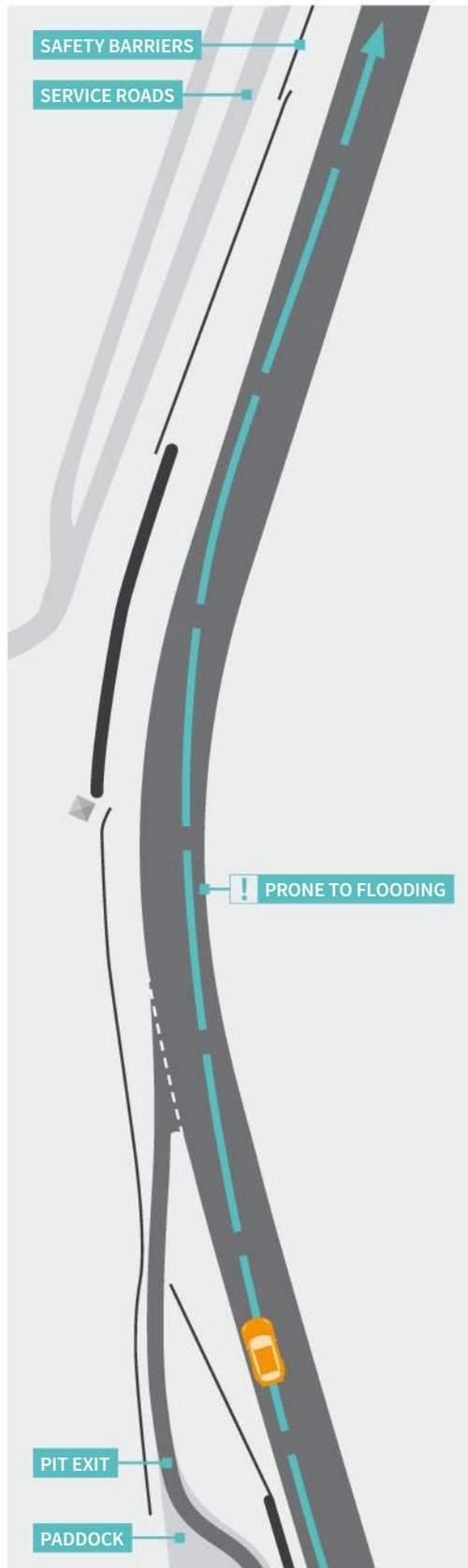
WITH BEN NORTON

WITH TWO CASTLE COMBE FF1600 TITLES AND THREE CARNIVAL WINS, NORTON KNOWS THE WILTSHIRE TRACK WELL



01 FOLLY Turn 1

In the dry, you don't have to worry about Folly, as it's an absolutely flat corner. In the wet, it can start to flood right at the apex, so you need to be conscious of that. Before they resurfaced it, there was quite a significant dip at the apex of Folly. That's still there, but it's not as pronounced now with the new Tarmac, so you don't have to worry about that quite as much.



KEY CORNER

02 AVON RISE/QUARRY Turns 3/4

The important bit here is the line that you're taking over the Rise, which can feel like a humpback bridge. You can either point your car at the apex of Quarry and ignore the apex at the Rise (line A), which is the line drivers tend to take in a race, or push the car slightly to the left as you go over the Rise and get a wider line through Quarry. I think there's a benefit to doing that in qualifying.

The rear goes light over the Rise and it's important not to overreact, get a tank-slap and spear off into the barrier on the left – there's very little runoff.

The braking point varies. If the car is working exactly how you want it, you won't brake until the moment the car settles back down after the Rise, almost before it's really come down. You can't see that, it's a feeling in the car – as it starts to compress. If you do it a moment earlier when the weight's all up in the air, that's when you're going to lock up. If it's not quite working, you might have a confidence lift before the Rise. The apex runs diagonally across the track – you go across the peak of the hill rather than taking it straight, so you're asking all the wheels to work at different heights.

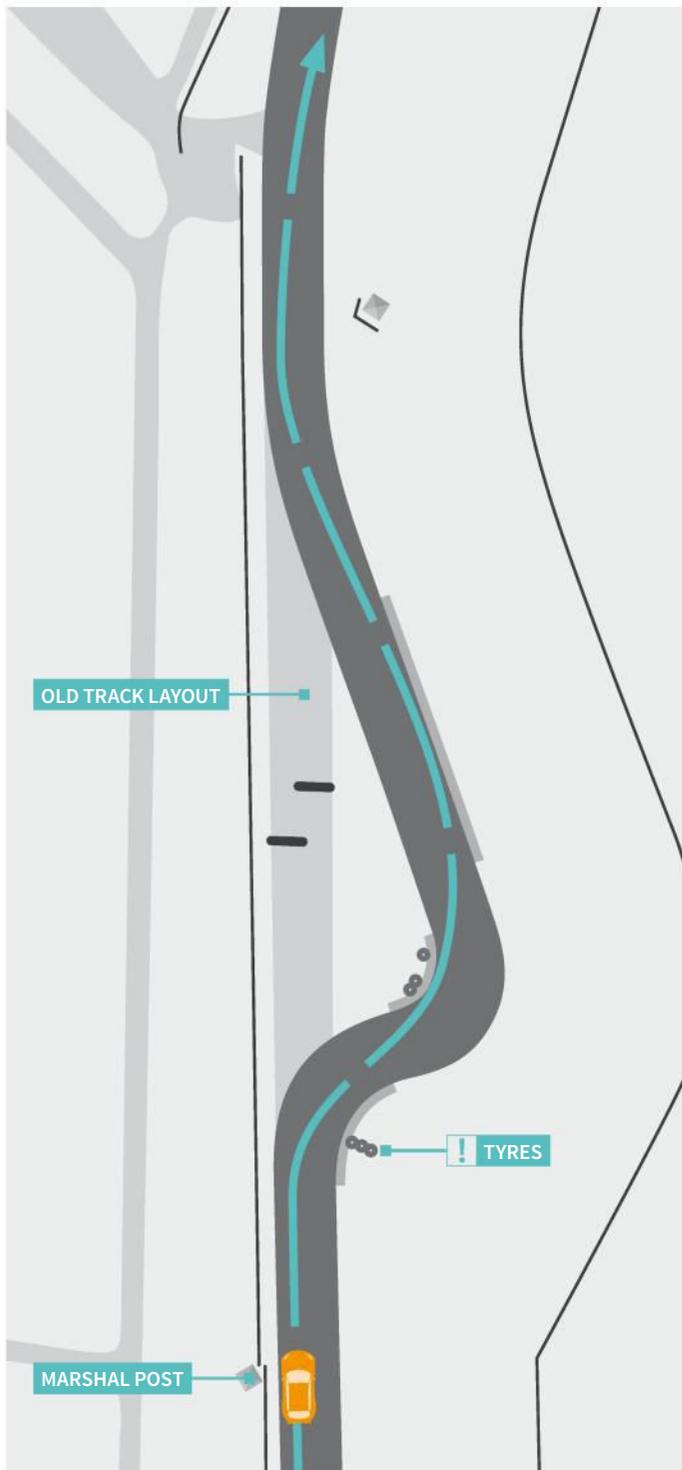
Quarry is probably one of the only 'standard' corners at Combe – a simple apex and run to the exit, and you can get on the power early. You don't find another chunk of time at Quarry, you can only lose it if you mess up your exit or don't carry enough speed through.

OVERTAKING OPPORTUNITY

The standard passing place is on the Rise and the run to Quarry. You won't make a full overtake before you get into Quarry – you'll only get yourself alongside then have to finish it on the brakes.

If you get alongside on the outside, you've got to hope your competitor gives you enough room over the Rise. Then you've got to be a little bit rude and cut their nose off on the apex of Quarry or stay round the outside. If you're approaching on the right, you can cut across your competitor, take the line and hang them out to dry a little.

If it's a two-way battle at a similar pace, you can be working on a move for two or three laps – trying to wear someone down and then pounce on them. If you're lapping within a tenth of each other, there's no opportunity to outbrake someone because it's such a fast circuit. If you had Quarry without Avon Rise before it, overtaking would be easier but you approach your biggest braking zone over a crest sideways. It's a brilliant design.



03 ESSES
Turns 5/6

You can approach the Esses in different ways. Some brake twice, some trail brake on the way in. I've tried both and find you go in and come out at the same speed either way. The standard line is to turn in quite late. There's a set of tyres on the first apex and you don't want to go in shallow and run the risk of clipping it. If you go in late, you can tease the car over to the right before the second apex.

What you're trying to do is get the car rotated for the second apex as early as possible, so you can keep your foot flat to the floor. If you don't get the car rotated, you have to come off the throttle, potentially generating understeer, and have to wait to get back on the throttle. If you decide to go for second gear rather than third, you'd go back on the power on the way in, then dab the brakes to get the weight back over the nose and rotate it for the way out through the second apex.

You're never going to outbrake someone into the Esses, but if you're alongside because they've got a bad exit from Quarry you can compromise their line through the Esses and leave them with no option but to wait for you to get back on the power at the first apex.

04 TOWER
Turn 9

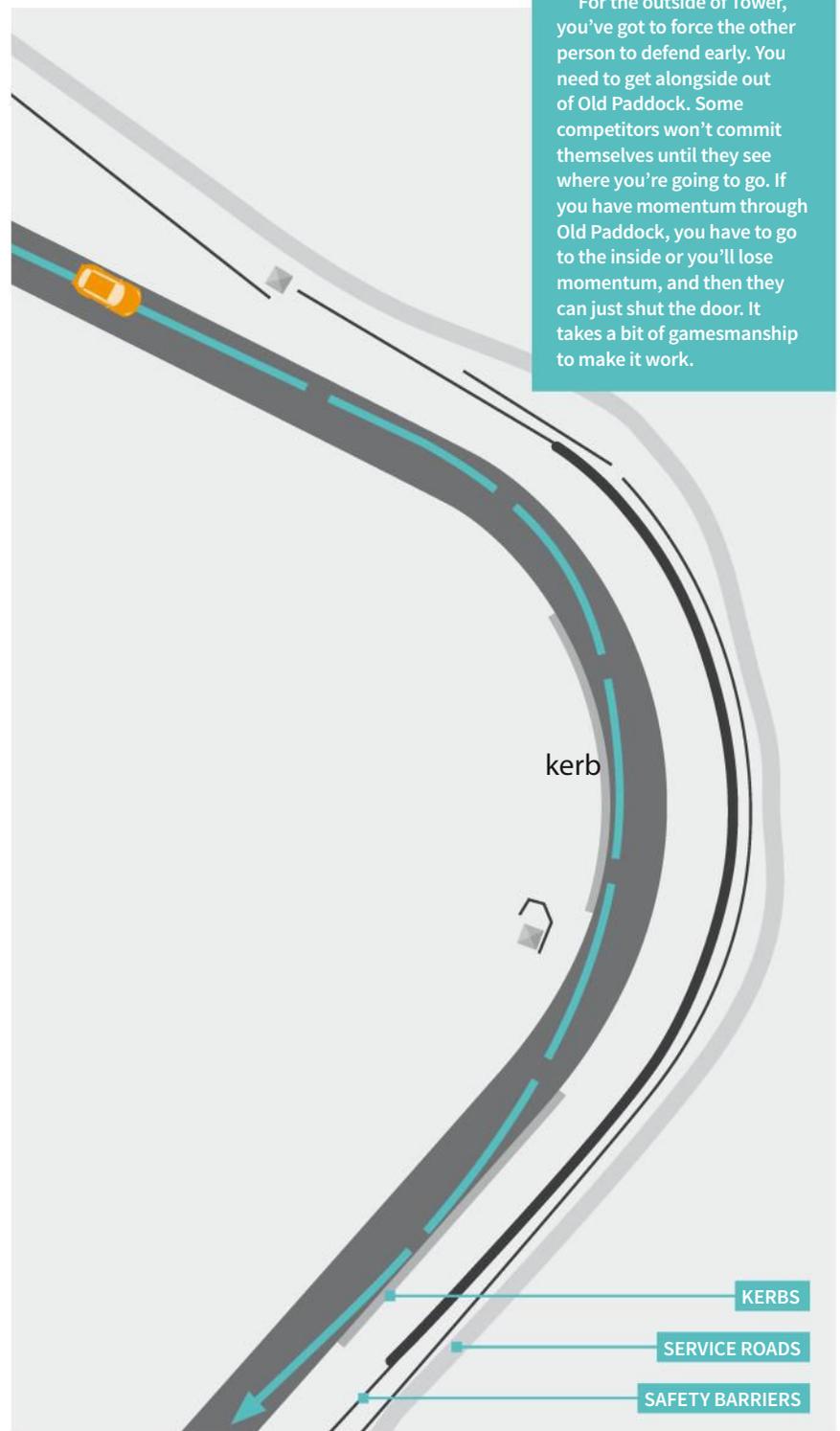
You approach in fourth gear at a very high speed and, even though you're heading downhill, you can brake very, very late. The tricky bit with Tower is it's off-camber. You've got to get to the apex and a bit more. If you don't get your wheel on the inside kerb, you'll just understeer wide on the exit. It feels like losing second after second waiting to get the car straightened back up again. When you arrive at Tower and brake down to third, you almost unsettle the rear of the car to get it to rotate.

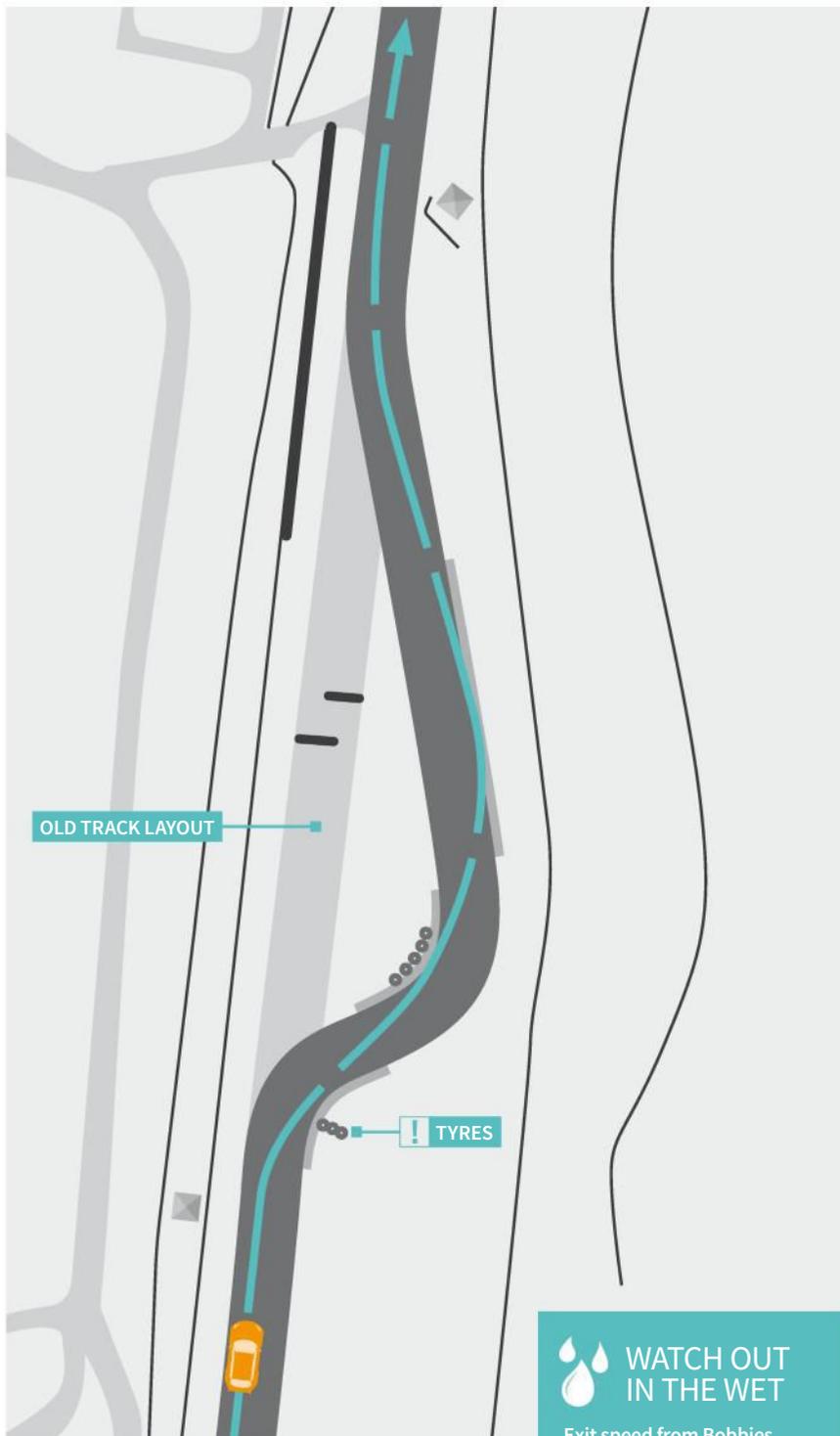
It's a very tricky corner. On a qualifying lap you can definitely lose a lot of time there. Before the resurfacing, the bumpy bits actually helped unsettle the car. Now it's smoother, I find I have to work a little bit harder to get the car unsettled through the corner.

OVERTAKING OPPORTUNITY

The most satisfying place to overtake is round the outside of Tower. When you pull that off, you really feel like you've achieved something. I've been overtaken round the outside of Camp, which frustrates me no end – but I'll take my hat off to Felix Fisher for doing it! To get around the outside of someone at a 90mph corner is pretty breathtaking stuff.

For the outside of Tower, you've got to force the other person to defend early. You need to get alongside out of Old Paddock. Some competitors won't commit themselves until they see where you're going to go. If you have momentum through Old Paddock, you have to go to the inside or you'll lose momentum, and then they can just shut the door. It takes a bit of gamesmanship to make it work.





05 BOBBIES Turns 10/11

It's a frustrating chicane because you arrive at it too soon. You've just dealt with a really tricky corner, you want to start getting back on it and this chicane appears very quickly. It's easy to outbrake yourself into the first part of Bobbies and end up over to the left way before the second apex, and then have to drive right round rather than going smoothly through. It's a fine balance between not braking too late and getting close enough to the tyres on the apex to rotate the car as the track drops away from you between the first and second part. People always run a wheel wide on the exit as you never seem to have the grip or space you're expecting.

It feels cumbersome. It's very difficult to go through there feeling you've done you're best. When you get the Esses right, you kind of dance through it, like it wasn't there. You rarely get that feeling of just nipping through Bobbies.

WATCH OUT IN THE WET

Exit speed from Bobbies is hugely important as it's uphill. In the dry, Westway on to Farm Straight is just an acceleration zone and you don't worry about it at all. But in the wet, where the hill is levelling out, if you're too aggressive on the throttle, the rear can get away from you and you spend the next 20 metres trying to get it to settle down. You need to keep those rear wheels in traction or you'll slide out to the left very, very quickly and everyone else will just drive away from you.

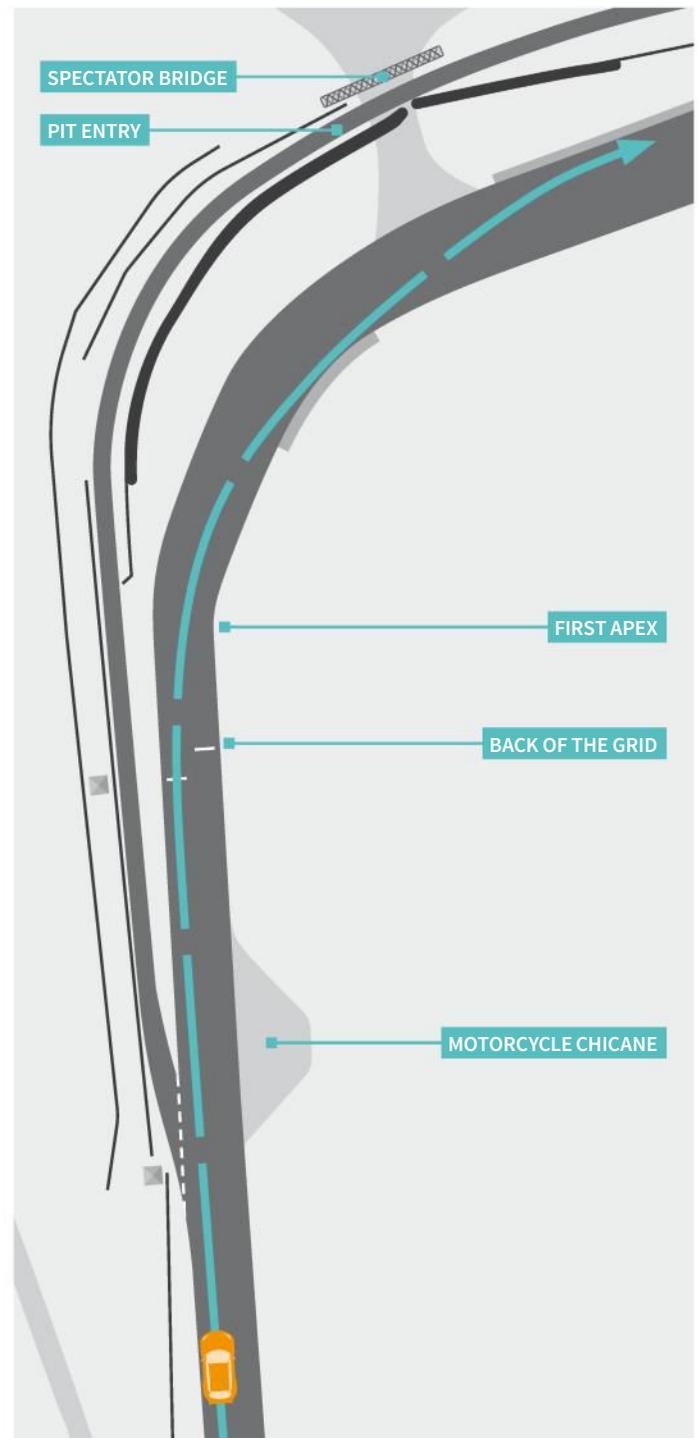
06 CAMP Turn 13

Looking from above, it's not constant radius – it turns then turns again. But what looks on a map like it might be a first apex doesn't exist. Focus on the bit that's got the kerb or you'll tighten up on the exit and have to get off the power. It's very tempting for a novice to turn in too early.

I use the last few grid slots as a braking and turn-in point. But if you have a tail wind or crosswind through there, it can massively change where you brake. A nasty crosswind means you have to brake earlier or you'll miss the apex by at least a car-and-a-half's width.

You dab the brakes and go into third, load the car up and that deals with that first section, the first slight turn into the apex. On a good lap, after that initial steering input there's nothing because you've got a four-wheel drift all the way through the corner. A bad lap is when you unsettle the car too much, get some oversteer or you're understeering all the way through.

If you look at your speed on the dash at the exit, you'll know if you're going to be on for a good lap. If you come out of there 2mph quicker, you hold that 2mph all the way up and over the Rise – that's a long way to benefit from it.



PRODUCT SHOWCASE

VALETPRO: RACECAR CLEANING

Often it is simply impossible or extremely inconvenient to wash a car before a race – no doubt there are far more pressing issues that need to be attended to. Citrus Bling from ValetPRO is a versatile spray-and-wipe cleaning product that's ideal for trackside pre-race preparation.

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KEY INFORMATION

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FOR MORE INFORMATION AND PRICES PLEASE GO TO www.cartekmotorsport.com





ARRIVE AND DRIVE

STARTING IN KARTING

HOW BOB POPE STARTED INDOOR KARTING... AND HOW HE SEES FOOTBALL CLUBS AS THE NEXT STEP

Indoor karting is such an integral part of the motorsport landscape these days that it's hard to imagine a time when it didn't exist. Yet it was only 30 years ago to the month that it came into being – the brainchild of karting pioneers Bob Pope and Martin Howell.

Both are still integral parts of the karting scene and Pope operates Teesside Karting, the world's longest kart circuit and one that is able to offer everything from topline karting through to serious arrive-and-drive events to corporates. While very much an outdoor circuit, Teesside Karting remains true to the spirit of indoor karting with its wide range of arrive-and-drive options. Built to a high standard, it shows how long this kind of karting has come in the past three decades.

"The first one we started was in the Royal Docks on Victoria Dock," recalls Pope. "They had the biggest standalone warehouse there where they used to load the liners. We were running outside when it started to rain and we asked if we could go inside. That's how it all started."

From small acorns grows a whole industry. They then moved to Camberwell Bus Garage and so on. It's just one area where Pope, who has since gone on to stage kart races all around the world – including the prestigious Le Mans 24 Hours kart race that took place earlier this month for the 26th time – has had a big impact on karting.

He's always looking for new ways to widen interest in the sport. His latest idea is to capitalise on the popularity

and the strong local links with football clubs. It's early days for the project, but it could lead to karting coming to a stadium near you soon. Well, a stadium car park anyway.

"The idea is that we will do two races on Thursday, six races on Friday and then open the circuit on Saturday for community groups to use it," says Pope of the plan to set up temporary karting circuits on what might be termed a roadshow basis.

"The aim is to get a new audience and get people in on the popularity of the football clubs. You can go to your

football ground, the race will be named after the star player at the club or the manager or whoever, and it could really work for us and for the clubs."

The next battle is to get the clubs signed up, although the objective isn't to go for the Manchester Uniteds and Arsenal of this world, but instead persuade lower-league clubs to come on board.

"You've got to find ways to get new people involved in karting," says Pope. You could argue, given his impact, that it's a motto he has lived by for a long time.

TEESSIDE KARTING

Teesside Karting is situated in the Borough of Redcar and Cleveland, just 1.6km from the centre of Middlesbrough. The facility incorporates a 2.1km, fully floodlit, all-weather karting circuit, which can be configured in a wide range of different layouts.

As well as corporate events, the company organises five important 24-hour kart race meetings – including the prestigious Le Mans event at the Alain Prost circuit in France as well as the British 24 Hour at Teesside – along with races in the Isle of Man and at Spa, and the UK University challenge.

www.teessidekarting.co.uk



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