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LOSING GRIP
ON F1 TITLE

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healthy margin
for Rosberg"



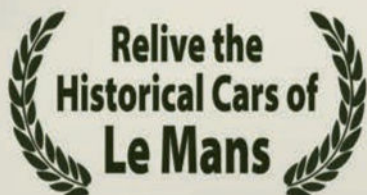
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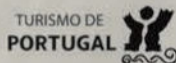
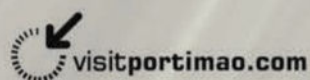
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The title is there for the taking for Rosberg

THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IS NOW OUT OF LEWIS Hamilton's hands. That doesn't mean he can't win it, as 33 points can be made up in four races easily enough, but what's certain is that if Nico Rosberg hits par — ie four second places — in the remaining races, he will prevail no matter what Hamilton does.

It's a remarkable turnaround. Going into the August break the smart money was on Hamilton taking the title. And after salvaging a third place having started at the back of the Belgian Grand Prix grid, everything looked good for him. But the engine failure in Malaysia changed the world championship battle completely.

At Suzuka the margins between success and failure were tiny. Rosberg did a superb job to take pole position by the narrowest of margins and probably would have won even if Hamilton hadn't had a slow start. The momentum is thoroughly with Rosberg. But it's not all over just yet — it's going to be fascinating to see what happens with Hamilton on maximum attack and Rosberg having to deal with the pressure of leading.

• Haymarket Media Group last week agreed to sell its motorsport brands, which include Autosport, to US motor racing content and events company Motorsport Network. After almost half a century under Haymarket's ownership, we're looking forward to the next phase of Autosport's development based on the same editorial values we have held dear since 1950.



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S. BLOKHAN/LAT

Rosberg takes control



in Japan

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor [@BenAndersonAuto](https://twitter.com/BenAndersonAuto)

OCTOBER 13 2016

5



Rosberg leads,
while Hamilton
drops to eighth

FOR MUCH OF THIS FORMULA 1 SEASON THE FOCUS HAS BEEN ON LEWIS

Hamilton, the reliability problems his Mercedes has suffered, and his valiant efforts to fight back from the early deficit in the title battle that those problems resulted in.

Hamilton was slowly but surely getting the job done, so such attention was warranted. This F1 season was shaping up to be a real comeback story for the reigning world champion; a journey of redemption against difficult odds.

And then Malaysia happened. Hamilton had that race in the bag. He was about to reclaim the championship lead. Then the big-end bearing in his Mercedes engine's crankshaft failed, and his power unit blew up catastrophically. Twenty-five points down the drain. His championship charge halted — by pure, dumb bad luck.

Focus on Hamilton's travails only increased as the F1 paddock descended on Japan. Amid the swirling hyperbole of conspiracy theories, higher powers, destiny, and Snapchat media storm-in-a-teacup controversy, Hamilton knew as well as anyone that he desperately needed a strong result, now more than ever.

With five races left this was still just about in his hands. He came

into the weekend trailing Mercedes team-mate Nico Rosberg by 23 points. With a difference of seven between finishing first and second, Hamilton just needed to win every remaining race to be guaranteed a third consecutive world championship title.

Amid all this focus on Hamilton's topsy-turvy season, Rosberg has quietly gone about winning a first world championship of his own. Apart from those early-season collisions with his team-mate in Spain and Austria, Rosberg has simply kept his head down and got on with the job. 'One race at a time' is his oft-repeated mantra, and before Suzuka he'd won eight of them. Whichever way you slice it, that is the winning form of a champion.

He surely knew that Suzuka was a pivotal weekend for him too. Lose and the championship could still be wrestled from his grasp regardless of his own efforts; win here and the championship would absolutely become his to lose.

High stakes indeed. Both drivers rose to the occasion. But



Hamilton chases Raikkonen and Hulkenberg



First stops got Hamilton ahead of Raikkonen, Perez

while Rosberg calmly delivered the perfect weekend, topping every practice session, claiming pole position and winning the race comfortably, Hamilton made a couple of key mistakes that helped hand the initiative to his chief title rival.

Firstly and crucially, Hamilton overreached in his efforts to outdo Rosberg in qualifying. Rosberg had taken pole for this race in each of the previous two seasons, and Hamilton admitted after Friday practice that Suzuka was “not up in the top of my best tracks, even though I love it”.

Hamilton felt he needed to do something special to get the edge on Rosberg here, and revealed on Saturday that he’d initially diverged on set-up. That turned out to be the wrong move. Hamilton had migrated back towards Rosberg’s settings for qualifying, but it was too little too late. He came mighty close, but missed out on a crucial pole position by just 0.013 seconds.

That put him on the damp and disadvantageous side of the grid, but there was still hope. Last season he bullied Rosberg into the first two corners and won the race. It could still be done.

Unfortunately Hamilton blew his shot with yet another abysmal start. He dumped the clutch too quickly and sat there spinning his wheels as his Mercedes dropped like a stone down the order.

“I don’t think the damp patch had really anything to do with it,” he said. “I just made a mistake.”

The start has been a weakness for Hamilton this season. Sometimes his getaways have been excellent, but far too many have been extremely poor. The Mercedes clutch is clearly not easy to handle. Rosberg has also suffered, but not as often. It seems this key discrepancy between the two could be down to minute details of operation as much as fundamental flaws with the system.

“The clutch is not perfect,” admitted Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. “It is difficult to handle in the right way. Both drivers have worked on that, going as far as changing the way the glove is sewn in order to release it [better].

“This is just one aspect, as well as how you release it and how you hold the revs, and that’s very complicated. Then there’s the random factor of getting all that right, and that is not always very easy.”

So Rosberg deserves credit for generally making a better fist of this crucial skill. Having nailed his own start from pole, he led Max Verstappen’s Red Bull and Sergio Perez’s fast-starting Force India into the first two corners as Hamilton scrambled for traction, finding himself down in eighth after the opening lap.

This was now a race of damage limitation for Hamilton. His >>

Rosberg was
in control all
weekend



first target was Nico Hulkenberg's Force India. He tried a brave move at 130R on lap six of 53, which didn't quite work out, but got the job done with the aid of DRS into Turn 1 at the start of the next lap.

Hamilton ran a slightly extended first stint, which helped him emerge from his first pitstop ahead of Perez, and Kimi Raikkonen's Ferrari. Squabbling with each other, and Jolyon Palmer's Renault, following their own first pitstops delayed these two, and helped Hamilton negate the benefit of fresh tyres from their earlier stops.

He passed Daniel Ricciardo's Red Bull (delayed off the grid by Hamilton's slow start) approaching 130R on lap 14, and cleared the long-running Williams duo shortly afterwards, passing Felipe Massa into Turn 1 and Valtteri Bottas at 130R.

Fifteen laps done and Hamilton was back up to fourth, but now almost 20 seconds adrift of the lead.

Rosberg was clear out in front, but seemingly unable to shake off Verstappen's Red Bull, which had again displayed strong long-run pace during Friday practice. The Dutch teenager closed to within 3s of Rosberg after the first round of pitstops, and initially in the second stint looked as though he might have a shot at challenging for victory. But Rosberg maintained a crucial advantage as the laps ticked off, suggesting he'd always been able to hold the Red Bull challenge in check.

"I was just managing the race," Rosberg confirmed. "There was no need to pull out 15 seconds, so it was about keeping a healthy gap. That's what I was driving to. It's also my last race on this engine cycle; I'm going to have a new one in Austin, so that definitely played into today."

Meanwhile, Hamilton was now engaged in a battle with

Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari for third. Vettel had started down in sixth, thanks to a grid penalty for driving into Rosberg at the first corner in Malaysia, but a strong start got him around Ricciardo, and team-mate Raikkonen, and into fourth on the first lap.

Vettel made short work of passing Perez in the early stages and looked very much in the fight with Verstappen over the first half of the race, but a strategic gamble from Ferrari, coupled with some time lost lapping backmarkers, cost Vettel his chance of a podium finish.

Sensing Vettel was threatening Verstappen, Red Bull pulled its driver in for a second stop on lap 28. Mercedes protected Rosberg by pulling him in for another set of hard tyres at the end of the following tour. Ferrari elected to leave Vettel out for another five

laps, during which time he briefly assumed the lead. But this also allowed Hamilton to close in rapidly as Vettel tried to stretch out tyre life.

Mercedes pulled Hamilton in for his second stop at the end of lap 33, which allowed him to jump the Ferrari

when Vettel finally stopped for a second time next time around.

Vettel emerged from the pits 1.398s behind Hamilton's Mercedes but on fresh soft tyres. He complained furiously over the team radio about being held up in traffic — had he lost less time while lapping Pascal Wehrlein's Manor, Vettel would probably have emerged from the pits ahead of the Mercedes.

"Lewis had a very good out-lap; on top of that I ran into traffic," explained Vettel, who backed Ferrari's decision to "take the risk" on strategy, even though he could have retained track position over Hamilton with a different call from the pitwall.

"I lost 1.5s at the beginning of the lap because I couldn't get past... I think it was one of the Manors. Turn 11 [the hairpin] is low grip

"Mercedes was operating 'less spicy' (Wolff's words) engine settings"



QUALIFYING



THIS WILL SURELY GO DOWN AS ONE OF THE MOST SATISFYING OF the 30 pole positions Nico Rosberg has claimed during his Formula 1 career. He was favourite going into Saturday afternoon, having topped every practice session, and he underlined that when he lapped four tenths quicker than Lewis Hamilton in Q2.

Other than a moment at Degner 2 in Q1, Rosberg's only wobble came during the first runs in Q3. He lapped 0.239s slower than in Q2, allowing Hamilton to steal ahead. This was the pivotal moment. Could he keep calm under pressure and turn things back around, or would Hamilton nick this pole position from under his nose? He rallied, driving particularly quickly through the first part of his final lap and circulating in 1m30.647s to leap back to the top of the pile.

Hamilton delivered a decent final lap of his own, fractionally quicker than Rosberg in the first and third sectors, but slower through the middle section. The reigning world champion cut the timing beam in 1m30.660s. Pole to Rosberg by just 0.013s.

“Hamilton declared he was happy, even though he missed out on pole”

“It’s been going well the whole weekend. I’ve had a good balance with the car,” said Rosberg. “The first one in Q3 wasn’t perfect – I felt a bit less grip somehow. But I knew I could do a good lap. I just had to get my head down and nail it.”

Hamilton declared himself “happy”, despite missing out on pole by what Mercedes calculated to be just 83cm around a 5.807km circuit.

“We veered off on a different tangent in terms of set-up and it wasn’t until qualifying that I got it back,” Hamilton explained. “It’s not easy going into qualifying with a completely different car, so that’s why I’m relatively happy.”

Kimi Raikkonen produced a strong effort to qualify third fastest for Ferrari, three tenths away from Rosberg.

“It’s pretty much the same car that we raced a week ago,” said Raikkonen, who was 0.079s quicker than team-mate Sebastian Vettel, and the only other driver to lap below 1m31s. “It’s been tricky to get the right balance, but I’m positively surprised how well the car has been behaving and how quick it has been.”

The Red Bull drivers locked out row three, Max Verstappen ahead of Daniel Ricciardo for the second race in a row. Ricciardo complained that his Renault engine was “bleeding” power on the straights, explaining the 0.062s deficit to his team-mate. “I hate making excuses, but that’s just how it was unfortunately,” he said.

Haas surprised the midfield by getting two cars into the top 10 for the first time, Romain Grosjean matching Sergio Perez’s Force India to the thousandth in Q3. The team put the result down to a breakthrough with its Singapore upgrade package, specifically stability modifications to the front wing.

“We had to make it a bit more stable because one of the flaps was moving,” explained team boss Gunther Steiner. “We knew if we could get a lap together we would be pretty good, but we thought getting two cars into Q3 was too ambitious. Everything came together, the stars aligned.”



Vettel gambled on a switch to softs for final stint, but could not challenge Hamilton

already, I locked up behind him and lost another chunk of time, which led to the fact that we came out behind even though we were convinced we should have come out ahead.

“We were not lucky today when we hit the blue flags. Lewis got around four seconds just around the lapped cars at that point. That’s how it goes. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose.”

Vettel’s only hope of retaliation lay in the fact that he was now on the fresh soft tyres he should have been using to attack Verstappen, compared to Hamilton’s hard-compound Pirellis. He pushed hard initially, but couldn’t live with the Mercedes in a straight line.

Mercedes was operating “less spicy” (Wolff’s words) engine settings, after the Malaysia failure, but they had less impact in detuned race mode than in qualifying. Vettel burned up his tyres in Hamilton’s slipstream, and his hopes of a podium faded with them. >>



“ERICSSON IS THE UNSUNG HERO OF THIS SESSION. HE WORKS HARDER THAN ANYONE”



SUZUKA IS A REAL DRIVER'S favourite, and it's easy to see why. It's another of Formula 1's classic tracks – fast and flowing. Confidence is key, because it's taken at such high speed. An average lap around this place is not much slower than at Spa or Silverstone.

I watch first practice from the outside of the Esses, the famous five-corner snake of asphalt that defines the opening part of the lap. This is a great spot to see F1 cars flowing through linked corners at high speed.

You can spot who has confidence and who's

searching for it. The Ferrari, Red Bull and Mercedes drivers display nice expansive lines, as do Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button, Valtteri Bottas, and Marcus Ericsson, who understands this track well from his Japanese F3 days.

Ericsson is the unsung hero of this session for me. He works harder than anyone to manipulate what remains a difficult car from one side of the track to the other, to maximise the speed he can carry.

It's not easy to do, because the car doesn't like such changes of direction, but he keeps it lit anyway, displaying impressive commitment.



Ericsson seizes the Sauber by the scruff

I move around to the tricky Degner turns for final practice. The Mercedes, Ferrari, Red Bull, McLaren and Toro Rosso all stand out for their speed and poise. The Toro Rosso is particularly good on turn-in, but it and the McLaren simply arrive at a much lower speed than the top cars.

The Force India is fast but

laury; the Williams looks stable, but not as quick.

The Haas gives up grip from mid-corner to exit, while the Renault matches Haas and Williams on entry but rides the mid-corner bump so badly that the car bounces heavily on its suspension, forcing the drivers to wait before picking up the throttle again.

The Sauber is a bit slower but rides the bump slightly better. The Manor simply cannot compete for entry speed.

Suzuka is a circuit that brings the best out of F1 cars. But if your tools are blunt, you're going nowhere fast.

BEN ANDERSON



Rosberg kept Verstappen's challenge in check



Rosberg's 23rd F1 win gives him a 33-point lead

The hard driving in the interim set Hamilton into a fierce pursuit of Verstappen's Red Bull. With eight laps to go Hamilton closed to within DRS range, but Verstappen did a good job of managing the gap and tactically using his recovered electrical energy to repel Hamilton's advances on the main straight.

The way Verstappen focused on the exit of the final chicane to keep the Mercedes out of reach was reminiscent of the tactics that helped him beat Raikkonen to victory in May's Spanish GP. But Hamilton gradually ground Verstappen down, and on the penultimate lap he made his move. Hamilton used superior drive coming off the Spoon Curve to close on him along the back straight and through 130R.

Bearing down on the final chicane, Hamilton made for the space on the inside, only for Verstappen to employ one of his patented late defensive moves as they approached the braking zone. Seeing the gap rapidly shrinking, Hamilton swerved left at the last moment and took to the escape road.

He complained over team radio that "Max moved under braking", and Mercedes later protested Verstappen's driving, alleging he "drove erratically and in a dangerous manner"; according to FIA documentation. But this protest was quickly withdrawn, with Hamilton's full support, so the result stood, with Rosberg claiming victory from Verstappen, and Hamilton third.

It was a good recovery drive from Hamilton, but this was a weekend in which he really needed much more than that. He needed to dominate in the way he'd done in Malaysia.

Some suggested Hamilton self-destructed at Suzuka, perturbed by the disappointment of Sepang and perceived slights from sections of the media following his antics at the pre-event FIA press conference. But Rosberg saw no such thing from his chief rival.

"I haven't seen any self-destruction," he countered. "The Lewis I saw was massively motivated and focused as ever. He was working the longest hours I've seen him work with the engineers in many, many months, trying to find those little bits of lap time. Anyway it's about me getting the best out of myself, and not focusing on what Lewis's state of mind is."

This was a superb performance from Rosberg, who found his

groove nice and early and never looked back. Hamilton worked hard to get the upper hand and generally drove well, but the better man won.

"From the get-go I felt really comfortable out on track," Rosberg added. "I was able to push

throughout the weekend and got everything right. It's really been a perfect weekend from me, and I'm very happy with that."

With his ninth victory of the season in the bag, Rosberg leads the championship by 33 points with four races to go. He can now afford to finish second to Hamilton at every remaining race to be crowned.

If Malaysia was the race in which fate stole Hamilton's thunder, Japan was the moment when Rosberg seized the chance to take firm control of this title battle with a brilliant, methodical display. That tiny edge in qualifying and a far superior start ultimately did the damage. The destiny of this championship is now very much in Rosberg's hands. *W*

“Rosberg was superb. He found his groove early and never looked back”



FERRARI QUICKER THAN RED BULL IN JAPAN

FERRARI MOVED AHEAD of Red Bull in Formula 1's competitive order during the Japanese Grand Prix weekend, according to Sebastian Vettel.

Kimi Raikkonen and Vettel were third and fourth quickest ahead of Red Bull pairing Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo in qualifying, but started eighth and sixth after penalties for a gearbox and causing a collision respectively.

In the race Vettel recovered to challenge Lewis Hamilton for the final podium spot, while Raikkonen salvaged fifth, ahead of Ricciardo.

"There have been a lot of positives this weekend, despite the penalty," Vettel said. "The pace was good – we were the second-quickest car out there.

"I'm not entirely happy, because if the podium is there for grabs and you don't take it then it always feels a bit disappointing.

"But if you compare here to Silverstone, track characteristics are similar, plus it was quite windy, we've improved a big amount since that time."

Ferrari tried a host of new aerodynamic parts in Japan, and Raikkonen believes they made a "small difference".

"I wouldn't say this is why we were suddenly more competitive," he added. "But all of those things are helping."

Mercedes withdraws Verstappen protest

MERCEDES PROTESTED MAX Verstappen after the Japanese Grand Prix, only to quickly withdraw its claim against the Red Bull star's driving standards.

In a bizarre 90 minutes following the conclusion of the Suzuka race, Mercedes initially protested Verstappen's defensive manoeuvre under braking into the final chicane on the penultimate lap, citing Verstappen had driven "erratically and in a dangerous manner" as per Article 27.5 of Formula 1's sporting regulations.

The stewards convened a hearing, but were forced to defer it to the United States GP, since both Hamilton and Verstappen had already left the circuit.

But Mercedes quickly withdrew the protest, allowing the result – which means the team cannot now be denied a third consecutive constructors' championship crown – to become official.

Moments before the withdrawal was declared, Hamilton sent out a tweet that

read: "There is no protest from either myself or @MercedesAMGF1. One idiot said we have but it's not true. Max drove well, end of. We move on."

That was then deleted and replaced with a new message: "There is no protest from myself. Just heard the team had but I told them it is not what we do. We are champions, we move on. End of!"

A Mercedes spokesperson later stated the protest had been withdrawn "in the interests of establishing a final official result this evening once it became apparent the hearing cannot be concluded today [Sunday]".

Speaking about Hamilton's race, Mercedes technical chief Paddy Lowe said: "Lewis drove one of his strongest races of the season to recover to third – and it could have been second save for a rather controversial manoeuvre by Verstappen.

"He made up a huge amount of time to finish only six seconds away from Nico."



TEE/LAT

McLaren-Honda laments lack of speed at Suzuka

McLAREN'S DISAPPOINTING PERFORMANCE AT Honda's home grand prix was a "nasty surprise" according to double world champion Fernando Alonso.

While the team scored points in six of the eight events leading up to the Japanese GP, it was off the pace all weekend at the circuit owned by its engine supplier. Jenson Button suggested that the Suzuka layout, while popular with drivers, is one of the least suited to McLaren's strengths.

McLaren struggled for grip in the high and medium-speed corners, which is likely down to a combination of incorrect aerodynamic settings, suspension geometry, and an engine that remains too heavy despite Honda's recent efforts to lighten the block. The drivers reported decent balance with the chassis, but a lack of overall grip in the corners. Alonso and Button finished a distant 16th and 18th in the race.

"Our race today reflected the whole weekend: it was just anonymous," said Alonso. "To finish 16th and 18th is a nasty surprise, especially after finishing seventh in Singapore, and seventh and ninth in Malaysia.

"It was clear that the layout of the track didn't suit our package – we lacked downforce for the faster corners.

"I know our car is much more competitive than we were able to show today, and I'm disappointed about putting on such a poor show at Honda's home race."

Button, who made it clear earlier in the weekend that expectations were always low for Suzuka, said the race was even worse than expected.

"It's a shame that this is our bogey track as it's our second home," he said. "We were a long way behind the points, a very tough day and a tough weekend. It was pretty horrific."



XPB IMAGES



TEE/LAT

Ricciardo compromised by Raikkonen penalty

DANIEL RICCIARDO BELIEVES KIMI Raikkonen's penalty, which moved the Red Bull driver up from fifth to fourth on the grid, led to his disappointing result in the Japanese Grand Prix.

Ricciardo finished sixth, one place behind Raikkonen. He blamed being moved to the damp side of the grid, and the need to go around the slow-starting Lewis Hamilton, for slipping behind Sergio Perez's Force India early on, which he feels ruined his race.

"Kimi's penalty seemed like a great thing, then I saw the right-hand side of the grid and was wishing I didn't gain that position," Ricciardo told Autosport.

"It seemed it was wetter further up the grid, and that allowed Perez to get us. Being stuck behind that slower car at the beginning really shaped the race for us."

Ricciardo also slipped behind Sebastian Vettel on the first lap. Ricciardo jumped Perez in the pits, but fell behind Raikkonen at the second round of stops.

WILLIAMS LOSING TO FORCE INDIA

NINTH AND 10TH FOR Felipe Massa and Valtteri Bottas in the Japanese Grand Prix meant Williams lost further ground in the battle with Force India for fourth in the constructors' championship.

Williams missed out on Q3 at Suzuka, but the resultant free tyre choice and a one-stop strategy

helped it make the points in a difficult race.

"We seemed OK in slow-speed corners, but in all these high speed corners, which this track is full of, we seem to be slow," explained Bottas. "It's kind of turned vice versa from the problems we had in the last two years, so we need to look into it."

Q&A

PAT SYMONDS, WILLIAMS CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER



Why do you think Force India has the edge at the moment?

You see it on a circuit like this because this is a downforce circuit. The reason we've been good at the tail end of the last two years is good development programmes. We've lost some of that this year. Force India has done some really good work upgrading, whereas ours have not been particularly successful. We certainly haven't advanced the way we have done in the last couple of years, and it's starting to show quite a lot I think.

Any particular reason for that?

I guess this year, because we were doing less because of the new cars [for 2017], it became ever more important you hit things right. We put a lot of effort into the front wing, which actually didn't pay off anywhere near the amount we hoped it would. I knew we had come into this year below the targets we had over the winter, so the FW38 hadn't moved on as far as it should've done. And all of us have just spent our time chasing down Pirelli prescriptions. The pressures and cambers we have to run mean you've got to try different things. That's stopped us working on the bits that make the car go faster.

Today summed up the battle for fourth. How's it looking for the last four races?

I think they are a bit quicker than us on a lot of these circuits. Of the four coming, probably we can be a bit closer, but what it will really come down to is how we race. And not just us finishing, but who else finishes. If people in front start dropping out then it counts so much more.

XPB IMAGES



Grosjean 'so frustrated' as Haas fails to score

ROMAIN GROSJEAN SAID HE HAS "never felt so frustrated" after narrowly missing out on a points finish for Haas at the Japanese Grand Prix.

Successful work unlocking performance from a new front wing introduced last month in Singapore helped Haas to get both cars into Q3 for the first time.

Grosjean started eighth, but slipped back with a bad start and also damaged his first set of tyres by locking up while avoiding a collision with Nico Hulkenberg's Force India at Turn 1.

He battled back to 11th, but could not overtake one-stopping Williams

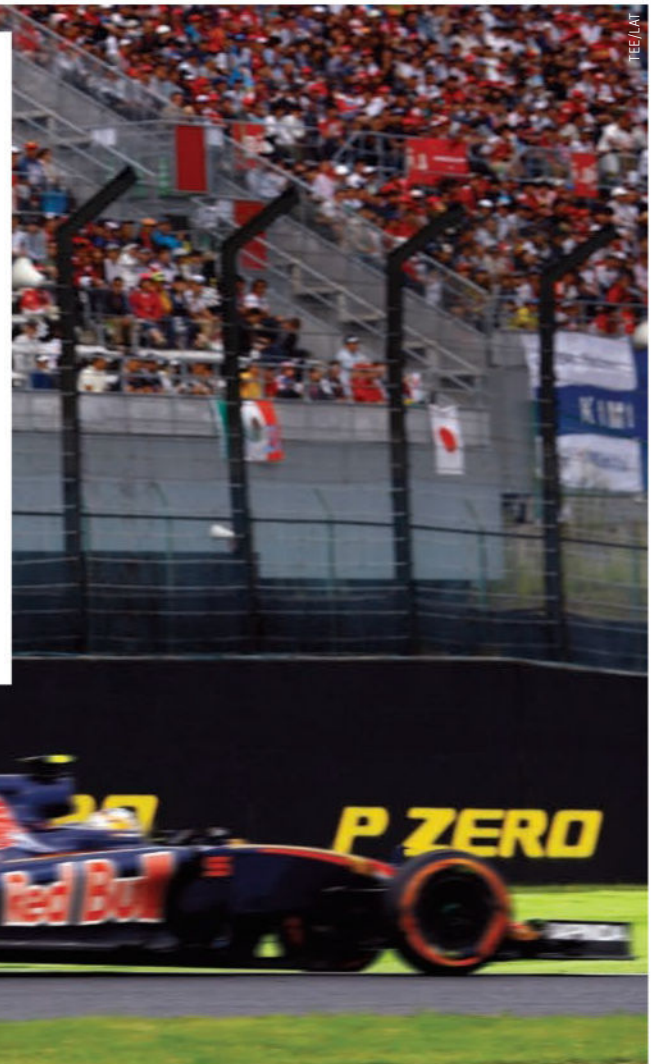
pair Felipe Massa and Valtteri Bottas, as team-mate Esteban Gutierrez — who clashed with the Toro Rosso of Carlos Sainz Jr (below) — slumped to 20th after starting 10th.

"Unlucky for us it was the race you didn't want to be in Q3, because you had to start with the softs," Grosjean said.

"I think we could have pitted a bit earlier and jumped the two Williams.

"I also lost a lot of time with Palmer mid-race. He was weaving a lot on the straights. That cost me 5.5 seconds — enough to be in front of the Williams.

"We didn't deserve to miss out [on finishing in the points]."



Lack of top speed makes race 'impossible' for Toro Rosso

CARLOS SAINZ JR SAID a lack of top speed made it "impossible" for Toro Rosso to have any impact in the Japanese Grand Prix.

Daniil Kyvat was the best-placed Toro Rosso driver in 13th, 24 seconds off the points, with Sainz 17th.

The team has scored just two points in the past six races. Its form has dipped as its 2015-specification Ferrari engine has become

increasingly uncompetitive.

Based on the speed-trap figures from qualifying, which give the most accurate comparison as all cars use the DRS with comparable tyre condition, fuel loads and engine settings, Toro Rosso was the second-slowest car on top speed — 6.5mph slower than Mercedes and just 0.4mph faster than McLaren.

"The problem with

the top speed is it leaves you very little in terms of strategy because we know it is impossible to overtake," said Sainz. "Today I wasn't even able to clear a McLaren, which is the second-slowest car in the field.

"Our flexibility on strategy is reduced and the choice [made for] me, leaving me out and having to pass five cars at the end, was impossible."



Palmer hails jump into the midfield

JOLYON PALMER'S 12TH-PLACED FINISH, AND ability to match the Williams drivers during spells of the Japanese Grand Prix, suggests that Renault is gradually breaking into the midfield.

The Renaults both made the top 10 in final practice, but slipped back in qualifying as Palmer scraped into Q2 and qualified 16th.

He completed the race on a similar one-stop strategy to the Williams duo, who finished ninth and 10th, and was encouraged to match their pace in clean air.

"The pace was really good, the same as Massa," Palmer told Autosport. "I just got caught up in traffic quite a lot, so lost a bit there.

"We managed to jump into [the midfield]. McLaren had a bad weekend, Toro Rosso were slipping [back].

"It's exciting. We expected this track to be worse than Malaysia, so 12th, when every car finished, is very good."



FERRARI HAS EYE ON 2017

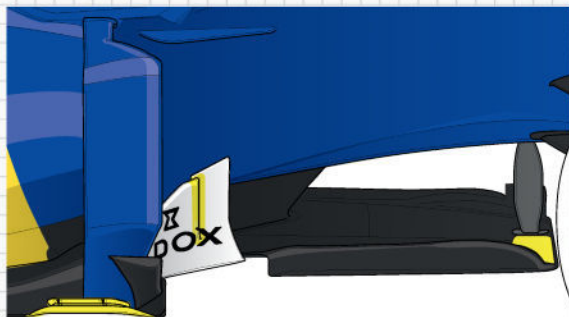
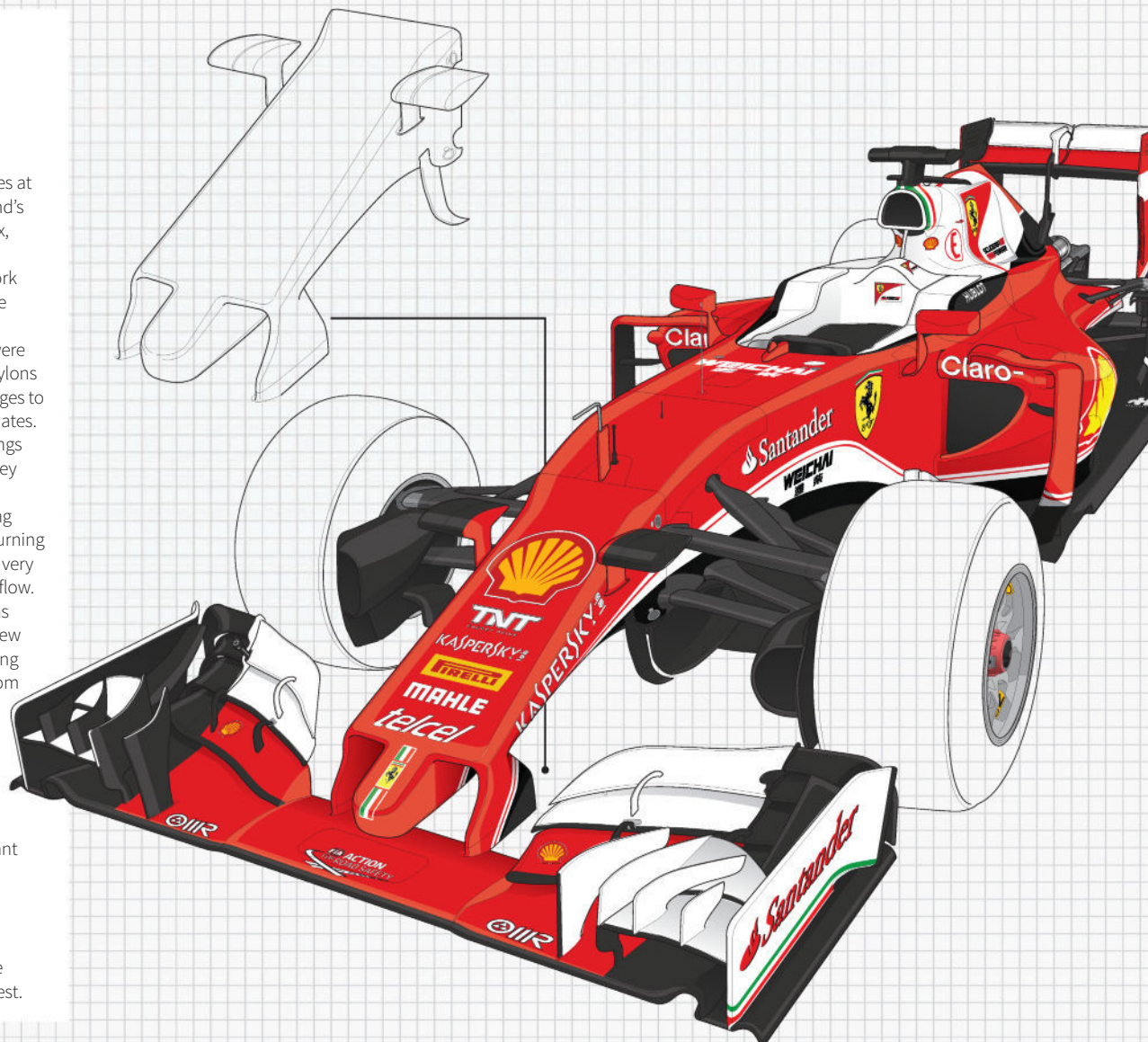
After introducing aerodynamic updates at the previous weekend's Malaysian Grand Prix, Ferrari continued to work on the bodywork along the edge of the raised chassis.

At Suzuka there were revised front-wing pylons and also detail changes to the front-wing endplates.

The wing mountings are interesting, as they continue the recent Ferrari theme of using the wing pylons as turning vanes, which can be very influential on the airflow.

The Suzuka pylons were mated to the new turning vanes, batwing and T-tray splitter from Sepang. These help to create an airflow separation between the front-wheel turbulence and the car's bodywork.

This is an important area to understand because the 2017 regulations open up this area for more development, hence Ferrari's recent interest.



SAUBER'S FLOOR FOCUS

Like Ferrari, the airflow along the edge of the car was the focus of Sauber's Suzuka developments. The team added three new parts to the floor: new vanes atop the T-tray splitter, new bargeboards and a new

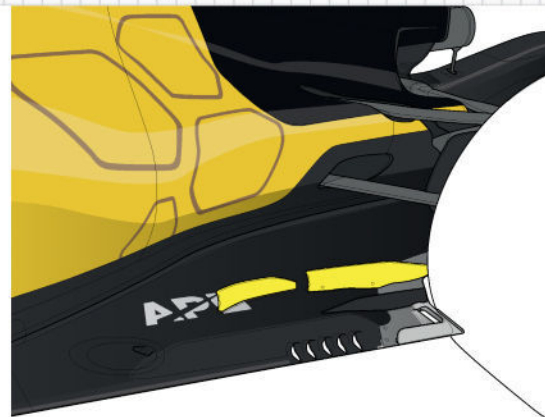
flick-up on the outer edge of the floor.

In combination these parts work to manage airflow under the floor, help seal the floor's edge and increase pressure above the floor for more downforce.

RENAULT TARGETS TYRE SQUIRT

Engine development and set-up work have improved Renault's pace in recent races. But at Suzuka more new parts were added to the RS16.

All these changes affect the gap between the rear tyre and diffuser, controlling the tyre wake that tends to upset diffuser performance. This is an effect known as tyre squirt. With teams unable to blow the exhaust into this area since 2014, vanes and slots have been

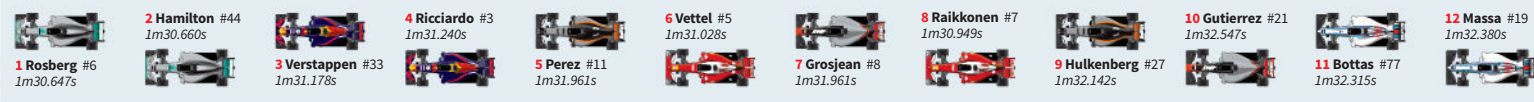


added to try to recreate some of the sealing effect.

In Japan this led Renault to add an extra fin ahead of the two already fitted, as well as reshaping some of the

metal insert that forms the edge of the floor. This may have had the objective of making performance more consistent, as much as adding downforce.

F1/JAPANESE GRAND PRIX RESULTS



Race results / 53 laps – 191.054 miles						Fastest laps			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES	TIME IN PITS	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes	1h26m43.333s	48	Yellow	45.823s	1	Vettel	1m35.118s
2	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Renault	+4.978s		Yellow	45.643s	2	Hamilton	1m35.152s
3	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+5.776s		Yellow	45.721s	3	Ricciardo	1m35.511s
4	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	+20.269s	5	Yellow	46.113s	4	Raikkonen	1m35.990s
5	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari	+28.370s		Yellow	46.006s	5	Rosberg	1m36.049s
6	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull-Renault	+33.941s		Yellow	48.857s	6	Verstappen	1m36.386s
7	Sergio Perez	Force India-Mercedes	+57.495s		Yellow	46.326s	7	Perez	1m36.756s
8	Nico Hulkenberg	Force India-Mercedes	+59.177s		Yellow	45.784s	8	Grosjean	1m37.020s
9	Felipe Massa	Williams-Mercedes	+1m37.763s		Yellow	22.463s	9	Button	1m37.177s
10	Valtteri Bottas	Williams-Mercedes	+1m38.323s		Yellow	25.007s	10	Hulkenberg	1m37.351s
11	Romain Grosjean	Haas-Ferrari	+1m39.254s		Yellow	49.170s	11	Kvyat	1m37.597s
12	Jolyon Palmer	Renault	1 lap		Yellow	23.452s	12	Sainz	1m37.723s
13	Daniil Kvyat	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	1 lap		Yellow	45.933s	13	Gutierrez	1m37.775s
14	Kevin Magnussen	Renault	1 lap		Yellow	23.072s	14	Massa	1m37.785s
15	Marcus Ericsson	Sauber-Ferrari	1 lap		Yellow	24.011s	15	Bottas	1m37.844s
16	Fernando Alonso	McLaren-Honda	1 lap		Yellow	45.818s	16	Palmer	1m37.978s
17	Carlos Sainz	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	1 lap		Yellow	45.924s	17	Wehrlein	1m38.000s
18	Jenson Button	McLaren-Honda	1 lap		Yellow	47.717s	18	Magnussen	1m38.036s
19	Felipe Nasr	Sauber-Ferrari	1 lap		Yellow	25.131s	19	Alonso	1m38.208s
20	Esteban Gutierrez	Haas-Ferrari	1 lap		Yellow	47.902s	20	Ocon	1m38.380s
21	Esteban Ocon	Manor-Mercedes	1 lap		Yellow	49.229s	21	Ericsson	1m38.496s
22	Pascal Wehrlein	Manor-Mercedes	1 lap		Yellow	50.091s	22	Nasr	1m38.544s

WEATHER Dry, overcast; track 25C, air 21C WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 132.183mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 136.566mph ● New ○ Used ● Ultra Soft ● Super Soft ● Yellow ● Medium ● Hard ● Wet ● Intermediate

1

Scuderia Toro Rosso has achieved only a single points finish in the past six races

2

This was the first time the new Haas team got both cars into the top 10 in qualifying

3

Mercedes won its third constructors' championship – only five other teams have more

7

This was only the seventh time in history that every starter has been a classified finisher

23

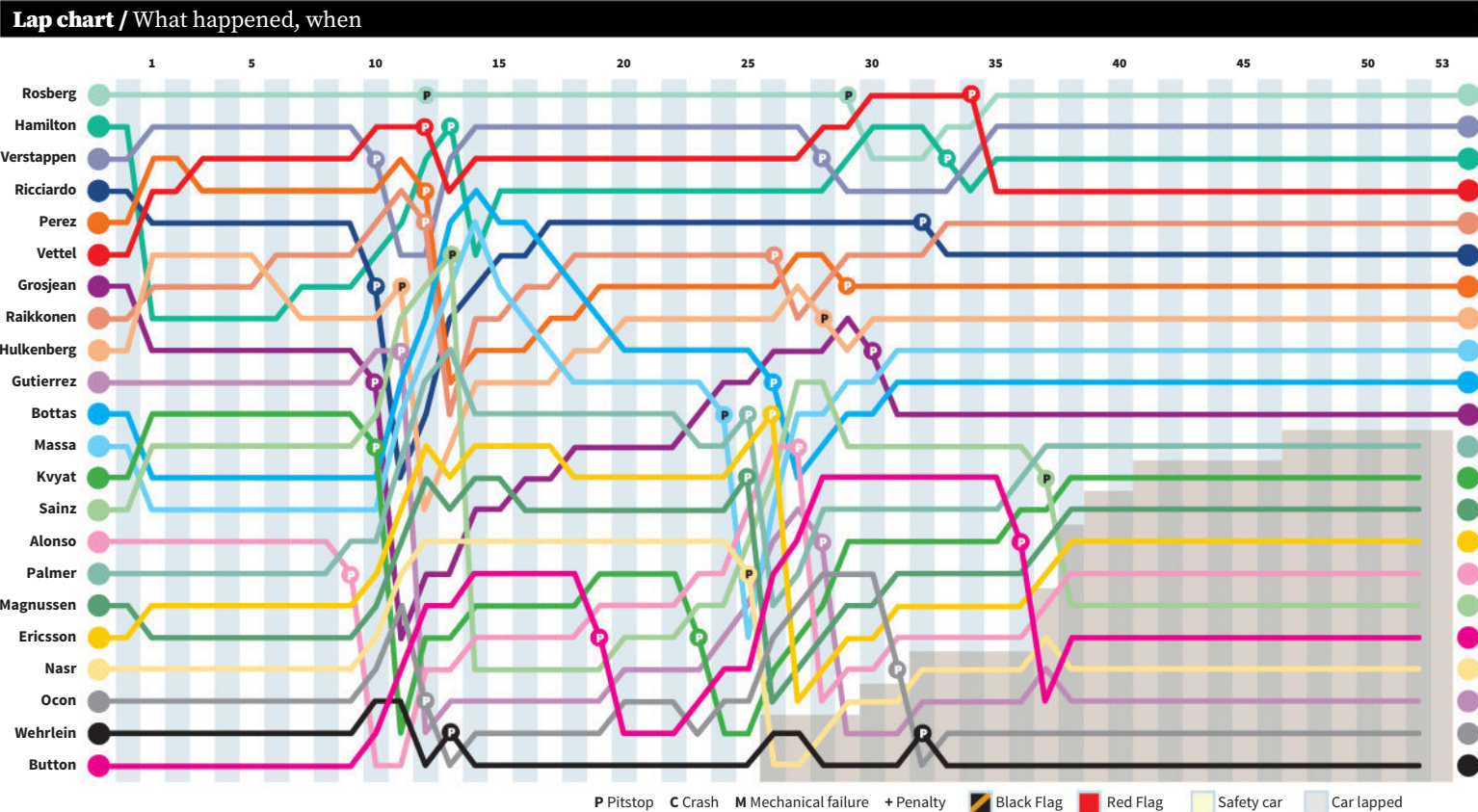
Rosberg now has 23 victories, drawing level with Nelson Piquet in 12th in the all-time list

100

Hamilton took his 100th podium. Only Michael Schumacher and Alain Prost have scored more

16006

One race on from his 300th start, Jenson Button passed 16,000 laps raced in F1





13 Kvyat #26
1m32.623s



14 Sainz #55
1m32.685s



15 Alonso #14
1m32.689s



16 Palmer #30
1m32.807s



17 Magnussen #20
1m33.023s



18 Ericsson #9
1m33.222s



19 Nasr #12
1m33.332s



20 Ocon #31
1m33.353s



21 Wehrlein #94
1m33.561s



22 Button #22
1m32.851s

Qualifying 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m31.659s
2	Raikkonen	1m31.674s
3	Rosberg	1m31.858s
4	Hamilton	1m32.218s
5	Bottas	1m32.383s
6	Hulkenberg	1m32.448s
7	Grosjean	1m32.458s
8	Verstappen	1m32.487s
9	Ricciardo	1m32.538s
10	Massa	1m32.562s
11	Gutierrez	1m32.620s
12	Kvyat	1m32.645s
13	Perez	1m32.682s
14	Sainz	1m32.789s
15	Palmer	1m32.796s
16	Alonso	1m32.819s
17	Button	1m32.851s
18	Magnussen	1m33.023s
19	Ericsson	1m33.222s
20	Nasr	1m33.332s
21	Ocon	1m33.353s
22	Wehrlein	1m33.561s

WEATHER Dry, overcast; track 26C, air 23C

Race Briefing

GRID PENALTIES

BUTTON 35 places (power unit element changes)

RAIKKONEN 5 places (gearbox change)

WEHRLEIN 5 places (gearbox change)

VETTEL 3 places (causing a collision)

Qualifying 2

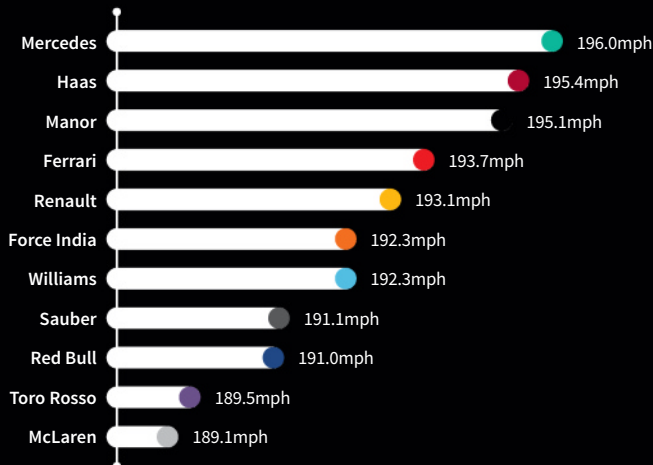
POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Rosberg	1m30.714s
2	Hamilton	1m31.129s
3	Vettel	1m31.227s
4	Raikkonen	1m31.406s
5	Verstappen	1m31.489s
6	Ricciardo	1m31.719s
7	Gutierrez	1m32.155s
8	Grosjean	1m32.176s
9	Hulkenberg	1m32.200s
10	Perez	1m32.237s
11	Bottas	1m32.315s
12	Massa	1m32.380s
13	Kvyat	1m32.623s
14	Sainz	1m32.685s
15	Alonso	1m32.689s
16	Palmer	1m32.807s

Qualifying 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Rosberg	1m30.647s
2	Hamilton	1m30.660s
3	Raikkonen	1m30.949s
4	Vettel	1m31.028s
5	Verstappen	1m31.178s
6	Ricciardo	1m31.240s
7	Perez	1m31.961s
8	Grosjean	1m31.961s
9	Hulkenberg	1m32.142s
10	Gutierrez	1m32.547s

Speed trap

Fastest for each constructor in qualifying



Free practice 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Rosberg	1m32.431s
2	Hamilton	1m32.646s
3	Vettel	1m33.525s
4	Raikkonen	1m33.817s
5	Ricciardo	1m34.112s
6	Verstappen	1m34.379s
7	Hulkenberg	1m34.530s
8	Perez	1m34.767s
9	Alonso	1m35.003s
10	Bottas	1m35.381s
11	Kvyat	1m35.446s
12	Sainz	1m35.672s
13	Button	1m35.677s
14	Grosjean	1m35.688s
15	Nasr	1m35.967s
16	Massa	1m36.169s
17	Gutierrez	1m36.219s
18	Ericsson	1m36.294s
19	Magnussen	1m36.822s
20	Ocon	1m37.797s
21	Wehrlein	1m37.966s
22	Palmer	1m37.992s

WEATHER Dry, cloudy; track 31C, air 22C

Free practice 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Rosberg	1m32.250s
2	Hamilton	1m32.322s
3	Raikkonen	1m32.573s
4	Verstappen	1m33.061s
5	Vettel	1m33.103s
6	Perez	1m33.570s
7	Hulkenberg	1m33.873s
8	Alonso	1m33.985s
9	Bottas	1m34.028s
10	Sainz	1m34.086s
11	Massa	1m34.127s
12	Ricciardo	1m34.150s
13	Grosjean	1m34.241s
14	Kvyat	1m34.305s
15	Magnussen	1m34.339s
16	Button	1m34.398s
17	Gutierrez	1m34.643s
18	Palmer	1m34.760s
19	Nasr	1m34.824s
20	Wehrlein	1m35.292s
21	Ocon	1m35.400s
22	Ericsson	1m36.318s

WEATHER Dry, cloudy; track 33C, air 24C

Free practice 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Rosberg	1m32.092s
2	Ricciardo	1m32.394s
3	Vettel	1m32.731s
4	Verstappen	1m32.784s
5	Raikkonen	1m33.011s
6	Massa	1m33.271s
7	Hamilton	1m33.284s
8	Palmer	1m33.639s
9	Magnussen	1m33.639s
10	Hulkenberg	1m33.646s
11	Alonso	1m33.714s
12	Gutierrez	1m33.787s
13	Bottas	1m33.865s
14	Perez	1m33.921s
15	Kvyat	1m34.037s
16	Grosjean	1m34.272s
17	Nasr	1m34.388s
18	Ericsson	1m34.544s
19	Button	1m34.548s
20	Ocon	1m35.230s
21	Wehrlein	1m37.256s
22	Sainz	1m56.323s

WEATHER Dry, overcast; track 27C, air 25C

SEASON STATS

Drivers' championship

1	Rosberg	313
2	Hamilton	280
3	Ricciardo	212
4	Raikkonen	170
5	Verstappen	165
6	Vettel	165
7	Bottas	81
8	Perez	80
9	Hulkenberg	54
10	Massa	43
11	Alonso	42
12	Sainz	30
13	Grosjean	28
14	Kvyat	25
15	Button	19
16	Magnussen	7
17	Palmer	1
18	Wehrlein	1
19	Vandoorne	1
20	Gutierrez	0
21	Ericsson	0
22	Nasr	0
23	Haryanto	0
24	Ocon	0

Constructors' championship

1	Mercedes	593
2	Red Bull	385
3	Ferrari	335
4	Force India	134
5	Williams	124
6	McLaren	62
7	Toro Rosso	47
8	Haas	28
9	Renault	8
10	Manor	1
11	Sauber	0

Wins

Rosberg	9
Hamilton	6
Ricciardo	1
Verstappen	1

Fastest laps

Rosberg	6
Hamilton	3
Ricciardo	3
Alonso	1
Hulkenberg	1
Kvyat	1
Raikkonen	1
Vettel	1

Pole positions

Hamilton	8
Rosberg	8
Ricciardo	1

Qualifying battle

ROS	9	8	HAM
VET	10	7	RAI
MAS	3	14	BOT
RIC	9	4	VES
RIC	4	0	KVY
PER	9	8	HUL
MAG	11	6	PAL
KVY	4	9	SAI
VES	3	1	SAI
ERI	10	7	NAS
ALO	11	5	BUT
BUT	0	1	VAN
OCO	2	3	WEH
HAR	5	7	WEH
GRO	11	6	GUT

A champion's performance

In a grand prix where everyone finished, Rosberg proved a cut above

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

MERCEDES



9 LEWIS HAMILTON

There was a lot of noise surrounding Hamilton. But if his spat with the media betrayed mental fragility off the circuit, there was no sign of it on track. Wasted time chasing a set-up to beat Rosberg; should have relied on his talent instead. Loses a mark for that hideous start. Good recovery to third but a vital race lost.



10 NICO ROSBERG

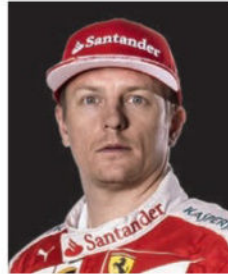
Superb all weekend, Rosberg topped every session. He loves Suzuka and found his groove quickly. Had a small wobble at start of Q3, but maintained an edge over Hamilton. Aced the start and never looked back. At a pivotal point in the title race, he delivered a champion's performance.

FERRARI



9 SEBASTIAN VETTEL

A very strong race from Vettel, who bounced back well from the disappointment of crashing out in Malaysia with a well-judged first lap here. Was looking good for a podium, but efforts to outdo Red Bull strategically, plus bad luck with backmarkers, undid his hopes. Ended up frustrated and stuck behind Hamilton.



9 KIMI RAIKKONEN

Raikkonen was surprised how quick Ferrari was here, and was best of the rest after Mercedes in qualifying. A grid penalty for a gearbox change undid that though. Got baulked by Vettel at Turn 1 and dropped behind Hulkenberg. Fought back well to beat Ricciardo to fifth, and to finish 8.101s behind Vettel.

WILLIAMS



7 VALTTERI BOTTAS

Williams struggled at Suzuka this year, Bottas suggesting the car was balanced but generally lacking grip. He was marginally faster than Massa, and should have finished ahead in the race, but got undone by an uncharacteristic slow Williams pitstop. Probably disappointed to get mugged at the chicane by Hulkenberg.



7 FELIPE MASSA

There was little to choose between the Williams drivers again, with Massa slower but on the same tenth as Bottas in qualifying. That he rose from 14th at the end of lap one to finish ahead of Bottas and in the points was down to patience, good strategy, and a bit of bad luck for his team-mate. Still, this was a decent effort.

RED BULL



6 DANIEL RICCIARDO

Not a great race for last weekend's winner. Unhappy to qualify slower than Verstappen, blaming his old Renault engine. Compromised at the start by Hamilton's slow getaway, which bottled him up behind Perez's Force India. Got ahead in the pits, but struggled in second stint and got jumped by Raikkonen.



10 MAX VERSTAPPEN

Another excellent weekend. Outqualified team-mate for second race in a row, and held on to second, despite threat of faster cars behind. Late defence against Hamilton prompted a withdrawn protest from Merc, but Hamilton was OK with what happened, so let's give Verstappen the benefit of the doubt.

FORCE INDIA



9 SERGIO PEREZ

Perez made a brief cameo inside the top three after the first-lap shenanigans, but the Force India eventually regressed to its natural level at the head of the midfield. This was the archetypal effective Perez performance. He was strong in qualifying again, and achieved realistically the best possible race result.



9 NICO HULKENBERG

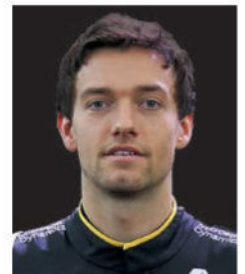
A very impressive weekend. Started two rows back from his team-mate, but finished just 1.682s behind him. He bravely passed Raikkonen's baulked Ferrari around the outside of Turn 1 at the start, and his later move on Bottas at the chicane was expertly judged. Had a chicane hash in qualify but was excellent overall.

RENAULT



6 KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Ultimately a frustrating time for Magnussen, who trailed Palmer by more than two tenths when it mattered in qualifying and failed to escape Q1. Felt starting on the hard tyre was a disadvantage, but he wasn't that quick on the medium either and finished well behind his team-mate, only just ahead of slower Ericsson.



9 JOLYON PALMER

This was a very strong weekend for Palmer. Qualifying was strangely difficult after both cars made the top 10 in final practice. Felt he could have been behind the Williamses but for the yellows in Q2 for Sainz spin. Matched their pace for some of race on same strategy, which shows how far he and Renault have come.

Fantastic charge
from Verstappen
in Japan



DUNBAR/LAT

TORO ROSSO



9 DANIIL KVIAT
Kvyat is finding a decent groove now, more comfortable in the team and feeling the former self that once so impressed Red Bull is gradually returning. Narrowly outqualified Sainz for the second race in a row, and felt he outperformed the car in the race. It was definitely one of his better drives this year, in a tricky car.



6 CARLOS SAINZ JR
This was a tough grand prix for Sainz. Was nip and tuck with Kvyat in qualifying, despite an ECU problem in final practice and a spin at Spoon on his second Q2 run, but the race was difficult. First stint was fine, but then got stuck behind Alonso. Outside pass of Gutierrez at Turn 6 was his only real highlight.

SAUBER



6 FELIPE NASR
Another tough weekend for Nasr, who was pleased with his first qualifying run but his second compromised by traffic on the out-lap, which cost him crucial tyre temperature. The race was disappointing too. His first set of tyres faded too quickly, and he also flat-spotted them before his pitstop, where he lost time in anti-stall.



8 MARCUS ERICSSON
Ericsson had high hopes for Suzuka. Ultimately he delivered a decent display, but it was tough getting there. Felt Sepang masked the car's deficiencies and struggled to find a quality set-up. The race was much better. Executed strategy well, and felt he would have challenged Kvyat but got jumped by Magnussen in the pits.

McLAREN



8 JENSON BUTTON
Button was all at sea in practice, but copied Alonso's set-up to get back in the game. Although he was dumped out in Q1, he lapped only 0.032s slower than Alonso in qualifying. Switched to a two-stop after starting on the hard. Was roughly the same distance behind his team-mate at the end as he was after the first lap.



8 FERNANDO ALONSO
Admitted the woeful lack of pace on Honda's home circuit was a "nasty surprise". He dragged the car into Q2, but couldn't do much more. He battled successfully with Sainz, but got jumped by the one-stopping Renaults and Ericsson's Sauber. Was frustrated after two consecutive points finishes.

MANOR

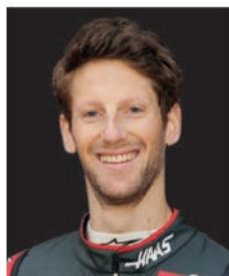


6 PASCAL WEHRLEIN
Was second best of the Manors on a tough weekend. Issues with the gearbox and brakes disrupted his rhythm in final practice, and prevented him getting the most from the car in qualifying. The car behaved in the race, and his pace was solid, but he lost touch with Ocon with a slow out-lap after his first stop.



9 ESTEBAN OCON
A really impressive weekend from Ocon. He was two tenths clear of Wehrlein in qualifying, and felt he could have beaten at least one Sauber but for a mistake at Spoon. That was his only blemish really. Was forced wide after a great start, his pace was strong and wasn't far behind Nasr or Gutierrez at the flag.

HAAS

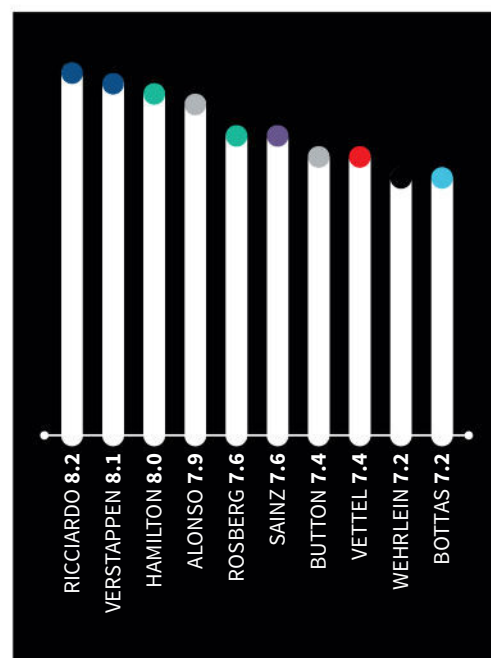


8 ROMAIN GROSJEAN
Haas got its Singapore front wing working properly here, which allowed Grosjean to flourish. Matched Perez in qualifying but the race was more difficult. Got too much clutch slip at the start and flat-spotted his tyres at Turn 1. Still, an impressive race. Too long behind Palmer to beat the Williamses.



5 ESTEBAN GUTIERREZ
A disappointing outcome. Was best of the rest behind Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull in Q2, but slipped to 10th in Q3. Tracked Grosjean in the first stint of the race, but got stuck behind Sainz and was angry when they collided at the chicane, damaging the Haas's front wing. Pace fell away after that.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATING





FORMULA 1

Bahrain or Barcelona?

FORMULA 1 TEAMS ARE AT LOGGERHEADS over where to head for pre-season testing ahead of the 2017 campaign, with seemingly no easy compromise solution on the table.

There two four-day pre-season tests scheduled for next year, on February 27-March 2 and March 7-10. Over the years the Formula 1 circus has more often than not pitched up at the Circuit de Catalunya outside Barcelona, and the Spanish Grand Prix venue has been slated to host both tests in 2017.

The twist is that, with Pirelli's new wider front and rear tyres scheduled to make their debut next year, the Italian manufacturer wants to head somewhere far warmer, ideally for both tests, the second at the least.

With that in mind, among those wanting to shift testing to Bahrain are Mercedes, Ferrari and McLaren, but then fundamentally opposed to this are Red Bull and Williams.

The main argument against is on the grounds of costs and logistics: trekking to Bahrain costs £400,000 more than heading to Barcelona, while there will also be headaches in shipping parts to the Middle East should any difficulties arise.

Unsurprisingly, the teams are unwilling to fork out such a sum, especially not when heading into a season where every penny counts, given the

aerodynamic development war that will break out once the cars hit the track.

Pirelli is also unwilling to foot the bill, even though such a test would be for its benefit as it seeks final validation on its compounding work. It feels that the temperatures in Bahrain will allow it to better ascertain the stress levels on the tyres due to the increase in downforce from the new wider front and rear wings.

Crucially, Pirelli will also be able to gauge whether its tyres are in the right window when it comes to degradation and overheating.

That could potentially prove the tipping point as Article 1.2 of the FIA sporting regulations states that changes to any rules now for next season may only be made on the grounds of safety. It is understood that Pirelli is ready to argue this point to the FIA, citing the concerns above as they strike at the heart of the integrity of the tyre.

The FIA has asked Pirelli to submit a letter detailing why it feels a switch to a test in Bahrain is necessary, and it is certain that it will express safety worries to avoid any major ramifications during the early grands prix of next season.

The ball would appear to have been played into the FIA's court. Should it make the call to head to Bahrain, the uproar from those against will be



FORMULA 1

'HULK' ON VERGE OF RENAULT SWITCH

RENAULT IS POISED TO sign Nico Hulkenberg for its Formula 1 driver line-up for 2017.

Autosport understands that both team and driver are hoping to close out a two-year deal – with an option for a third season – before the next race in the United States.

Hulkenberg, however, is contracted to Force India for next season. While it is believed that there is an escape clause, the hitch for the parties is in attempting to interpret its detail.

Hulkenberg is eager to make the move from Force India, and Renault wants an experienced name to lead the team.

Hulkenberg's current Force India team-mate Sergio Perez came close to joining the French manufacturer, only to get cold feet over what he saw as difficulties behind the scenes and instead take up the option to remain with the Silverstone-based team.

Renault also made an approach for Toro Rosso's Carlos Sainz Jr, only to be rebuffed as Red Bull believes that the Spaniard still has a long-term future as part of its F1 set-up.

Hulkenberg's experience is seen as crucial to helping Renault move forward in F1 following a difficult return this year as a works team.

Since making his debut in 2010 with Williams, the 27-year-old has made 111 starts, spending five years at Force India along with a season with Sauber in 2013.

IAN PARKES

Teams row over testing

considerable given the additional cost.

Certainly, smaller teams such as Manor, Sauber and Toro Rosso can ill afford to head to Bahrain, but may have to do so begrudgingly.

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner has already accused Mercedes of "bullying" teams into heading to Bahrain, which he feels would be "irresponsible financially".

From Mercedes motorsport boss Toto Wolff's perspective, talks are required to resolve the cost implication, with all parties needing to reach a compromise. "It is still a joint platform between the commercial rights holder, the FIA, the tyre supplier and the teams," said Wolff.

"We need to find a solution that is not detrimental to one party only, to sit down at a table and ask, 'How can we divide those additional costs?'"

The first attempt at such talks made little headway when Horner, Wolff, Mercedes non-executive chairman Niki Lauda and Pirelli motorsport director Paul Hembery met with FIA Formula 1 race director Charlie Whiting in the Suzuka paddock on Saturday morning. The

upshot was Whiting's directive to Hembery to provide a letter outlining the reasons why Bahrain is preferable over Barcelona.

There is, though, an alternative, as aired by Horner following the Japanese Grand Prix when asked again about the matter. "Let's not forget that, for the first four races, Melbourne can be pretty chilly, China's certainly pretty cool, Bahrain's a night race and Russia can also be on the cooler side," said Horner.

"So maybe a more sensible solution would be to stay in Bahrain after the race and, rather than do the test in Barcelona mid-season [which normally takes place after the Spanish GP], do it in Bahrain when everybody's kit and personnel is at that circuit."

Pirelli's counter-argument is that by delaying the test, it would be forced to continue dictating compounds and numbers of sets of tyres for the drivers beyond the opening five races.

But this could be a small price to pay compared to the £400,000 alternative of going to Bahrain before the season begins.

IAN PARKES

"Horner has accused Merc of bullying teams to Bahrain"



GT: GOOD BUT NOT GREAT

THE FIA'S GT WORLD cup has yet to capture the imagination of the world's GT3 manufacturers. Just four – one down on last year's inaugural event – have registered for the end-of-season shoot-out on the streets of Macau.

Reigning champion Mercedes is returning along with Audi and Porsche, while Lamborghini has signed up for the first time. McLaren and Aston Martin, which competed for the World Cup in 2015, will not be present on November 19-20.

The event in Macau still has an impressive grid. There are a further four makes on the entry list for what is also the Macau GT Cup – BMW, Ferrari, Bentley and Nissan – who haven't signed up with the FIA.

The GT race in Macau, started in 2008, remains a local or Asian race with the FIA event bolted on top.

GT Asia Series teams FFF Corse and Craft-Bamboo, which represented McLaren and Aston Martin last year, have changed manufacturers for 2016. FFF is now flying the flag for Lamborghini with a pair of Huracan GT3s, while Craft-Bamboo runs Porsches as part of a much wider arrangement with the German manufacturer.

Blancpain GT Series boss Stephane Ratel, who is in charge of putting the grid together, has admitted he was "expecting more manufacturers". One was BMW, which eventually decided to send only a single M6 GT3 run by Spa 24 Hours winner Rowe Racing and not the two that would have made it eligible for the World Cup.

"The grid is still good," said Ratel (above), "and we should not forget that GT3 racing is not only about manufacturers."

GARY WATKINS

FORMULA 3

Rosenqvist bids for Macau GP hat-trick

FELIX ROSENQVIST HAS REVEALED that the Macau Grand Prix is the race that has had the biggest impact on his career as he bids for an unprecedented third successive win in this year's highlight of the Formula 3 calendar.

The Swede, last year's F3 European champion, headlines the 30-strong entry list for next month's race – which doubles up as the F3 World Cup – with the Theodore Racing-backed Prema Powerteam squad, effectively taking the place of 2016 European champion Lance Stroll, who is missing the event.

Rosenqvist's 2014 win with Mücke Motorsport – when his career looked in jeopardy – was significant in his securing his ride with Prema last year, which in turn led to his GT3 and DTM roles with Mercedes. And both victories were instrumental in his selection for the Mahindra Formula E team.

"It's the one race in the world that has had the greatest impact on me and my career," said Rosenqvist, "and when the prospect of doing it again with Prema came up it was too tempting an opportunity. I won't have raced in F3 for 12 months, but I think the experience I have will be more than sufficient."

"I've done the race so many times now [six], but there will be some new challenges and unknowns this year. We will race on Pirelli tyres for the first time, and that could have quite an impact on the relevance of previous data. It's going to be a big task, but I'm back to try and win the race for a third time and that's my very clear target."

Rosenqvist is joined on the entry list by Mercedes DTM stablemate and 2011 Macau winner Daniel Juncadella (with Hitech Grand Prix) and BMW-contracted Spa 24 Hours winner

Alexander Sims (Double R Racing).

From the European F3 ranks, race winners Maximilian Gunther and Nick Cassidy (Prema), George Russell (Hitech), Callum Iltott and Anthoine Hubert (Van Amersfoort Racing), and Joel Eriksson and Niko Kari (Motopark) are all entered, with Ralf Aron still hopeful of securing a ride.

Highly rated Toyota-backed Japanese F3 champion Kenta Yamashita switches to British team T-Sport to drive its ThreeBond/Tomei-engined car. The man he beat in Japan – Nissan protege Jann Mardenborough – will line up in Macau for the first time with his regular B-Max Racing Team machine.

Brit talents enter F3 for Macau

One of the most intriguing aspects of Macau will be the performance of the British talents who are new to F3.

Carlin has put together a deal with 16-year-old Formula Renault Eurocup champion Lando Norris, who has been flying in testing with various teams. Jake Hughes also takes time out from his GP3 programme to line up with Carlin.

Meanwhile, Dan Ticktum, who has served his 12-month ban from racing, will represent Double R Racing.

All three will drive for Carlin in this weekend's Euro F3 finale at Hockenheim in order to qualify for Macau, with Sims doing the same at Hitech. Strangely, Rosenqvist and Juncadella seem exempt.

But with Norris and Ticktum having breached 2016 Euro F3 sporting regulations by their participation in rookie test days over the summer and autumn, they will be forced to start each of the three races at the German circuit from the pitlane.

MARCUS SIMMONS



XPB IMAGES

XPB IMAGES



MOTOGP/FORMULA 1 Who's this at the wheel of a Mercedes Formula 1 car? It's a world champion, but not from the sport you'd expect... Instead its reigning MotoGP champion Jorge Lorenzo, who swapped his Yamaha for a 2014-spec Mercedes F1 W05 last Thursday at Silverstone. Although no lap times were released, the Spaniard was happy with his performance. "It was quite easy to drive and the car in the corners is really, really fast and the grip unreal," he said. "In the first lap you feel the power but, when you get used to it, it's similar to a MotoGP bike. But in the corners you are in a different world – about 40km/h faster in the middle of the corners." **Photograph by Monster Media**

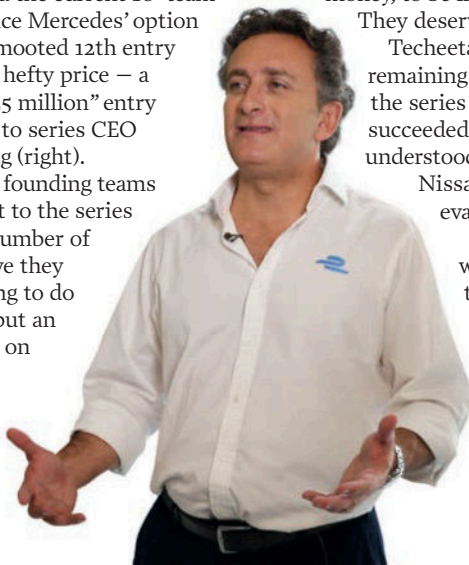
FORMULAE

Join Formula E? That's €25m please

FORMULA E'S 2018-19 FIELD COULD be spectacular. Should Mercedes take up its reserved slot, it could join a grid comprising Jaguar, BMW, Audi, Renault – and a host of emerging marques.

FE's rapid expansion has far exceeded the series' own expectations. It plans to expand beyond the current 10-team entry list (hence Mercedes' option to join) but a mooted 12th entry will come at a hefty price – a "minimum €25 million" entry fee, according to series CEO Alejandro Agag (right).

Formula E's founding teams had to commit to the series for a certain number of years and prove they had the funding to do so, as well as put an initial deposit on the cars, but did not have to pay an entry fee.



"I don't know if there are people who are ready to pay that money or not but what I want to do is protect the ones that are already here," said Agag.

"Everyone here, especially the privateer teams, has invested a lot of effort, a lot of human resources, a lot of money, to be in the championship.

They deserve a value in return."

Techeetah is the only remaining independent team in the series but the entry it succeeded, Team Aguri, was understood to be negotiating with Nissan, which has openly evaluated FE.

Agag did not say whether Nissan was on the verge of joining the series but confirmed "good discussions with some" Japanese manufacturers were taking place.

SCOTT MITCHELL



FORMULAE

BUEMI: WEC TAKES PRIORITY IN CLASH

THERE IS FRESH HOPE THAT THE 2017 CALENDAR CLASH between Formula E and the World Endurance Championship can be avoided – but if it goes ahead, FE will head to the New York penultimate round without its reigning champion.

Sebastien Buemi has revealed that he will miss the July 15-16 double-header if its clash with the WEC's Nurburgring round remains. WEC boss Gerard Neveu has an agreement with his teams not to have a race within four weeks of the Le Mans 24 Hours, while the Nurburgring needed a two-week gap leading up to its proposed German Grand Prix date on July 30.

But the 2017 F1 calendar issued last month lists Hockenheim as hosting the German GP for a second year in a row.

Meanwhile, Lucas di Grassi told Autosport it was not clear what he would prioritise because he did not know what his 2017 programme would be. Venturi's Stephane Sarrazin, Dragon Racing driver Loic Duval and DS Virgin Racing's Sam Bird are the other FE drivers currently with a full-time WEC programme.

SCOTT MITCHELL



WORLD RALLY

WHO GOES WHERE FOR THE WRC IN 2017

WE KNOW PLENTY ABOUT the stunning new cars coming for the World Rally Championship in 2017, but now – following recent announcements from Citroen and Hyundai – we finally have a clearer idea of who'll drive them.

Volkswagen

No change. It'll be Sebastien Ogier, Jari-Matti Latvala and Andreas Mikkelsen for a fifth season in succession.

Hyundai

Same faces in the same places after Thierry Neuville committed the next two years of his career to the South Koreans last week. That means it'll be Neuville, Hayden Paddon and Dani Sordo. Team boss Michel Nandan wants to Kevin Abbring to remain as a test driver and hopes to 'make him happy' with a possible part-programme.

Citroen

Kris Meeke (above) will be joined by fellow Irishman Craig Breen and France's Stephane Lefebvre for the next two years.

Toyota

Chief Yaris tester Juho Hanninen is confirmed for a single season, where he'll be joined by Esapekka Lappi and possibly a third Finn, Teemu Suninen.

M-Sport

Eric Camilli and Ott Tanak return, with Elfyn Evans and Teemu Suninen possibilities for a DMACK-backed Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

DAVID EVANS



INDYCAR SERIES

Montoya future unclear as Newgarden joins Penske

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS IN limbo after Team Penske confirmed that Josef Newgarden will replace the two-time Indianapolis 500 winner in its #2 Dallara-Chevrolet in next season's IndyCar Series.

The door is open to the 41-year-old Colombian to stay on at Penske in an Indy 500-only deal, combined with a role in any IMSA SportsCar Championship programme.

Penske is known to have ambitions to return to sportscars, potentially in a partnership with Honda's US motorsport HPD division, but this is thought to be more likely for 2018 than next season.

Penske president Tim Cindric said: "It's something we are still working through. When we sat down with Juan around the Toronto race in July we told him at that point in time we

were not prepared on making any decisions moving forward until the end of the season. We wanted him to understand what our options were and were very upfront with him.

"We told him we wanted him to be part of our team in the future. We have a seat for him at Indy if he wants one and if we do a sportscar programme we want him involved in it."

But Montoya is understood to want at least one more full-time season in the IndyCar Series.

Other openings for the ex-Formula 1 star could include KVSH Racing (with incumbent Sebastien Bourdais tipped for a switch to Dale Coyne Racing), Chip Ganassi Racing (if Tony Kanaan moves elsewhere), a straight swap with Newgarden at Ed Carpenter Racing, or AJ Foyt Racing.

BRUCE MARTIN



INDYCAR SERIES

Ganassi to boost Honda

CHIP GANASSI RACING'S SWITCH from Chevrolet to Honda power for next season's IndyCar Series could boost every one of the Japanese manufacturer's teams.

That is the message from Ganassi managing director Mike Hull, who told Autosport that his team will share information with Honda's other teams.

"I read the words 'power team' [with regard to CGR] and that does a disservice to every team on the grid,

whether they have a Honda or a Chevrolet," said Hull. "There are quality teams on both sides – no matter what Penske or Ganassi chooses to do there is plenty of depth on the grid.

"We are very willing and unselfish with the share of information and how to make the process better for us, the manufacturer and other [teams].

"Our expectation is each of the Honda teams will accept us because we will accept them and help each other

fight. All the teams that represent Honda have really good drivers."

The first Ganassi test with Honda is scheduled for this week at the Gateway oval with Tony Kanaan driving.

It is a revival of the relationship that brought CGR its first Indycar title with Honda power in the old CART series, with Jimmy Vasser driving in 1996, as well as the IndyCar crown with current Ganassi star Scott Dixon in 2013.

BRUCE MARTIN



WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP1 privateer crisis

WHERE NOW FOR THE LMP1 PRIVATEER in the World Endurance Championship? Rebellion Racing's decision to step down to LMP2 for 2017 is a bodyblow for the category and leaves the grid for both the WEC and the Le Mans 24 Hours seriously short on P1 cars.

Rebellion's withdrawal, which may or may not prove to be temporary, is significant because the Anglo-Swiss team has dominated the P1 privateer class since the rebirth of the WEC in 2012. It has claimed every piece of end-of-season silverware since then and has been the first independent home at Le Mans every year, a run that includes fourth-place finishes in 2012 and '14.

The move comes in the face of rule changes planned for the next two seasons devised to bring the privateers and their non-hybrid P1 machinery closer to the technological marvels run by the Audi, Porsche and Toyota factories. But one of the major factors in Rebellion's decision was the prospect of the new breed of LMP2 cars snapping at the heels of its AER-engined Rebellion R-One.

"The new LMP2s are going to be significantly quicker than the existing cars, which makes it difficult to justify the additional spend required for P1 when we wouldn't have been going that much faster than them," explained Rebellion team boss Bart Hayden.

Ligier's new LMP2, known as the JSP217, could be as much as eight seconds per lap faster around the 8.47-mile Le Mans circuit than the existing P2 cars. That was the prediction of Olivier Pla after he gave the new

car its first runs at Magny-Cours at the end of September. That suggests a potential laptime of 3m28s, only a couple of seconds slower than the best Rebellion effort in qualifying last June.

The Automobile Club de l'Ouest, organiser of the 24 Hours and promoter of the WEC, insists that a healthy gap will be maintained by the rule changes. Privateer P1 machinery will be given a weight break and allowed bigger front diveplanes and a more efficient rear wing, at the same time as tweaks to the aero rules for the factories will rob their cars of downforce.

"The new rules will enable a privateer to be really competitive," said ACO sporting director Vincent Beaumesnil. "If you asked someone to do a simulation, you would be very interested to see the results of what we are planning even for next year."

Rebellion is also quitting P1 in search of greater opposition. The ACO's package of rule changes, which will include the introduction of a Drag Reduction System for the privateers in 2018, came too late to bring new entrants for next season to race alongside the only likely privateer next year, ByKolles and its CLM P1/01.

The question is whether any potential P1 privateers sitting on the fence right now will look at Rebellion's decision and decide against making the jump. Beaumesnil knows that the ACO has to get its message out there and prove what a non-hybrid car might be capable of in the future.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

SAUBER KEEPS OLD FERRARI ENGINES

Sauber will stick with the 2016 Ferrari engine for next season's Formula 1 campaign. The Swiss team made the decision so that it could focus on the aerodynamic rule changes being introduced for 2017. "The prime reason for it was that we really wanted to have the ability to focus more on the chassis development," team boss Monisha Kaltenborn told Autosport. "This decision was taken when the rules were not 100% sure."

ALLISON OPTS AGAINST RENAULT MOVE

Former Ferrari technical director James Allison has opted against a return to the Renault Formula 1 team. Renault approached Allison – for whom it would have been a fourth stint at the Enstone-based operation – in June. It is understood that he was concerned over Renault's apparent lack of leadership.

WRC CONCERN OVER TURKEY

There has been alarm over Turkey's inclusion on a provisional World Rally Championship calendar for 2017, with the teams keen to see how the current political situation plays out before committing for next season. China is not expected to be included on the schedule. Work will progress in Beijing with the aim of returning in '18.

ELECTRIC TIN-TOP RACE SUPPORTS FE

Andrew Lo Kai Bong snatched a dramatic victory in the first ever Formula E support race in Hong Kong. The local driver won the e-Touring Car Challenge race after passing long-time race leader Chin Ka Lok on the final lap. Sixteen identical electric Volkswagen Golfs populated the tin-top grid, with FE keen on more support events in the future.

SCHUMACHER, MAWSON AIM FOR F3

Newly crowned German Formula 4 champion Joey Mawson tested with the Van Amersfoort Racing Formula 3 European Championship team last week at Monza as he prepares for a planned graduation to the series in 2017. Mick Schumacher, who finished runner-up to Mawson in F4, is also planning to go F3 next season.

IANNONE TO MISS JAPANESE GP

Ducati's Andrea Iannone will miss this weekend's Japanese MotoGP round at Motegi due to the fractured vertebra he sustained in a crash at Misano last month. He now plans to return for the Australian GP the following weekend.

ROCKENFELLER: AN ABT CHOICE

Audi veteran Mike Rockenfeller has been shifted into the marque's top Abt Sportsline squad for the DTM finale this weekend at Hockenheim to help Edoardo Mortara's bid to win the title for the Ingolstadt marque. Rockenfeller (below) replaces the absent Mattias Ekstrom, who is contesting the clashing World Rallycross finale. Audi stand-in Rene Rast will take Rockenfeller's place in the Phoenix team.



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FEEDBACK

Sort out this grid-penalty nonsense

Charlie Whiting and his fellow F1 operatives could resolve the nonsense that is the grid-penalty system with a tape measure, pot of white paint and paint brush. Oh yes, and the will to actually do something about it.

The 45-place grid penalty imposed on Fernando Alonso in Malaysia was a fiction, as have been previous multi-place grid penalties. It was actually only a 22-place grid penalty as he started from the back of the grid.

By my reckoning if the tape measure, white paint and brush had been used to mark out a 45-place grid, Alonso would have started from the apex of the last corner – that would be a real, meaningful penalty and would turn a fiction into a fact.

Andrew Andersz
Aston Clinton, Bucks

No cheers for Jaguar's return

When I first heard the news that Jaguar was to return to racing I was

delighted, for a few seconds, then my heart dropped when I realised it was in Formula E.

Why? What on earth do they hope to achieve? I must confess to being old fashioned, but electric racing cars? A big turn-off so far as I'm concerned, but am I so different to millions of others?

Rod Hunt
Byemail

Kimi's words of wisdom

Once again the twitterati are up in arms about driver behaviour, this time at an F1 press conference.

These are usually rather deadly-dull affairs, with the drivers looking bored out of their skulls from the beginning, anticipating the same old questions.

Sky should have plugged into Lewis Hamilton's mobile so we could all join in the cartoon fun, lightening the heavy atmosphere considerably.

Kimi Raikkonen often solves the drivers' quandary by answering

Jaguar made a low-key Formula E debut in Hong Kong. But is electric racing right for the Big Cat?

questions with 'we'll see what happens', a very wise statement that frequently applies to F1, politics, relationships, and life itself.

Mike Vickers
Devon

Japanese GP is final straw

As a previously devoted F1 fan for some 30 years, I cannot bring myself to watch another grand prix.

After the Japanese race it hit home how boring F1 has become: the same winners, the same constructors' champions, the same boring drivers with nothing to contribute, the commentators lost for words repeating the same old thing every race.

Hopeless. Excitement? Forget it!

KI Gaulton
Byemail

Hoping for an F1 reality check

It says so much about the divorced-from-reality state that F1 has got itself into that the British Grand Prix, which never ceases to impress with the scale and enthusiasm of its crowds, appears to be under threat (Pit+Paddock, October 6).

We can only hope that the sport's new broom will take a fresh approach to how F1 is run, eschewing the squeeze-it-until-the-pips-squeak method for a more sustainable approach that will help it survive and prosper in the long term.

Frances Stewart
London SE13



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Autosport is offering you a very special behind-the-scenes prize. Our lucky winner – plus a friend – will be treated to a memorable experience on Thursday October 27. The experience will blast off in spectacular style with tickets to the official pre-rally Shakedown in the famous Clocaenog Forest. The winners will then be treated to hospitality plus a behind-the-scenes tour from top team M-Sport in the service park at the Rally Village in Deeside. What will be a truly memorable day will conclude with our winners flagging away some of the WRC cars during the spectacular Ceremonial Start in Eirias Park, Colwyn Bay on Thursday evening. It's a truly special prize that money really can't buy!

It's the final countdown to the Dayinsure Wales Rally GB, Britain's eagerly-anticipated round of the 2016 FIA World Rally Championship.

This month's award-winning event (October 27-30) is all set to be an unmissable thriller. The new date at the end of October not only encourages drier and faster conditions, but the route itself is also the longest and most challenging since the world-class event moved to its new home in north Wales.

Tickets are already selling fast,

with fans taking full advantage of the significant discounts available for those booking right now. Adult prices start from just £20 with accompanied kids aged 15 and under admitted free – a real boon for those already enjoying half-term.

This year's standout highlights will include three days of epic action in the legendary Welsh forests, the family-friendly RallyFest which has now moved to Cholmondeley Castle in Cheshire plus a special tribute to the fearsome Group B generation

of epic rally cars, which were outlawed exactly 30 years ago in 1986.

The first nine rounds of this season's fiercely-fought WRC produced no fewer than six different winners, with Britain's new hero Kris Meeke taking famous victories in both Portugal and Finland.

For more information on where to catch the dramatic WRC action and how to book discounted advance tickets, visit the www.walesrallygb.com website.

ANSWER THIS QUESTION TO WIN

Mads Ostberg competes for the M-Sport World Rally Team – who is his co-driver in 2016?

- A** JONAS ANDERSSON
- B** OLA FLOENE
- C** RAIGO MOLDER

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Don't write Renault off

The French manufacturer hasn't had the most illustrious return to works status, but turning around an ailing F1 team takes time

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

ONLY THREE TOP-10 FINISHES IN 17 RACES, WITH a car that has qualified near the back of the grid for most of the season. Renault's return to Formula 1 as a works entrant has certainly not been glorious.

As well as this paucity of good results, and difficulty convincing experienced drivers to join its cause, serious questions have been raised by paddock insiders about Renault's chain of command. But even though this season has been bad, the important thing is to stay calm and look at the bigger picture.

It took Renault three seasons to get into shape after buying out Benetton at the start of the 2000 season, its first return to F1 as a manufacturer entry in the modern era. The first proper year under Renault control, '01, was Benetton's worst-ever season in F1. The Renault name appeared above the door in '02, but it took until mid-'03 to become a winner again. Two seasons later, Renault won the first of its back-to-back world championships with Fernando Alonso.

The first few seasons were difficult, but the path was one of gradual improvement on track, while diligently working to turn the oil tanker that is the wider infrastructure of an F1 team onto the desired course.

There simply are no shortcuts in F1. The exception is probably Brawn GP, an opportunistic takeover of the mothballed Honda works team that was in any case on the verge of a massive breakthrough after two seasons of struggle.

There again, Honda took over BAR in 2004, won a single race in '06 (a surprise success in Hungary) and pulled out just before Jenson Button drove on to world championship glory in '09, in a car designed using Honda's investment.

F1's current factory powerhouse, Mercedes, took over that operation to make its manufacturer comeback in 2010. That first season was relatively difficult. OK, it was not a disaster, but nevertheless a reversal from top of the pile to fourth in the standings in the space of one season. That's a loss of three places — the same number Renault has dropped since it took over the sixth-placed Lotus team at the end of last year.

By 2012 Mercedes had a car capable of winning races, which helped convince Lewis Hamilton to jump ship from McLaren. He wouldn't have been interested at the end of '10, because the team was still building up into a credible force.

Sure Mercedes took over a championship-winning team, but it was effectively a skeleton crew following Honda's pullout. It took time to build a robust operation, and invest in the sort of manpower and infrastructure necessary to compete properly

and consistently at the front of the grid. For the past three years we have witnessed the result of that gradual process: total domination of F1, but only after several seasons of slog.

That's the crumb of comfort Renault should cling to. Yes, its return to works status has been difficult, perhaps even haphazard behind the scenes, but realistically there is no need to panic unless proper results don't start to arrive in year three of the project, which would mean 2018 in this case.

This season the race team has proven it is still perfectly capable, scoring points on three occasions with a chassis that was designed in 2014 around a completely different engine.

OK, the car is terrible on bumpy circuits and lacks downforce generally, but Renault didn't arrive until December, so this season was always going to be a write-off. The important thing is for the race team to tread water as best it can while the wider operation is rebuilt.

By the end of 2015, Renault's Enstone base had been so starved of proper investment for so long as to be unrecognisable from the championship and race-winning force it was previously.

This time last year the team formerly known as Lotus was locked out of its hospitality unit, and was turning up to races not knowing whether it would be able to compete. Staff understandably defected

elsewhere. This can all be rectified, but it takes time.

Next year should be better. Renault will produce a bespoke car for the new regulations, designed around its own engine, with all the packaging advantages that go with being a proper works outfit. Results are bound to improve. Confidence will grow with that improvement. 2018 should be another step on from that, the point at which the recruitment and rebuilding process already under way should begin to pay dividends.

Only then will we see where Renault is really at, and whether it's put the right building blocks in place to become a proper force in F1 again. If not, then Renault management will have serious questions to answer.

F1's current top-three teams — Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull — have won 15 of the past 18 constructors' world championships between them, but history tells us it took several seasons of hard graft before they were ready to attain their success. Renault is about to finish the first and most difficult of those on its journey of redemption. This is the time to keep calm and carry on. Rome wasn't built in a day, and nothing in Formula 1 ever is either. 🍀

“Current powerhouse Mercedes' first season back in F1 was difficult”

Where's the next British F1 ace?

Next year Jenson Button will not be on the Formula 1 grid and Lewis Hamilton will be 32, so who could be Britain's next star at the top of the sport?

By Marcus Simmons, Deputy Editor

[@MarcusSimmons54](#)

Question: who's the most recent British driver to take his maiden Formula 1 win? Chances are you've had to think about this, but of course it's Lewis Hamilton, way back on June 10 2007 in the Canadian Grand Prix. Over nine years have elapsed since then, in which time Hamilton has accumulated three world championship titles and more or less a half-century of further grand prix wins. But in his wake? Nobody.

Which is not to say that the UK has been entirely deprived of promising drivers entering F1. The most recent is Jolyon Palmer, who as a GP2 Series champion automatically must be considered as worthy of an F1 seat. A tough season with Renault has only just resulted in Palmer breaking his point-scoring duck, but he has not looked unworthy of his place alongside Kevin Magnussen, the Dane who was highly rated as he rose through the ranks and entered F1 with McLaren.

But with Hamilton now in his thirties, Jenson Button about to get out his pipe and slippers for a (possibly temporary) retirement, and Palmer not regarded as a potential world champion, then who is knocking on

the door? The answer is: a lot of drivers.

There was a little game played among media in the GP2 paddock earlier this year: if GP2 was a World Cup, which country out of Britain, France or Italy would win? The fact that the British trio of Oliver Rowland, Alex Lynn and Jordan King was regarded as at least the equal of those other two nations (Pierre Gasly, Norman Nato and Arthur Pic for France; Antonio Giovinazzi, Raffaele Marciello and Luca Ghiotto for Italy) indicates what a surprise it is that not one has a feature-race win under his belt from 2016.

At the level below them, no fewer than four British drivers (plus Anglo-Thai Alexander Albon) — Jake Dennis, Jake Hughes, Jack Aitken and Matt Parry — have won races in the GP3 Series this season, while George Russell, Callum Ilott and Ben Barnicoat are all victorious in the Formula 3 European Championship.

But it's at the next rung down the ladder where perhaps the most exciting talent of all lurks. Lando Norris has scooped up four highly competitive single-seater titles in the past 12 months, and has already sparked an explosive controversy in F3 over an intended debut at the 2016 Hockenheim finale due in no small part to the fact that rivals are fearful he will beat them. You can't get any better recommendation than that... >>



THE NEARLY MEN

Jordan King, Oliver Rowland and Alex Lynn lie fifth, eighth and ninth respectively in the GP2 points. King and Lynn have each taken two reversed-grid wins, while Racing Steps Foundation-backed Rowland – after his stunning 2015 Formula Renault 3.5 title-winning season – is without a victory, although he did lead the points briefly at mid-season.

Tony Shaw, who along with wife Sarah forms the engineering strength at the MP Motorsport team Rowland drives for, believes this brief table-topping stint possibly distracted Renault F1 protege Rowland and led to his subsequent slump. “You don’t turn a car that has potential for the front two rows into a bucket of shit overnight,” says Shaw. “We left Silverstone leading the championship – we didn’t get excited but maybe some people did.”

Shaw points out that but for some bad luck Rowland would have been a winner before July – particularly Baku, where he was on course for pole before DRS was disabled in the final sector because of a yellow flag elsewhere on the circuit. “He can be mega,” says Shaw. “I wouldn’t say he’s the fastest driver out there but he’s certainly the best racer. But the problem with Ollie is he never had to work at it particularly hard [before 2016], and I think this GP2 season with so many top-drawer drivers is a stark reminder that you have to work hard as a driver on so many fronts, and not just pace.”

The Shaws ran King under the Manor Competition banner in Formula Renault, and are impressed with his progress in GP2 with Racing Engineering. “Jordan works hard – he trains his knackers off and he’s big into his sport and his running,” says Shaw. “Every season we’ve wanted him at MP. He’s the

sort of guy who relies a lot on himself. He doesn’t leap up and down and try to control situations. He has a solid driving style, and with the time to get going I think he could do quite well if he got into F1.”

King made an art mid-season of winning reversed-grid races. “In GP2 you’ve got to qualify well,” says Shaw, “because if you don’t you’re pushing to get back to where you ought to be, and then you’re going to screw your tyres. You’ve got to box clever, and Jordan does.”

Shaw has also been a fan of Lynn’s since the Williams F1 protege blitzed Rowland, King and the rest on his way to the 2011 Formula Renault UK title: “We weren’t able to get anywhere near him that year! He is impressive – end of. And he’s continued that on.”

Lynn’s DAMS team has struggled this year – at the same squad in 2015, he was almost an exact match for Pierre Gasly, who is now shooting for the title with Prema Racing. Shaw reckons part of the reason for the rewriting of the GP2 formbook this year has been the switch from Hitco to Carbone Industrie brakes. “That’s the biggest single difference,” he says. “In any one-make formula, if you change one thing some teams adapt quicker than others.”

Could he equal Gasly in the same way as the Frenchman’s team-mate Giovinazzi is doing this year? “There’s no reason why not,” states Shaw. “The most important test for Alex is that he stays calm and works on it, and not dive into a vat of self-doubt.”

Is Lynn capable of F1? “Yeah of course,” says Shaw. “He threw it off in Sochi last year but these things happen. He’s a champion. Any champion from F3, GP3 [in Lynn’s case], FR3.5... they deserve to be there. They’ve all had to beat over 20 other drivers, and in F1 you only have one bloke to beat: your team-mate!”





King and the castle. Brit in action in Baku

HALFWAY THERE

Oliver Oakes, boss of the Hitech GP team in F3, has known most of the current Brits in F3/GP3 since their childhood karting days when he was an ambassador for Tony Kart. And, in the case of 2016 Hitech team leader George Russell, he even raced against his older brother Benjy during their own karting days before a car-racing career that took Oakes to F3/GP3 level.

“George has been the man to beat in everything he’s done,” says Oakes, “from cadets, to juniors and the step up into cars. The difference between George’s year in Carlin last season [as an F3 rookie] and now is he’s almost stepped up to be a professional driver. The way he’s handled leading a new team, he’s done a very good job. We’ve made mistakes, he’s made mistakes, but he’s kept his focus and is very mature.”

“We are fortunate in the UK in that we have a lot of talent. Obviously Callum [Ilott, who Oakes ran in karting and is now

“Russell has almost stepped up to be a professional this year”

with Van Amersfoort Racing] is exceptionally quick – he’s your rough diamond, who on his day no one can beat. I’ve worked with him since he was 11 and he beat Lance Stroll, Max Verstappen in the odd race... He was always the standout guy, and he seems to punch above his weight at certain moments.”

Racing Steps youngster Ben Barnicoat has raced alongside Russell at Hitech as an F3 rookie this year. “The nicest kid on the grid and a pleasure to watch – he always makes it very exciting,” says Oakes. “He is your out-and-out true racer, and I don’t think there’s a kid with more dog-eat-dog racecraft than Ben. He’s a fighter, works hard and it’s just a question of time.”

The other British driver on the European F3 grid has been Ilott’s VAR team-mate Harrison Newey. “He’s made a huge step up and done very well,” reflects Oakes. “F3 is cut-throat – you only have to look at how drivers go when they move onto other things. Look at Alessio Lorandi – he was next to last in F3, then he goes to GP3 and he’s fighting for points.”

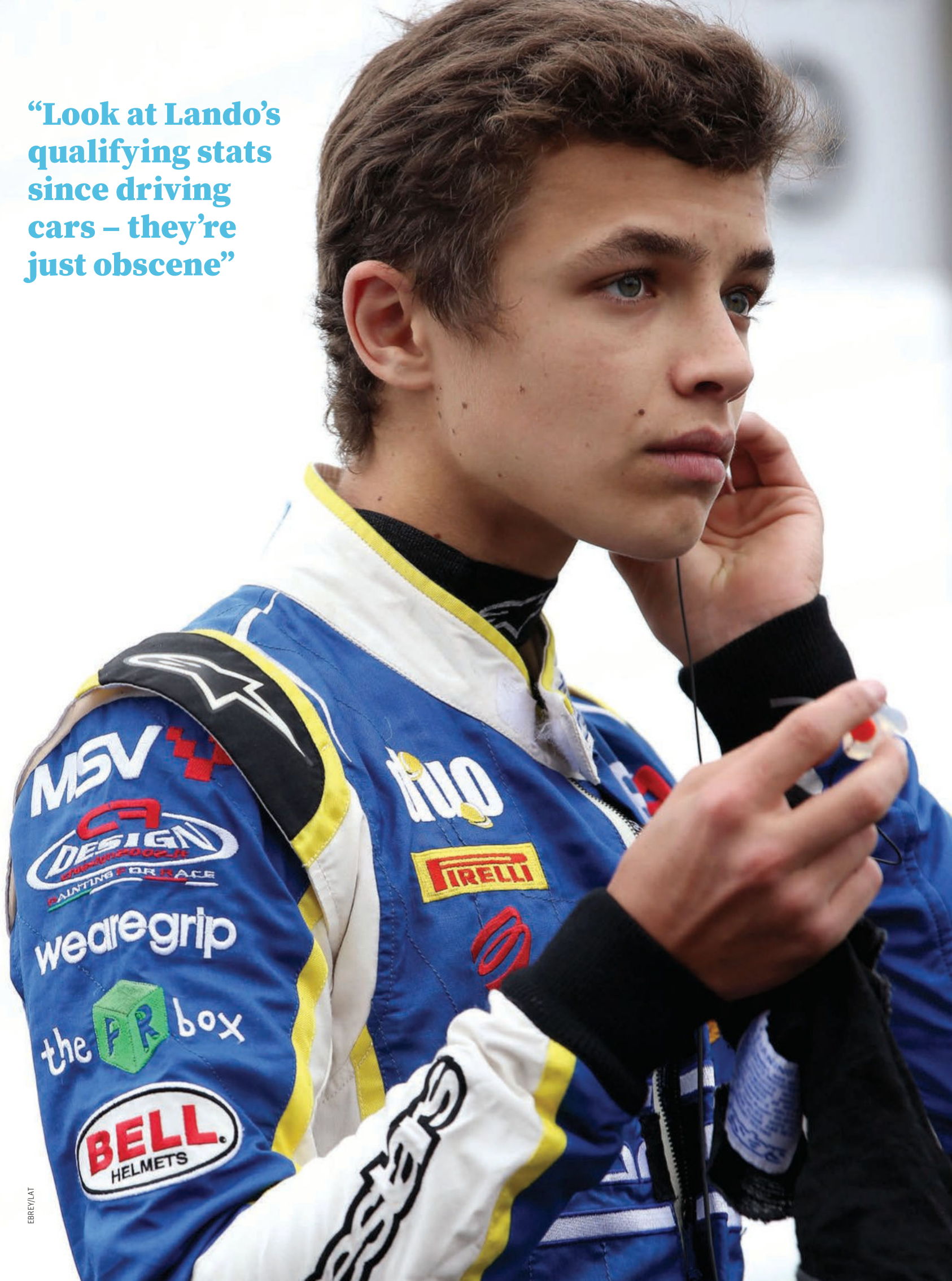
Talking of which, GP3 has had its own British stars this season. “Jake Dennis is the man to beat at the moment [thanks to his late-season form],” says Oakes. “Racing Steps always pick great karters and him and ‘Barney’ [Barnicoat] always stood out as life-or-death racing. Everyone had heard of Jake in karting, and what he did in F3 last year put him on the map, battling Rosenqvist and Giovinazzi. It sounds horrible, but he’s really punched above Arden’s weight and taken it to the guys at ART.”

Renault F1-backed Jack Aitken has joined Dennis at the Arden stable, proving evenly matched with his lanky team-mate. >>

Left: all-British podium in GP2 formed by (left to right) Rowland, King and Lynn. Below: all-British podium in GP3 formed by (left to right) Aitken, Dennis and Hughes



**“Look at Lando’s
qualifying stats
since driving
cars – they’re
just obscene”**



XPB IMAGES



'Rough diamond' Ilott
leads a Euro F3 train at Imola

"He's been the surprise of GP3," reckons Oakes. "What he did in Renault Eurocup last year [Aitken won that title and the secondary ALPS crown], and with his step to GP3 this year, he's performed exceptionally. He's pushed Jake hard, and has been impressive in getting on top of the Pirellis."

Jake Hughes, narrowly beaten by Aitken in Renault, has had a tougher season with DAMS. Oakes didn't know much about him because of his brief – and late – karting career, but says: "I saw him testing an F3 car with Carlin at Valencia last year and he did a very good job. Him and Jack were neck and neck in Renault and to be fair he's been impressive with what has to be counted as a lesser team – unless you're doing Formula E with them!"

Finally, Matt Parry cleaned up in UK domestic karting, although didn't go abroad to the international scene before he stepped into cars. "What is impressive with him is that Koiranen is a one-man band as far as drivers at the front are concerned," says Oakes. "He's on his own doing the job – that's a huge amount of responsibility and the faith he must have to take it to those other teams with such strong line-ups is very impressive."

THE BEST HOPE OF THE LOT?

"He is as good as it gets at this stage when you're looking at a complete package, and he's getting better and better. I wouldn't like to say he's the best driver we've ever had, but he's as good as any of the others."

Fewtrell wrestled last-gasp
British F4 title honours



EBREY/LAT

The words are Trevor Carlin's and, when you consider that his team has run drivers of the calibre of Daniel Ricciardo and Sebastian Vettel in their formative years, you begin to realise how much excitement Lando Norris is generating. He won't be 17 until just before he heads out to the Macau Grand Prix, but over the past 12 months he's racked up titles in 2015 MSA Formula (with Carlin), and 2016 Toyota Racing Series, Formula Renault Eurocup and FR NEC. He's also won races in a part-programme (again with Carlin) in BRDC British F3.

"He's just super-quick all the time in everything he drives," continues Carlin. "He's got a great feel for the car and grip and he always, *always* delivers a lap time. And I guarantee you he hasn't always had the best car. Look at his qualifying stats since he's been driving cars – they're just obscene! Everyone has a bad day, but he doesn't."

Norris went to FR2.0 and British F3 this year to improve his racecraft. "He's sorted it," says Carlin. "Another box ticked. I can't put my finger on anything [shortfalls]. He's a lovely kid, fit and healthy, super-motivated, super-fast, and now he's got brilliant racecraft. When he gets home from a track, his mum has to force him to have his tea, because he just wants to go straight on his iRacing game. He wins that too – and he does it in a Formula Renault 2.0!"

Norris has been joined on the European Formula Renault trail this season by other Brits, three of whom have posted good results. Harrison Scott has been a multiple race winner, Will Palmer shows the early hallmarks of being very similar in approach and intelligence to his older brother Jolyon, while Alex Gill has been close to the Renault NEC podium numerous times.

Carlin also ran Ricky Collard close to the BRDC British F3 title. "Unfortunately he couldn't quite close the deal, but he was up against a very good driver in Matheus Leist, and many people underestimate how good Matheus is," says Carlin. "Ricky learned a lot this year – his qualifying came on in leaps and bounds and it was a good season in his development. With another good year in single-seaters he'd start to become a complete package. He's a character like his dad [British Touring Car veteran Rob], and I'm sure he'll become a very popular British driver."

On top of that, Carlin fielded Max Fewtrell as he emulated Norris in becoming British F4 champion, after a last-race showdown with Sennan Fielding: "Max is still a baby, but to come in and be as cool and calm as he was and to win a championship in his first season of car racing is great. He came on strong in the last third of the season, and did everything he needed, finishing it at Brands with a champion's drive." ❧

Why the British GP needs home stars

Talented local heroes are an essential part of what attracts a significant proportion of Formula 1 fans to Silverstone's big race every year

By Kevin Turner, Editor

[@KRT917](#)





Mansell mania:
'Our Nige' was a
crowd magnet



Hamilton could
be the sole Brit
in F1 next year

Beyond a patriotic desire to find the next British Formula 1 star, there are more important reasons that make finding a successor to Lewis Hamilton essential. The British motorsport industry and, in particular, the UK round of the Formula 1 World Championship, rely on big names boosting the sport's popularity.

Silverstone is owned by the British Racing Drivers' Club, and president and ex-grand prix racer Derek Warwick said earlier this month that the cost of hosting the British Grand Prix – which increases by 5% every year thanks to the deal with F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone – is putting Silverstone's future at risk.

"We're looking at where we are going to be in 2019; whether or not we still want the grand prix," he said. "At the end of the day, if you can't afford it you can't afford it."

Having British drivers such as world champions Hamilton and Jenson Button to get fans through the gates has become ever more important in making the books balance. Which is one reason why Warwick is so proactive in trying to help British drivers.

"Silverstone is a very marginal business and it's been a very tough few years for us," says Warwick. "We've bucked the trend [of diminishing F1 trackside spectators] by getting more fans year on year. We've got a fantastic fanbase and try to keep ticket prices low."

"We're very proud of what we've achieved, but part of our success is due to having great British F1 drivers. We'll get 50,000-60,000 every year because it's the British GP, but Lewis, Jenson and to a lesser extent Jolyon Palmer bring in another 20,000-30,000, maybe more. When you look at the crowds there are plenty of Lewis and Jenson banners."

Long-time British GP commentator Ian Titchmarsh also believes that the presence of a home hero has often made a difference to the event itself, as well as putting more people through the gate.

"Having a leading British star makes it enormously different," he says. "Stirling Moss and James Hunt were huge names and it picked up again with Nigel Mansell. When he moved to Ferrari for 1989 the fans that had been in Williams [Mansell's previous team] colours had turned red. With Nigel it was very tangible."

"Damon Hill attracted a huge amount of support as well and Lewis is a public celebrity. Having a top British driver gives the event a different atmosphere."

With Button, who has been part of F1 since 2000, certainly out next year and possibly for good, the need for another British F1 star is becoming more pressing.

"We're very cautious going forward – we're losing Jenson next year and Jolyon isn't sorted yet either," adds Warwick. "We could go into 2017 with only one British driver, even

though Lewis is one of the greatest drivers we've ever seen. And he won't be around forever. He loves the sport, but I think Lewis will be the sort of driver who could wake up one morning and decide he doesn't want to do it anymore."

The BRDC has its Rising Stars (with up to 40 junior drivers) and SuperStars (12 more senior drivers) programmes to try to assist drivers, but Warwick realises there are limitations.

"We do as much as we can to promote and help British drivers, but we haven't got millions of pounds to pump into our young proteges, so it's difficult to promote the drivers we feel are ready for F1," he says. "There are a lot of British drivers on the tip of F1, but all have budgetary problems."

Some of the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winners highlight the issue. Button (who won in 1998), Anthony Davidson (2000) and Paul di Resta ('04) did make it to F1. Others have had very successful careers elsewhere, but it would be easy to argue that more recent winners such as Oliver Turvey (now a McLaren simulator driver, GT racer and Formula E pilot), Alexander Sims (factory BMW driver) and GP2 contender Oliver Rowland are better drivers than Will Stevens and Max Chilton, both of whom made it to F1. The difference was access to budget, although Rowland could yet make it.

The leading supporter of British drivers since 2007 has

been the Racing Steps Foundation. Rowland is currently the most senior member of the squad, but so far no RSF drivers have made it into F1, even though several have become professionals in other categories.

"RSF has brought a lot of talented drivers up to F1, but never had the programme to take them into F1," says Warwick. "[RSF founder] Graham Sharp has been a great supporter of British talent, but it's not the same as some other countries that help drivers come in with massive amounts of money."

This is an area where Britain's success and heritage in motorsport could be working against it. Whereas some countries with little past success – such as Venezuela with Pastor Maldonado and Mexico with Sergio Perez – have shown a willingness to back one driver, Britain has not only a larger number of potential candidates but also a history of drivers making it to F1 anyway.

"We don't seem to have anyone to put the money behind our best drivers and that's a shame," agrees Warwick. "We've always had so much talent that's made it, perhaps everyone thinks they're going to make it [anyway]."

With F1's current economic concerns and many teams needing driver cash to survive, such assumptions are dangerous.

Right now, there are a number of British drivers who could – and arguably should – get a chance in F1. The problem is finding (or should that be funding?) them a seat. Given the cost of hosting the grand prix, the need to solve that problem is greater than it first appears. ❧

Warwick: "We don't have anyone to put money behind our best drivers"



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Davison carries Tekno

BATHURST 1000
MOUNT PANORAMA (AUS)
OCTOBER 9
AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS ROUND 11/14

WILL DAVISON AND JONATHON WEBB WON a dramatic Bathurst 1000 – or did they?

That was the question being asked in Australia last Sunday night. The pair's Tekno Autosports Holden crossed the line and the drivers were escorted onto the top step of the podium, to be feted by the huge crowd below. They were in company with Red Bull/Triple Eight pair Shane van Gisbergen and Alex Premat in second, and Nick Percat and Cameron McConville, the LDM pair completing a Holden sweep of the top three.

But Jamie Whincup and co-driver Paul Dumbrell had dominated the race and Whincup took the flag well ahead of Davison. He was only put back to 11th place due to a 15-second time penalty, earned for his role in a three-car accident that put Garth Tander out of the race.

The Triple Eight-run Red Bull Racing Australia team has appealed the decision to penalise Whincup, stating that previous, similar incidents have resulted in no such penalty, rather a loss of championship points. The appeal will be heard next week in Brisbane, and a decision

should be made before the next round of the championship on the streets of the Gold Coast.

What shone through the controversial finish was another stellar race at The Mountain. Whincup and Dumbrell dominated the build-up. They qualified fastest, and Whincup topped the single-car shootout to claim pole position. They led early in the race and, for the first 90 of the 161 laps, looked to have the race at their mercy.

While they were out front, many of their challengers faded. Craig Lowndes and Steven Richards qualified their Triple Eight car badly, due to a lack of set-up tyres, but had worked their way to the edge of the top 10 when Richards had a gearbox linkage break, forcing him to pit for repairs.

Chaz Mostert looked to have the speed to challenge, but his Ford was slowed, then stopped, by a broken throttle cable. And his Prodrive team-mate Mark Winterbottom looked to be getting over brake problems until a rotor broke as he approached the 180mph Chase corner. He was pitched off the road, but was unhurt.

The other car that had impressive speed was the Tim Slade/Ash Walsh Brad Jones Racing-run Holden. Walsh was running comfortably in second mid-race, holding the gap to Whincup, when his brakes caught fire during a pitstop. Fast



Davison soaks it up from van Gisbergen in the closing stages

to disputed win – for now

work by the crew limited the loss of time to two laps – which, amazingly enough, they got back through smart pitwork. By the end of the race they had made it back into sixth, less than five seconds from the winners.

That was determined by fuel, strategy and a fraction of luck. Fabian Coulthard's DJR Penske Ford led in the last 20 laps, building a gap as other drivers conserved fuel. There was a big challenge for second place, with Whincup closing on the second-placed Volvo of Scott McLaughlin. The two clashed at The Chase and, when McLaughlin was forced off the track, Whincup tried to 'redress' the pass, so as not to gain a penalty.

But when McLaughlin came back onto the circuit Tander had caught both of them and, when Whincup slowed, Tander was caught in a big impact. His Holden Racing Team entry was out on the spot, and was narrowly missed by another car – that of Davison, who grabbed what was then second place by the skin of his teeth.

And that became 'first' when Whincup was hit with his time penalty.

But Davison was nearly out of fuel, and van Gisbergen was right behind him. Twice Davison resisted passing moves, and his task got a little easier in the last two laps, when Todd Kelly's Nissan was bunkered and the second-to-last

corner was covered with double waved yellow flags for the final two laps. Van Gisbergen lunged at Davison – whose car coughed at the penultimate corner, then again exiting the last one, 100 yards from the flag. But he held on to win by 0.15s.

"I had Shane behind me – what do you do?" Davison said.

"Every time they asked me to save, I thought, 'Do I save? If I do, I lose the lead.' So I was trying on the last lap, I was trying to roll out [of the throttle]. I could see him in the mirror and it was all going on.

"Shane's a good racer. It's the biggest race of the year, of course – you are going to have a crack, aren't you?"

Van Gisbergen and co-driver Alex Premat were gracious in defeat, particularly since the result gives 'The Giz' a bigger lead in the Supercars drivers' championship. Ironically, van Gisbergen drove for Tekno until the end of last year, and he and Webb lost a near-certain Bathurst 1000 win in 2014, when the car stalled in the pitlane and would not restart. They even shared a Bathurst 12 Hour win together in February.

Third was an astonishing result for Lucas Dumbrell Motorsport, with Percat on the podium for the third time with McConville –

who was retired for two years, until the team's intended co-driver Oliver Gavin became unavailable.

Behind the top three came the three Fords of Prodrive's Cam Waters/Jack Le Brocq, and the DJR Team Penske Falcons of Scott Pye/Tony D'Alberto and Coulthard/Luke Youlden, who no doubt impressed team owner Roger Penske, present at Bathurst for the first time.

Whincup has fallen further behind van Gisbergen in the drivers' championship, which will hurt, but first there is the small matter of working out whether he has won a fifth Bathurst 1000, or whether his best friend Davison has taken honours for the second time.

PHIL BRANAGAN

RESULTS

1 Will Davison/Jonathon Webb (Holden Commodore) 161 laps in 6h19m25.3237s; **2 Shane van Gisbergen/Alexandre Premat (Holden)** +0.1434s; **3 Nick Percat/Cameron McConville (Holden)**; **4 Cameron Waters/Jack Le Brocq (Ford Falcon)**; **5 Scott Pye/Tony D'Alberto (Ford)**; **6 Fabian Coulthard/Luke Youlden (Ford)**; **7 Tim Slade/Ash Walsh (Holden)**; **8 Michael Caruso/Dean Fiore (Nissan Altima)**; **9 Dale Wood/David Russell (Nissan)**; **10 Tim Blanchard/Macauley Jones (Holden)**. **Points 1 van Gisbergen 2524**; **2 Jamie Whincup 2385**; **3 Craig Lowndes 2205**; **4 Davison 2112**; **5 Scott McLaughlin 2109**; **6 Mark Winterbottom 1908**.

Hurricane Matthew (Kenseth) gets beaten

NASCAR SPRINT CUP
CHARLOTTE (USA)
OCTOBER 9
ROUND 30/36

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER HIS SPRINT Cup debut and after 24 races without a win, Jimmie Johnson was victorious at Charlotte to progress to the next stage of the Chase. He jumped Matt Kenseth on the last restart of a race postponed for a day as Hurricane Matthew continued to strike the Southern United States.

The progress of Hendrick Chevrolet driver Johnson into the last eight of the Chase is the first time the multiple champion has got this far since the elimination format was introduced in 2014.

The defining moment of the race was a 12-car wreck and an ensuing red flag with 74 laps left, triggered by aggressive bump-drafting from Martin Truex Jr on Austin Dillon, who was running second.



Johnson leads Kenseth and the pack during the hurricane-delayed Charlotte race

Dillon hit the SAFER barrier on the exit of pit road hard, but was later discharged from the medical centre without injury.

Truex, the current man to beat after winning two of the previous three races, was hampered by a late-race clutch failure. As a result, he was one of five Chase drivers outside the top 30 in the results.

With 52 laps to go, Kenseth had fought his way from last to third place, and Ryan Newman was the next driver to be overtaken. Kenseth also withstood an early penalty as his pit crew jumped over the wall too soon, his start from the rear coming due to pre-race changes to a trackbar mount.

Kasey Kahne, Ryan Newman and Kyle Larson rounded out the top five. The drivers, none of whom are in the running

for the Chase, showed blistering pace in the closing laps on what was a slick and abrasive surface for tyres throughout, due to the hurricane having washed away any rubber laid on the track.

RESULTS

1 Jimmie Johnson (Chevrolet SS) 334 laps in 3h42m47s; 2 Matt Kenseth (Toyota Camry) +1.474s; 3 Kasey Kahne (Chevy); 4 Ryan Newman (Chevy); 5 Kyle Larson (Chevy); 6 Kyle Busch (Toyota); 7 Brad Keselowski (Ford Fusion); 8 Kurt Busch (Chevy); 9 Tony Stewart (Chevy); 10 Jamie McMurray (Chevy). **Round of 12**
1 Johnson 1 win/3045 points; 2 Kenseth 3040; 3 Kyle Busch 3036; 4 Keselowski 3034; 5 Kurt Busch 3033; 6 Carl Edwards 3029; 7 Martin Truex Jr 3028; 8 Denny Hamlin 3012; 9 Austin Dillon 3009; 10 Chase Elliott 3009; 11 Joey Logano 3006; 12 Kevin Harvick 3004.

Bandoh Lexus team breaks Super GT duck

SUPER GT
BURIRAM (T)
OCTOBER 9
ROUND 6/7

RACING PROJECT BANDO took its maiden overall Super GT win with its Lexus on the series' away trip to Thailand.

Current Super Formula series leader Yuhi Sekiguchi qualified the car on pole and built up a big lead in the early stages over Hideki Mutoh in the Drago Corse Honda,

in which GT500 debutant Tadasuke Makino — substituting for the Formula E-committed Oliver Turvey — had done a stunning job to get on the front row.

Joao Paulo de Oliveira ran third in the Team Impul Nissan he shared with Hironobu Yasuda. The car made it up to second, but a drive-through penalty due to a mistake at the pitstop — the team began working on the car while it was being refuelled — dropped them to fourth.

At the front, Sekiguchi controlled a

It was first GT500 win for Sekiguchi and second for Kunimoto

left-rear blowout to bring the leading Lexus safely to the pits, and Yuji Kunimoto took over the car before bringing it home to the chequered flag.

Once again Makino starred. The 19-year-old went on a charge and finished just 2.9 seconds down on Kunimoto.

James Rossiter put in a great drive in his TOM'S Lexus to move from seventh to fourth, but a drive-through for contact with a Honda dropped him to ninth and cost at least a podium. As a result, the Le Mans Lexus of Andrea Caldarelli and Kazuya Oshima came home in third.

JIRO TAKAHASHI

RESULTS

1 Yuhi Sekiguchi/Yuji Kunimoto (Lexus RC F) 66 laps in 1h37m58.745s; 2 Hideki Mutoh/Tadasuke Makino (Honda NSX Concept-GT) +2.917s; 3 Kazuya Oshima/Andrea Caldarelli (Lexus); 4 Hironobu Yasuda/Joao Paulo de Oliveira (Nissan GT-R); 5 Daisuke Nakajima/Bertrand Baguette (Honda); 6 Koudai Tsukakoshi/Takashi Kogure (Honda); 7 Heikki Kovalainen/Kohei Hirate (Lexus); 8 Kosuke Matsuura/Tomoki Nojiri (Honda); 9 James Rossiter/Ryo Hirakawa (Lexus); 10 Naoki Yamamoto/Takuya Izawa (Honda). **Points 1 Tsguo Matsuda/Ronnie Quintarelli 56;** 2 Caldarelli/Oshima 46; 3 Yuji Tachikawa/Hiroaki Ishiura 45; 4 Kovalainen/Hirate 45; 5 Kunimoto/Sekiguchi 41; 6 de Oliveira/Yasuda 36.





Lukyanuk managed not to fall into the Med

Lukyanuk is ERC golden boy

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
CYPRUS RALLY (CY)
OCTOBER 7-9
ROUND 10/10

ALEXEY LUKYANUK TOOK A DOUBLE victory on Rally Cyprus, winning not only the event outright but also the return of the European Rally Championship's Golden Stage, which awarded €25,000 to the winner.

The result also helped Lukyanuk to cement second in the ERC after his battle with Latvian Ralfs Sirmacis, who has won three times this year.

In Cyprus, Sirmacis struggled to match Lukyanuk's pace throughout the event. The Russian's experience gave him an advantage, as did the night stages, where his Fiesta ended up a minute ahead of Sirmacis's Skoda after just two tests on Friday.

Sirmacis also struggled thanks to only having access to a harder-compound Michelin, despite scouring the island nation for a different set.

The biggest shock of the event was Marijan

Griebel. In winning this year's ERC Junior championship, the German had secured a prize of a one-off outing in an R5 car in Cyprus.

Griebel — having never driven a four-wheel-drive car in competition before — took second overall in a fantastic display in his Motorsport Italia-prepared Skoda Fabia, after just a 50km test the night before the rally started.

Sirmacis took third, picking up his gravel pace on Saturday and Sunday and taking two stage wins.

Nikolay Gryazin had been running second but rolled his Skoda on SS6.

JACK BENYON

RESULTS

1 Alexey Lukyanuk/Alexey Arnavtov (Ford Fiesta R5) 2h06m55.9s; 2 Marijan Griebel/Pirmin Winklhofer (Skoda Fabia R5) +2m12.2s; 3 Ralfs Sirmacis/Arturs Simins (Skoda); 4 David Botka/Peter Szeles (Citroen DS3 R5); 5 Christos Demosthenous/Pambos Laos (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX); 6 'Chips Junior'/Antonis Chrysostomou (Mitsubishi). **Points 1 Kajetan Kajetanowicz 181;** 2 Lukyanuk 159; 3 Sirmacis 143; 4 Bryan Bouffier 42; 5 Jaroslaw Koltun 41; 6 Jan Kopecky 39.

Parente champ for McLaren

PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE
LAGUNASECA (USA)
OCTOBER 9
ROUND 11/11

ALVARO PARENTE TOOK VICTORY AND THE title for the K-PAX Racing McLaren team after an incredible final lap robbed Wright Motorsports Porsche driver Patrick Long of the crown.

A lengthy caution led to a single-lap shootout to the finish, with Long and Parente — so evenly matched in the points that whoever finished ahead would be champion — in second and third respectively as the race went green, behind the

leading Cadillac of Johnny O'Connell.

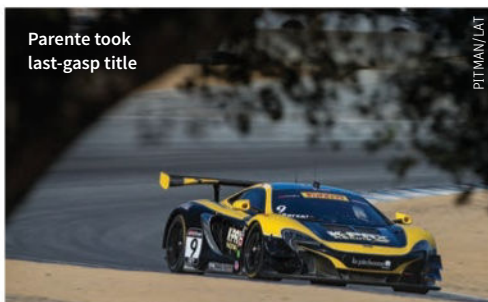
O'Connell gunned the restart and looked set for the win, only to run wide at the Turn 4 right-hander and onto the dirt. That gave Long the momentum to pull ahead on the run to Turn 5, only for O'Connell to barrel down the inside and push the Porsche wide. A disbelieving Parente — who'd had to defend third from the other Cadillac of Michael Cooper at the restart — accelerated past, with Long falling to fifth on the road behind Cooper and Bryan Heitkotter's Nissan.

A post-race penalty for O'Connell for the manoeuvre relegated him to fifth — one position behind Long — and promoted new champion Parente to race honours.

Parente had looked a long shot for the title, but a great start to go from sixth on the grid to third on lap one set him up for his unexpected present.

RESULTS

1 Alvaro Parente (McLaren 650S GT3) 27 laps in 51m02.693s; 2 Michael Cooper (Cadillac ATS-VR GT3) +0.671s; 3 Bryan Heitkotter (Nissan GT-R); 4 Patrick Long (Porsche 911 GT3-R); 5 Johnny O'Connell (Cadillac); 6 Jon Fogarty (McLaren). **Points 1 Parente 1657;** 2 Long 1629; 3 Cooper 1549; 4 O'Connell 1538; 5 Heitkotter 1397; 6 Ryan Eversley 1365.



Parente took last-gasp title

IN BRIEF

VLN

The brand-new Lexus GT3 prototype took victory on the Nurburgring Nordschleife, with brothers Dominik and Mario Farnbacher sharing the car run by their father Horst's team. They finished 33 seconds clear of the Rowe Racing BMW of Alexander Sims and Stef Dusseldorp, with ADAC GT Masters champions Christopher Mies and Connor de Phillippi third in their Land Motorsport Audi.

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

Joey Logano took the honours at Charlotte after grabbing the lead from long-time leader Kyle Larson on a restart with 18 laps remaining. Larson closed back in on the leading Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, only to brush the wall with four laps to go and drop to fourth at the finish behind Elliott Sadler and Daniel Suarez. Sadler and Suarez had already qualified via wins for the next 'Round of 8' stage of the Chase, while Erik Jones — winner of most races before the initial Chase cutoff — also managed to clamber in by finishing fifth. The big upset was the elimination of Ty Dillon, who finished 11th and ended up just one position short of the required points to make it.

DUNLOP V8 SERIES

Paul Dumbrell may not have won the Bathurst 1000 (well, not yet anyway), but he did dominate the 250km support race at Mount Panorama. In his older-model Holden, the double series champion led nearly all the way to beat series leader Garry Jacobson and Anton de Pasquale in their Fords.

AUSTRALIAN CARRERA CUP

Matt Campbell continued his dominant form at Mount Panorama. The 21-year-old won all three races to beat veterans Steven Richards and David Wall, who shared the podium positions. Former Bathurst 1000 winner Tony Longhurst missed the races after crashing heavily in practice.

GT4 EURO CUP

Ex-DTM and WTCC driver Peter Terting secured the title at the Zandvoort finale along with Jorg Viebahn in their PROSport Porsche. Eighth place for Terting and Viebahn in race one was enough, as Mads Siljehaug grabbed the win in the KTM X-Bow started by Maciej Dreszer by passing Dutch prince Burkhard van Oranje (who had taken over the Ekris BMW M4 started by Ricardo van der Ende) on the penultimate lap. Van der Ende was leading late in race two when he was punted into a spin at Tarzan by the Maserati of Luca Anselmi. As Anselmi served his drive-through, the other Ekris M4 of Simon Knap (started by Rob Severs) went by to take victory from van der Ende.

US FORMULA 4

Cameron Das claimed the inaugural US F4 title after extending his winning run to eight with a hat-trick in the finale on the Homestead 'roval'. The 16-year-old from Baltimore recovered from a duff start to win race one before securing the crown in race two.

How Buemi won Bird's race

Pre-season favourite Sebastien Buemi won for e.dams, but it was far from straightforward and it was the driver who finished 13th who really should have won

By Scott Mitchell, Formula E Correspondent

[@ScottAutosport](https://twitter.com/ScottAutosport)





A repeat of the podium of last year's season opener in the inaugural Hong Kong harbour-front race might suggest that little has

changed going into the third season of Formula E, but four drivers could have won this remarkable race. The path to Sebastien Buemi leading home Lucas di Grassi and Nick Heidfeld was far from straightforward.

Jean-Eric Vergne topped practice for the new Renault-powered Techeetah team, but he was hampered by a red flag in his qualifying group, which meant he then had to go straight into a flying lap after just an out-lap. Struggling to find an optimal balance, he wound up ninth on the grid.

"But starting from ninth I could still win because I know the car is extremely quick," Vergne insisted. "Qualifying was one mistake and in the race many ones."

In the race, the Frenchman was in a train of cars fighting for fourth, less than 10 seconds off the lead, but had to stop early on after a battery failure on the water pump. Vergne rejoined, and attempted to set fastest lap in similar style to Sebastien Buemi in last season's finale after changing his car – but only

"They found Piquet a tougher nut to crack"

after confusion within the team over whether he would be allowed to do so.

"Then the radio wasn't working, so I didn't know if I could finish the race," he explained. "I heard 'push' so I pushed, heard 'box' so I boxed. It was a big mess."

While Vergne's plan to upset the works Renault team with his customer entry unravelled and eliminated one potential winner, there was still the possibility of a new storyline: Nelson Piquet Jr was back.

The inaugural FE champion wiped away the miserable memory of his title defence with a shock pole position, heading a NextEV one-two on the grid, and then scarpered four seconds clear as team-mate Oliver Turvey fought a rearguard action behind.

Turvey was on a different strategy and attempting to save more energy, and this meant his defence of second was breached sooner rather than later by Sam Bird and Buemi.

But once the DS Virgin Racing and Renault e.dams drivers were free of Turvey, they found Piquet a tougher nut to crack. The Brazilian was using his



hugely uprated powertrain to good effect, and Bird made no inroads initially before whittling the margin down to 2.5 seconds by the start of the 17th lap.

That lap changed the race.

Jose Maria Lopez had starred on his first Formula E qualifying session to claim third on the grid, one place ahead of team-mate Bird, but clashed with the sister DS Virgin car exiting the first corner and picked up a handling issue. He dropped through the order and eventually stopped early.

But then, two laps after that stop, he submerged his second car into the barrier on the exit of the chicane at Turns 3 and 4 – right in front of Piquet, who was coming up to lap him.

With little time to react, Piquet was forced into evasive action – and chose to nose his car gently into the barriers to the left of Lopez's car rather than rear-end the car itself. He was able to reverse and rejoin, but slipped to third.

That meant Bird came to the fore, but Lopez's stricken machine required a safety-car period that defined the race.

With 17 laps completed and 28 to run, most teams were adamant it was too early to stop, even with the obvious strategic benefit of getting into the pits while those who stayed out circulated slowly behind the safety car.

The frontrunners split – Buemi stopped at the end of the 20th lap, under the safety car, while Bird stopped at the end of the 25th after three (quick) laps once the caution period was over.

By this point Bird held a 16-second lead, with pitstops costing around 40 seconds. Advantage Buemi in terms of track position, but Bird would have come on extremely strong with so much more energy at his disposal.

We were therefore robbed of a grandstand finish when Bird's second car failed to start in the garage. As the seconds ticked by agonisingly he tried

Buemi believes he could have held lead even if Bird's second car had not failed

to restart the system, and eventually succeeded, but lost a lap in the process.

"It's obviously gutting given the lead I'd opened; it's better we diagnose and iron out the problems now at race one, rather than later in the season," was Bird's philosophical conclusion.

But would Bird's strategy have paid off? It's difficult to say decisively how much quicker he was than Buemi in the second stint, given Buemi had less need to conserve energy because Bird lost that lap. By rejoining roughly one lap and a few seconds behind Buemi he was roughly 1m10s in arrears. By the finish he was 48 seconds down. In other words, 22 seconds quicker, despite having to unlap himself against Nico Prost, Nick Heidfeld, Lucas di Grassi and Buemi.

That suggests he would have been right with Buemi at the flag, and running at a pace advantage of two seconds per lap – a difficult force to stop. It all adds up to a race that Buemi was not favourite



to win until late on, though he later suggested he'd have had enough to turn up the wick in defence.

"I finished with a huge margin [on energy]; we maybe had a bit of a miscommunication so I finished with close to a lap more," he explained. "I could have done much more."

And if the strategies had not converged, and Bird not suffered his pitlane delay, Buemi was equally confident that he'd have had a crack after a tricky opening stint.

"I had a little bit more percentage compared with him, but only one, so to be honest I feel I had the same speed," he said of the first stint against Bird. "Then for the second car we made a big adjustment on the set-up and I was a lot more competitive."

Buemi said not many made the right call in stopping under the safety car, but it worked out differently for different drivers. Piquet should have been in >>

LOW-KEY DEBUT FOR "CAUTIOUS" JAGUAR

JAGUAR CLAIMED THAT ADAM CARROLL'S 12TH-place finish in Hong Kong was what it expected from its "cautious" Formula E debut.

The British manufacturer's return to motorsport was somewhat low-key as Carroll finished 12th and Mitch Evans retired, having both qualified more than a second off pole.

Jaguar was the only team not to get at least one car within a second of Nelson Piquet Jr's pole time. Carroll's fastest lap of the race was 1m04.732s, which was much more competitive relative to those who were also managing energy (some just went for fastest lap).

Both drivers flirted with the top 10 but did not pit under the safety car and fell back. Team director James Barclay admitted inexperience cost Jaguar there, as the team was not convinced that its cars would make it to the end with such a long second stint.

"This is exactly the point," he said. "This year is about learning. How hard can we push on the energy? What's the earliest we can stop and go to the end? We've learned that now."

"We approached this weekend quite cautiously in a lot of ways. We were really competitive on energy, so we know we can push a bit harder there. Both drivers did a good job."

"For sure there's time to find in qualifying but we were quite conservative. We needed mileage and now we can take all the data away and analyse and optimise what we do."

The Jaguar package is believed to be slightly overweight compared with its rivals, but it is not known by how much.

Barclay insisted the race proved that the team was not going to suffer the same fate as NextEV did last season with a heavily compromised package and an overweight car.

"I think we've shown today that's not the case," he said. "We'll show the potential as the races progress. We know where we are. In the race Mitch and Adam were moving forward – that's a good sign."

Barclay claimed there were gains to be made on the set-up side as well as more to come from the drivers, which was backed up by Evans, who retired due to a technical issue on his second car that had been picked up earlier in the day.

"There's always going to be [areas to improve] when we're so new," said the Kiwi. "As a driver I've got a lot to work on with myself. The team know where they need to work on. It's going to be a constant evolution throughout the championship and as a starting point we can be satisfied with this."

Carroll, who lost a bit of time in the car swaps with a seatbelt issue, said Jaguar could "definitely chip away" at its pace deficit to the frontrunners. "We have the data, we have all the laps," he said.

"I was hoping I was going to be a bit closer than that in qualifying, but the chicane without the sausage kerb was very difficult. I hit it slowly and realised it could cause an issue, and I was quite conservative at that point."

"I lost a bit of time there and there was definitely time to gain. How much it bunched up [in the race], it was pretty good."



podium contention despite his shunt because he ran third on the road, but NextEV brought him in on the same lap the safety car ended. The time loss dropped him to the back of the field, he cycled back to just inside the top 10, and then he fell out of the points again owing to a topsy-turvy stint in which he seemed to have to follow quick laps with slower ones to maintain energy.

On the other hand, the performances of the Andretti duo suggest stopping later was not an entirely foolish strategy. Antonio Felix da Costa and Robin Frijns managed to end the race fifth and sixth despite starting 13th and 20th. Da Costa had moved up to seventh by the time the safety car came out, and stayed out until a lap before Bird. He rejoined eighth and recovered to fifth, though it arguably could have been more.

Da Costa ran just behind Heidfeld and ahead of Prost under the safety car, but they finished third and fourth, 10 seconds clear of him. That said, he turned a 30-second gap to Buemi to 17.9s in the second stint while charging back through, and it's unlikely he'd have been able to keep with Prost had they been on identical strategies.

Frijns, meanwhile, crashed heavily in qualifying and his second car was only just rebuilt in time for the second half of the race. Starting last, he had gone extremely conservative in his first stint so had enough energy to run right through to lap 26 (even leading a lap).

The Dutchman made even more ground than his team-mate after stopping, rising from 11th to sixth. It was firmly a net gain.

For Buemi, even his various rivals for the race victory having problems did not make for a smooth run to the flag.

"In general the more energy you save, the less you heat up the battery since



Buemi's seventh Formula E win got his 2016-17 title bid off to the perfect start

you ask less of it," he explained. "But the stint was so long that the battery just got hotter and hotter. And with the regeneration being so much more powerful [drivers can harvest at 150kW now instead of 100kW], it's really on the limit with the battery.

"I was two degrees away from stopping. It was quite normal, but on the high side — there was not much margin."

Remarkably, the man applying the pressure at the flag was di Grassi. Not only had the Abt Audi Sport driver's

qualifying crash consigned him to 19th on the grid, but the Brazilian then broke his front wing in a first-lap melee at Turn 2. He was forced to pit to replace it on lap seven. But with nothing to lose when the safety car emerged on lap 18, Abt gambled and di Grassi was immediately in the pits.

That put him right on the back of the pack, but with everyone else due to stop — whether under the safety car or green-flag conditions. Thus di Grassi ran a net first briefly, until his extreme strategy meant he did not fight it at all when Buemi came up behind him.

Last season di Grassi had a knack of pulling off results that seemed unlikely. But here the Brazilian's energy-saving requirements were severe — his second stint was naturally the longest of anyone's at 27 laps. Yet he executed it very well to perform what was by far his most significant salvage job in Formula E.

Heidfeld completed the podium for Mahindra, having been part of a duelling pack (also comprising Turvey, Loic Duval, Prost and Jerome d'Ambrosio) that followed Buemi into the pits under the safety car.

Heidfeld only started 10th, four places behind his rookie team-mate Felix Rosenqvist, but an aggressive round-the-outside move at Turn 2 on the opening lap vaulted him to sixth. He fended off the Swedish debutant until Rosenqvist spun into the barriers on lap 14, and Heidfeld's reward was the right strategy call and a podium despite coming very, very close to running out of energy at the flag. 🌟



Piquet led early on, before Lopez got in the way



Bird was a lapped 13th, but could have won it



Vergne's race was effectively over early on

STALEY/LAT

RESULTS ROUND 1/10, HONG KONG (PRC), OCTOBER 9 (45 LAPS – 52.009 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renault e.dams • Renault Z.E.16	53m13.298s
2	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Abt Audi Sport • Abt Schaeffler FE02	+2.477s
3	Nick Heidfeld (D)	Mahindra • Mahindra M3ELECTRO	+5.522s
4	Nicolas Prost (F)	Renault e.dams • Renault Z.E.16	+7.360s
5	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Andretti • Andretti ATEC-02	+17.987s
6	Robin Frijns (NL)	Andretti • Andretti ATEC-02	+21.161s
7	Jerome d'Ambrosio (B)	Faraday Future Dragon Racing • Penske 701-EV	+28.443s
8	Oliver Turvey (GB)	NextEV • NextEV NIO	+30.355s
9	Maro Engel (D)	Venturi • Venturi VM200-FE-02	+30.898s
10	Stephane Sarrazin (F)	Venturi • Venturi VM200-FE-02	+31.734s
11	Nelson Piquet Jr (BR)	NextEV • NextEV NIO	+35.256s
12	Adam Carroll (GB)	Jaguar Racing • Jaguar I-type 1	+43.839s
13	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing • Virgin DSV-02	+48.058s
14	Loic Duval (F)	Faraday Future Dragon Racing • Penske 701-EV	-2 laps
15	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Mahindra • Mahindra M3ELECTRO	-2 laps
R	Daniel Abt (D)	Abt Audi Sport • Abt Schaeffler FE02	34 laps-out of energy
R	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Techeetah • Renault Z.E.16	31 laps-out of energy
R	Mitch Evans (NZ)	Jaguar Racing • Jaguar I-type 1	24 laps-mechanical
R	Jose Maria Lopez (RA)	DS Virgin Racing • Virgin DSV-02	15 laps-accident
R	Ma Qing Hua (PRC)	Techeetah • Renault Z.E.16	1 lap-accident

Winner's average speed 58.632mph. **Fastest lap** Rosenqvist 1m02.947s, 66.098mph.

Qualifying 1 Piquet 1m03.099s; 2 Turvey 1m03.231s; 3 Lopez 1m03.251s; 4 Bird 1m03.258s; 5 Buemi 1m03.317s; 6 Rosenqvist 1m03.332s; 7 Abt 1m03.615s; 8 Vergne 1m03.750s; 9 Prost 1m03.759s; 10 Heidfeld 1m03.848s; 11 Duval 1m03.637s; 12 Engel 1m03.915s; 13 da Costa 1m04.057s; 14 Sarrazin 1m04.520s; 15 Evans 1m04.588s; 16 Ma 1m04.740s; 17 Carroll 1m04.428s; 18 d'Ambrosio 1m05.166s; 19 di Grassi 1m08.094s; 20 Frijns 1m10.407s. * grid penalty.

Championship 1 Buemi 25; 2 di Grassi 18; 3 Heidfeld 15; 4 Prost 12; 5 da Costa 10; 6 Frijns 8.

IN THE HEADLINES



MAUGER/LAT

FRIJNS 'FOUR MINUTES' FROM EXIT

Andretti co-team principal Roger Griffiths has revealed Robin Frijns's second car was "four minutes" from not being ready to run. The team had to build an entire car around a new tub after Frijns's heavy qualifying crash (above). "We set it up, it wasn't just thrown together," said Griffiths. "And we even put some stickers on the side of it."

ANDRETTI "AMAZED" BMW

Griffiths described the "never-say-die" rebuild job as something that "amazed" Andretti's new engineering partner BMW. The German marque is evaluating a fully fledged works entry from 2018 and has aided Andretti's powertrain for this season. "It really set the partnership off on a great start," he said.

JEV WANTS TECHEETAH CHANGES

Jean-Eric Vergne says Techeetah needs to make changes before Marrakech after a "big mess" of a race. The Frenchman's race was undone by a battery issue and he was delayed further by his team's uncertainty about some of the rules. "There's a lot of things we can change," said Vergne. "For Marrakech I am sure things are in much better shape in the team. I'm sure we will win races and fight for the championship."

PROST'S JOKER USED ALREADY

The Renault e.dams team has already had to deploy the 'joker' inverter for Nico Prost. The Frenchman's Z.E.16 broke down on the first lap of Friday's shakedown session, and the source was traced to a wiring fault in the inverter. The team had to use its one free replacement to solve the issue.

TURVEY PERPLEXED BY NEXTEV

NextEV needs to analyse why it failed to convert its strong qualifying pace into consistency in the race, according to Oliver Turvey. Nelson Piquet Jr and Turvey turned a front-row lockout for the resurgent team into 11th and eighth respectively. Turvey (below) said: "It's encouraging to have a quick car but in the race it's about being as efficient as you can and we have to look into that."



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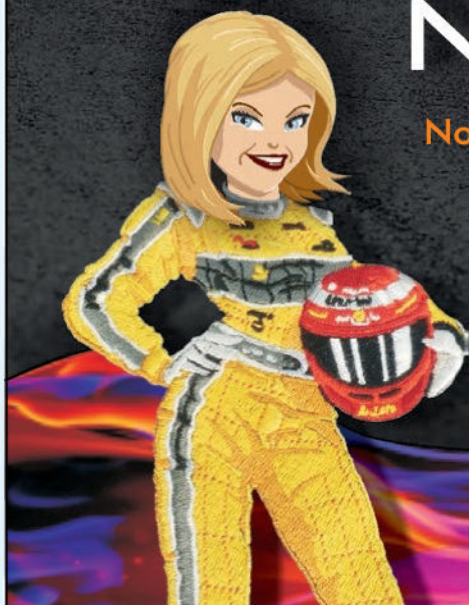
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England and Noble suffered damage in qualifying and couldn't race at Snetterton

F3 squad West-Tec enters Prototype Cup

LONG-TIME FORMULA 3 SQUAD Team West-Tec plans to run two cars in the new Prototype Cup next year, saying the series has the potential to rival British GT.

West-Tec has previously provided technical support to prototype and sportscar teams, notably in the European Le Mans Series. With the rapid expansion in the LMP3 category worldwide, the team now sees an opportunity to run cars.

Team manager Craig Bennett said that the team is keen to remain in Formula 3, but is realistic about the challenges surrounding the single-seater racing ladder at the moment.

"We know there are opportunities in LMP3," he said. "It's becoming increasingly difficult to find customers to race in F3 and I don't think the market is quite as strong."

"We definitely want to keep going in Euroformula Open and our single-

seater pursuits, but at the same time we're keen to look into the future and I can see the Prototype Cup becoming the new Radicals and potentially a rival to British GT."

West-Tec entered two Ligier JSP3s last weekend at Snetterton for the inaugural Prototype Cup race, but damage in qualifying meant that the Christian England/Colin Noble car was retired for the race. Meanwhile, the car of Bradley Smith and Shaun Balfe completed the hour-long event and finished second.

Bennett said that attending the event and showcasing the team's ability was essential to West-Tec's 2017 plans.

"There's a mini-boom in LMP3, and we know we have the contacts with young professional drivers, so this weekend is about coming and showing what we can do and hoping to attract the gentlemen drivers we need to have two LMP3s on the grid next year," he said.



Seven cars started the 'pilot' event last weekend at Snetterton

United Autosports boss Richard Dean added that he is confident the category will be a success.

"We're the UK agents for Ligier and we've had six orders, and I'm fairly certain four are for the Prototype Cup, so in theory we're up to 12 cars if you include the ones here," he said. "There are nine Ligiers in the UK and eight were at Snetterton, which is huge."

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FORMULA FORD 1600

Ex-Van Diemen boss to Festival and WHT

FAMED FORMULA FORD TEAM BOSS Jonathan Lewis is to contest the upcoming Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch and Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone.

Lewis headed up the successful works Van Diemen team in the 1990s and early 2000s, but has more recently raced in Mighty Minis before starring in the Masters Pre-66 Touring Cars Championship earlier in 2016.

He will drive a 1988 Reynard in the two Kent events after restoring the car. Lewis had planned to race the car in the Champion of Brands series this season, but, after those plans were put on hold, the centrepiece races will be his first chance to get behind the wheel of the car in anger.

"I bought this Reynard with a friend of mine, Ade Barwick," said Lewis. "I restored it last winter and I tested it at the first test day at Brands Hatch this year. I was going to race it in the Champion of Brands but then a sponsor wanted me to race in historic Minis so the Reynard got shoved into a corner.

"Even when I ran the Van Diemens, I always loved the look of the Reynard and thought it was the prettiest car. It's more of a show car and will only go up in value."

This will be the first time Lewis has raced a single-seater for two years. The last time he regularly raced one was when he claimed the Monoposto 2000 titles in 2003 and '04.

"I always said I would do the Festival and the Hayes as I've never done them as a driver and I'm really looking forward to it," added Lewis. "I'm not expecting anything, I've got no delusions that I'll even be on the same lap as most of them! I'm not out there to get in anyone's way."

Ex-Formula 1 driver Martin Donnelly was set to join Lewis on the grid but clashing commitments mean he will be unable to get to Brands Hatch until the Sunday.

"It's a shame and the plan was to head back, but this was booked last December, so I can't get out of it," said Donnelly. "We will have to put it on the backburner until 2017."

FORMULA RENAULT

F4 racer Fielding handed Formula Renault testing opportunity



BRITISH FORMULA 4 RUNNER-UP Sennan Fielding will test a Formula Renault 2.0 car at Estoril later this month after being offered an opportunity to take part in the Eurocup's rookie test.

Fielding, who with JHR Developments missed out on the F4 title by seven points to Carlin's Max Fewtrell, will get his run at the Portuguese venue on October 25.

The 20-year-old doesn't yet know which team he will run with, but is confident of showing what he is capable of as he evaluates his options for 2017.

"It [the Eurocup] was going to be something we were looking

at for next year anyway – we were interested in going down that route," said Fielding, who raced briefly in FR2.0 in 2014. "Renault Sport sent me an email asking if I would like to do the official rookie test. I was like 'sure, 100%!'. It's such a good opportunity for me.

"The Formula Renault is a really good car and, as long as I have the car underneath me, I can go out and prove what I can do. I haven't been in a Formula Renault for absolutely ages, about two years, and it's a new circuit for me so it's going to be a challenge but I'm really looking forward to it."

Fielding added that he was confident of being able to remain in single-seaters next year, despite having struggled to piece a budget together for 2016 and in previous years.

"I've had a lot of interest [from teams for 2017]; single-seaters is still on," he said. "I gave it my all but I was just really gutted for my team and family [on missing out on the F4 title at Brands Hatch]. It was heartbreaking. There were a fair few tears shared around.

"I've just got to take the positives – we did well to compete against Carlin and there were times that the car was the quickest on the grid."

Richardson team to race in Juniors

RICHARDSON RACING WILL ENTER THE Ginetta Junior Championship next year.

The team is best known for competing in British Formula 4 and the previous British Formula Ford series, although it did branch out to run a programme in this year's Ginetta GT5 Challenge.



Team boss Gwyn Richardson said: "In the past 12 months, we have tested a number of young drivers in our F4 car who are looking to get onto the motorsport ladder but who aren't currently old enough to race in the series.

"With that in mind, we thought it was the ideal time for us to look at what options were available if we were to introduce a Junior programme for young drivers like this, and there is nothing to beat the Ginetta series."

The team is also considering expanding into the British GT Championship GT4 division for 2017, and plans to test drivers during the winter in an Aston Martin Vantage.

The Richardson family has a history in Ginetta Juniors, with Louise Richardson a former frontrunner in the series.

IN BRIEF



GOODWOOD 2017 DATES ANNOUNCED

Dates for Goodwood's three standout events in 2017 have been announced, starting with the 75th Members' Meeting over the weekend of March 18-19. The Festival of Speed on the hill in the grounds of Goodwood House will run from June 22-25, while the annual Revival (above) on the Goodwood circuit is scheduled for September 8-10. While the dates for the Members' Meeting are confirmed, the dates for the other two events remain provisional.

CLIO CUP TO RUN ON MICHELIN TYRES

The Renault UK Clio Cup will switch back to using Michelin tyres next season after four years using Dunlop rubber, as part of a move by Renault Sport to have all of its Clio series using the same tyre manufacturer. It had already been announced that the new Junior Clio Cup series will use Michelin road tyres.

RADICALS' MANCHESTER TO CATERHAM

Radical-racing teenager Jack Manchester will make his Caterham Supersport debut in the final round at Donington Park this weekend. Manchester, who recently took his first Radical UK victory at Silverstone and maiden Radical European Masters class win at Monza, will continue racing in Radicals next season.

CHADWICK THIRD ON NORDSCHLEIFE

2015 British GT4 champion Jamie Chadwick finished third in class in her first VLN event on the Nurburgring Nordschleife since gaining her 'A' race licence to compete on the circuit in September. Chadwick raced an Aston Martin Racing GT8 in the SP8 division, alongside Peter Cate and Ahmad Al Harthy, in the four-hour race.

GRANT, WAINWRIGHT GO FOR FFORD TITLE

Callum Grant and Rob Wainwright will settle the Historic Formula Ford title in this weekend's double-header during the HSCC Finals meeting at Silverstone. 2012 champion Grant (leading below) has the upper hand after eight wins from 13 rounds, and can seal the crown with a win or two fourth places in his Merlyn Mk20. Wainwright can only try to win both races in his Elden Mk8.



JUNIORSALOONS

Zanetti gets Clio test after saloons success

PROVISIONAL JUNIOR SALOON Car Championship winner Matteo Zanetti is set to test a Michelin Clio Cup Series car with Westbourne Motorsport at Donington Park during the winter, with a view to graduating into the championship next year.

The 16-year-old's age makes him ineligible to defend his crown, which he secured with Westbourne, should it be ratified after an appeal by provisional runner-up Katie Milner.

The Citroën Saxo-based championship will be decided

by a hearing at the MSA Court of Appeal after Milner appealed her exclusion from both races from the recent round at Knockhill for a technical infringement.

"Pretty much 80% of the grid are backing us," said Milner.

CATERHAMROADSPORT

Marshalling saves Caterham ace

A MARSHALLING INITIATIVE BROUGHT in at the start of this year has reduced the gap between the top two drivers in the Caterham Roadsport championship ahead of this weekend's finale at Donington Park.

Daniel Quintero received a nine-point deduction for a driving-standards breach at Anglesey, calculated by multiplying by three the number of points applied to his MSA licence as a result of the offence.

But under a new Caterham directive,

Quintero successfully applied to the championship clerk to complete a day's marshalling. Successful drivers then have their points penalty lifted, although the licence points still stand.

Quintero completed the day and has had his lost points reinstated. With dropped scores accounted for, he now effectively trails series leader Russ Olivant's tally of 236 points by just four with two races to run and 52 points on offer.



FF1600 Castle Combe Formula Ford stalwart Pete Diccox made his final appearance in the category during the circuit's finals day meeting at the age of 80. Diccox concluded his 25th full season in his Van Diemen RF89 on Saturday. He was a late additional entry to the Formula Ford Carnival, after contact forced him out of the final Formula Ford Championship race on the first lap. He exited the Carnival after nine laps due to mechanical issues. "I think it's the trying to keep up with and being around younger people that keeps you going," said Diccox. "When you're older it's easier to fall into a certain routine but being around the youngsters has kept me going and active." **Photographs by Ollie Read**

OSS

SPRINT AND HILLCLIMB CHAMPION CARTER TO OSS FINALE

NEWLY CROWNED Hillclimb and Sprint Association champion Matt Carter will return to circuit racing for the first time in two years this weekend.

Carter will take part in the final OSS races of the season at Silverstone in the same Radical PR6 that he uses in hillclimbs and sprints.

He last raced in the 750 Motor Club's Bikesports Championship in 2014 and has previously won in the SEMSEC Sports Racing series at Lydden Hill in 2013.

"After sprinting and hillclimbing for so long a 20-minute race will feel like an endurance race!" said Carter.

"My limited experience of circuit racing says you need a relatively relaxed body to last the 20 minutes and get into a rhythm, but the concentration level is just as high given the other cars on the circuit."

PROTOTYPE CUP

Randle set to stay in Prototype Cup after race debut at Snetterton

BRDC BRITISH FORMULA 3 race winner Thomas Randle will compete in the Prototype Cup next year, as he waits to see if he can run a joint season in the Formula V8 3.5 Series.

Randle tested the car for the first time two weeks ago at Snetterton, and after a successful run is now contemplating a future in prototype racing.

The Australian raced a Ligier JSP3 at Snetterton for his British F3 team Douglas Motorsport in the inaugural Prototype Cup round last weekend, sharing the machine with its owner Mike Newbould and finishing sixth.

"Mike only just got the car after enjoying trying it with United Autosports," he said. "After I've helped him in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup he offered me the chance to try an LMP3 car and I was massively intrigued."

"Driving it at Snetterton really won me over and, with a real ladder in prototype racing that potentially goes all the way to LMP1, it's something I'd really consider."

"Mike wants to do the full season with me and I'll take him up on that, as I want to ideally combine it with FV8 3.5 next year, but we'll see when the calendar comes out."



Randle raced LMP3 car in Snetterton prologue last weekend

EBREY



British aces shine in FIA Hillclimb event

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

[@Autosport](#)

BRITISH SPEED-EVENT FANS SHOULD BE IMMENSELY proud of Scott Moran, Trevor Willis, Wallace Menzies and Will Hall, who recorded overall top 10 finishes in the second biennial FIA Hill Climb Masters event at Ecce Homo Sternberk in the Czech Republic last weekend. Backed up by Darren Warwick and Dave Uren in smaller single-seaters and Dave Warburton (Caterham) and Colin Satchell (Peugeot 205), in a multi-division team seeing the classic venue for the first time, their results should not be underestimated.

As can be seen in countless, frankly terrifying videos on YouTube, continental hillclimbing is a very different discipline to that which we enjoy in these islands. The European Championship, fought over 12 events, is contested by elite competitors on some staggering mountain roads, each several kilometres long.

Here, our specialists battle for points twice per counter over single runs of between 22.58 seconds (Shelsley Walsh) to just under 40 (Craigantlet, Northern Ireland).

The European Championship's logistics effectively preclude our competitors from taking part. Aside from the ultra high-downforce single-seaters which dominate our scene not fitting the FIA eligibility template, the circus's route would demand full-time participation from a central base.

Given that it might take three or four seasons to get a handle on each course (on a rotating calendar), no wonder it's been decades since a Brit tackled more than the occasional event.

This year's marathon schedule took racers to St Jean du Gard-Col St Pierre (France) and Rechbergrennen (Austria) back-to-back in April, Rampa da Falperra (Braga, Portugal) and Subida al Fito (Arriondas, Spain) over an Iberian fortnight in May, Sternberk and Ascoli Piceno's 'Coppa Paolino Teodori'

(Italy) in June; Limanowa (Poland), Dobsinsky Kopec (Slovakia) and Glasbachrennen (Bad Liebenstein, Germany) in July; St Ursanne-Les Rangiers (Switzerland) in August; and Ilirska Bistrica (Slovenia) and Buzetski Dani (Croatia) in September.

I have only been to one European round, but memories of the awesome St Ursanne-Les Rangiers event in 1980 – attended with Brits Paul Edwards and David Franklin – remain with me still. Swiss driver Patrick Studer won over the two ascents in a Formula 2 March-BMW 802, shadowed by Frenchman Michel Pignard (Group 6 Toj-BMW SC206) and Markus Hotz third in another F2 March.

The mountainmeisters of yore are many in a sport dating back to 1930 when Hans Stuck (Austro-Daimler) won the inaugural title. Stuck drove an Auto Union up Shelsley in '36, a spectacle repeated 80 years later by son 'Hanschen' this summer. Edgar Barth (father of Porsche's Le Mans winner Jurgen), Lodovico Scarfiotti, Gerhard Mitter and eight-time champion Mauro Nesti are among its heroic legends.

In recent years, Italy's Simone Faggioli has swept the board in Osella and Norma sportscars. This season, his bid for a ninth (and eighth successive) was thwarted by compatriot Christian Merli, who pipped him to the post.

Sternberk record holder Faggioli and Merli were the only competitors to post quicker times than Moran – who this year equalled Tony Marsh's record of six RAC British Hillclimb titles almost 50 years after his last – Willis and Menzies last weekend.

That surely underlines the talent pool at the top of our tree. Something tells me the continental stars might have greater trouble getting their heads round a short blat if they came here.

Wouldn't it be great to see them try? Maybe at next year's championship 70th Anniversary celebration at Shelsley? 🍀

DRAKE LANDS FIA LURANI FJ TROPHY TITLE AT DIJON

Second in class for Robin Longdon (Lola Mk2) at Dijon's Motors Cup event in France last weekend allowed Briton Chris Drake (Terrier Mk4) to cement the FIA Lurani Trophy Historic Formula Junior championship.

Manfredo Rossi di Montelera (Lotus 22) and Scot John Fyda (Brabham BT6) each won a leg at the French circuit, but the Italian's retirement on lap one of Sunday's finale handed outright round victory to Richard Smeeton (Wainer 63).

Leo Voyazides/Simon Hadfield won the GT & Sports Car Cup enduro in the Greek's AC Cobra, from Guillermo Fierro's Maserati T61 'birdcage', and claimed both halves of the 200km race in Voyazides' ex-Jean-Louis Lafosse Lola-DFV T282. Mark Richardson/David Gathercole (Lola-BDG T290) and Belgian Marc Devis (Toj-DFV SC303) led the chase.

Matthew Watts (March-BMW 772) won both HSCC Historic F2 races but Alsatian Robert Simac (March-BDA 712) aced the 1600cc class to clinch his fourth successive title. Peter Horsman (Lotus 18/21), Philip Walker (Lotus 16) and Julian Bronson (Scarab) earned HGPCA honours.



HESKETH v SHADOW IN JARAMA MASTERS SHOWDOWN

Michael Lyons (Hesketh 308E, pictured above) or Max Smith-Hilliard (Shadow DN5) will emerge as FIA Masters Historic F1 pre-'78 champion at period Spanish GP circuit Jarama this weekend. Nick Padmore, who clinched the Post-'78 championship title at Spa last month in MS-H's Williams FW07C, adds spice to the event, switching back to the Lotus 77 in which he won the class last year.



SILVERSTONE
BARC OCTOBER 8-9

Dorlin recovers well to take crown

JAMES DORLIN SECURED HIS second title in three seasons as he was crowned Michelin Clio Cup Series champion, despite having to share the race honours on the Silverstone International Circuit with main rival Brett Lidsey.

Dorlin, the 2014 Junior Saloon champion, bogged down from pole position in the opening contest, handing Lidsey an advantage he pushed home in the wet conditions. A recovery drive past Westbourne team-mate Sam Randon proved enough for Dorlin, who was declared champion with dropped scores taken into account. "We've had a brilliant season – it's only my second year in the Michelin Clios," said Dorlin. "I'm absolutely thrilled to come away with second and the championship."

The rising star consolidated his championship victory with another stellar recovery drive to score an eighth win of the campaign in the season finale. Once again 17-year-old Dorlin made a below-par start, handing Lidsey and Randon the advantage for the second race in succession. Dorlin got the cutback on Randon to reclaim second into Club on the fourth lap, before completing his comeback a lap later with a move to the inside of Lidsey at Stowe.

Jack Fabby emerged victorious in the struggle for the Road class title, though he was aided by Nic Harrison heading into the gravel at Stowe in the soggy

conditions during race one. Damian Hirst scored a career-best second in the category, while Nick White took two class podiums on his debut.

Though Matteo Zanetti provisionally wrapped up the Junior Saloon Car title on the track, it remains to be seen whether title rival Katie Milner's appeal against her exclusion for a technical infringement at Knockhill will be upheld, which would give her the crown.

Both fell back from their starting slots during the first race at Silverstone, where George Sutton took his first race victory since Pembrey in April, and although Milner claimed an impressive last-gasp victory in the final race with Zanetti behind, the championship provisionally

Dorlin made poor starts to both races but recovered to claim two podiums and secure the title

goes to the Westbourne driver.

As the Clubmans resumed normal proceedings after a non-championship visit to Anglesey last month, Phil Weaver's Nemesis proved to be the package to beat in the opening race ahead of Steven Dickens's Mallock. Though Dickens initially bested Weaver at the start of the first contest, the Nemesis reclaimed its advantage on the inside line down the International Pits Straight on the fourth lap. Dickens would have his revenge, taking victory in the other two races to round out a strong triple-header.

Ironically, the most represented championship on the timetable produced the least variance in results, with the top two in each Classic Touring Car group being the same throughout the weekend. Andy Thompson and Alexander Owen traded the honours in the category for pre-2003/2005 production cars, claiming a win apiece in their SEAT Toledo and Honda Civic Type R respectively.

Dale Gent and his Subaru Impreza dominated both pre-1993/Thunder Saloons/Blue Oval Saloon races with a combined winning margin of almost 20 seconds; only Andy Robinson's Ford Falcon could claim to be in the same league as Gent in each contest. In the pre-1966/1983 touring cars, Stephen Primett completed the trend, as he steered his Ford Escort



Weaver had the advantage in first Clubmans contest



Primett mastered the conditions in Pre-66/83 race



Mk1 into the winner's circle on both attempts ahead of Mark Osborne's Triumph Dolomite Sprint.

Will Taylforth took a breakthrough victory in the opening Hyundai Coupe Cup outing by a two-second margin from Ian Goodchild, the most successful driver this campaign in terms of race victories. Though Taylforth led in the early stages of race two, both Alex Cursley and Goodchild were able to pass before dicing for the spoils, which, against the run of results this season, went to Cursley.

Nick Dunn rounded out the year in the Max5 Racing Championship with a win ahead of John Munro, but it was invitational entry and Anglesey winner Jonathan Halliwell who took the spoils earlier in the day. Even so, Dunn missed out on the championship after all of his points before the Anglesey round were discarded due to a technical issue, which meant Munro was champion once dropped scores ruled out Ian Loversidge.

James Card held on despite a retirement in the final round to claim the A1 title honours in Kumho BMWs, though it was title rival James MacIntyre-Ure who proved to be the class of the field with a brace of victories. Andrew Rogerson edged out Adam Jackson in a virtual dead-heat during the final MG Owners Club contest, having comfortably beaten Jackson in the first race.

DAMIAN MEADEN

Owen (leading) and Thompson took a win apiece in their Pre-2003/5 Production Touring Car battles

RESULTS

CLIO CUP SERIES (BOTH 16 LAPS)

1 Brett Lidsey; 2 James Dorlin +0.519s; 3 Daniel Kirby; 4 Tom Barley; 5 Tyler Lidsey; 6 Ben Palmer. **CW** Jack Fabby. **FL** Barley 1m23.379s (79.91mph). **P** Dorlin.

S 16. RACE 2 1 Dorlin; 2 B Lidsey +5.830s; 3 Sam Randon; 4 Barley; 5 Kirby; 6 T Lidsey. **CW** Fabby. **FL** B Lidsey 1m15.441s (88.32mph). **P** Dorlin. **S 14.**

JUNIOR SALOON CARS (11 LAPS)

1 George Sutton; 2 Ethan Hammerton +1.189s; 3 Adam Batty; 4 Will Drydal; 5 Matteo Zanetti; 6 Sam Kirkpatrick. **FL** Zanetti 1m34.459s (70.54mph). **P** Luke Browning. **S 24. RACE 2 (7 LAPS) 1 Katie Milner;** 2 Zanetti +0.949s; 3 Hammerton; 4 Sutton; 5 Edward Moore; 6 Batty. **FL** Browning 1m24.425s (78.92mph). **P** Oliver Willmott. **S 24.**

CLUBMANS CHAMPIONSHIP (14 LAPS)

1 Phil Weaver (Nemesis); 2 Steven Dickens (Mallock Mk29) +5.726s; 3 Steven Chaplin (Phantom P79); 4 Alex Champkin (Vision V84); 5 Mike Evans (Mallock Mk27); 6 Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23). **CW** Chaplin; Evans; Trish Hunter (Mallock Mk16). **FL** Weaver 1m08.982s (96.59mph). **P** Weaver.

S 20. RACE 2 (14 LAPS)

1 Dickens; 2 Chaplin +2.239s; 3 Barry Webb (Mallock MK23B); 4 Evans; 5 Wood; 6 Peter Richings (Mallock MK30PR). **CW** Chaplin; Webb; John Drinkwater (Messer 6); Hunter. **FL** Weaver 1m08.347s (97.49mph). **P** Weaver. **S 17. RACE 3 (12 LAPS) 1 Dickens;** 2 Weaver +9.947s; 3 Webb; 4 Steve Everson (Mallock Mk27); 5 Chaplin; 6 Richings. **CW** Webb; Chaplin; Hunter. **FL** Weaver 1m21.564s (81.69mph). **P** Dickens. **S 16.**

PRE 2003/2005 PRODUCTION TOURING CARS/PRE 2003 CLASSIC VWs (11 LAPS)

1 Andy Thompson (SEAT Toledo); 2 Alexander Owen (Honda Civic Type R) +17.330s; 3 George Young (Civic Type R); 4 Tony Absolom (Volkswagen Golf); 5 Ross Craig (Civic Type R); 6 Leonard Simpson (Volkswagen Vento VR6). **CW** Owen; Absolom; Steven Barden (Civic Type R); Chris

Mohan (Golf GTi Mk4); Ken Adlard (Alfa Romeo 145); Craig Langley (Peugeot 206 GTi); Timothy Scott Andrews (BMW 318 Ti); Matthew Holtom (Renault Clio 182).

FL Thompson 1m25.095s (78.30mph). **P** Thompson. **S 40.**

RACE 2 (12 LAPS) 1 Owen;

2 Thompson +0.136s; 3 Luke Allen (Civic Type R); 4 Barden; 5 Young; 6 Craig. **CW** Thompson; Barden; Ken Lark (Volkswagen Corrado); Holtom; Kevin Stirling (Ford Fiesta ST); Mark Shepherd (Golf GTi Mk3); Scott Andrews. **FL** Thompson 1m15.728s (87.98mph). **P** Thompson. **S 40.**

THUNDER SALOONS/PRE 1993 TOURING CARS/BLUE OVAL SALOONS (12 LAPS)

1 Dale Gent (Subaru Impreza); 2 Andy Robinson (Ford Falcon) +2.980s; 3 Ian Froggatt (Impreza); 4 Lee Penn (Alfa Romeo 33); 5 Andrew Wilson (Holden Monaro); 6 Ray West (BMW M3). **CW** Robinson; Penn; West; Ian Knight (SEAT Supercopa); Terry Davies (Ford Escort Mk2); Alan Eason (Ford Fiesta XR2); Stephen Askham (Jaguar X300); James Reveler (Hyundai Coupe); Michael Sheraton (BMW 325i E30); Derek Bowley (Rover 216 GTi).

FL Vaughan Fletcher (Impreza) 1m15.003s (88.83mph). **P** Gent.

S 33. RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Gent;

2 Robinson +16.693s; 3 Wilson; 4 James Janicki (Nissan Skyline); 5 Penn; 6 Froggatt. **CW** Robinson; Penn; Knight; West; Paul Finney (Fiesta); Davies; Simon Ward (Vauxhall Astra GTE); John Edwards-Parton (Fiesta XR2); Askham; Bowley. **FL** Gent 1m09.904s (95.31mph). **P** Gent. **S 28.**

PRE 1966/1983 TOURING CARS (12 LAPS)

1 Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1); 2 Mark Osborne (Triumph Dolomite Sprint) +16.782s; 3 Stephen Cripps (Escort Mk2 RS2000); 4 Alan Greenhalgh (Ford Falcon); 5 Stuart Caie (Ford Capri); 6 Peter Winstone (Escort Mk1). **CW** Greenhalgh; Caie; Malcolm Jeffs (Alfa Romeo Alfassud SC); Andy Messham (Austin Mini 7); Tony Preston (Morris Minor); Allan Weyman (Chevrolet IROC);

Freddie Brown (Hillman Imp).

FL Primett 1m20.353s (82.92mph).

P Primett. S 27. RACE 2 (10 LAPS)

1 Primett; 2 Osborne +32.516s; 3 Greenhalgh; 4 Cripps; 5 Jeffs; 6 Caie. **CW** Greenhalgh; Jeffs; Caie; Jon Davis (Ford Mustang); Messham; Luc Wilson (Austin A40); Brown. **FL** Primett 1m37.605s (68.26mph). **P** Primett. **S 24.**

HYUNDAI COUPE CUP (11 LAPS)

1 William Taylforth; 2 Ian Goodchild +2.274s; 3 Jon Winter; 4 James Goodwin; 5 Alex Cursley; 6 Steve Kite. **FL** Kite 1m24.549s (78.80mph). **P** Kite. **S 16. RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Cursley;** 2 Goodchild +0.619s; 3 Taylforth; 4 Winter; 5 Simon Miles; 6 Kite. **FL** Goodchild 1m37.245s (68.52mph). **P** Taylforth. **S 16.**

MAX5 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP (15 LAPS)

1 Jonathan Halliwell; 2 Joe Wiggan +11.665s; 3 Nick Dunn; 4 John Munro; 5 Andy Waters; 6 Geoff Gouriet. **CW** Wiggan; Josh Malin. **FL** Halliwell 1m20.677s (82.59mph). **P** Dunn. **S 21. RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Dunn;** 2 Munro +16.414s; 3 Wiggan; 4 Waters; 5 Halliwell; 6 Paul Roddison. **CW** Halliwell; Malin. **FL** Dunn 1m36.019s (69.39mph). **P** Wiggan. **S 21.**

BMW CHAMPIONSHIP (10 LAPS)

1 James MacIntyre-Ure (M3 E46); 2 Oliver Taylor (E36 M3) +1.639s; 3 James Card (M3 E46); 4 Jason West (M3 E46); 5 Ian Hill (E46); 6 Jim Cannon (1-Series). **CW** Darrell Morgan-Owen (M3); Colin Whitmore (M3 E36 Evo); Peter Smith (130i Challenge); Russell Dack (E46 Compact); Max Walton (318is); Robert Alman (E36). **FL** Taylor 1m20.117s (83.16mph). **P** MacIntyre-Ure. **S 34. RACE 2 (5 LAPS)**

1 MacIntyre-Ure; 2 John Bradburn (M3 E36) +1.169s;

3 West; 4 Hill; 5 Robert Davidson (E36 M3 Evo); 6 David Griffin (E36 M3). **CW** Bradburn; Whitmore; Stephane Jansem (E46 Compact 325Ti); Walton. **FL** Bradburn 1m33.908s (70.95mph). **P** MacIntyre-Ure. **S 33.**

MG OWNERS CLUB (15 LAPS)

1 Andrew Rogerson (ZR); 2 Adam Jackson (ZR) +1.273s; 3 Adrian Wray (ZR); 4 Mark Baker (F); 5 Simon Kendrick (F VVC); 6 Stephen Williams (ZR). **CW** Baker; Jim Baynam (B); Jagminder Golhar (Maestro Efi). **FL** Jackson 1m20.768s (82.49mph). **P** Jackson. **S 22. RACE 2 (6 LAPS)**

1 Rogerson; 2 Jackson +0.054s; 3 Wray; 4 Kendrick; 5 Stuart Plotnek (F); 6 Nick Golhar (ZR). **CW** Kendrick; Christopher Pollard (B); J Golhar. **FL** Jackson 1m30.165s (73.90mph). **P** Jackson. **S 23.**



Hammerton (left) and provisional JSCC champion Zanetti

CASTLE COMBE
 CCRC OCTOBER 8

Orgée defends Fford crown despite clash

ROGER ORGÉE WAS CROWNED THE Castle Combe Formula Ford champion for the second year running after tangling with title rival and team-mate Michael Moyers in the final race of the season.

A red flag was thrown early on for an incident between Pete Dicox (who is retiring from racing) and Richard Mayall. Chaos ensued as the race was restarted without a secondary green-flag lap.

Moyers had led before the stoppage but ran behind Orgée at the restart. Critically, he then ended up making contact with his title rival and was forced out of the race. Orgée was able to continue but later pulled into the pits, having already retained his title with Moyers out of the running.

After a safety-car period, Luke Cooper and Ben Norton had a tremendous dice for the victory. Cooper led the initial running before being passed by Norton on the fifth lap. Swift driver Cooper fought back to retake the lead, but Norton wasted no time in firing straight back at him with a brave outbraking manoeuvre in his Spectrum at Camp Corner. The two then lapped in tandem to the chequered flag, and the season ended with victory for Norton – just 0.181 seconds clear of Cooper – and Josh Fisher rounding out the podium.

In the 20th Formula Ford Carnival, Norton and Moyers provided the race of the day. Their battle only ended after Moyers attempted a daring move down the inside at Camp, spectacularly losing control and spinning his Spectrum to the inside of the circuit. This left Norton clear to claim his second victory of the day and his fourth Carnival success.



The opening Super Mighty Minis/Mighty Minis amalgamation produced a stunning race. Polesitter Adrian Tuckley fell to third on the first lap, as Ian Slark swept into the race lead ahead of Steven Dawson. The trio then spent the early running swapping positions on a lap-by-lap basis. Tuckley's good work was then undone by an electrical fire, putting him out of the race. Slark also slipped off the circuit, making contact with the barriers, but he was able to continue back to the pitlane. Dawson eventually claimed the win, with Neven Kirkpatrick second and Ben Butler completing the podium. A three-car dice for success in the Mighty Mini order was won by Greg Jenkins, after a thrilling battle with Sam Tomlinson and Mark Burnett. Despite his retirement, Tuckley was crowned as the Super Mighty Minis champion, with Jenkins's class win sufficient to give him the Mighty Minis honours for 2016.

Race two came to an early end when Alex Comis tangled with Mighty Minis runner Jim Carolan at Camp. Carolan

Orgée raced on despite contact with title rival Moyers, then pulled up with championship in the bag

went off the road and was joined in the barriers by a sympathetic Kirkpatrick. Since the results reverted to the order at the end of the preceding lap, it was Comis who was declared the winner from Dawson and Tuckley. Tomlinson took the Mighty Minis victory.

A tense Saloons race was claimed by Gary Prebble in his SEAT. Simon Thornton-Norris was able to secure the overall crown despite head-gasket issues forcing him to nurse his Mitsubishi Colt through the day.

Barry Squibb clinched the Castle Combe GT success in his Mitsubishi Evo, his fourth victory of 2016. Chris Vinall had already wrapped up the overall title by virtue of his greater consistency in class E with his SEAT Leon, taking his sixth class victory in the finale.

Tom Witts (Volkswagen Scirocco) converted a slender qualifying advantage into a pair of sure-footed VAG Trophy successes. A second-placed finish for Paul Taylor in the finale enabled him to claim the 2016 crown in his Golf, with the Class B title going to Simon Tomlinson's Mk4 Golf.

Two scheduled Castle Combe Sports Series races became one owing to a paltry three-car entry. Mark Nicholson was the victor in his Radical SR3 RS.

A Castle Combe Open Sports vs Saloons encounter was the perfect way to end the season. David Krayem led initially but his Ginetta G50 expired in the closing stages. As a result Ben Scrivens, also in a Ginetta, and Chris Southcott's MG found themselves contesting the fight for victory.

Southcott had charged from the back of the grid and drew alongside Scrivens at one point, but was unable to complete an overtake, leaving Scrivens to take the chequered flag and the final victory of the season.

LEE BONHAM



Witts claimed a VAG Trophy double at Combe

RESULTS

CASTLE COMBE FORMULA FORD (15 LAPS)

1 Ben Norton (Spectrum 010b); 2 Luke Cooper (Swift SC16) +0.181s; 3 Josh Fisher (Van Diemen JL14); 4 Felix Fisher (Van Diemen RF02); 5 Nathan Ward (Spectrum 011c); 6 David Cobbold (Van Diemen RF89). **Class winners** Cobbold; Joe Riley (Swift SC95); Charles Greenwood (Dulon MP15). **Fastest lap** Norton 1m10.178s (94.90mph). **Pole** Michael Moyers (Spectrum 011c). **Starters** 19.

FORMULA FORD 1600 CARNIVAL (15 LAPS)

1 Ben Norton (Spectrum 010b); 2 Nathan Ward (Spectrum 011c) +2.655s; 3 Josh Fisher (Van Diemen JL14); 4 Luke Cooper (Swift SC16); 5 Roger Orgee (Van Diemen RF00); 6 Felix Fisher (Van Diemen RF02). **CW** Bob Higgins (Van Diemen RF90); David Cobbold (Van Diemen RF89); Charles Greenwood (Dulon MP15). **FL** Michael Moyers (Spectrum 011c) 1m09.866s (95.32mph). **P** Norton. **S** 24.

SUPER MIGHTY/MIGHTY MINIS (14 LAPS)

1 Steven Dawson; 2 Neven Kirkpatrick +3.794s; 3 Ben Butler; 4 Damien Harrington; 5 David Rees; 6 Steven Rideout. **CW** Greg Jenkins. **FL** Adrian Tuckley 1m24.664s (78.66mph). **P** Tuckley. **S** 26.

RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Alex Comis;

2 Dawson +0.216s; 3 Tuckley; 4 Louise Inch; 5 Rideout; 6 Butler. **CW** Sam Tomlinson. **FL** Kirkpatrick 1m24.548s (78.77mph). **P** Guy Parr. **S** 25.

SALOONS (15 LAPS) 1 Gary Prebble (SEAT

Leon Cupra); 2 Dave Scaramanga (VW Scirocco) +2.407s; 3 William di Claudio (Peugeot 106 GTi); 4 Geoffrey Ryall (Peugeot 106 GTi); 5 Bill Brockbank (SEAT Ibiza Cupra); 6 Mark Wyatt (Vauxhall Astra). **CW** di Claudio; Wyatt; Russell Humphrey (Vauxhall Corsa). **FL** Scaramanga 1m14.458s (89.44mph). **P** Charles Hyde-Andrews-Bird (Renault Megane). **S** 37.

GT (15 LAPS) 1 Barry Squibb (Mitsubishi

Evo 9); 2 Chris Southcott (MG Midget) +9.019s; 3 Tim Woodman (Caterham 7); 4 Chris Vinall (SEAT Leon Supercopa); 5 Steve Hall (Audi TT RS); 6 Doug Watson (BMW M6 Coupe). **CW** Southcott; Woodman; Vinall; Watson; Mark Higginson (Rage R200RT); Michael Harris (Peugeot 205 GTi). **FL** Squibb 1m08.232s (97.60mph). **P** Squibb. **S** 21.

VAG TROPHY (13 LAPS) 1 Tom Witts (VW

Scirocco); 2 Kenan Dole (VW Golf GTI) +5.064s; 3 Darron Lewis (Golf GTI R); 4 Benjamin Wallace (Golf); 5 Paul Taylor (Golf); 6 Toby Bearn (Golf). **CW** Christie Doran (Golf Mk5). **FL** Witts 1m13.926s (90.09mph). **P** Witts. **S** 17. **RACE 2 (7 LAPS) 1 Witts;** 2 Taylor +3.381s; 3 Lewis; 4 Bearn; 5 Darelle Wilson (Scirocco TDI); 6 Dole. **CW** Doran. **FL** Wilson 1m13.913s (90.10mph). **P** Martyn Culley (SEAT Leon Cupra). **S** 17.

SPORTS SERIES (18 LAPS) 1 Mark Nicholson

(Radical SR3 RS); 2 Neil Harris (Nemesis Prototype) +1m02.564s; 3 John Gillman (Radical Clubsport); no other starters. **CW** Gillman. **FL** Nicholson 1m07.079s (99.28mph). **P** Nicholson. **S** 3.

SPORTS VS SALOONS (13 LAPS) 1 Ben

Scrivens (Ginetta G50); 2 Chris Southcott (MG Midget) +0.642s; 3 Chris Vinall (SEAT Leon Supercopa); 4 Tim Woodman (Caterham 7); 5 Ilsa Cox (SEAT Leon Cupra); 6 Doug Watson (BMW M6 Coupe). **CW** Southcott; Gary Prebble (Peugeot GTi); James Keepin (MG ZR). **FL** Southcott 1m09.469s (95.87mph). **P** Steve Putt (Mazda RX7). **S** 28.



MONDELLO PARK
MPSC OCTOBER 9

Fitzgerald leads the way from Maguire. Each took a race win

Fitzgerald wins at the second attempt

THE FIESTA ST FIELD ENTERTAINED AS regular Mondello tin-top classes battled it out last Sunday, with Dave Maguire and Brendan Fitzgerald sharing the race wins.

Fitzgerald qualified under the lap record for pole in race one, but was quickly displaced by title contenders Maguire, Kevin Doran and Ulick Burke. Burke drove beautifully to oust Doran at the final corner but could do nothing to reel in the impressive Maguire as the laps ran out. Sean Lillis charged back to fifth having being bundled off on the opening lap.

In race two Fitzgerald hung on for the win, with Maguire second and Burke clinging on to third after a great drive, despite plenty of attention from Maguire's team-mate Hugh Grennan after a late-race safety-car period.

Mark O'Donoghue won the opening Fiesta Zetec race from pole, a late-race push from Mark Johnston not being enough to challenge. Andy Kavanagh was third from Colin Lewis, who rose from 10th on the grid, while his team owner Sean Woods charged to seventh from the back on his Fiesta debut despite a first-corner tangle. In race two, O'Donoghue did the double with Kavanagh just holding off Woods for second after a race-long battle. Johnston had challenged the leader initially but fell back with gear-selection issues, finishing fourth.

James Holman took the opening Irish Legends race, easing away from series leader Paul O'Brien in the closing stages to keep his slim title hopes alive. Punto graduate Ian Conroy completed the podium. In race two, O'Brien grabbed the lead on

the opening lap, while Holman charged through to second with Niki Meredith for company. On the final tour, having chased O'Brien down and set a new lap record, Holman challenged for the lead and the duo crossed the line as one, with O'Brien just ahead. Meredith was a lonely third with Jonny Taylor in fourth.

In the final Legends race, O'Brien charged up from mid-grid to snatch the lead from Meredith while Holman was caught in traffic. Holman eventually moved up to second but, despite setting a number of fastest laps, was unable to catch O'Brien, who clinched the win and the title.

Timmy Duggan was first over the line in the opening Future Classic race, and his ex-works SEAT was the class of the field. But Duggan was one of a number of drivers to receive a penalty for breaking the barrier time, handing the win to Celica driver Robbie Parks, who headed the similar car of Ken Byrne and Adrian Dunne's Saxo. All attention was on the giant-killing Uno of David Hammond though, as he charged through to fourth from 15th on the grid.

In the second race, Duggan grabbed the lead from Dunne early on before a safety-car intervention. When the pack went racing once again, Dunne piled on the pressure before the pair were joined by Byrne. Towards the end, Hammond's Uno caught the lead battle but, having just eclipsed the barrier time, he earned himself a penalty. At the flag, it was Duggan who claimed both the win and the coveted Birrane Cup, with Dunne alongside and Byrne in third.

LEO NULTY

RESULTS

FIESTA ST (14 LAPS) 1 Dave Maguire;

2 Ulick Burke +2.108s; 3 Brendan Fitzgerald; 4 Sean Lillis; 5 Hugh Grennan; 6 John Denning. **Fastest lap** Graham McDonnell 1m06.611s (62.13mph). **Pole** Fitzgerald.

Starters 18. RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Fitzgerald;

2 Maguire +0.291s; 3 Burke; 4 Grennan; 5 Denning; 6 Lillis. **FL** Maguire 1m06.749s (62.00mph). **P** Grennan. **S** 18.

FIESTA ZETEC (BOTH 13 LAPS) 1 Mark

O'Donoghue; 2 Mark Johnston +4.605s; 3 Andy Kavanagh; 4 Colin Lewis; 5 Keith Campbell; 6 Stephen Martin. **FL** O'Donoghue

1m11.732s (57.69mph). **P** O'Donoghue. **S** 14.

RACE 2 1 O'Donoghue;

2 Kavanagh +4.089s; 3 Sean Woods; 4 Johnston; 5 Eamonn Yamamoto; 6 Lewis. **FL** O'Donoghue 1m11.983s (57.49mph). **P** O'Donoghue. **S** 13.

LEGENDS (8 LAPS) 1 James Holman;

2 Paul O'Brien +1.426s; 3 Ian Conroy; 4 Gary Humphries; 5 Sam Mansfield; 6 Jonathan Taylor. **FL** Holman 1m03.393s (65.28mph). **P** Niki Meredith. **S** 9. **RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 O'Brien;** 2 Holman +0.073s;

3 Meredith; 4 Taylor; 5 Conroy; 6 Humphries.

FL Holman 1m03.118s (65.57mph).

P Humphries. **S** 9. **RACE 3 (10 LAPS)**

1 O'Brien; 2 Holman +0.941s; 3 Conroy;

4 Meredith; 5 Ivor Greenwood; 6 Taylor.

FL Holman 1m03.308s (65.37mph).

P Greenwood. **S** 10.

FUTURE CLASSICS (BOTH 13 LAPS)

1 Robbie Parks (Toyota Celica); 2 Ken Byrne (Toyota Celica) +1.475s; 3 Adrian Dunne (Citroen Saxo); 4 David Hammond (Fiat Uno); 5 Gilbert Clancy (Mitsubishi FTO); 6 Aidan Byrne (Vauxhall Chevette). **FL** Ger

Byrne (BMW 323) 1m08.563s (60.36mph).

P Tommy Byrne (Fiat Punto). **S** 19. **RACE 2**

1 Timothy Duggan (Seat Ibiza Cooper);

2 Dunne +0.109s; 3 K Byrne; 4 A Byrne;

5 T Byrne; 6 Parkes. **FL** Hammond

1m08.858s (60.10mph). **P** Dunne. **S** 17.

SNETTERTON
 MSVR OCTOBER 8-9

Witt powers Bentley to sprint brace and claims GT Cup title

JORDAN WITT'S BENTLEY Continental proved the car to beat in an absorbing trio of GT Cup races, notching a pair of emphatic wins in the sprint races to shrug off the competition – leading every lap both times – before sealing the overall title in the finale.

Chasing him in the early stages of race one was the Ferrari 458 of the ever-improving Bonamy Grimes. Having claimed his maiden pole position, Grimes looked comfortable running second in the race before hitting fluid left by Mike Sellar's Porsche 997 and running off at Palmer. Unfazed, he recovered to secure GTC class honours. Meanwhile, Gareth Downing took advantage of the dramas to claim runner-up spot in his Lotus Evora.

Although race two was another Bentley benefit, Grimes overtook Peter Littler's Aston Martin to secure second spot.

The season culminated with a pro/am

pitstop enduro to finish. Despite needing overnight suspension repairs, Grimes's prancing horse was up to third by mid-distance before he handed over to Johnny Mowlem for the final stint. Mowlem joined the fray in 10th and put in a sparkling drive, surging up the order to secure outright victory from Littler.

The inaugural race for the newly created Prototype Cup made for a promising debut, with seven of the evocative 5-litre, 420bhp Ligier JSP3 chassis on show as a prelude to a full championship in 2017. The pairing of Nigel Moore and Phil Hanson proved to have the edge, taking the first victory comfortably clear of Bradley Smith and Christian England. Wayne Boyd threatened to close on the leaders late on, but it was too late.

With more orders reportedly on the books, the series looks set to flourish



Witt dealt expertly with title-fight pressure to clinch GT Cup crown with two final wins

in 2017. "They're fantastic – they have so much power," Smith enthused.

There was an eye-catching start to the trio of Radical Challenge races, when an inspired Brian Caudwell launched his SR3 from fifth on the grid to lead through the opening corners. Despite his progress being stymied by an early safety-car period, Caudwell held on to win ahead of John MacLeod and Jack Lang. In a dramatic twist, the latter pair collided in the closing stages but recovered to complete the podium places.

Bradley Smith stole the limelight in race two, converting pole to a lead that Lang in second couldn't bridge. Having finished third and second respectively in the opening races, Lang completed his podium collection by narrowly beating champion-elect Steve Burgess to win the finale.

Ashley Dibden set the pace in the pair of F3 Dallara-dominated races for the



Moore/Hanson took honours in first Prototype Cup race



Watts won F3 Cup finale but was beaten twice

RESULTS

GT CUP (14 LAPS) 1 Jordan Witt (Bentley Continental); 2 Gareth Downing (Lotus Evora GTE) +1m13.265s; 3 Tom Webb (BMW M3 E46 GTR); 4 Jonathan Evans (Porsche 997 GT3 Cup); 5 Nigel Hudson (Audi R8 GT3); 6 Peter Littler (Aston Martin GT3). **Class winners** Webb; Bonamy Grimes (Ferrari 458 GTC); James Birch (Porsche Cayman GT4). **Fastest lap** Witt 1m49.444s (97.65mph). **Pole** Grimes. **Starters** 26. **RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Witt;** 2 Grimes +14.111s; 3 Hudson; 4 Littler; 5 Webb; 6 Tom Hibbert (Ginetta G55). **CW** Grimes; Webb; Hibbert. **FL** Witt 1m48.932s (98.11mph). **P** Witt. **S** 26. **RACE 3 (23 LAPS) 1 Grimes/Johnny Mowlem;** 2 Littler +13.953s; 3 Downing; 4 Scott Thomas/Matt Bell (McLaren 650S Sprint); 5 Neil Huggins (Lamborghini Gallardo Super Trofeo LP570-4); 6 Witt. **CW** Littler; Hibbert; Andrew

Baker (Porsche 997 GT3 Cup). **FL** Witt 1m51.272s (96.05mph). **P** Witt. **S** 24. **PROTOTYPE CUP (31 LAPS) 1 Nigel Moore/Phil Hanson;** 2 Bradley Smith/Christian England +22.293s; 3 Jay Palmer/Wayne Boyd; 4 Jacques Duyver/Charlie Hollings; 5 Patrick Byrne/Guy Cosmo; 6 Mike Newbould/Thomas Randle. **FL** Boyd 1m43.887s (102.88mph). **P** Moore. **S** 7. **RADICAL CHALLENGE (10 LAPS) 1 Brian Caudwell;** 2 John MacLeod +0.748s; 3 Jack Lang; 4 Tony Wells; 5 Aaron Bailey/Lee Bailey; 6 Joe Stables. **CW** Bailey/Bailey; Andy Chittenden. **FL** Lang 1m50.639s (96.60mph). **P** Lang. **S** 23. **RACE 2 (11 LAPS) 1 Bradley Smith;** 2 Lang +4.838s; 3 MacLeod; 4 Caudwell; 5 Jack Manchester; 6 Steve Burgess. **CW** Lang; Chittenden. **FL** Smith 1m49.337s (97.75mph). **P** Smith. **S** 21. **RACE 3 (20 LAPS) 1 Lang;** 2 Burgess +0.439s; 3 Manchester; 4 MacLeod; 5 Evgeny Klyucharev/Smith; 6 Brian

Murphy. **CW** Klyucharev/Smith; Chittenden. **FL** Smith 1m50.660s (96.58mph). **P** Klyucharev/Smith. **S** 21. **MONOPOSTO F3/2000/CLASSIC (BOTH 9 LAPS) 1 Ashley Dibden (Dallara F301);** 2 Tony Bishop (Dallara F302/4) +0.664s; 3 Ben Cater (Dallara F301); 4 Chris Hodgen (Dallara F304); 5 David Gillett (Dallara F302/4); 6 Russ Giles (Dallara F398). **CW** Kevin Otway (Van Diemen F4); Will McAteer (Reynard 923). **FL** Bishop 1m48.757s (98.27mph). **P** Bishop. **S** 21. **RACE 2 1 Dibden;** 2 Hodgen +1.959s; 3 Cater; 4 Gillett; 5 Bishop; 6 Hayden Edmonds (Formula Renault). **CW** Otway; McAteer. **FL** Bishop 1m49.913s (97.24mph). **P** Bishop. **S** 21. **F3 CUP (7 LAPS) 1 Paul Dagg (Dallara-Mercedes F311);** 2 George Line (Dallara-Mugen Honda F308) +0.893s; 3 James Heffernan (Dallara-Mercedes F308); 4 Stuart Wiltshire (Dallara-Mercedes F308);

5 Daryl Jones (Dallara-Volkswagen F308); 6 Shane Kelly (Dallara-Mugen Honda F308). **FL** Dagg 1m45.545s (101.26mph). **P** Dagg. **S** 12. **RACE 2 (9 LAPS) 1 Dagg;** 2 Robbie Watts (Dallara-Volkswagen) +8.152s; 3 Line; 4 Heffernan; 5 Jones; 6 Jacopo Sebastiani (Dallara-Volkswagen F311). **FL** Jones 1m43.929s (102.84mph). **P** Watts. **S** 12. **RACE 3 (12 LAPS) 1 Watts;** 2 Line +3.085s; 3 Jones; 4 Sebastiani; 5 Kelly; 6 Heffernan. **FL** Bishop 1m44.045s (102.72mph). **P** Dagg. **S** 12. **RADICAL SR1 CUP (10 LAPS) 1 Oliver Barker;** 2 James Taylor +23.279s; 3 Richard Baxter; 4 Andy Chittenden; 5 Jack Baber; 6 Spencer Bourne. **FL** Barker 1m59.474s (89.45mph). **P** Barker. **S** 12. **RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Barker;** 2 Taylor +23.246s; 3 Kye Wheatley; 4 Rob Ellice; 5 Baxter; 6 Chittenden. **FL** Barker 1m58.487s (90.20mph). **P** Barker. **S** 11. **RACE 3 (8 LAPS)**

1 Barker; 2 Taylor +14.497s; 3 Baxter; 4 Chittenden; 5 Bourne; 6 Wheatley. **FL** Barker 1m57.938s (90.62mph). **P** Barker. **S** 11. **MONOPOSTO 1800, 1600, MOTO 1000, 1400 (8 LAPS) 1 Richard Gittings (Jedi Mk6);** 2 Richard Moorcroft (Jedi Mk6) +22.557s; 3 Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke (Dallara); 4 Dan Levy (Jedi Mk6); 5 Jonathan Reed (Jedi Mk6); 6 Craig Hurran (Jedi Mk6). **CW** Gordon-Colebrooke; Chris Lord (Van Diemen RF82); Geoff Fern (Van Diemen RF98). **FL** Jeremy Timms (Dallara F399) 1m51.933s (95.48mph). **P** Jeremy Timms. **S** 18. **RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Gittings;** 2 Jason Timms (Dallara F311); 3 Moorcroft; 4 Gordon-Colebrooke; 5 Levy; 6 Hurran. **CW** Jason Timms; Alex Fores (Van Diemen RF87); Fern. **FL** Jason Timms 1m50.077s (97.09mph). **P** Gittings. **S** 15.



STYLES

Monoposto F3, 2000 and Classic classes. He swept past polesitter Tony Bishop at the start of race one and quickly established a decisive gap. Bishop pushed hard in the second half of the race, but lost crucial ground at the Bombhole, ensuring Dibden top spot. Dibden repeated the feat in race two to complete the double. Behind him Ben Cater edged out Tony Bishop to take the F3 class title.

Irishman Paul Dagg made an instant impression on his debut in the F3 Cup Championship, taking victories in the first two races and getting the better of title protagonists George Line and Shane Kelly. But he couldn't make it a hat-trick in the finale, dropping to third on the opening lap and falling out of contention thanks to a late puncture. Instead it was Robbie Watts who proved dominant to take a well controlled victory in race three. The big winner, though, was Line who edged out Kelly to take the title. After grabbing one win all year, an ecstatic Line was rewarded for his consistency.

The Radical SR1 Championship threatened to go down to the wire with three races and a hatful of points still available. The men most likely to clinch it were Oliver Barker, James Taylor and Kye Wheatley, but with the points stacked in favour of Taylor. So it proved. Although Barker took a trio of wins over the meeting, it wasn't enough to deny Taylor the overall title.

Richard Gittings guided his Jedi Mk6 to a double victory in the races for smaller-engined Mono and Moto machines, extending his season-long record of consistent finishing. In the opening race he pulled clear early on, eventually taking the flag well clear of closest rival Richard Moorcroft (Jedi).

He won again in race two, leading from lights to flag. A hard-chasing Jason Timms offered a threat in his 'bike-engined Dallara, setting fastest lap on the way, but he had to settle for second.

OLIVER TIMMON



WALKER

Sherardize shines in Fun Cup finale

AFTER FOUR HOURS OF FRANTIC ACTION, there was still only 0.401 seconds covering the top three in the Fun Cup final.

The Team Sherardize pair, Peter Belshaw and Phil Keen, were never far from the lead, trailing the ECO 209 trio of Tom Mills, Paul Abraham and Paul Turner at half-distance. But it was the final 30 minutes when the race really livened up, after James Littlejohn had taken over the DespatchBay car from Andy Bicknell, with Racelogic, Team Lane Roofing and CCS Media all in contention, and Keen down in ninth for Sherardize.

With the light fading, a safety-car period left a 19-minute sprint to the flag, with 17 cars still on the lead lap. Team Lane Roofing had an off after contact, and Jon Tomlinson was also punted in the Racelogic car, while CCS Media's Nigel Greensall closed on Littlejohn's lead.

Three laps from home, Keen snatched second at Old Hall, leaving the lead trio running in line astern. Keen made the race-winning move into Druids, with Greensall following a lap later, giving CCS their first UK podium. Littlejohn took third, well clear of the Jones family MCAC Racing car. Track Focused claimed fifth from Track Torque 2 Rent Dominos with a lap to go. Sixth was still enough for Henry Dawes/Neil Burroughs to clinch third in the championship, with runners-up ECO 209 finishing seventh.

Despite coming home 11th, JPR Uvio's three-time race winners Farquini Deott and Graham Roberts took championship honours.

Jamie Jardine's Reynard 84FF was a double

winner in the Northern FF1600 Pre 90 races. Jaap Blijleven (Reynard 88FF) ran with Jardine in both, but almost went off in race one as he made a last-lap challenge for the lead at Knickerbrook. Christopher Stones (Van Diemen RF88) eventually escaped from the duelling Nick Barnes and Mike Bibby to complete the race-one podium. Barnes was a comfortable third in the second outing.

Having lost out to Michael Blackburn's XR3i at the start of the first XR Challenge race, a safety-car intervention gave XR2 man Justin Roberts a second chance, which he took with both hands to head Blackburn at the flag. Ralph Fernihough just retained third, with inches to spare, over Greg Speight.

It was lights-to-flag for Roberts in race two as he completed his double. Speight came back from a first-corner spin to claim second in his XR2, as Lee Shropshire went grass-tracking along Lakeside, dropping to fourth behind Steve Poole.

Chase Owen's Ray proved unbeatable in both Post 89 Northern FF1600 races. Joshua Smith (Van Diemen) ran second in race one, but lost out to David McArthur (Van Diemen) down the Avenue on the second lap. McArthur briefly closed on the lead, but Smith recovered to reclaim second on the last lap. Doug Crosbie just took fourth from Matt Cowley. A four-car battle for third in race two allowed Owen and Smith to escape. Crosbie led the chasing quartet, but McArthur moved into the final podium spot on lap seven, leaving Crosbie fourth, well clear of Cowley.

PETER SCHERER

RESULTS

FUN CUP (99 LAPS) 1 Team Sherardize

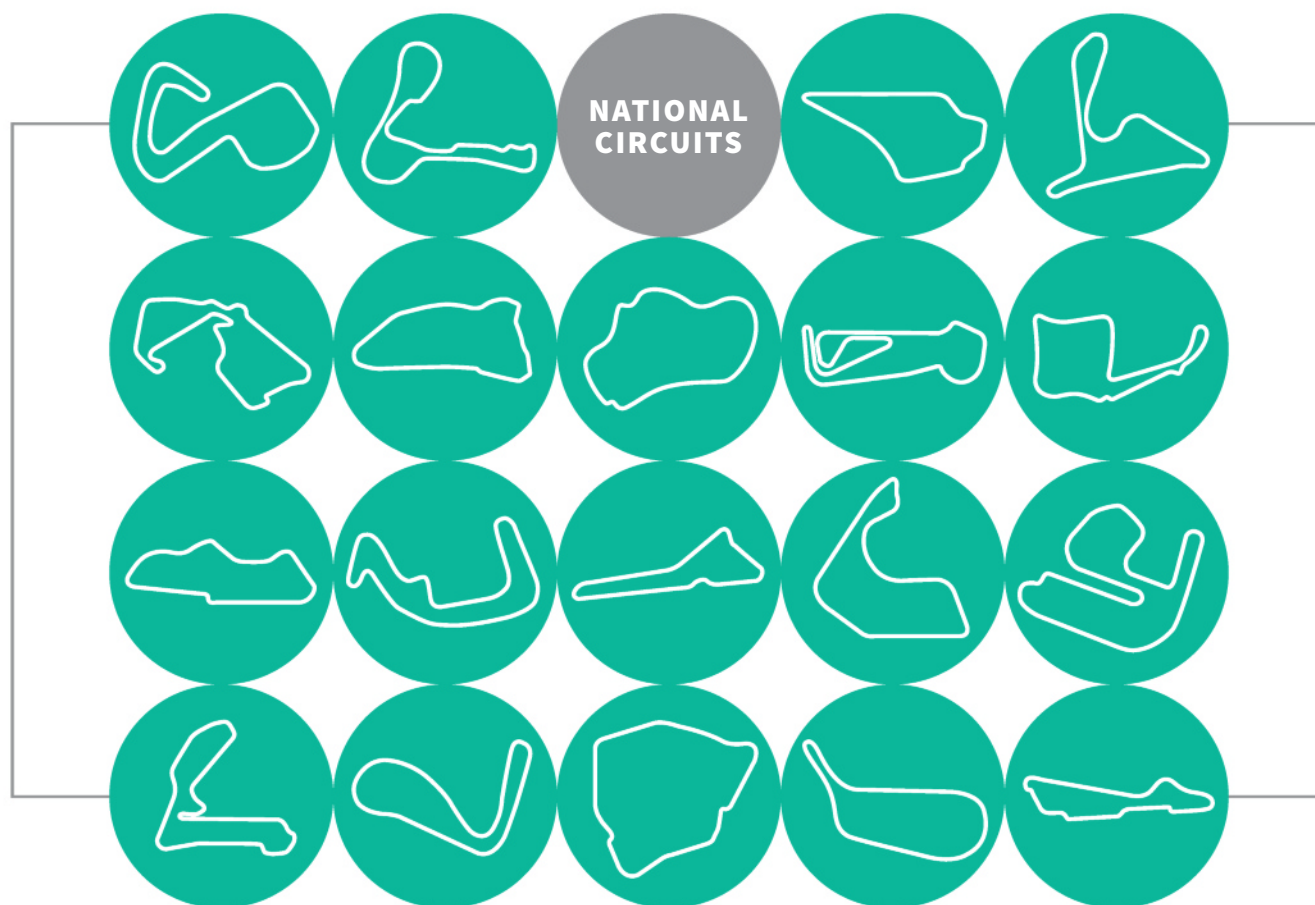
UK (Peter Belshaw/Phil Keen); 2 CCS Media (Nigel Greensall/Bob Tomlinson/Ciro Carannante/Alan Honarmand) +0.103s; 3 DespatchBay.com (James Littlejohn/Andy Bicknell); 4 MCAC Racing (Matthew Jones/Morgan Jones/Philip Jones/Gareth Jones); 5 Track Focused (Sean Cooper/Michael McCollum/Neil Smith); 6 Track Torque 2 Rent Dominos (Henry Dawes/Neil Burroughs). FL Keen 2m00.579s (80.36mph). P Team 7 Racing. S 30.

NORTHERN FF1600 - PRE 90 (BOTH 11 LAPS) 1 Jamie Jardine (Reynard 84FF); 2 Jaap Blijleven (Reynard 88FF)

+1.276s; 3 Christopher Stones (Van

Diemen RF88); 4 Nick Barnes (Van Diemen RF87); 5 Mike Bibby (Reynard 84FF); 6 Will Alterman (Reynard 89FF). Class winners Blijleven; Colin Williams (PRS RH01). FL Jardine 1m48.781s (89.08mph). P Jardine. S 16. RACE 2 1 Jardine; 2 Blijleven +3.287s; 3 Barnes; 4 Ian Wolfenden (Reynard 87FF); 5 Bibby; 6 Scott Guthrie (Crossle 25F). CW Blijleven. FL Jardine 1m49.999s (88.09mph). P Jardine. S 15. FORD XR/PUMA CUP (6 LAPS) 1 Justin Roberts (XR2); 2 Michael Blackburn (XR3i) +0.907s; 3 Ralph Fernihough (XR2); 4 Greg Speight (XR2); 5 Pete Lancaster (XR2); 6 Danny Leigh (XR3i). CW Blackburn; Mark Noble (Fiesta Si); James Clare (Puma). FL Roberts 2m06.058s (76.87mph). P Speight. S 28. RACE 2 (7 LAPS) 1 Roberts;

2 Speight +4.024s; 3 Steve Poole (XR2); 4 Lee Shropshire (XR2); 5 Noble; 6 Luke Johnson (Puma). CW Noble; Johnson; Michael Taylor (XR3i). FL Clare 2m06.147s (76.81mph). P Roberts. S 27. NORTHERN FF1600 - POST 89 (BOTH 11 LAPS) 1 Chase Owen (Ray GR14/15); 2 Joshua Smith (Van Diemen JL13K) +0.110s; 3 David McArthur (Van Diemen LA10); 4 Douglas Crosbie (Van Diemen JL013K); 5 Matthew Cowley (Van Diemen JL13); 6 Jack Wolfenden (Van Diemen JL013K). CW Matthew Chisholm (Van Diemen RF92). FL McArthur 1m47.550s (90.10mph). P Owen. S 11. RACE 2 1 Owen; 2 Smith +2.358s; 3 McArthur; 4 Crosbie; 5 Cowley; 6 Wolfenden. FL Smith 1m47.930s (89.78mph). CW Chisholm. P Owen. S 10.



What is the best club racing circuit?

Autosport asked its contributors to vote on what makes the UK and Ireland's circuits so special

How do you go about comparing motor racing circuits? They're all different – different sizes, different levels of funding, different championships. They're just different.

But Autosport has never shied away from a challenge, and, along with its contributors, who bring you all the club reports from

Britain's favourite circuits, it has taken on the impossible.

Ranking circuits out of 10 on history, difficulty, quality of racing, prestige, spectator experience and facilities, Autosport contributors have spoken.

There are surprises as well as some predictable results, and in the next few pages the average scores for each category – as determined by each contributor's ratings – will be revealed. What was top and what was bottom? There's nowhere to hide.

So, let the battle commence. What is Britain and Ireland's best club circuit? The answer lies in wait. >>

CATEGORIES

DIFFICULTY

Some circuits are harder to master than others. Which ones provide the toughest tests for drivers?

HISTORY

Britain boasts the richest of motorsport cultures, but which circuits are the most fabled?

QUALITY OF RACING

Certain circuits offer better racing, so which tracks provide the most exciting action?

PRESTIGE OF SERIES

Drivers come from all over the world to race on UK and Irish Circuits, but which tracks have the best series?

SPECTATOR EXPERIENCE

It's not just about the smile per mile for the drivers. What do the circuits offer committed club fans?

FACILITIES

From breakfast to a dry place to sit, and even a media room. Which circuits boast the best facilities?

GOODWOOD



BLOXHAM/LAT

DONINGTON PARK



WALKER

SILVERSTONE



EBREY

DIFFICULTY

A REAL TEST. ONE OF THE REASONS club racing has remained so popular, and simply remained, is because the circuits in Britain and Ireland offer some of the most challenging roads anywhere in the world.

This section is topped by Cadwell Park, which remains a regular fixture on the club racing calendar. The cambers and undulations throw up an almost unique test for drivers to handle.

Oulton Park runs Cadwell close. Cascades is a savage and often unforgiving test, while the rest of the lap offers up a range of slow, medium and fast corners to test driver and machine. Brands, Thruxton and Silverstone round out the top five. Thruxton's fastest corner in UK racing, Church, is tricky to stay committed on and sorts the men from the boys.

Further down the order, the poor performance of Rockingham is a surprise. The circuit is often praised by drivers, with Rockingham's problem always remaining a lack of history and its cold and eerie feel. Lydden Hill scored just over five, just ahead of Kirkistown in Northern Ireland. Perhaps it's time to get some Autosport correspondents out for a drive at Lydden or Rockingham to see if the scores change.



Cascades at Oulton has been difficult for over 60 years

RESULTS DIFFICULTY		
POS	CIRCUIT	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Cadwell Park	8.89
2	Oulton Park	8.54
3	Brands Hatch	7.95
4	Thruxton	7.25
5	Silverstone	7.1
6	Donington Park	7.06
7	Goodwood	7
8	Knockhill	6.82
9	Castle Combe	6.78
10	Mondello Park	6.75
11	Croft	6.7
12	Snetterton	6.69
13	Anglesey	6.22
14	Pembrey	6
=	Bishops Cleeve	6
16	Mallory Park	5.8
17	Rockingham	5.71
18	Kirkistown	5.5
19	Lydden	5.13

HISTORY



WHEN IT COMES TO HISTORY AT RACING circuits, Britain and Ireland are spoiled with the Formula Ford Festival, Leinster Trophy, The Gold Cup. And that's just naming a few.

There has to be a winner, but every circuit on this list can lay claim to something in the annals of motorsport history.

When it comes to founding years, there's only a couple of years separating Brands Hatch and Silverstone, our category leaders.

Both circuits have hosted major events that have provided a place for journeymen club racers and stars of motorsport's future in equal measure.

Over the water, Mondello and Kirkistown boast the Leinster Trophy which offers a winners' list

perhaps more impressive than any at Brands or Silverstone. However, as the event has moved around circuits, it has failed to become synonymous with one track, hurting the overall ratings of Kirkistown and Mondello.

As for the tracks featured further down, Anglesey props up the list by having only gained an MSA licence in 1997 and being recognisable in its current guise from 2007 onwards. Rockingham (built in 2001) also suffers here as does Pembrey.

One of the surprises on the list is Thruxton. Despite running events for as long as both Silverstone and Brands Hatch, our correspondents felt the circuit didn't have the same historical significance.

Above; Button won the Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch in his first season in cars

Top Right: Marshall slides Baby Bertha around Silverstone



RESULTS HISTORY		
POS	CIRCUIT	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Silverstone	9.71
2	Brands Hatch	9.2
3	Donington Park	8.47
4	Goodwood	8.43
5	Oulton Park	7.58
6	Cadwell Park	7
7	Mondello Park	6.75
8	Snetterton	6.62
9	Thruxton	6.58
10	Castle Combe	6.56
11	Mallory Park	6.4
12	Bishops Cleeve	6.33
13	Kirkistown	6
14	Croft	5.8
15	Knockhill	5.64
16	Lydden	5.13
17	Pembrey	3.83
18	Rockingham	3.64
19	Anglesey	3.56

QUALITY OF RACING



YOU CAN HAVE A CIRCUIT WITH TREMENDOUS history. It can provide a brilliant spectator experience. It can have excellent facilities and the prestige of the categories on track can be top-notch. But if the circuit doesn't lend itself to high-quality racing, many of those other categories can be considered irrelevant.

There needs to be a mix of both high- and low-speed corners that encourage overtaking, and the track needs to be wide enough to allow cars to run side-by-side. Crucially, cars need to be able to follow each other closely together without getting too strung out.

According to our survey, we are blessed in the UK with a number of different circuits that

do indeed play host to pretty decent racing. In fact, this is one of the closest categories of them all, with Silverstone, Brands Hatch, Oulton Park, Donington Park and Snetterton all very similarly rated.

But also, interestingly, the scores are noticeably lower in this category than the others. There is a very small spread between the 19 venues, and this also suggests that there is no one circuit that stands out above the crowd on the issue of the quality of the motor racing.

At the bottom of the list come Kirkistown, Mondello Park, Lydden Hill and Pembrey, but, with only a small difference in scores, these venues can still provide some good racing.

Top: Donington and its curves fared well in overtaking stakes

Right: Mondello doesn't rate as well as the UK tracks for good racing

RESULTS QUALITY OF RACING

POS	CIRCUIT	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Silverstone	7.76
2	Thruxton	7.75
3	Donington Park	7.65
4	Mallory Park	7.5
5	Knockhill	7.45
6	Goodwood	7.29
7	Castle Combe	7.22
8	Brands Hatch	7.05
9	Croft	7
=	Bishopscourt	7
11	Kirkistown	6.75
12	Oulton Park	6.69
13	Rockingham	6.57
14	Anglesey	6.56
15	Snetterton	6.54
16	Cadwell Park	6.33
17	Lydden	6.25
18	Pembrey	6
19	Mondello Park	5.25



PRESTIGE OF SERIES

OUT OF ALL OF THE CATEGORIES IN THE comparison, this is the one that has the clearest winner. There is no disputing the prestige of the racing held at Silverstone.

Forget Formula 1, the World Endurance Championship and MotoGP, there are countless other high-profile events held at the circuit. Everything from the ever-expanding Silverstone

“There is no disputing the status of racing held at Silverstone”

Classic to the blue-riband, three-hour British GT round and the prestigious Walter Hayes Trophy at the end of the year. Almost every major championship has a meeting at the Northamptonshire venue with it hosting a plethora of different clubs.

And, of course, it holds a crucial round in the closing stages of the British Touring Car Championship. In fact, all of the BTCC venues



feature in the top 10 of the prestige rankings, with Goodwood the only interloper. While the historic Sussex track may only play host to a tiny number of meetings per year, the status of the Members' Meeting and Revival is undisputed.

At the other end of the scale comes Pembrey. The Welsh track also only has a small number of meetings, like Goodwood, but, perhaps crucially, none of these can boast the same pedigree.

Pembrey's relatively low number of meetings also lack prestige and therefore it scores the least

RESULTS PRESTIGE OF SERIES

POS	CIRCUIT	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Silverstone	9.9
2	Brands Hatch	8.2
3	Oulton Park	7.69
4	Donington Park	7.41
5	Snetterton	7.15
6	Goodwood	6.86
7	Croft	6.6
8	Thruxton	6.58
9	Knockhill	6.36
=	Rockingham	6.36
11	Cadwell Park	5.67
12	Bishopscourt	5.33
13	Castle Combe	5.11
14	Anglesey	4.56
15	Mallory Park	4.3
16	Kirkistown	4
=	Mondello Park	4
18	Lydden	3.38
19	Pembrey	3.3

SPECTATOR EXPERIENCE

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT ONE. WHAT CAN circuits offer visiting spectators? This is intrinsically linked with facilities, but not dependent on it. For example, Croft is renowned for producing spectator-thrilling racing, but the facilities are not of the standard of Brands or Silverstone. As you can see from the final table, the two categories match with the circuits in the same order for both.

There's little to choose between the forerunners in this category. Brands and Cadwell top the list – the two circuits are picturesque, which aids the spectator factor. Both have plenty of history, too, which also affects this category. Heading to Goodwood – because of its history – will, for the most part, get spectators excited more than heading to a track with zero history.

The correspondents found this a difficult category to vote on, thanks to the result being a mixture of all the categories. There's an element of not being able to put your finger on what makes a

“Two scenic circuits – Brands Hatch and Cadwell – top the list”

circuit one spectators want to go back to – a sprinkle of magic you can't quite explain.

Propping up the list are Pembrey, Kirkistown, Bishopscourt and Croft – all of which also have lower facilities scores. Weather is another factor – who wants to stand outside in the rain all day? Some probably will, but they don't want to, and that's probably why Pembrey is at the bottom.



RESULTS SPECTATOR EXPERIENCE		
POS	CIRCUIT	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Brands Hatch	8.7
2	Cadwell Park	8.56
3	Goodwood	8.43
4	Castle Combe	8.22
5	Oulton Park	7.46
6	Knockhill	7.36
7	Mallory Park	7
8	Thruxton	6.83
9	Anglesey	6.78
10	Lydden	6.75
11	Donington Park	6.71
12	Snetterton	6.69
13	Rockingham	6.43
14	Silverstone	6.3
15	Mondello Park	6.25
16	Croft	5.6
17	Kirkistown	5.5
18	Bishopscourt	5
19	Pembrey	4.33

FACILITIES



FACILITIES. SOUNDS SIMPLE. ALL CIRCUITS have a café and a toilet. But what did our correspondents think?

When choosing the ratings for this category, our writers thought about the media centres and what entertainment is on offer at the circuits. As well as the cafés and toilets, of course.

Brands Hatch surprisingly ranked ahead of Silverstone, which underwent a recent renovation for the British Grand Prix, although both were close.

Those suffering poorly were the likes of Lydden, Pembrey and Croft. With the addition of World

RallyCross, Lydden's facilities have improved. Pembrey and Croft both suffer as they aren't used as frequently as some of the more central circuits. And the lack of a heated media centre for many years can't have gone down well in this list.

The scores in this category are reflected in the circuits' funding, which is why the less well backed, 'smaller' independent circuits feature further down the list while the MSV tracks and Silverstone rank so highly. The latter benefit from regular investment, with the so-called smaller tracks struggling to outlay their income on the quality of their facilities.

Rockingham is in the top five for facilities as one of the more modern circuits

RESULTS FACILITIES		
POS	CIRCUIT	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Brands Hatch	8.05
2	Silverstone	7.71
3	Goodwood	7.43
4	Oulton Park	7.38
5	Rockingham	7.14
6	Donington Park	7
=	Snetterton	7
8	Cadwell Park	6.33
9	Mondello Park	6.25
10	Castle Combe	5.89
11	Anglesey	5.88
12	Knockhill	5.69
13	Thruxton	5.58
14	Mallory Park	5.4
15	Bishopscourt	5.33
16	Kirkistown	4.75
17	Croft	4.3
18	Lydden	4.25
19	Pembrey	3.5

CONCLUSION

AS WE EXPLAINED AT THE START, THIS WAS ALWAYS GOING to be an extremely challenging poll to complete. But we have a winner and we have a loser.

Some will be surprised that Brands has beaten Silverstone, the so-called home of UK motorsport, but it's worth keeping in mind that this is a survey of the best club circuit. The British Grand Prix and the World Endurance Championship aren't

considered here, which may have pushed Brands over the edge and hurt the Northamptonshire circuit's rating. Likewise, had this list been conducted a few years ago, DTM wouldn't have been considered for Brands Hatch – we're only focusing on club circuits.

At the bottom, Pembrey scored a couple of respectable results despite falling down in other areas. Scores of six for

the quality of racing and difficulty prove, as with the other circuits, that every track has a place in UK motorsport and each one offers its own unique challenges.

Do you agree with Autosport's scores for your favourite circuits? Let us know your thoughts by emailing autosport@haymarket.com.



FINAL RESULTS

POS	CIRCUIT	DIFFICULTY	HISTORY	RACING QUALITY	PRESTIGE	SPECTATOR EXPERIENCE	FACILITIES	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Brands Hatch	7.95	9.2	7.05	8.2	8.7	8.05	8.19
2	Silverstone	7.1	9.71	7.76	9.9	6.3	7.71	8.08
3	Goodwood	7	8.43	7.29	6.86	8.43	7.43	7.57
4	Oulton Park	8.54	7.58	6.69	7.69	7.46	7.38	7.56
5	Donington Park	7.06	8.47	7.65	7.41	6.71	7	7.38
6	Cadwell Park	8.89	7	6.33	5.67	8.56	6.33	7.13
7	Snetterton	6.69	6.62	6.54	7.15	6.69	7	6.78
8	Thruxton	7.25	6.58	7.75	6.58	6.83	5.58	6.76
9	Castle Combe	6.78	6.56	7.22	5.11	8.22	5.89	6.63
10	Knockhill	6.82	5.64	7.45	6.36	7.36	5.69	6.55
11	Mallory Park	5.8	6.4	7.5	4.3	7	5.4	6.07
12	Croft	6.7	5.8	7	6.6	5.6	4.3	6
13	Rockingham	5.71	3.64	6.57	6.36	6.43	7.14	5.98
14	Mondello Park	6.75	6.75	5.25	4	6.25	6.25	5.88
15	Bishopscourt	6	6.33	7	5.33	5	5.33	5.83
16	Anglesey Circuit	6.22	3.56	6.56	4.56	6.78	5.88	5.59
17	Kirkistown	5.5	6	6.75	4	5.5	4.75	5.42
18	Lydden	5.13	5.13	6.25	3.38	6.75	4.25	5.15
19	Pembrey	6	3.83	6	3.3	4.33	3.5	4.49

WHAT'S ON



Channel 5's Formula E debut rated

OF ALL THE DIFFERENT SERIES IN international motorsport, Formula E's pace of change from year to year is arguably the most rapid.

But the change in the championship's UK broadcaster was not part of the plan, as out went ITV4 after two years and in came Channel 5.

The announcement may have been met with raised eyebrows last month, but just how did the new broadcaster stack up compared to ITV4? Answer: uneasily.

Firstly, there's the presentation. Gone are Jennie Gow and pundits Marc Priestley and Jaime Alguersuari, with world-feed pit reporter Nicki Shields presenting a series of pre-prepared VTs and lead commentator Martin Haven chipping in every now and then instead.

Studio-based presenters hosting away from the circuit can often be a clunky endeavour but ITV4 tended to get it right. Shields being based at the circuit is a bonus but, given she is only introducing largely pre-prepared material, the full benefit of her trackside presence hasn't been exploited. Indeed, Shields was only

seen clutching the Channel 5 microphone for a handful of minutes.

Furthermore, in ex-Formula 1 man Priestley ITV4 had a knowledgeable and eloquent pundit, while Alguersuari gave the crucial driver's-eye view from the cockpit – both of their input is keenly missed with little to no analysis present.

Next comes the content. The pre-race build-up has been cut from an hour to 30 minutes but still features all the usual qualifying round-ups, driver interviews and on-board lap demonstrations, which, as before with Gow, were largely split between Shields and commentator Dario

Channel 5 joined Jaguar in making a Formula E debut in Hong Kong



Franchitti, so not too much change there.

New viewers will no doubt have tuned in as the series has remained free to air, but too much of the pre-race build-up was tailored to the newbie, which left me, as a knowledgeable fan who has followed the series from its inception, often feeling like I was being talked down to.

It's a tough line to tread – cater too much for the diehard and casual fans struggle to understand, while too much basic explanation gives existing fans no reason to tune in. It's a line ITV4 managed to get right, but Channel 5 still has some work to do on this front.

Indeed, I was disappointed by the lack of exploration of key issues – which teams performed best in pre-season testing at Donington Park, how were new drivers finding it, and what was the story behind Hong Kong getting its first ePrix?

But it's not all bad news – for one, C5 has wisely opted not to puncture the race with advert breaks (other than a clumsily placed cutaway just seconds after Buemi crossed the line that left the viewer feeling like the rest of the field didn't

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After two years of ITV4 coverage, Channel 5 took over for Hong Kong



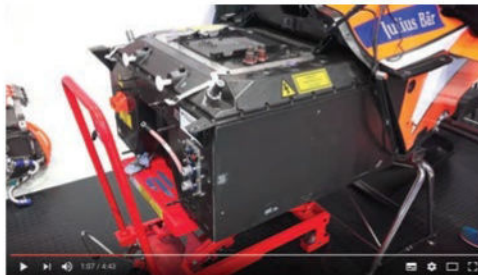
seem to matter), instead saving them all for the pre- and post-race elements. The broadcaster's decision to keep it on its 'main' channel rather than one of its offshoots also suggests it is taking its coverage seriously.

But, sadly, the execution didn't match the intention. All too often it felt a little haphazard, and the join between segments was often filled only by a wide shot of the Hong Kong backdrop and a deafening silence. Sure, teething problems are to be expected, but it will need to get on top of those quickly to match the slick production ITV4 established.

It's worth remembering that Channel 5 is relatively new to the motorsport coverage game and will therefore need some bedding-in time but, as the race result itself made clear, experience counts.

Sadly, without objective pundits providing insightful analysis, and with key developments glossed over, it's hard to see how the viewer is going to get a broadcast that puts them in the heart of the action.

JASON NOBLE



HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube INSIDE A FORMULA E CAR

Search for: Developing An Electric Race Car – Formula E

Coinciding with the start of Formula E season three, this looks at the series' technical complexities. Some of the oily-fingered nitty-gritty should already be familiar to readers, but this offers a chance to poke around the innards of Andretti Autosport's development car – and marvel at the size of that battery pack.



TV PICK OF THE WEEK

FUJI WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Motors TV
Sunday 0230

A week after Formula 1 visited Japan, it's the World Endurance Championship's turn this weekend. Leave your alarm clock set for early Sunday morning and enjoy another installment in what has been an enthralling WEC season. Can Audi break Porsche's recent winning streak?

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

WORLD ENDURANCE

Rd 7/9
Fuji, Japan
October 16
WATCH ON TV
Live Motors TV,
Sunday 0230

RALLY CATALUNYA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 11/13
Salou, Spain
October 13-16
WATCH ON TV
Live stages plus.wrc.com
Highlights Channel 5,
Monday 1900

DTM

Rd 9/9
Hockenheim, Germany
October 15-16
WATCH ON TV
Live BT Sport ESPN,
Sunday 1400

EUROPEAN FORMULA 3

Rd 10/10
Hockenheim, Germany
October 15-16
WATCH ONLINE
Live fiaf3europe.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 31/36
Kansas Speedway, USA
October 16
WATCH ON TV
Live Premier Sports,
Sunday 1830

WORLD RALLYCROSS

Rd 11/12
Estering, Germany
October 15-16
WATCH ON TV
Live Quest, Sunday 1730

BRNO 24 HOURS 24 HOUR SERIES

Rd 7/7
Brno, Czech Republic
October 15-16

V8 STOCK CARS

Rd 9/12
Curitiba, Brazil
October 16

MOTOGP

Rd 15/18
Motegi, Japan
October 16
WATCH ON TV
Live BT Sport 2,
Sunday 0545

UK MOTORSPORT

OULTON PARK CSCC

October 15
Tin Tops, Swinging Sixties, Magnificent 7s, Modern Classics, Special Saloons, Classic K, New Millennium, Open Series

SILVERSTONE NATIONAL HSCC

October 15-16
Derek Bell Trophy, Classic F3, Historic F3, Historic FF2000, Historic FF1600, Classic Racing Cars, Formula Junior, Historic Touring Cars, Guards Trophy, Classic Clubmans, Historic Road Sports, '70s Road Sports

DONINGTON PARK BRSCC

October 15-16
Caterham Roadsport, Caterham Tracksport, Caterham Superlight, Caterham Supersport, Caterham Academy, HRDC Allstars, HRDC Touring Greats, Honda VTec, Production GTi, Monoposto

SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL BRSCC

October 15-16
Formula Jedi, Porsches, Mazda MX5, Open Sports, BMW Compact Cup

PEMBREY BARC

October 15-16
Trucks, Legends, Pickups, Karts, Welsh Sports/Saloons



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THE ARCHIVE

Ever pondered on the plural of Stratos? Stratoses, Stratii, Lancias Stratos? No matter, enjoy the view inside Lancia's Chivasso factory as Sandro Munari's car is stripped following his dominant win on the 1977 Monte Carlo Rally. Immediately behind is the Group 5 racing Stratos that won the previous October's Giro d'Italia with Carlo Facetti and Piero Sodano.

THE BUCKET LIST

GO TO ROSSI
COUNTRY



SEEING RACE FANS PILING INTO A CIRCUIT ON A SATURDAY EVENING, several hours after on-track action has finished and the best part of half a day before it's due to restart, is a curious sight.

But that's just one of the magnificent things about MotoGP at Mugello and Misano. And it's all due to one man: Valentino Rossi.

Wherever you go watching MotoGP, you will see that slightly radioactive yellow that has become as synonymous with Rossi as his #46. Even in Spain, where his arch rivals Marc Marquez and Jorge Lorenzo are the local heroes.

In Italy, Rossi is MotoGP (sorry Ducati). Both circuits attracted raceday crowds north of 100,000 this year, and you should endeavour to join them before Rossi retires, likely at the end of 2018.

The way they transform green hills to resemble sunflower fields, chant 'Rossi' and invade the track after the race is special. Nestled in the Tuscan countryside, Mugello lends itself to camping at the track, given how small the township is. Misano is on the Adriatic Coast, and therefore has significantly more accommodation options, which means camping is not as popular.

So while Misano is next to Rossi's hometown of Tavullia, Mugello offers an atmosphere pretty much unrivalled in world motorsport. Fans camp at the top of the hill overlooking the circuit from Thursday, with plenty more rolling in after qualifying on Saturday evening.

Come down, they have all filed down into the spectator areas that line the track, blowing horns and revving any sort of motor they can get their hands on. By the time Rossi heads to the grid, they all still have plenty left in reserve, their chanting only pausing to belt out the Italian national anthem, as flares add to the sea of yellow.

It's a frenzy you have to see and hear for yourself, and even join, while Rossi their king is still racing. **M**

MITCHELL ADAM

AT A GLANCE

Where Mugello, about an hour from both Florence and Bologna airports. Misano, close to Rimini airport, with Florence your next-best bet.

When June 2-4 for Mugello and September 8-10 for Misano on the provisional 2017 calendar.

Key tip Don't try to fly home on the Sunday night.

Make sure you are stocked up enough to hang around for a couple of hours after the chequered flag is shown, to sit out the traffic-management storm.



**Crowd support
for Rossi has to be
seen (and heard)
to be believed**

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