

**JOHN SURTEES 1934-2017**



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# Tributes to one of the sport's true greats

**THIS ISSUE WAS GOING TO BE ALL ABOUT LOOKING** ahead to the upcoming Formula 1 season, but news of the death of John Surtees last Friday overshadowed testing in Spain.

Already a motorcycle great before he switched to four wheels, Surtees was far better than his F1 tally of six world championship grand prix wins and one world title suggests. Always true to himself, Surtees walked out of Lotus and Ferrari seats that could have provided him with stats rather closer to his rival – and era benchmark – Jim Clark. Even then, his performances in Cooper and Honda machinery meant he remained a frontrunner towards the end of the 1960s.

Becoming a constructor did not prove as successful as Surtees would have hoped, but his influence on the sport went on long after his eponymous team folded. In particular he helped young drivers, and set up the Henry Surtees Foundation following his son's cruelly unlucky death at Brands Hatch in 2009.

In this issue we carry tributes to one of the sport's true legends, from Nigel Roebuck (page 4), Paul Fearnley (page 6) and many key figures, including some of the young talents Surtees helped along the way (p15). The breadth and depth of the responses are a better measure of Surtees's place in history.



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# NIGEL ROEBUCK

## Remembering *Il Grande John*

### FORTY YEARS AGO THINGS WERE DONE

differently in Formula 1, and even by the standards of the day John Surtees did them differently again. One day, in November 1978, I got a call from his secretary, asking me to visit John in St Thomas Hospital. At the time we didn't even know he was laid up.

"It's my legs," he explained, "and it goes back some years. Seems to be a combination of the injuries from the Mosport Can-Am shunt in '65, and some Avgas burns I got from the Cooper-Maserati in Mexico the year after." John being John, of course, he forebore to mention that this last was a race he had dominated.

"I've had this problem for ages, and it reached a point this summer when I couldn't drive the cars anymore, and I really missed that. So here I am..."

Although Surtees had retired as a driver at the end of 1972, concentrating thereafter on running his team, I knew he still loved to test his cars, but I couldn't help but suspect that there was a reason for the timing of his request that I visit him. Finally he said, "Well, as long as you're here, I may as well give you some news about the future."

What, I asked, was Team Surtees doing in 1979? "Nothing," he said. "That's the news. We're stopping."

Momentarily I was nonplussed. The sport, as I said, was very different then, with PR no more than a twinkle in Mark McCormack's eye, but still this seemed a casual way of announcing the end of a Formula 1 team. Was there not to be a formal statement — at the very least, a press release?

No need, John said. "What better way is there to make an announcement than to do it in Autosport?" So you want me to tell the world you're stopping? Yes.

I quickly wrote up the interview, which appeared in the following Thursday's magazine. That day, unsurprisingly, my phone rang off the hook.

Surtees's decision was reached because he had grown frustrated in his search for sponsorship: "It's now a vital factor, because Formula 1 costs have got out of hand, and frankly my holding company has always been the main sponsor of the team. I've always gone racing for pleasure and satisfaction, as well as my living, and there's no pleasure in hovering around at the back of the grid."

Surtees co-designed the TS7, a non-championship race winner



Surtees lit up historic events with his enthusiasm



I could only feel sorrowful that it had ended this way, and ever after it saddened me that memories of John Surtees — a colossus of motorsport — were to some degree wedded to a failed team bearing his name. I never saw him race a bike, but accept the testimonies of those who did, and just as he was among the very greatest on two wheels, so I know from my own experience — watching him in Ferraris, Hondas, Lolas, whatever — that so he was also on four.

Surtees was a natural, in the true sense of the word, and his love of competition, his *desire* to race, I put up there with Mario Andretti. To motorcycling aficionados, he will be forever synonymous with MV, but the company competed in only world championship events, and had the autocratic Count Agusta not forbidden his riding other bikes in lesser events, Surtees might never have made the switch to cars. Simply, he needed to race more than his contract allowed; it did not, however, preclude racing cars...

Mike Hawthorn, only a month before his





death in a road accident, put the idea in John's head. "He said, 'Try a car – they stand up better!' When I went to John Cooper to order a Formula 2 car, John had arranged for Ken Tyrrell to be present – and that's how I ended up driving Ken's car in a Formula Junior race at Goodwood, where I finished second to Jimmy Clark. The first car race I ever went to was the first race I drove in."

Surtees's instant pace was startling, and thus he found his 1960 dance card indeed full, competing in the world championship with MV, and also driving for Lotus in F1 races that didn't clash. At the end of the year, another title won, he gave up the bikes.

John, as I said, did things differently. For 1961 he had an offer from Ferrari, which he turned down – "I thought, 'I've got to learn my trade first...'" – and a year later did the same again: "I concluded no, I'm not ready for this."

Finally, for 1963 he said yes, and quickly became one of Enzo's favourite sons, winning the world championship in '64, and staying at Maranello until midway through the '66

## **"John was never an easy man, in that he had strong opinions and spoke his mind, but I greatly admired him"**

season when he left after a dispute with notorious team manager Eugenio Dragoni.

"I didn't want to leave," Surtees said, "and the Old Man didn't want me to, but Dragoni left me no choice."

After two largely frustrating seasons with Honda, then an appalling one with BRM, Surtees decided to set up his own team. In 1970 he won the Oulton Park Gold Cup in the neat little TS7, but in subsequent years strong results were few and far between, and financially Team Surtees was always up against it, which is where we came in.

John was never an easy man, in the sense that he had strong opinions and always spoke

his mind regardless of the consequences.

On many an occasion that cost him dear, but I greatly admired him for it, as also I did for his heartbroken stoicism after the death of his son Henry in 2009.

He was a good man, and a kind one. After Chris Amon's death last August he called me. "When we lost Henry you phoned me, and I was grateful," he said, simply. "I remembered how close you and Chris were, and just thought you might want to talk..."

As I miss Chris, so shall I miss John, both mavericks in their different ways, both giants of racing's golden age. Surtees on a charge was an unforgettable sight. ✽



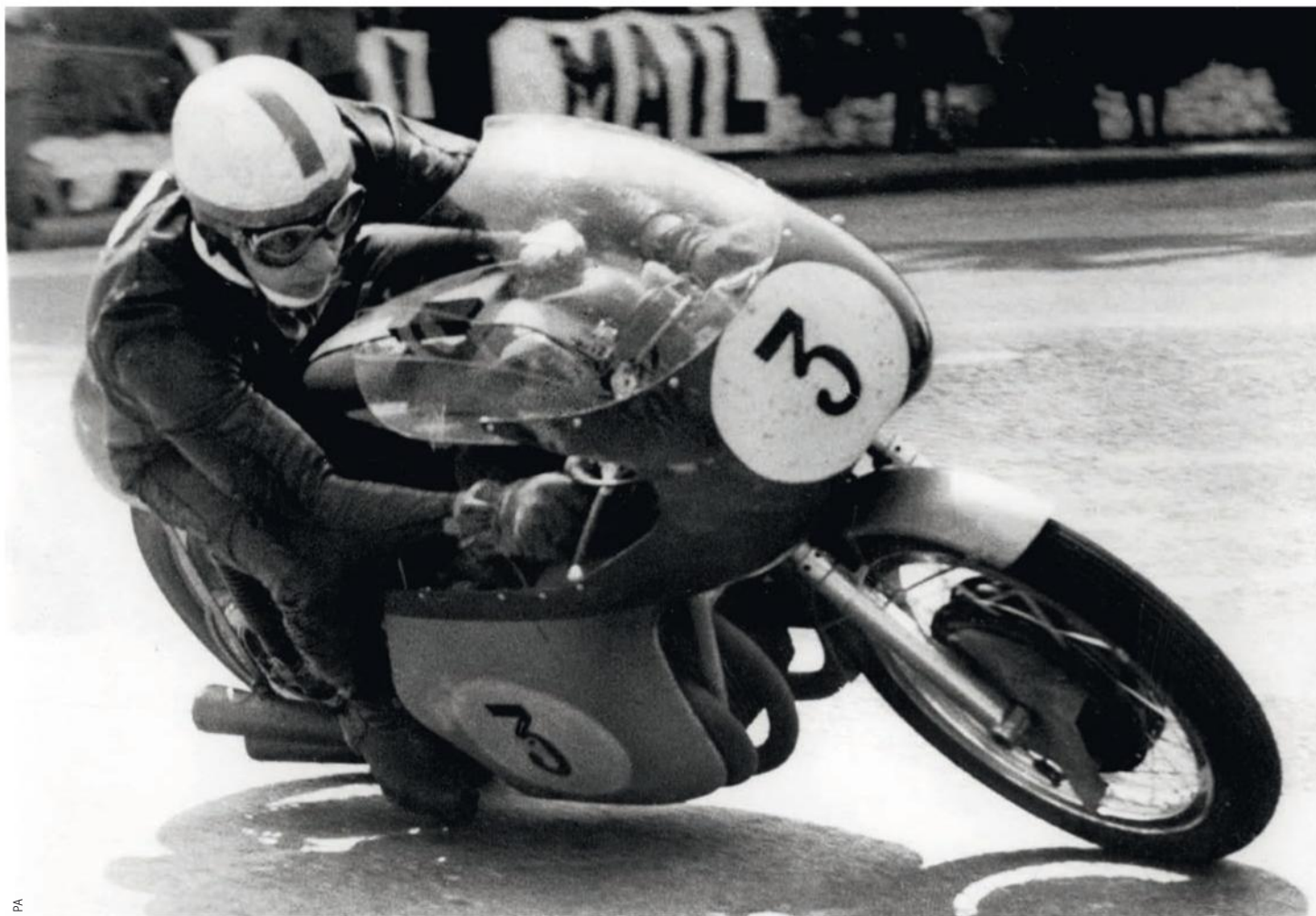




# John Surtees

— 1934-2017 —

By Paul Fearnley



PA

**T**he greatest motoring sportsman was the eldest child of a bike-mad family living in South London. Dad 'Jack' was a burly bus driver-turned-motorcycle repairman/dealer who excelled at sidecar racing either side of WWII; and mum Dorothy, an expert rider herself, was occasionally his brave passenger.

Both were supportive presences – enabling rather than forcing, protecting without cosseting – for their shy but determined son who excelled on two wheels, three (he won on his sidecar debut in 'the chair' in 1948, only to be disqualified for being underage) and four.

An eight-time world champion, seven on bikes, once in cars (1964), John Surtees Jr won: six Isle of Man TTs; six Ulster Grands Prix at Dundrod; six Dutch TTs at Assen; seven GPs at Monza (five on bikes, two

in cars); seven at Spa (six and one); and four at the Nurburgring – two apiece.

He won: on his debut in a sports-prototype – even though his own Ferrari team protested the result of 1963's Sebring 12 Hours; four Oulton Park Gold Cups – twice in a Formula 1 car bearing his name; a brace of Nurburgring 1000Km and Syracuse GPs; 1962's South Pacific Trophy at Tasmania's Longford; 1963's New Zealand GP and Lakeside International Trophy in a Lola, and the Mediterranean GP at Enna and Kyalami's Rand GP for Ferrari; the inaugural Can-Am series of 1966 – in a Lola that he developed; consecutive 1967 Formula 2 races – at Mallory Park and Zolder – in a Lola; and, during his final (partial) season as a racing driver, aged 38, the Japanese and Imola GPs of 1972 – in an F2 car bearing his name.

He: 'handed' Jim Clark the only second place of a 72-start GP career; scored Lola's only 'official' F1 victory – the 1962 International 2000 Guineas at Mallory – having put the car on pole for its world championship

debut at Zandvoort; and won the 1966 Monza 1000Km (in the pouring rain and without windscreen wipers) on his comeback from serious injury. But for those injuries he would have driven the two best Ferrari single-seaters of his era – the F1 1512 and 246T (for Tasman) – and also for the Lola-Ford team that won Indy in 1966.

This appreciation will major on his stellar car career, but without doubt he was even better on, and more comfortable around, bikes. The stats are boggling. His 250 wins from 352 starts from 1951-60 included: 54 from 66 in 1954, 70 from 86 in 1955, and all bar three of 42 from 1958-59. Among them were: sequences of 17, 20, 17, 19, 24 and 16 consecutive victories; 68 wins at Brands Hatch, including 40 in a row; 16 at Silverstone, including 15 in a row; 10 in a row at Cadwell Park; an undefeated 20 at Aberdare Park; an undefeated nine at Castle Combe; 17 from 18 at Crystal Palace; 16 from 17 at Snetterton; and 13 from 17 at Oulton. This 'Moss of motorcycling' was fit, strong – his run-and-bump

1960 Isle of Man TT was John's last outing on the island before he switched to cars. He won the Senior race and was second in the Junior



Surtees took pole position on his car debut



Flying in Ferraris with and without a roof: winning the F1 title in 1964 (top) and the '66 Monza 1000Km with Mike Parkes

starts possessed feline grace and potency – and relentless. Winning was the result of natural talent, immaculate preparation and intense focus: four victories at a single meeting, all on different bikes, was not unusual; three was the norm; and two a disappointment. A weekend without competition was a source of intense frustration.

He opened his world championship account on a 250cc NSU Sportmax at Dundrod in 1955 and, frustrated by Norton's conservatism and insularity, he joined Italy's struggling Meccanica Verghera Agusta and won the 1956 500cc world title despite breaking his right arm mid-season. From 1958-59, with MV's 'fours' more reliable after a chastening 1957, and nimbler too, he won all 25 rounds that he contested. Voted BBC's Sports Personality of 1959 – no biker has won since – he completed his 350cc/500cc hat-trick with seven wins from 12 starts in 1960. By which time, aged 26, and frustrated by MV's dogmatism – despite his having won 37 of 56

starts on its bigger bikes, he was not allowed to ride its 250cc racer – he had begun a transition to four wheels that was remarkable for its speed, in every sense of the word.

On his international bike debut in August 1951, aged 17, he had given Norton's soon-to-be-crowned double world champion Geoff Duke, a Boy's Own hero in racy one-piece black leathers, a genuine fright on lesser machinery in the wet at Thruxton. Nine years later, from pole position at Goodwood – "The first car race I ever saw, I was in!" – his Cooper-Austin might have denied Clark and the fundamental Lotus-Cosworth axis its maiden victory had he not dived into a bike-sized gap while lapping a backmarker. He also finished second in his maiden F2 race and, having joined forces with Colin Chapman and Clark at Lotus, he was runner-up in his second world championship GP: the British at Silverstone. Five months after his car debut he lined up on pole for the Portuguese GP at Oporto, only his third F1 world championship start,

and was leading comfortably when he came up to lap Stirling Moss, whose privateer Lotus had given chase before being delayed by a misfire.

Surtees: "I had it in the bag! There was fluid on my pedals – but I made mistakes: in a good rhythm, I didn't want to get stuck behind him; I should have turned more sharply across the tramlines [F1 has changed!] because that would have given me more grip; and I should have dived up the escape road when I realised my mistake."

Instead he hit a kerb and damaged the radiator: "Now I had unfinished business. It was a wrench to leave bikes but I had nothing more to prove. Cars opened new opportunities."

Their paddock, however, was a foreign country, a colder place than the bikers' 'gypsy encampment' where Surtees had felt appreciated and fulfilled. He not only knew very few car guys, but also his aptitude had put them all *en garde*. Though its lines and techniques were different – "particularly the slower corners – I had to concentrate more in cars >>



Emphatic German  
GP win in 1964 set  
up drivers' title

than on bikes" – his supreme balance, coordination and feel for grip, plus bravery and will meant that the driving part was easy compared to shedding that outlier/outsider/outside tag. He never would, quite.

It didn't help that this 'lone wolf' was neither easy to work with nor for, though mechanics appreciated him as one of their own made good. Having bothered to complete a five-year engineering apprenticeship even though his bike career was taking off, he had high standards and held very definite ideas and opinions – but lacked a diploma in diplomacy. He would butt heads and/or fall out with: fellow Brit-at-Ferrari Mike Parkes; Ferrari designer Mauro Forghieri; long-time collaborator Eric Broadley of Lola; Len Terry, freelancer designer of what became the first Surtees car; BRM chairman Louis Stanley (not difficult to do); Chaparral's Jim Hall; and, more importantly and to different extents, Colin Chapman, Enzo Ferrari and Soichiro Honda: "Enzo and Soichiro sabotaged my career with decisions they were not qualified to take."

Tellingly, he would have to call on several bike contacts when finally in 1970 he built his own F1 car – and several of his drivers were bemused at best by his working practices: "If there was a new part to be assessed I would normally do it. I don't think that detracted from the team."

It made sense for a squad strapped for cash to maximise its boss's skill set – but though it came for free, it would exert a price. Giving up the aspect he enjoyed most to concentrate on those he enjoyed least proved problematic for Surtees and his team.

Life as a constructor proved a disappointment, not in terms of endeavour or personnel – many good

people learned their trade at Team Surtees – but F1 results. Though competitive from its 1969 Formula 5000 beginnings on both sides of the Atlantic, and despite winning the 1972 European F2 title with Mike Hailwood, that game-changing GP win remained tantalisingly out of reach: a leaking gearbox at Kyalami and a mere 18-hundredths at Monza in 1971, plus a sheared suspension bolt at Kyalami and a broken airbox clip at Monza in 1972. Reliability issues also cost it non-championship F1 victories at Silverstone and Brands Hatch. And just when its boss thought his hopes had been realised – more money, new factory and fresh engines for 1974 – they were blown apart when he refused/failed to mollify his new sponsor's wannabe-driver son; after a tortuous court case, an exhausted Surtees 'settled' for costs.

Broken bones he could cope with. When he split his pelvis in a Lola T70 crash at Mosport in September 1965, his left leg, shorter by four inches, had to be tugged back into alignment. 'Pain' caused by elements beyond saddle and cockpit was harder to bear. He was laid low with viral pneumonia after a disappointing 1969 when he decided to become a constructor, and would call a halt to it in 1978 from his hospital bed, suffering complications from that Mosport shunt.

He'd always looked older than he actually was. Now he had a reason: cars. They made him ill.

The warning signs had been there from the off. Although he got on well with Chapman, he was wary of the glint in his eye. So when a team-mate kicked up a stink, Surtees – there was a surprisingly thin skin under those leathers and a sensitive soul behind that impassive race face – felt obliged to clear up Chapman's mess. Offered







Superb showing at dramatic 1966 Belgian Grand Prix was his last win for Ferrari before quitting mid-season

the number one seat at Lotus for 1961, plus his choice of number two, Surtees had picked Clark — all of which came as second-hand news to the ousted Innes Ireland. Surtees's decision to walk away from the snafu meant that already he had driven the most competitive car of his F1 career in the form of the Lotus 18.

He turned down Ferrari too. Twice. *Il Grande John* spoke the lingo and liked the lifestyle, but his experience at feudalistic MV, where he'd been silently circled and vetted by its black-veiled dowager Countess before being allowed to 'join the family', had taught him that it was better to deal from a position of power with Italian teams.

Ferrari's initial approach came at the end of its valedictory 1961. Feeling underprepared after a season spent with a customer Cooper run by Reg Parnell, and sensing complacency at

the Scuderia, Surtees instead helped unite finance house Bowmaker with Lola for 1962 and finished fourth in the drivers' and constructor's rankings, ahead of Ferrari.

Enzo, who had warned that he wouldn't ask again, was in the mire and in desperate need when he... asked again at the end of 1962. This time Surtees accepted. In conjunction with recently promoted Forghieri — several key senior staff had walked out at the end of 1961 — and experienced engineer Franco Rocchi, he attempted to instil a sense of modernity and best-of-Britishness. Unfortunately he was 30 years too early and not thanked by everyone for his trouble: "Where I fell foul was trying to make it an international team. But it needed to happen, as Ross Brawn proved."

Struggling to understand accepted Ferrari 'norms', such as the primacy of Le Mans, he became increasingly

frustrated by jingoism within sections of the squad. When nemesis team manager Eugenio Dragoni handed co-driver Ludovico Scarfiotti the opening stint at Le Mans 1966, as a sop to Scarfiotti's uncle Gianni Agnelli, the new president of Fiat, Surtees — that short fuse again — rushed to Maranello for showdown talks.

He was hopeful of Enzo's support: the latter's insurers had paid his medical expenses even though his Mosport shunt hadn't been in a Ferrari, and Surtees had recently moved into a Modena flat at Enzo's behest. He never would reveal the details of the meeting, preferring instead to repeat Enzo's plea, made much later, that they remember the good times, not the bad.

The former included a world championship gained in dramatic circumstances in Mexico City. It's true that Clark's engine seized one lap from the title, and that Surtees's team-mate >>

Lorenzo Bandini, his flat-12 faster than the team leader's V8, collided with the other title aspirant, BRM's Graham Hill, at mid-distance and apparently let Surtees through into a crucial second place on the penultimate lap. Less well known is that Surtees — who insisted there had been no team orders — had recovered from 13th place after his engine cut out during the opening lap. He was a worthy champion of the most competitive season of the decade.

He might have made it two titles with Ferrari in 1966 had he toed the line, given that his final victory for it had been a virtuoso performance in the rain at Spa. Immediately quicker than team-mate Jochen Rindt at new employer Cooper — powered to Ferrari's chagrin and John's glee by a Maserati V12 — he was in the running for victories in Germany, Italy and the United States until denied by a failing clutch, burst bag tank and an inattentive backmarker. He did, however, win the Mexican finale. With Clark discovering life with below-par machinery, Surtees and Cooper ended the season as F1's fastest combination — and as runner-up to Jack Brabham in the title race. Given that he was also in the midst of winning the lucrative Can-Am Challenge Cup in a self-run Lola T70, thanks to victories at St Jovite, Riverside and Stardust Raceway in Las Vegas, this was the Surtees Era.

Briefly.

Having hoped to see out his career with Ferrari, so it was with Honda, which he joined in 1967. Or rather it joined him at his Slough HQ: "I thought I was as quick as anyone then, and I was sure that it would come right." Honda's sonorous V12 was powerful but dated and heavy, its chassis pedestrian. Replacing the latter with a modified Indy Lola, Surtees promptly won a last-corner thriller at Monza. A bespoke design was quick on occasion in 1968 but was hampered by "stupid little things" — and this time the team walked away. Surtees had been unable to dissuade it from

LAT IMAGES



Mike Hailwood was quick in the F2 TS10



running its air/oil-cooled V8 at the French GP, and Jo Schlesser's death in this car was a trigger for withdrawal.

In the lurch once more, and with neither BRM nor Chaparral proving the ticket in 1969, Surtees faced a dilemma: "I thought, 'No, this is not the way it has to be'. If I'd been thinking clearer I could have sorted the problem purely as a driver with another team. But I decided to go the route of my own team — you could do that in those Hewland/Cosworth days — and the idea soon gathered momentum, albeit I was spending more or less my own money."

Surtees gave the TS7 its grand prix debut at Brands Hatch in 1970 (above left); after rediscovering his love of motor racing he was a regular at Goodwood (above right)

Team Surtees had been founded, with Enzo's consent, in 1965. Relocating from Slough to Edenbridge, Kent, its becoming a constructor was convoluted and involved a Formula A/5000 design by Terry intended for another but redirected to American actor James Garner's proposed team, a deal Surtees was steering.

Unhappy with its progress, however, he stepped in. TS5 was fast in the hands of David Hobbs (America) and Trevor Taylor (Europe), both finishing runner-up in their series, and F1 seemed a natural progression. Its shape dictated by budget and facilities, TS7 was third with three laps to go at Hockenheim — its second race in 1970 — when the engine let go. Its first world championship points were accrued when Surtees finished fifth in the Canadian GP.

The arrival of fellow biking great Hailwood gave the team impetus. Though he and Surtees were chalk and cheese, they understood and complemented each other: Mike was happy for John to do the testing and set-up and proffer advice on how best to make the transition. Having finished

HAWKINS



Annual Henry Surtees Foundation kart race is always a big hit





HAWKINS

runner-up in the 1971 Rothmans F5000 series and the 1972 Tasman Series (for F5000s), Hailwood scored 13 points in F1 in 1972. Team-mates Andrea de Adamich and Tim Schenken added a further five during the team's most fecund season.

When Carlos Pace joined for 1973, it had two genuine contenders for GP victories, both he and Hailwood having won for it during the South American winter F2 Torneo at Interlagos. But, mucked around by Firestone, which withdrew, rejoined and brought tyres better suited to Lotus even though it had switched to Goodyear, the season was a bust: Hailwood failed to score and Pace, who set back-to-back fastest laps while finishing fourth in Germany and third in Austria, netted seven points. Reliability does not come cheaply, and when McLaren hotshoe Jody Scheckter's impetuosity resulted in three badly damaged TS14As at Silverstone, Surtees's furious response was that of a man on the edge. Perhaps he sensed already that it was slipping away.

Despite a proposed budget of £110,000 – for F1 and F2 – from

Surtees relished meeting fellow mega-talent Valentino Rossi (above), and he supported grassroots racing after the tragic death of son Henry (top right)



fair-weather sponsor Bang & Olufsen, Hailwood preferred a third McLaren in his search for better reliability for 1974; and Pace, after a strong start – fourth in Brazil, he qualified second in South Africa – was wooed away mid-season by Brabham. The grisly death of inexperienced Austrian newcomer Helmuth Koinigg at Watkins Glen was doubly cruel.

Alan Jones and Durex sponsorship revived hope in 1976 with a fighting second place to McLaren's James Hunt at the Race of Champions and two fifth places and a fourth during the world championship proper, but it faded despite Vittorio Brambilla's best but increasingly ragged efforts from 1977–78, and Surtees sold his FOCA entry to Frank Williams. Gordon Smiley's victory in a TS20 fitted with TS21 sidepods at Silverstone's final round of the 1979 national AFX Aurora F1 series was the final appearance for the Surtees Racing Organisation. Its final creditor was paid in 1984.

Surtees the man wanted nothing more to do with cars, preferring to restore historic racing bikes and demonstrate them with verve. He had met his second wife Jane, a nurse at St Thomas', started a family – Edwina, Leonora and Henry – and was immersed in the restoration of a magnificent manor house, part of a burgeoning property portfolio.

But his son's ambitions rekindled that racing enthusiasm: "I could have done much better for John Surtees, racing driver, but I don't suppose I would have changed any of it. As with all these things, even those that went wrong, there are relationships and memories you wouldn't have wanted to miss."

The death of Henry, 18, in a freak accident during an F2 race at Brands Hatch in July 2009, sorely tested this. John, a strongman survivor of its most gladiatorial age, again turned his back on a sport that he loved and had graced – but soon realised that "Henry wouldn't have wanted me to stop". He returned to help youngsters gain a foothold and progress via the Let's Go Karting campaign, an ambassadorial role with the Racing Steps Foundation, and as landlord and later sole owner of the Buckmore Park Karting Circuit. He also created the multi-faceted Henry Surtees Foundation charity and worked tirelessly for it.

He was created an MBE in 1961, an OBE in 2008 and a CBE in 2015. Why the only man to win world titles on bikes and in cars was not knighted was a source of bewilderment among the motorsport fraternity, although Surtees himself consistently played down the possibility and any furore.

Wholehearted and big-hearted, naive on occasion, he spoke always as he saw it and remained true to himself throughout. He was convinced, as all successful sportsmen should be, that he could beat allcomers given equal equipment, and would point out firmly but fairly that: "My whole career was a matter of getting enthusiastic about making this or that work rather than getting myself the best machinery available." He cannot shirk the blame for that – his puritanical streak was not to everyone's taste – but very few could match him in terms of talent.

If, as is usually reckoned to be the case, Hailwood and Clark were better than John Surtees, this serves to prove that theirs truly was a golden age – on two and four wheels. 🍀

# John Surtees

## Tributes

### Ferrari

Aside from his outstanding Formula 1 performance, Surtees contributed several victories to Ferrari's success in the 1963 and '65 World Sportscar Championships. All at Ferrari send their heartfelt condolences to his family at this sad time.

### Damon Hill

*In The Telegraph*

John was certainly his own man; a committed member of the British Racing Drivers' Club and an independent one. He would speak his mind even if it was not a fashionable view. I think he was wary of group-thinking. That independence of thought earned him the respect of everyone he met, though, from Enzo Ferrari to Bernie Ecclestone.

His death has come as a real shock. Another bridge to those halcyon days gone. Although he was 83, I thought he would go on forever. He looked so well when I last saw him. I will miss that grin.

### Takahiro Hachigo

*President, CEO and representative director,  
Honda Motor Co Ltd*

All at Honda would like to offer their deepest condolences to the family and friends of John Surtees.

John was a person who helped to lay the foundations of Honda's Formula 1 journey.

He also contributed greatly to other Honda motorsport activities, driving in events such as 50 years of Honda and the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

He had a long and illustrious career in the world of motorsport and will be greatly missed.

### Dan Gurney

Right after I got the sad and unexpected news of John's death, a friend wrote an email saying: 'John has taken flight.' And I wrote back: 'Yes, and in all likelihood he flew faster than anybody else.'

John and I became friends very early on due to our mutual passion for motorcycle racing. John was happy to find somebody in Formula 1 with whom he could discuss his two-wheel career and who understood and openly admired the talent and sheer guts it took to reach the pinnacle of that sport in that era.

He was a fierce competitor of mine in F1 and we had some memorable battles in the 1960s, especially in the 1964 season, which ended with him winning the F1 World Championship with Ferrari and me winning the Mexican Grand Prix. Both of us also raced on the sportscar and Can-Am circuit in the United States.

Like me, he enjoyed the engineering part of our business and it was not surprising that he too built his own car carrying his name.

John was never afraid to speak his mind and publicly voice his frustrations, which sometimes got him into hot water. I rather enjoyed his frankness.

After we both retired we stayed in contact

over the years, and it was a joy to reconnect with him and Jane at Goodwood during the last decades. The loss of his son Henry was tragic, yet he and his family bravely soldiered on.

I will miss John as a friend and will remember him forever as a unique man who reached the pinnacle of motor racing on two wheels and four.

God's speed, John!

### Murray Walker

*On BBC Radio 5 Live*

It's a hammerblow for me and for British motorsport in general. I used to race with John Surtees at Brands Hatch in the grass-track days in the 1940s, and I've been privileged to commentate on him, and to know him as a friend ever since then, and he is undoubtedly one of the greatest people who has ever lived in the history of motorsport.

And he was a lovely man, he was very much his own man – John knew what he wanted and intended to get it, and he did – but he's a terrible loss and I'm very, very sad about it.

It is to me a shocking indictment of our honours system that John hasn't been given a knighthood, because when you think of the things that he's done, not just in terms of his achievements in motorsport, but he did an enormous amount for charity.

Sadly and tragically his son Henry – who was a very promising car driver – was killed, and John started the Henry Surtees Foundation, and I hope people will subscribe to that in honour of John now.





## Lewis Hamilton

He was a legend of the sport, a lovely guy who did so much. It's a shock to everyone.

## Jenson Button

Today we lost one of the all-time greats on two and four wheels. We will miss you John... #ripjohnsurtees

## Martin Brundle

Rest in peace John Surtees, a great champion in every respect. Sadly he'll never get the knighthood he deserved. Condolences to the family.

## Jonathan Palmer

John's energy was always amazing, particularly for a man of his age. Following Henry's death others might have turned their back on motor racing, but not John. It was understandable that John would immerse himself in developing the Henry Surtees Foundation, a very successful charity to mainly help head-injury victims that will undoubtedly continue to flourish in memory of

Henry. What is perhaps more remarkable is John's continued interest in young-driver series, racing cars and the career path for young drivers. He would often call me to either let me know his views – or ask for mine – on such matters.

Karting was always a sport dear to John's heart, and his purchase two years ago of Buckmore Park circuit was great news that has resulted in a major upgrade of the popular local kart track and an exciting future for it with major involvement from Leonora Surtees.

## Emerson Fittipaldi

A friend and a true gentleman. We will miss him. God bless you, my friend.

## Valtteri Bottas

Sad news today. It was great to meet you. RIP John Surtees.

## Nico Rosberg

Very sad, can't believe it John. You had been so supportive of me all along! My thoughts are with your family.

## SURTEES: HELPING THE YOUNGSTERS

### Graham Sharp

Racing Steps Foundation founder

I think it's fair to say few, if any, matched the passion and energy he displayed in encouraging young people to take part, be it at their local karting circuit, in junior formula single-seater racing or on bikes in the UK and abroad.

His wisdom and experience were invaluable in helping us to set up the foundation and for that we will always be truly grateful. He was a man with enormous and unmatched talent, which was complemented by a seemingly inexhaustible and rare generosity of spirit when it came to sharing his time and knowledge with the stars of tomorrow or the many charities he supported over the years.

He will be sorely missed in so many quarters.

### Jake Dennis

Absolutely shocked to hear John Surtees has passed away. True legend in the sport and has been a great ambassador for the RSF for many years!

### Ben Barnicoat

Devastated to hear about the passing of John Surtees today... a true inspiration and influential person to my career. Rest in peace John.

### Jack Harvey

John Surtees. Genuine legend whose achievement will never be surpassed. Truly great ambassador to our sport. RIP John.

### Carlin

Rest in peace John. We were proud to have known you and called you a friend. A true legend. Our thoughts go out to the Surtees family.





FIA FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP

## Top team hails rename

SINGLE-SEATER POWERHOUSE DAMS HAS hailed the rebranding of the GP2 Series as the FIA Formula 2 Championship as a major step forward for motorsport.

Autosport predicted early in February that the impasse between the GP2 organisation and motorsport's governing body had eased since the acquisition of Formula 1's commercial rights — of which the GP2 and GP3 series were part of the package — by Liberty Media, and that a renaming in time for the 2017 season could be imminent.

This was finally signed off by the FIA's World Motor Sport Council last Thursday.

DAMS team principal Francois Sicard, whose squad won the GP2 title in 2011 (with Romain Grosjean), '12 (Davide Valsecchi) and '14 (Jolyon Palmer), told Autosport: "I think it's going to help everyone make the link to F1. GP2 was well known to people in motorsport, but not to people outside. This will make things easier with the media, and that will make it easier to attract sponsors because they will see a link between F1 and F2."

"This will help make the series stronger — F2 is a famous name and many famous drivers won the championship. But when you spoke about

GP2 and before that Formula 3000, it was hard to explain to people what it means.

"What is important is that Liberty want to promote F2 with the FIA and keep an eye on the new talent. It is very important to us that they take care of the feeder categories."

The move means that FIA president Jean Todt has finally completed the last piece on the jigsaw on the proposed ladder to F1 he outlined before his election for a second term. Under Gerhard Berger's presidency, the FIA Single Seater Commission had already completed a rebranding of the old Formula 3 Euro Series as the FIA F3 European Championship in 2013, and introduced its entry-level Formula 4 category in '14 — initially in Italy, but now with 12 different championships around the world.

Todt charged Berger's successor Stefano Domenicali with establishing an FIA F2 Championship, and it quickly became clear that the current economic climate would not sustain a start-up series in competition with the existing GP2 and Formula Renault 3.5 (now Formula V8 3.5), so negotiations with GP2 began.

But F1 commercial impresario Bernie Ecclestone — whose trusted lieutenant Bruno





# of GP2 as Formula 2

Michel had run GP2 since its inception in 2005, was reluctant for the series to lose its independence. Frenchman Michel has been retained as CEO of the new F2 championship.

“Bruno has been very successful,” said Sicard. “It has been 12 successful seasons and we are now in difficult times with the economy, but he has shown he was able to manage and properly promote the series. He has been key to its success. We now have to build on this, and for sure we still need to find a way to reduce the costs.”

This could come through the introduction of the new F2 car, currently slated for 2018. Michel revealed to Autosport last July that the existing Dallara chassis – introduced in ’11 – would race on for one more year in ’17, giving teams breathing space on costs as well as allowing more time to decide on the new engine specification and work on development.

The rebranding comes with just over one month before the opening round of the F2 Championship, in Bahrain on April 15/16.

**“We have to build on this and find a way to reduce costs”**

## De Vries joins field; Merhi could too

Almost as if it were orchestrated to follow the announcement of the series’ name change, a clutch of driver signings was announced for F2, almost completing the grid for 2017.

McLaren junior Nyck de Vries, a race winner in the GP3 Series last season, has concluded a deal with Italian team Rapax, which will also field Johnny Cecotto Jr, who made a successful return to GP2 with the squad at the end of 2016 and finished on the podium in Abu Dhabi.

Another GP3 race winner, Swiss Ralph Boschung, joins Campos Racing, which intriguingly fielded ex-F1, FR3.5, DTM and World Endurance racer Roberto

Merhi in this week’s Barcelona test, and said that it is working on a race deal with the Spaniard to “relaunch his career”. Before the F2 name change, Trident had confirmed Nabil Jeffri and also ran veteran GP2 trouble magnet Sergio Canamasas in the Barcelona test. The test was topped by ART’s Nobuharu Matsushita on day one.

MARCUS SIMMONS



MCKLEIN/DE

## OBITUARY

# Patrick Neve 1949-2017

PATRICK NEVE, WHO DIED ON Monday aged 67, will be forever remembered as the driver who represented Williams Grand Prix Engineering on its 1977 race debut.

Born in the Belgian city of Liege, Neve moved to England to work at the Jim Russell Racing Drivers’ School, and after occasional Formula Ford races from 1970-73 he steered a works Lola to the STP title in ’74, defeating Geoff Lees.

Neve graduated to the British BP Formula 3 Championship in 1975, taking an impressive fourth in the points in the solo Safir, powered by the elderly Ford twin-cam engine against the Toyota hordes, as well as second place in the prestigious Monaco GP support race.

He made his Formula 1 debut in the 1976 Race of Champions at Brands Hatch in a RAM Brabham, had a one-off outing for Ensign in the French GP, and then joined Williams to drive the team’s March in ’77 (below). His best result was seventh at Monza.

An attempt to resuscitate the F1 dream in 1979 fell flat when he declared the disastrous Kauhsen undriveable after an early test.

Neve, already a regular in the Spa 24 Hours, went on to twice race at Le Mans and also contested some European Touring Car rounds in 1984 in a Volvo, before concentrating on his racing team and sports-marketing company.

MARCUS SIMMONS



LAT IMAGES



WRC

## MEEKE DEFEATS DONALD TRUMP

DONALD TRUMP'S US presidential election victory came close to costing Mexico its round of the World Rally Championship, won dramatically last weekend by Citroen's Kris Meeke.

Trump's policy to impose tighter controls on movement between the United States and Mexico had an immediate impact on the value of the Mexican peso. The combination of that hike in costs allied to the loss of Volkswagen as the event's principal sponsor is understood to have taken the Leon-based rally to the financial brink.

Rally director Patrick Suberville denied the third round of the series was ever in doubt, but he admitted that Trump's arrival in the White House didn't help.

"The whole Trump story caused the currency to devalue by 40% in one week," said Suberville. "Most of the things we use [in the rally], let's be honest, they come from the US and they suddenly became a lot more expensive. The event was in trouble this year because we lost our main sponsor three months prior to the start; we learned that Volkswagen pulled out when we were on our way to sign the contract with them. The government helped us out, they saw we were in trouble and they helped us do this."

The government funded the event's Mexico City stage, underlining the importance of Thursday night's Zocalo square test.

DAVID EVANS



IMSA SPORTSCAR

# D-Day looms for Penske's decision on sportscar entry

AMERICAN RACING GRANDEE ROGER PENSKE SAYS his team is approaching D-Day over its anticipated return to the sportscar racing arena in 2018.

The Penske team — which has a glittering past in US sportscars, including multiple American Le Mans Series LMP2 titles with Porsche — is seeking a manufacturer-backed deal to run Daytona Prototype international machinery in the US IMSA SportsCar Series, with star drivers Juan Pablo Montoya and Helio Castroneves likely choices to spearhead its driving strength. It has been linked with potential Honda and Alfa Romeo programmes for next season.

"We're trying to put all the pieces together now," said Penske of his sportscar plan. "Hopefully we'll have something [decided] mid-summer if we're going to go.

"If we do it, we've got to be ready to go for it next year. I don't want to wait another year. We've waited a year now, and we have a couple of options — and each one of them are good ones — but we just have to see which one is going to be the best. If we did a sportscar programme, Montoya would be top of the list to drive for us, and I've told him that."

Penske also revealed that an enquiry was made about running Audi LMP1 cars once it was clear that the factory squad was withdrawing from the World Endurance Championship. "I talked about if we could get a privateer [effort] with some of those cars," said Penske.

Audi quickly ruled out any kind of privateer WEC team before the end of last season.

CHARLES BRADLEY



WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

# AMR gets factory funding

ASTON MARTIN IS STEPPING UP its World Endurance Championship assault with full manufacturer funding of its Prodrive-run squad and a new five-year commitment to the series.

The British sportscar maker has taken over complete funding of Aston Martin Racing's pair of GTE Pro-class Vantages as part of a wider deal that includes turning AMR into a brand. Two AMR versions of Aston road cars were launched at the Geneva

Motor Show last week.

"We now fully support the two Pro cars in the WEC — they are full Aston Martin cars," explained a spokesman for the manufacturer.

AMR team principal John Gaw said: "We are delighted to be chosen to continue with Aston Martin as their motorsport partner. And we're looking forward to competing against the best in the WEC with increased resources."

AMR, winner's of last year's WEC

GT drivers' title, had previously funded its racing programmes with backing from commercial partners and sponsors, as well as from Aston Martin.

The five-year deal also encompasses AMR's GT3 and GT4 programmes. Aston is set to switch to a new model, which is likely to retain the Vantage name, in GTE next year and then the lower categories in 2019.

GARY WATKINS





#### BLANCPAIN GT SERIES

## DTM star Green for GT

AUDI DTM STAR JAMIE GREEN WILL make his sportscar racing debut in the Blancpain GT Series next month at the start of a short programme of events he is calling "a perfect introduction" to the discipline.

The 34-year-old, who has finished in the top three of the DTM for the past two seasons, will contest three BGTS rounds with the WRT Audi squad. They will be his first race appearances in anything other than a DTM car since 2005.

"I've always been focused on the DTM: I've had 12 seasons without racing in any other category," said Green. "One of the attractions of going to Audi four years ago was that they are always happy to let their DTM drivers do other things, so something like this was always in the back of my mind."

Green explained to Audi over the winter that he was interested in racing a GT3 car and subsequently received a call from WRT boss Vincent Vosse. He was looking for someone to replace Audi factory GT driver Robin Frijns when he is on Formula E duty with the Andretti squad.

"Vincent explained that there was an opportunity to do a few races and some tests," said Green, whose programme includes the blue-riband Spa 24 Hours BGTS round. "This feels right because I can add stuff to my season without having a negative effect on my DTM programme."

"It also works quite nicely, because the third of the three outings is the 24-hour race, which

is something I've never done before. Hopefully I'll be acclimatised to the car by then."

Green stressed that the DTM would remain his "bread and butter".

"I'm doing this as a taster and will then have to see how I feel about it afterwards," he said.

Green will contest the BGTS Sprint Cup opener at Misano next month in the #17 WRT Audi R8 LMS GT3 and then Endurance Cup rounds at Silverstone in May and Spa in July. He will share with Stuart Leonard in his sprint outing, and then Leonard and fellow GT newcomer Jake Dennis in the enduros.

Racing Steps Foundation driver Dennis, who raced at last year's Le Mans 24 Hours with the Jota LMP2 team, is moving full-time into the GT ranks. He will also contest the five Sprint Cup races with Pieter Schothorst, winner of last year's Renault Sport Trophy for the RSo1 one-make racer.

Another British tin-top star, Sam Tordoff, is making a full-time move to the GT ranks. Last season's British Touring Car Championship runner-up will race a Strakka McLaren 650S GT3 in the the BGTS enduros this season alongside Jonny Kane and Italian David Fumanelli, a champion in the Renault Sport Trophy in 2015.

Briton Dean Stoneman, a race winner in Indy Lights last year, is also making the switch from single-seaters with Strakka. The 26-year-old will contest the enduros with Jazeman Jaafar and Andrew Watson.

GARY WATKINS

## IN THE HEADLINES

### LECLERC HAS SAUBER RESERVE CHANCE

Reigning GP3 Series champion Charles Leclerc is in strong contention for a role as Sauber Formula 1 reserve this season. The Monegasque Ferrari protege, who graduates to Formula 2 this season, took part in four Friday free practice sessions with Haas last year. Antonio Giovinazzi subbed for the injured Pascal Wehrlein in the first Barcelona test, but he is already named as Ferrari reserve.

### MARSHALL JOINS WRC ACE PADDON

Briton Sebastian Marshall will co-drive for Hyundai ace Hayden Paddon from August's Rally Germany onwards. Kiwi Paddon and current co-driver John Kennard took what they admitted was one of their hardest decisions ever to end a 12-year relationship. "This decision had to come at some point," said 58-year-old Kennard. "As you get older, you work harder at everything, but you do get fractionally slower and what I don't want is to stop after a mistake."

### OGIER GEARBOX QUESTIONED BY FIA

World Rally Championship leader Sebastien Ogier could lose his second place from last weekend's Rally Mexico. Official results said that further checks will be carried out on the gearbox of Ogier's M-Sport Ford Fiesta WRC. The gearbox will be sealed and taken to Geneva for FIA checks.

### ESTRE TAKES 'BRUNI' PORSCHE SEAT

Porsche factory driver Kevin Estre has been named as the final member of the manufacturer's GTE Pro assault in this year's World Endurance Championship. The seat had been earmarked for Porsche's Ferrari capture Gianmaria Bruni, but the Italian is on gardening leave. Estre will join Michael Christensen in the #92 911 RSR, with Richard Lietz partnering Frederic Makowiecki in the #91.

### LYNN IN FRAME FOR G-DRIVE ORECA

Single-seater convert Alex Lynn is the hot favourite for the TDS Racing-run G-Drive ORECA seat in the LMP2 class of the WEC this season. Lynn, who is already juggling three deals this year, tested with prospective co-drivers Roman Rusinov and Pierre Thiriet at Motorland Aragon last week.

### COLLARD TO RACE IN BLANCPAIN BMW

BRDC British Formula 3 runner-up and BMW junior Ricky Collard is to race in the Blancpain Endurance Cup this season. Collard will share a Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW M6 GT3 with reigning Carrera Cup Asia champion Nico Menzel and Christian Krognes.

### FORCE INDIA'S PINK PANTHER

Everyone who likes dull Formula 1 liveries: look away now. Force India unveiled this rather distinctive new look just before Autosport went to press. The paintjob is in deference to new sponsor BWT, a water-technology specialist, whose colours have already been seen in the DTM sported by the Mücke Motorsport Mercedes team.





## MULLER PROVES HE CAN'T STAY AWAY FROM WTCC

FOUR-TIME WORLD Touring Car champion Yvan Muller has joined the Volvo team as its development driver and senior advisor.

Muller called time on his full-time career in the championship at the end of the 2016 season, having claimed the 2008 (with SEAT), '10, '11 and '13 titles (all with Chevrolet).

The Frenchman spent his final three years in the WTCC with the works Citroen team. Although he was largely overshadowed by team-mate Jose Maria Lopez – who claimed all three drivers' titles between 2014 and '16 – during that spell Muller is acclaimed for his role in developing Citroen's C-Elysee before its debut.

Muller has been working with the Volvo team – run through the Swedish manufacturer's performance arm Polestar – over the winter, and has carried out testing and development work on its S60 Polestar. He joined in an official capacity on January 1, and is part of its driver line-up in this week's pre-season Monza test.

While there are hints that Muller could make the occasional race appearance, his #68 will be sported on a full-time basis in 2017, with nephew Yann Ehrlacher set to race an ex-factory Lada Vesta with French

team RC Motorsport.

Ehrlacher is the son of Muller's sister Cathy – a former racer of note – and drove for Muller's YMR squad in the LMP3 class of the European Le Mans Series last year. The 20-year-old has tested with RC, which has registered two Vestas for the 2017 season in the wake of Lada's exit as a manufacturer. It is yet to announce its second driver.

Meanwhile, ex-Formula 3, Formula Renault 3.5 and Indy Lights ace Esteban Guerrieri has confirmed a minimum five-race programme in the series with Campos Racing. The Argentinian – a leading runner in his domestic Super TC2000 tin-top series – scored a sixth place on a one-off appearance in his home round in Argentina with Campos last year. Beyond his initial deal, the 32-year-old is working towards a full-season entry with the Campos squad's Chevrolet Cruze.

Also in a Cruze, veteran Tom Coronel has been confirmed during the past few days for a further season with ROAL Motorsport.

To complete the recent raft of signings, Hungarian squad Zengo Motorsport has chosen Daniel Nagy to race its second Honda Civic – Nagy will join Formula V8 3.5 ace Aurelien Panis.

**JACK COZENS**

# Vinales tops last Qatar test

Newly ensconced at Yamaha, the Spaniard is looking good to take the fight to Marquez and co

**J**udging by winter testing, the favourite for this year's MotoGP world title has to be Maverick Vinales. The Yamaha newcomer continued his domination of pre-season running by topping the timesheets in Qatar for the third and final test last week (below), before the season opener under the lights of the Losail track next week.

Reigning world champion Marc Marquez, predicted to be Vinales's main rival this season, had a crash-ridden test. The Spaniard was outside the top 10 in the combined

timings after shunting five times over the three days as he attempted to tame his Honda, which arrived in Qatar equipped with new winglet fairings – similar to the design introduced by Suzuki in the preceding test at Phillip Island. "We can't be happy because it wasn't the best test of the pre-season, but I'm not completely unhappy," said Marquez. "Over a single lap you see me 10th, and you think I'm not there, but in terms of race pace we are pretty good." Meanwhile, Dani Pedrosa outperformed his team-mate, slotting in the third best time on his late runs on Sunday.

Valentino Rossi continued his rather mute pre-season testing and struggled to compete with team-mate Vinales, posting a time 0.402 seconds off the pace.

Like Honda, Ducati trialled a new front fairing as part of its aerodynamic compromise in the face of banned winglets for 2017. The GP17 resurfaced with some form in Qatar after a difficult test at Phillip Island for the manufacturer. Andrea Dovizioso topped the timings on day one and was second fastest overall, just 0.071s shy of Vinales's time. Team-mate Jorge Lorenzo remained unconvinced by the Ducati's pace. The Spaniard finished fourth in the timings but has struggled throughout pre-season testing and said: "In terms of race pace we still have a lot of work to do. It's going to be a long process."

Alvaro Bautista continued to shine after recovering from a crash early on the final day to post a time that was only 0.195s off the pace of Lorenzo on his Aspar Ducati GP16. Also on the GP16, Pramac Ducati rider Scott Redding finished seventh.

Rookie Jonas Folger continued to impress, finishing the test in eighth place with Tech3 Yamaha team-mate Johann Zarco not far behind in 10th. Andrea Iannone was the fastest of the two Suzukis in 13th, with rookie team-mate Alex Rins 15th.

Newcomer KTM may have occupied the bottom end of the table, but Bradley Smith improved by 2.4s from the first day to the third.

**FATEMA CHOWDHURY**



MICHELIN





**FITTIPALDI EF7** Double Formula 1 world champion and Indianapolis 500 winner Emerson Fittipaldi revealed his own trackday supercar at the Geneva Motor Show last week. The Fittipaldi EF7 Vision Gran Turismo is styled by Pininfarina and engineered by HWA, the AMG spin-off that builds Mercedes' DTM cars. A 4.8-litre normally aspirated V8 powers the car, which features racing-spec brakes, fully independent suspension and adjustable anti-roll bars. The engine and the six-speed sequential gearbox are stressed chassis members to help achieve a targeted kerb weight of just 1000kg. Only 25 will be built, with Fittipaldi promising personal track tuition to all owners. **Photograph by Motor1**

## FORMULAE

# Gutierrez gets FE deal at Techeetah

## HAAS FORMULA 1 REFUGEE

Esteban Gutierrez is to make his Formula E debut with the Techeetah team.

The Mexican will race in the electric single-seater series for the first time at his home event in Mexico City on April 1, taking Ma Qing Hua's seat for the remainder of the season.

Ma (pictured right) has been stood down by the team after a run of disappointing performances since he made his debut in Paris last season, when the team was still known as Aguri, but stays on as reserve.

Gutierrez will partner Jean-Eric Vergne in the Renault-powered team. He and his management are understood to have settled on Techeetah after other possible opportunities, believed to be with Renault e.dams, Faraday Future Dragon Racing and DS Virgin Racing, were explored.

Faraday Future Dragon Racing initially had the most expansive talks with Gutierrez but a deal, which looked a

formality at one stage, was not finalised.

That team still has to find a replacement for Loic Duval, who is set to miss the Paris race due to a clash with his new Audi DTM role. Duval has been handed a minor reprieve as the Brussels race, which also clashed with a DTM event, has lost its place on the schedule.

Brussels was named on Formula E's 2016-17 calendar for July 1, but doubt arose after the original venue in the Belgian capital had to be scrapped.

The Berlin round will now expand to two days – June 10-11 – at the Tempelhof airfield track, which itself was brought in to replace the downtown circuit near Alexanderplatz. Plans are being discussed for both races at Berlin Tempelhof to be run on a modified circuit from the one used in 2015. One possibility is a route through one of the former airport's terminal buildings.

Its move to a double-header will mean the current season still features 12 races.

**SCOTT MITCHELL**





# Same difference?

GP2's rebranding as Formula 2 is fantastic news for the sport. But is the key to success to allow the series to carry on being run GP2-style?

By Marcus Simmons, Deputy Editor

[@MarcusSimmons54](#)

**GP2 OFFICIALLY BECAME FORMULA 2 LAST THURSDAY** when the move was ratified by the FIA's World Motor Sport Council, bringing to an end a sometimes-painful two years of attempts to put into place what Jean Todt had wanted since his election for a second term as the governing body's president.

On the face of it, this is great news for junior single-seater racing. I'm sure I'm not the only one tired of explaining to non-motorsport friends and family why the intermediate step between Formula 1 and Formula 3 is called GP2, and that there's also GP3 to further muddy the waters. Purely from a branding and common-sense viewpoint – and by implication from the commercial side – F2 will work much better than GP2.

I always thought it daft that the category name was thrown away when a new formula was devised for 1985, initially using the obsolete three-litre Cosworth DFV F1 engines. Those responsible said that 'Formula 2' implied that it was second-class, so presumably their replacement of the name with 'Formula 3000' meant that they'd prefer to be viewed as 3000th-class. F3000 was replaced by GP2 in 2005, a name that at least made more sense than its predecessor. Then, at the behest of then-FIA president Max Mosley, we did have the return of F2 from 2009-12. Series boss Jonathan Palmer did a tremendous job to make it work, but the cars weren't quick enough, the centrally-run low-budget format failed to catch on, and the driver-experience level was closer to F3 – although several have progressed to enjoy extremely good careers.

So, for the first time since 1984, motorsport has a Formula 2 that is the direct feeder to Formula 1, but what next? Crucially, GP2 boss Bruno Michel has been retained to continue running the series as CEO. GP2 was Bernie Ecclestone's baby, and he entrusted its control to Michel right from the start. The Frenchman has very much run GP2 in Bernie's image, as a benevolent dictatorship. Just as in F1, it is known that GP2 teams have been bailed out with loans on the quiet in the past in order to keep grid numbers up.

The FIA, as motorsport's legislative and administrative body, would find it very difficult to do this, because everything has to be seen to be fair and transparent, with every competitor treated equally. These principles are all admirable, but sometimes in sport – indeed in business – there needs to be a bit of mutual back-scratching going on for the benefit of the whole. This is especially relevant today – at the time of the announcement of GP2 becoming F2, just

15 drivers were announced for the 2017 season, this four days before the first pre-season test kicked off at Barcelona...

And this comes amid a backdrop of what it would be no exaggeration to say is a crisis in the world of single-seaters. The global economy, together with the resignation of many drivers that they will never get to F1 and the attraction of manufacturer deals elsewhere, is causing youngsters to jump off the single-seater ladder ever-earlier. GP2's current struggle to fill the grid comes despite its former rival, Formula Renault 3.5, changing tack as Formula V8 3.5. One level down, GP3 and European F3 are both on a quest to at least get to 20 cars. Increasingly, drivers are moving to GTs straight out of FIA Formula 4, and last week this magazine carried news of a driver going to British GT with McLaren direct from karts!

Furthermore, Ecclestone's big problem with FIA involvement was that the series would lose its autonomy and ability to make instant decisions, and instead be under the influence of committees and commissions before ratification by the World Council. The hope from some involved in the new F2 is that

Michel can continue to run it in the same style as GP2.

And what of the GP3/F3 scenario? Surely with the FIA now having its F2 championship, it makes no sense for a 'renegade' GP3 series to be on the same bill as F1 and F2, and competing

directly against the governing body's own F3 European Championship... The word on the street is that, due to GP3's existing contracts being in place for its current cycle, nothing can change until the end of 2018. Then, say the sources, can come what would effectively be a merger between GP3 and F3, under the name of F3, to continue as the third rung on the F1 bill – effectively a mirror image of MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3.

The FIA, of course, is the custodian of F3, so it would make most sense for this to continue under existing F3 rules – which, of course, are also used in Japan. Without that, events such as the Macau Grand Prix could not continue for this level of the sport.

Could an F1-supporting F3 then pave the way for the return of a lower-level FIA-spec F3 series in Europe, perhaps occupying the current DTM-support role, with cheaper and more attainable budgets? There are plenty of teams with unused equipment ready to go...

GP2's renaming as F2 could, therefore, be the start of a new era in single-seater racing. The hope is that the existing parties can continue to work together in order for it to thrive. #

**“This comes amid the backdrop of a crisis in single-seater racing”**



# FEEDBACK

## Formula 1 and the need for (top) speed



I like to think of myself as a traditionalist, I love Mr Roebuck's column and have always thought Gilles Villeneuve was the ultimate racer. When I started watching the sport there were few cars as quick as a grand prix car.

Over the pre-season testing period I have seen many times on social media people asking about the top speed of a Formula 1 car. Maybe potential new fans don't care that a modern car can lap faster because of cornering speed. Maybe the newer fans want top-end speed. How fast can a modern F1 car go?

The modern car is phenomenally safe, so for one race a year, maybe even Ross Brawn's non-championship race, let's take it to a superspeedway. Let's have a race at Daytona or Michigan. Let the people to whom top-end speed matters see how amazing these cars are.

It's a complete break in tradition, but these drivers are supposed to be the best, as are the cars and engines. Actually I think we would all love to see how fast an F1 car can go. Not just around corners, like the FIA seems to think.

**Mark Farrell**  
Byemail

### Crunch time for McLaren

How much longer can McLaren go on being the laughing stock of F1? Eric Boullier is still offering almost word-for-word the same excuses as he did over three years ago.

It's embarrassing to watch. Why don't they just give up, change engine suppliers (and don't tell me that's too difficult) or use 2017 as nothing more than an extended test session and tell everyone they are not competing this year. If none of these options is acceptable, then they need to give Honda a deadline to get it right. They can't go on as they are.

**KI Gaulton**  
Byemail

### Good, but more work needed

So the new Formula 1 cars look miles better — more impressive and with more 'presence'.

The rear end is sexy but the front half still leaves a lot to be desired. The regulations will dictate that all the cars are virtually identical from the cockpit forward with a 'broken-nose' look — just ugly! This also results in emotionally disturbing anhedral 'upside-down' front suspension — and this before one

Superspeedways and F1 don't have the best history, but is the headline-grabbing potential of top speed being neglected?

considers the ludicrous front wings...

Drop the front bulkhead to chassis level and mandate simple front wings and we'll approximate the gorgeous cars from the 1980s and '90s with signature noses. My guess is that it would improve the racing too.

And please someone, anyone, ditch the horrific halo idea!

**Guy Dormehl**  
Garden Route, South Africa

### Top drawer is top-drawer

As a long-time Autosport subscriber, I have to say a huge welcome back to Giorgio Piola and his excellent technical drawings. Having just read the technical focus in the March 9 edition, it really hit home what I, and the countless other Autosport readers, missed when Mr Piola left previously.

Now, once again, we have excellent technical drawings accompanied by excellent analysis and explanation. Giorgio Piola and Gary Anderson — a winning combination. Well done Autosport for reuniting the two and giving anoraks like me the chance to try to understand how a modern F1 car really works!

**Ian Brown**  
Fareham, Hampshire

### No need for live test coverage

In response to Roger Gollicker (March 2) I have just watched a very entertaining paddock walk live on Facebook, and I would definitely say Liberty Media has got this social media thing nailed down. I think live coverage of pre-season testing is too uneventful and unnecessary.

**Joey Padgett**  
Byemail

## HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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# Is the threat to Mercedes real?

Ferrari set the pace during testing and looked good over long runs, raising hopes that Mercedes has a fight on its hands

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)







**M**ercedes looked in almost impenetrable shape after the first week of pre-season testing at Barcelona. The W08 set the pace and logged almost 100 more laps than any other car; star driver Lewis Hamilton called it the most detailed car his Formula 1 team had ever built and said it looked “a thousand times better than everyone else’s” – and that was just in basic specification.

The prospects for Mercedes’ rivals seemed truly frightening. F1’s dominant team was already tweaking some of its new aerodynamic parts, preparing an upgrade package for the engine and chassis between tests, and plotting a new campaign of world domination to begin at the first race in Australia.

Mercedes looked strong straight out of the box, with a suggestion of plenty more to come, perhaps even a 1m18s lap of Barcelona’s Catalunya circuit. That lap time ultimately came – but from Ferrari, not Mercedes.

Ferrari has been much-maligned after a troubled 2016 season, but it looked genuinely good in week one; a silent star – not saying much off the track, but doing some pretty encouraging talking on it.

Sebastian Vettel lapped well within three tenths of Valtteri Bottas, and didn’t use the softest available tyres, his car looking strong, stable, driveable, consistent, and most importantly *fast*.

Ferrari is a renowned testing showboater, so there was

reluctance to get too excited. That’s exactly what company president Sergio Marchionne did in 2016, when the team matched Mercedes in pre-season testing but subsequently failed to win a race, let alone challenge for the world championship. So these positive early signs were viewed with extreme caution.

The second week of pre-season testing is where proper performance work happens. Fine tuning set-ups, unlocking potential, unleashing some of it, starting to build a real picture of where you might stack up against the rest. Surely Mercedes would leave Ferrari trailing once it started to turn up the heat?

Mercedes updated its car and brought its Melbourne-spec engine to Spain, but endured a tricky start to the week, with Hamilton’s first morning compromised by some damage to the floor. By day two it was back on top of the pile, with Bottas lapping in 1m19.310s on the super-soft tyre, but that’s as good as it got, or Mercedes wanted it to get.

For the final two days of this test, Ferrari set a scorching pace. Vettel sandbagged his way to a 1m19.024s best on Thursday, despite deliberately lifting off the throttle coming out of the final corner.

Vettel’s best sector times put him in the 1m18.7s bracket on ultra-soft tyres. The best Hamilton did was a 1m19.352s, slower than Bottas managed on super-softs the day before.


On the final day, Kimi Raikkonen did a 1m18s lap for real during his morning performance run, despite a small lock-up under braking for Turn 5. Raikkonen said at the end of the day that he could have gone even faster than that benchmark. >>

Mercedes set the pace initially, but Ferrari came on strong in week two





#### PURE-PACE RANKING

1	<b>Ferrari</b> Kimi Raikkonen		1m18.634s (super-soft)
2	<b>Mercedes</b> Valtteri Bottas		1m19.310s (super-soft)
3	<b>Williams</b> Felipe Massa		1m19.420s (ultra-soft)
4	<b>Red Bull</b> Max Verstappen		1m19.438s (super-soft)
5	<b>Toro Rosso</b> Carlos Sainz		1m19.837s (ultra-soft)
6	<b>Renault</b> Nico Hulkenberg		1m19.885s (ultra-soft)
7	<b>Force India</b> Sergio Perez		1m20.116s (ultra-soft)
8	<b>Haas</b> Kevin Magnussen		1m20.504s (ultra-soft)
9	<b>McLaren</b> Stoffel Vandoorne		1m21.348s (ultra-soft)
10	<b>Sauber</b> Marcus Ericsson		1m21.670s (super-soft)

● ultra-soft ● super-soft



The best combination of sector times Bottas completed on Thursday, on a mixture of super-soft and soft-tyre outings, lowers his theoretical best lap time to 1m19.040s.

Pirelli estimates the lap time difference between the super-soft and ultra-soft tyres at Barcelona currently to be between 0.3s and 0.5s, which suggests Mercedes was probably at least capable of something between 1m18.8s and 1m19.0s on the ultra-soft. But Raikkonen did his best time on super-softs too, so could potentially have gone at least another three tenths faster than he did.

Along with the usual variables of unknown engine modes and fuel loads, Pirelli also stresses that the two softest compounds are not designed for this circuit. When the cars return for the Spanish Grand Prix in May, the soft compound is the softest tyre they will use.

On this tyre Ferrari set the pace quite comfortably, with Vettel managing a 1m19.341s best on Thursday, and lapping consistently in the low-1m19s. Max Verstappen managed 1m19.852s on the final day; Felipe Massa a 1m19.909s for Williams on Wednesday.

Mercedes was only fourth fastest on this tyre – Hamilton pumping in a 1m19.915s effort at the very end of the final day.

Getting a read on where Mercedes really stands on the most relevant tyre for this track is not easy. In fact, getting a read on Mercedes' true pace in week two at all is near-impossible, as the entire test was affected by inconsistencies in performance created by what Mercedes called a "lack of robustness" in parts of the floor.

That's probably why Hamilton wasn't particularly content with his lot after his final day in the car, saying he had yet to find a set-up he was totally happy with. "I haven't got it into a good window yet," says Hamilton, who earlier in the week called Ferrari the favourite given its strong pace in testing. "We've had up and down days, and there has generally never been a perfect day, but there is a lot of potential in the car."

The best we can do is estimate Mercedes' potential pace on the soft tyre. Bottas lapped in a 1m19.310s best on super-softs in week two, so given Pirelli's estimate of a 0.3-0.5s difference between the soft and super-soft compounds, and the fact that

Bottas didn't put his best sectors together when at his quickest, Mercedes should probably have lapped somewhere between 1m19.3s and 1m19.5s with a perfect run on the softs – similar or slightly slower than Ferrari managed.

Mercedes also didn't complete a representative race run at the second test. Both drivers did some long runs during their final afternoons in the car, but didn't attempt full race simulations in the way Ferrari and Red Bull did. Hamilton said this wasn't necessary for Mercedes, given it completed these simulations at the first test.

Vettel's Thursday afternoon race run was very impressive, his average pace nearly eight tenths of a second per lap up on Verstappen's (before the Renault MGU-K gave out in the Red Bull on Wednesday afternoon), and more than half a second quicker than Daniel Ricciardo managed while running at the same time as Vettel.

The best we have to go on from Mercedes is Hamilton's race

simulation from the first test, where Mercedes was running an older specification of engine, detuned to protect the turbo and compressor.

Hamilton's average pace during this run was just over three tenths of a

second per lap down on Vettel's, which suggests Ferrari has a slight edge in race trim too. But that doesn't account for Mercedes running the updated engine specification at the second test, and potentially running more powerful engine modes as a result.

It's likely Mercedes could gain another two or three tenths on Ferrari, once the engine updates are accounted for, and the fact that it couldn't get the updated chassis into the sweet spot owing to that troublesome floor.

"We have had so many different upgrades and maybe some of them haven't been perfect," says Bottas. "It's been affecting the balance, and once you put new stuff into the car it's not like it's suddenly better."

"There's some things that we definitely need to unlock, it just needs hard work. I'm sure we can get most out of all the stuff we're bringing to the car in Melbourne."

If, as some suspect, Mercedes also ran with more fuel than Ferrari during testing as well, that's likely to mean Mercedes is at least equal to Ferrari, but in reality it probably holds an

Red Bull was behind Williams on pure pace, but a raft of updates should push it forward

## **"It's optimistic to expect Ferrari to be right in the fight with Mercedes"**





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advantage of two or three tenths in reserve.

"I feel pretty happy inside the car, but it's still early days," says Vettel. "It doesn't really matter if you look at one single lap time – you need to look at more than that, and in that regard there's still a lot of work to do.

"We're probably still a little bit behind. If you look at the amount of laps Mercedes has done, if you look historically how slow they were going in the test, how much they were able to ramp it up for the races, I think it's clear that they're very fast if you look at their long-run pace. I think they're the ones to beat."

It probably is optimistic to expect Ferrari to be right in the fight with Mercedes, even if (as some suspect) the Silver Arrows has been forced to alter the suspension under the FIA's new diktat, and is still working out how to get the best from the revised car.

The Wo8 still looks capable regardless, and there is probably plenty more to come from the engine. The updates Mercedes brought to Barcelona solved any potential reliability concerns with the MGU-H, and although customer squads Williams and Force India were using the older specification, some updates allowed them to power up at the second test, where Williams showed a strong turn of pace to lead the midfield pack.

There is great expectation that if Ferrari cannot challenge Mercedes this season, Red Bull can, but at present it's difficult to know where it stands in relation to the other big guns. Red Bull lagged slightly behind Williams on pure pace at the second test, and Ricciardo suggested the team lost its way with the >>

## TOO CLOSE TO CALL IN 'CONFUSING' MIDFIELD PACK

TORO ROSSO DRIVER CARLOS SAINZ JR offered a simple yet erudite analysis of the messy midfield squabble that took shape during pre-season testing.

After identifying Force India, Renault and Williams as his team's closest rivals, he added: "And with Haas, thanks to the jump from the Ferrari engine, it's going to be extremely complicated."

The gaggle of cars that will fight it out behind the big three was headed in testing by Williams. Five teams lapped within a second of each other, with Felipe Massa's 1m19.420s at the head of the queue and new Haas man Kevin Magnussen's 1m20.504s at the rear.

Williams turned around a very difficult first week to top day one of the second test, looked good on different tyre compounds, and racked up serious mileage. As Haas's Gunther Steiner hypothesised: "I think the Williams is a little bit better than the big group."

Haas completed its testing programme with "quite a few issues with the handling of the car" and a water leak that ended its race simulation. But it was far from the only team in the midfield fight to suffer setbacks.

Force India joined its fellow Mercedes customer Williams in logging an impressive lap count at Barcelona, but Sergio Perez said the team discovered "a lot of weaknesses" in its 2017 challenger. The VJM10 looked uncomfortable on the kerbs in the second week of testing, and its lack of compliance could be related to the FIA's clampdown on trick suspension systems that alter a car's aerodynamics at high speed.

One team is known to have had to change its design and, while it has not been confirmed, it's thought Mercedes

has been affected. If this is the case, it would likely have a knock-on effect for Force India, which uses the Mercedes gearbox as part of its supply deal.

If Mercedes has had to make changes to its suspension, it's likely Force India has had to do the same.

Still, at least Force India racked up lots of mileage. Renault and Toro Rosso were hamstrung by a 'magnified' issue in the energy recovery systems of Renault's overhauled engine concept.

After problems during the first week for the French manufacturer and its customer teams Red Bull and Toro Rosso, works Renault driver Jolyon Palmer lost Tuesday morning's running to a precautionary engine swap. Red Bull driver Max Verstappen suffered two MGU-K problems on Wednesday, before Palmer stopped again on Thursday.

Palmer admitted "it's not been as easy as we'd hoped" to manage the problem and gather meaningful data, with the three Renault teams in the bottom four for mileage. Renault itself logged 597 laps across both tests, Toro Rosso 584. That was 200 fewer than the majority of its midfield rivals.

A late stoppage for Sainz on the final day cut short a promising conclusion to a troubled couple of weeks for Toro Rosso, but after showing promising pace in the STR12 on the final day, the Spaniard insisted: "We could enjoy it more. Now we can go to Melbourne with our minds more at ease."

That's less likely for Sauber, which joins McLaren-Honda in being off the back of this group while the Swiss team battles to cure an oversteer problem on its new car, which also carries the disadvantage of being powered by a 2016 Ferrari engine.

**SCOTT MITCHELL**



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set-up for his race simulation on Thursday.

The squad also had to run its Renault engine at reduced power to protect the reliability of the fragile MGU-K in the new energy recovery systems, but it already looks to be the third-fastest team in reality. And there is a feeling Red Bull will find a big chunk of performance when Renault introduces reliability fixes for Melbourne, and the team brings its first raft of updates to what remained a very basic-looking version of the RB13.

“Our true pace is closer but we’re not quite on their level,” says Ricciardo. “We certainly haven’t showed Ferrari’s pace yet, so you would say Ferrari is, at the moment, the closest challenger [to Mercedes]. We can get there, but we’re not there yet.”

Haas team principal Gunther Steiner reckons there is a 1-1.5s gap from the top three teams back to the chasing pack, an impression supported by others in the paddock.

Williams’s strong start to the second test suggests it is currently at the head of that queue. Its headline pace was slightly faster than Red Bull’s, but Massa’s average lap time during his race simulation on day one was more than six tenths of a second per lap down on what the best Red Bull managed.

Unfortunately, that midfield pack will not include McLaren-Honda, which has suffered a complete disaster of a pre-season, struggling throughout both tests with a serious lack of power and woeful reliability from the new Honda engine, which is currently producing less power than the one it developed to the end of last season.

Honda brought its Melbourne-spec engine to Barcelona for the second test, but this unit proved to be even worse than the one it used at the first test. Unstable combustion in the ICE led

## “The midfield pack will not include McLaren-Honda, which suffered a complete disaster”

to several failures throughout the week, as the Japanese manufacturer battled to control excess vibrations – which caused multiple electrical failures on the car – and detonation.

The McLaren-Honda could barely manage 10 laps in a row without breaking down, it was almost three seconds off the pace when it did run, and problems with the engine’s mapping made the car difficult to drive when it wasn’t stuck in the garage.

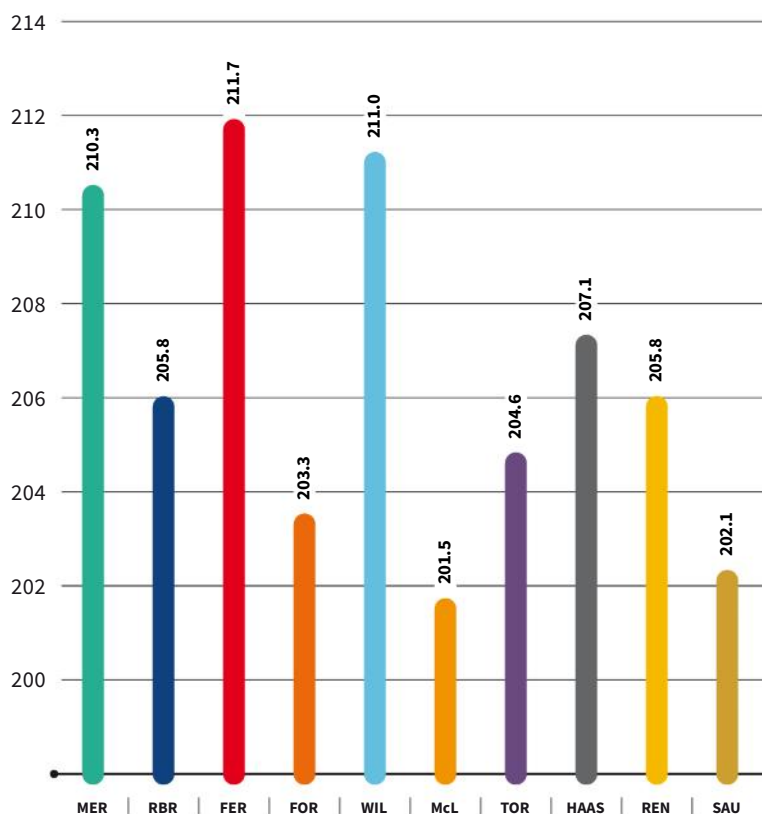
McLaren estimates it has completed only 30% of the work it planned to get through pre-season, and expects to be fighting a losing battle to avoid Fernando Alonso and Stoffel Vandoorne starting from the back row of the grid at the first race.

It appears Honda has over-promised and completely under-delivered with its revised 2017 power unit. Unlike Mercedes, for which it’s likely the inverse is true – regardless of whether Ferrari’s headline-grabbing lap times suggest otherwise. ❗



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**SPEED TRAP MPH (TEST 2)**



**BARCELONA TEST TIMES MARCH 7-10 (TEST 2)**

POS	DRIVER	CAR	MONDAY	TUESDAY
1	<b>Kimi Raikkonen</b>	Ferrari SF70H	-	1m20.406s
2	<b>Sebastian Vettel</b>	Ferrari SF70H	1m19.906s	-
3	<b>Valtteri Bottas</b>	Mercedes F1 W08	1m20.924s	<b>1m19.310s</b>
4	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	Mercedes F1 W08	1m20.456s	1m20.702s
5	<b>Felipe Massa</b>	Williams-Mercedes FW40	1m19.726s	<b>1m19.420s</b>
6	<b>Max Verstappen</b>	Red Bull-Renault RB13	-	1m20.432s
7	<b>Carlos Sainz</b>	Toro Rosso-Renault STR12	-	1m21.872s
8	<b>Nico Hulkenberg</b>	Renault RS17	1m21.589s	1m21.213s
9	<b>Daniel Ricciardo</b>	Red Bull-Renault RB13	<b>1m19.900s</b>	-
10	<b>Sergio Perez</b>	Force India-Mercedes VJM10	-	1m21.297s
11	<b>Esteban Ocon</b>	Force India-Mercedes VJM10	1m21.347s	-
12	<b>Jolyon Palmer</b>	Renault RS17	1m24.790s	1m24.774s
13	<b>Lance Stroll</b>	Williams-Mercedes FW40	-	1m20.579s
14	<b>Daniil Kvyat</b>	Toro Rosso-Renault STR12	1m21.743s	-
15	<b>Kevin Magnussen</b>	Haas-Ferrari VF-17	1m21.676s	-
16	<b>Romain Grosjean</b>	Haas-Ferrari VF-17	-	1m21.887s
17	<b>Stoffel Vandoorne</b>	McLaren-Honda MCL32	1m22.537s	-
18	<b>Fernando Alonso</b>	McLaren-Honda MCL32	-	1m23.041s
19	<b>Marcus Ericsson</b>	Sauber-Ferrari C36	1m23.630s	1m23.384s
20	<b>Pascal Wehrlein</b>	Sauber-Ferrari C36	1m23.336s	1m23.000s

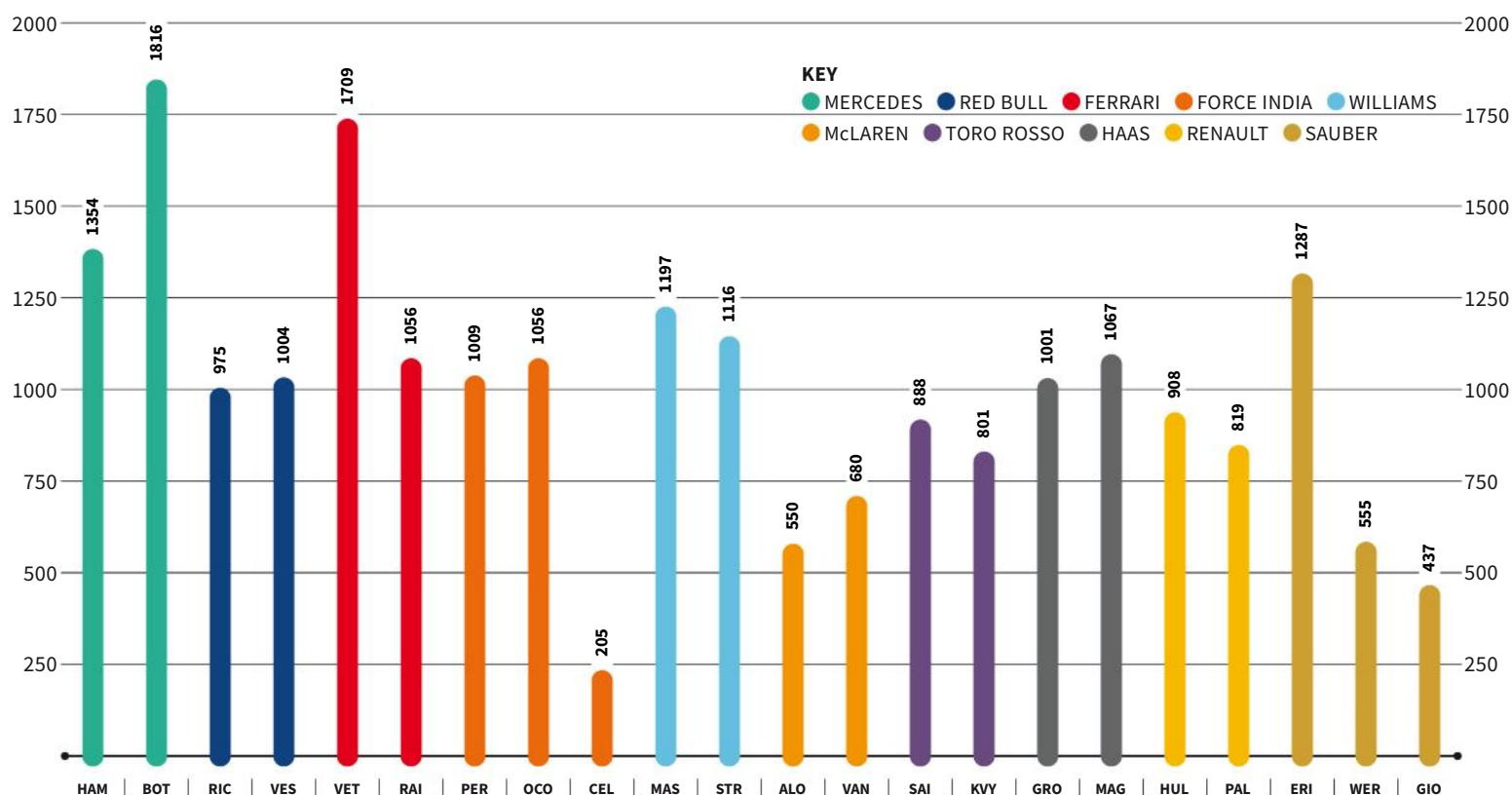
The fastest time for each driver is marked in bold, with fastest time of the day in red.



## TESTING DATA

TOTAL LAPS COMPLETED 7430

### MILES COMPLETED BY DRIVER (TESTS 1 AND 2 COMBINED)



### OVERALL BEST TIMES (TESTS 1 AND 2 COMBINED)

POS	DRIVER	CAR	MONDAY
1	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari SF70H	1m18.634s
2	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari SF70H	1m19.024s
3	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes F1 W08	1m19.310s
4	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes F1 W08	1m19.352s
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8	Nico Hulkenberg	Renault RS17	1m19.885s
9	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull-Renault RB13	1m19.900s
10	Sergio Perez	Force India-Mercedes VJM10	1m20.116s
11	Esteban Ocon	Force India-Mercedes VJM10	1m20.161s
12	Jolyon Palmer	Renault RS17	1m20.205s
13	Lance Stroll	Williams-Mercedes FW40	1m20.335s
14	Daniil Kvyat	Toro Rosso-Renault STR12	1m20.416s
15	Kevin Magnussen	Haas-Ferrari VF-17	1m20.504s
16	Romain Grosjean	Haas-Ferrari VF-17	1m21.110s
17	Stoffel Vandoorne	McLaren-Honda MCL32	1m21.348s
18	Fernando Alonso	McLaren-Honda MCL32	1m21.389s
19	Marcus Ericsson	Sauber-Ferrari C36	1m21.670s
20	Pascal Wehrlein	Sauber-Ferrari C36	1m22.347s
21	Antonio Giovinazzi	Sauber-Ferrari C36	1m22.401s
22	Alfonso Celis	Force India-Mercedes VJM10	1m23.568s

### MILES BY TEAM (TESTS 1 AND 2 COMBINED)

POS	TEAM	MILES
1	Mercedes	3170
2	Ferrari	2765
3	Williams	2314
4	Sauber	2279
5	Force India	2271
6	Haas	2068
7	Red Bull	1978
8	Renault	1727
9	Toro Rosso	1689
10	McLaren	1229

### MILES BY ENGINE (TESTS 1 AND 2 COMBINED)

POS	TEAM	MILES
1	Mercedes	7755
2	Renault	5394
3	Ferrari	4833
4	Ferrari '16	2279
5	Honda	1229



# Mercedes technical focus special

Mercedes endured some minor difficulties during last week's test, but has upped the ante in complex aerodynamic development. So it should be in strong shape once the issues have been ironed out

By Gary Anderson and Giorgio Piola

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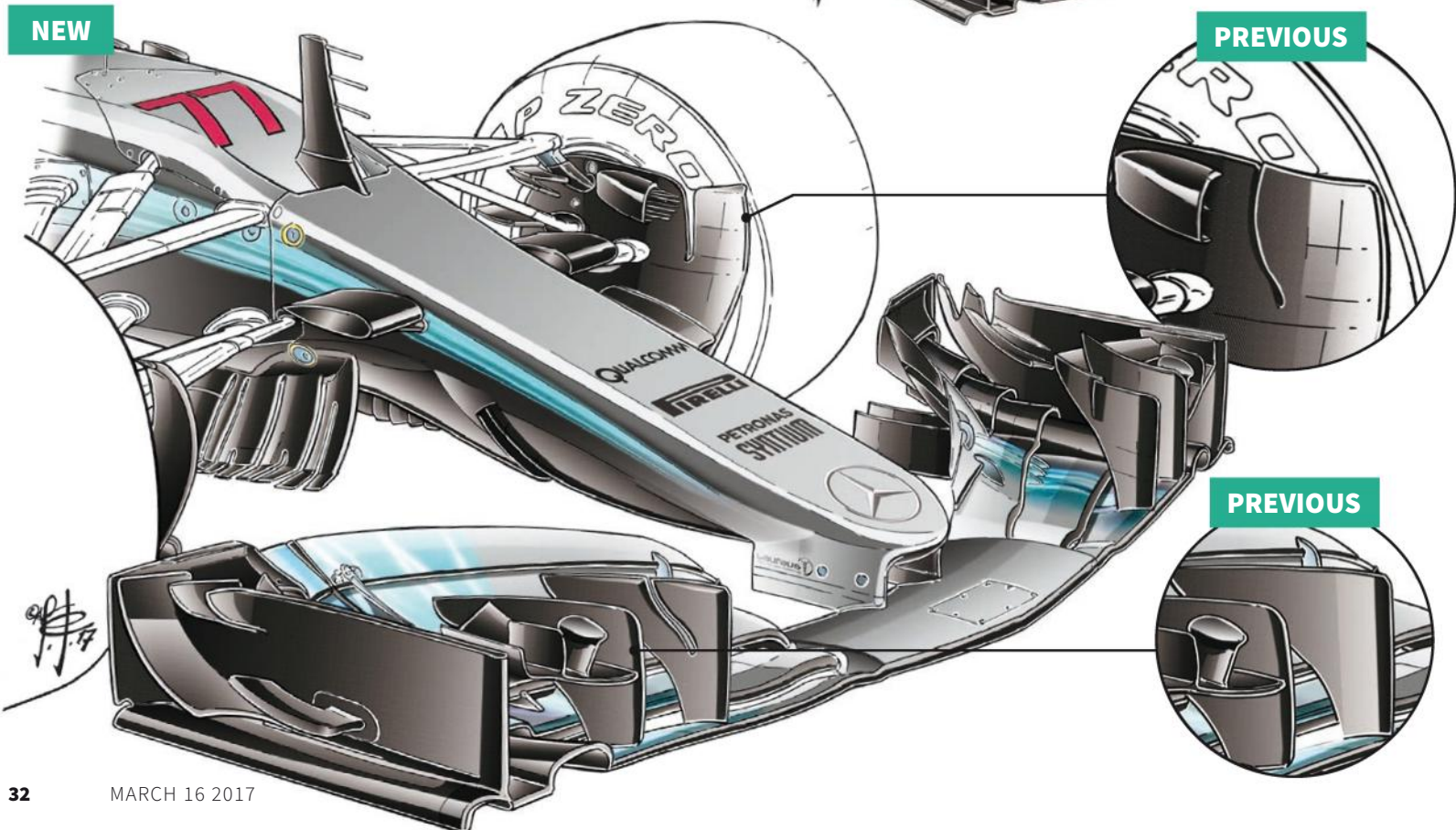
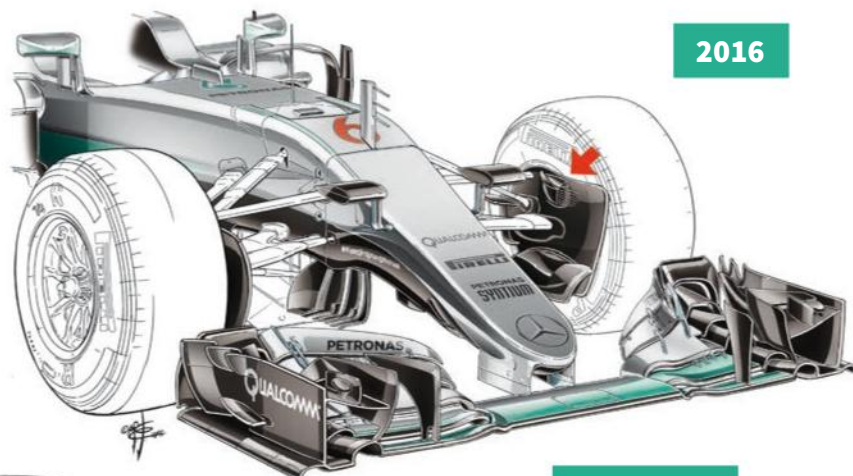
## BESTING RED BULL'S WING AND NOSE DETAIL

Red Bull used to be the standard when it came to slot-gap airflow management. But not only has Mercedes poached the drivers' and constructors' world championships from Red Bull over the past three years, it has also taken the mantle of being the team that has the best understanding of manipulating airflow to the maximum.

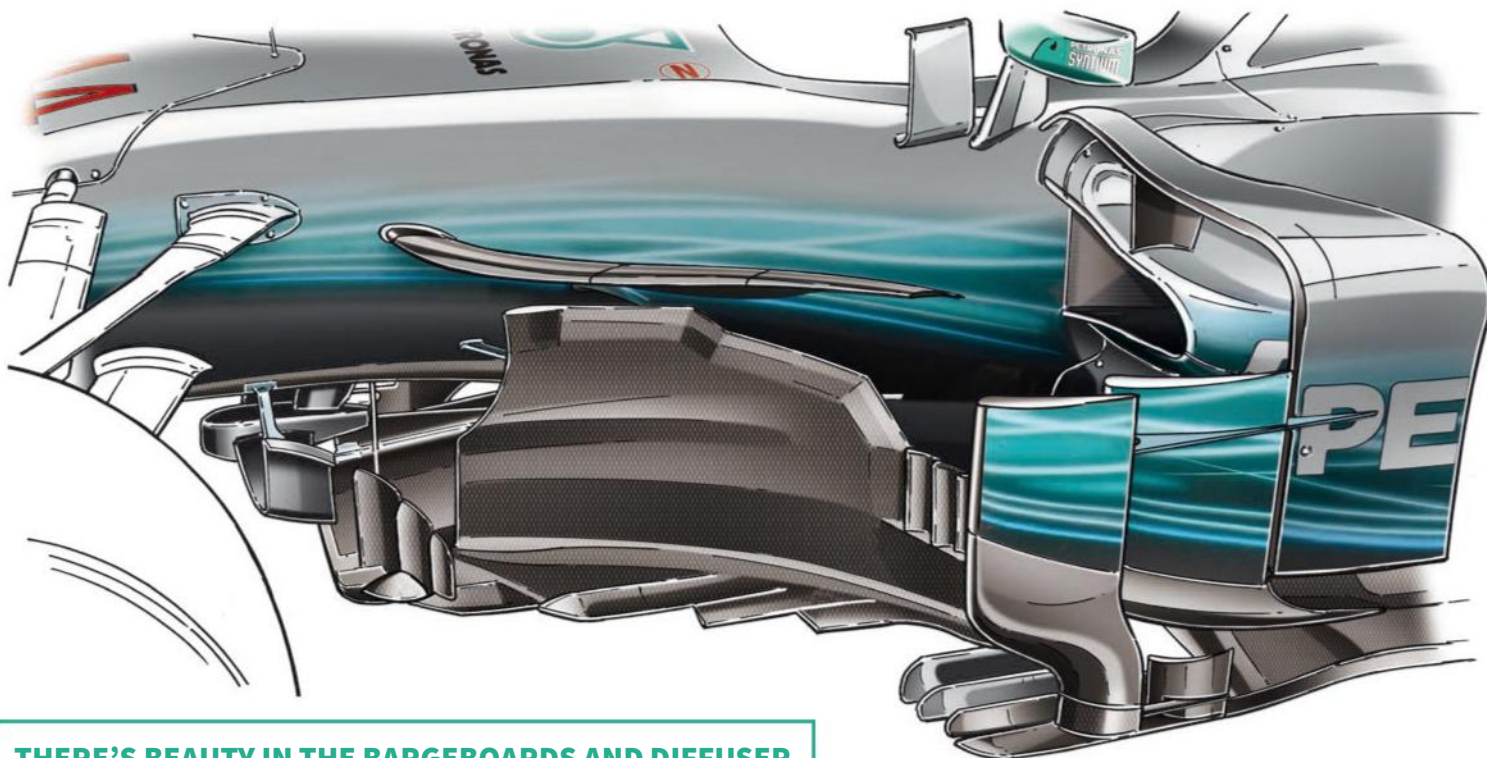
By applying carefully detailed slot gaps in nearly every aerodynamic surface, Mercedes has set new standards in how to maximise airflow while still maintaining consistency.

I've often said a driver can only get confidence if the car's aero platform is consistent. Peaky downforce will at some point just pitch them into the gravel. Once that has happened a few times, and the driver doesn't really know why, then their confidence just drops away.

If you just take a look at the vertical turning vane under the W08 chassis, the lower horizontal section has a series of slot gaps. That section has now been adapted to the many front-wing turning vanes, and even the front brake ducts.







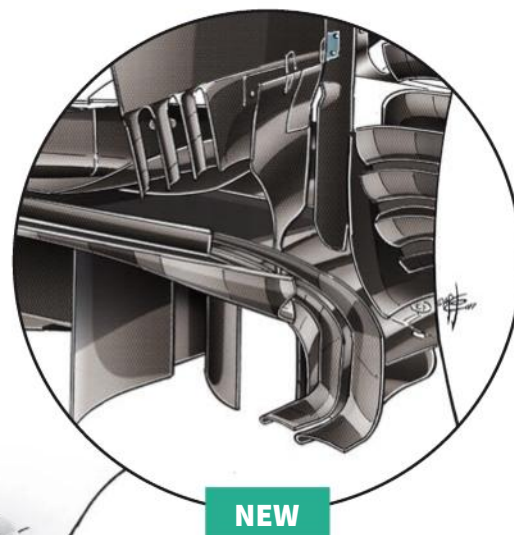
## THERE'S BEAUTY IN THE BARGEBOARDS AND DIFFUSER

The small horizontal wing section on the outer corner of the sidepods has gone from being a single-element component to a three-element component. As well as that, the diffuser outer section – which I thought at the first test was the most impressive in the pitlane – has some even more detailed modifications to the outer section, where it is turning the airflow towards the low-pressure area behind the rear tyre.

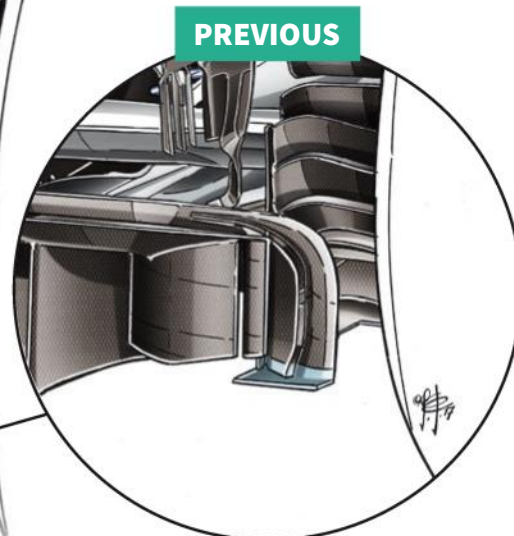
Get these two working as one and the complete rear end of the car is extracting airflow from the underfloor, improving the overall downforce from this very powerful area.

The importance of slot gaps to help keep airflow attached to aggressive aerodynamic surfaces can be easily seen by the cascade of turning vanes that make up the rear brake ducts. This detailed work allows Mercedes to work the surfaces harder, getting higher levels of downforce from every component while still minimising airflow-separation problems.

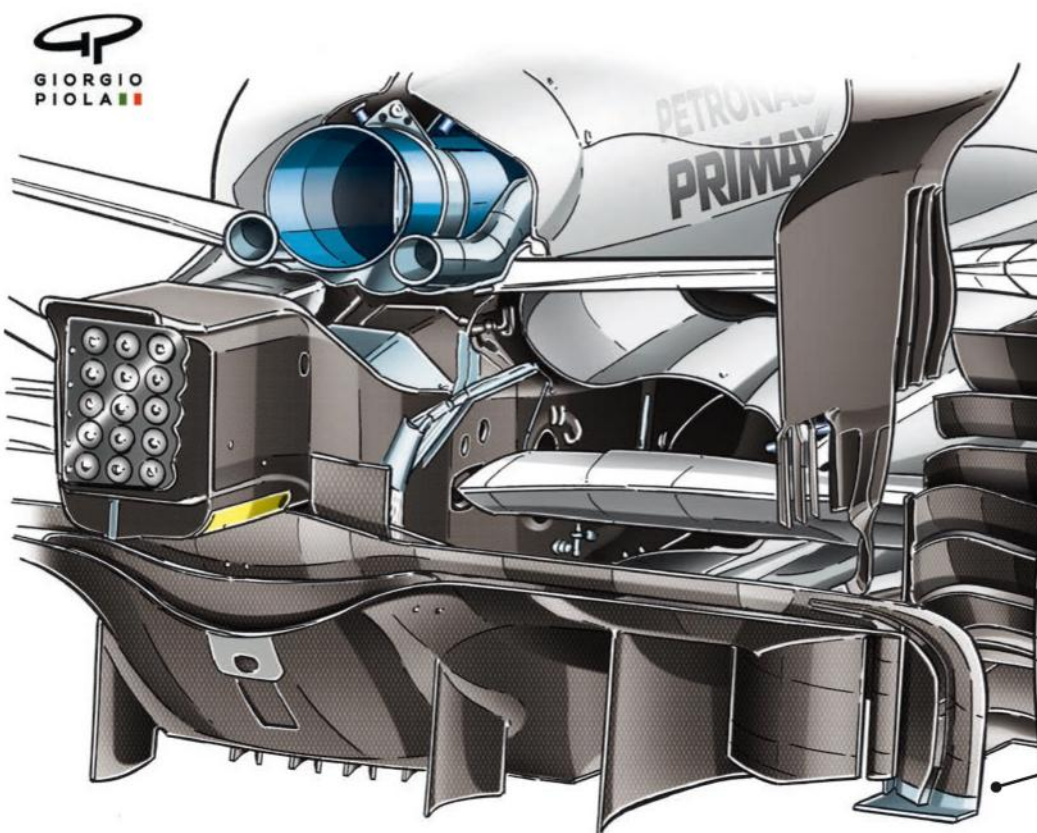
If you get separation on one small component it can very easily spread and affect other ones, and since these cars are growing ever-more-complicated airflow structures around them, small problems can easily lead to large dramas.



NEW



PREVIOUS



GIORGIO  
PIOLA





# Who's hot and who's not in F1 testing?

Autosport spent the Thursday afternoon of the final pre-season test watching trackside; here's the verdict of our ex-F1 driver and Channel 4 analyst on how F1 2017 is shaking out so far

By Karun Chandhok

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





## Too close to call at the front



IT'S REALLY NIP AND TUCK BETWEEN Ferrari and Mercedes. There have been different parts of the track where each has looked good.

What's been encouraging from Ferrari this year is the fact that on every tyre the car has looked competitive. That shows Ferrari has a car in which it can find a set-up window and change the balance across the tyre types, which was a past weakness for the team.

The front of the Mercedes looks quite stiff – the ride quality doesn't look as

good as the Ferrari's. Coming out of Turns 2 and 3, the front of the Merc is hopping around a fair bit. Despite the fact that it's probably got a lot of aero load on it at that stage, it still looks a little bit unsettled.

Similarly, when you look at the kerbs in the final sector, the Ferrari seems more compliant, and just looks like an easier car to drive. It also appears to be incredibly stable at high speed.

Vettel looked much more comfortable than Bottas, who looked like he was

having to work a bit harder.

The Mercedes still has fantastic driveability and traction. There's something the works Mercedes team has – I don't know if it's car design, set-up or electronics – that makes it much better in this area than the other Mercedes-powered cars. That was the case last year too.

Mercedes is also somehow able to run its car with much less rake than any other, yet still generate sufficient downforce at the front.

Mercedes has obviously been the gold standard in the recent past, and must go into the season as favourite – despite what Lewis Hamilton might be saying publicly. The body language from the Mercedes folk isn't one of panic, so I think that they've got more performance up their sleeve as well.

But the Ferrari this year looks like a genuine contender. That's a good thing. We want to have multiple teams arriving at an F1 race on a Friday not knowing who is going to win.

## Red Bull isn't quite in the fight



THE RED BULL LOOKS GOOD AT HIGH speed, as we've come to expect. It looks strong under braking and on turn-in to the slow-speed corners too, and really good on the kerbs.

The Red Bull is able to ride the kerb through the Turn 11 kink much better

than any other car. That allows it to take a much better line through Turn 12, which I know from experience can be a lap-time killer if you can't get it right.

Red Bull has obviously gone for a car that's low in drag. Speaking privately to some people in other teams who have

GPS data, this direction is quite clear, which is maybe influenced by an expected power deficit in the engine.

I'd be very surprised if the Red Bull we've seen in testing is the one we see in qualifying in Melbourne. I think there are more bits to come on the car, and

more room for it to move forward than with the Ferrari or Mercedes – and that's before Renault sorts out its reliability issues and unleashes the higher power modes on the engines.

At present Red Bull is third best, and a clear third best. >>

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## Williams is winning the midfield war



THE TOP THREE teams are clearly ahead, and have moved further away from the chasing pack under these regulations.

Behind there is a really tight pack, but Williams has emerged as fourth best after making a good step forward in the second week.

Since Lance Stroll is a rookie, Williams will have some challenging weekends at circuits he isn't so familiar with, such as Melbourne. But in general the car looks quite driveable – certainly easier to push than the Force India or the Renault, and it's probably got more downforce than the Haas.

And it's got the Mercedes engine...

## It's ultra-close between Williams's rivals

PUSHING WILLIAMS, I THINK FORCE India, Haas, Toro Rosso and Renault are all in the group fighting for fourth best, and it's really close.

The Haas seems to be a driveable car. It looks like it's ahead of the likes of Sauber and McLaren, and genuinely in the fight with Renault, Force India and Toro Rosso. If you consider Haas's inexperience and relative lack of resources, that's a good effort.

The Force India appears to be very edgy. Esteban Ocon was having to work quite hard, and he seemed to be overdriving it a bit. From my perspective the main weakness of the car is its performance over kerbs. And for whatever reason, despite having the same engine package as the Williams and the works Mercedes, traction wasn't good compared with those two.

With the complicated suspension systems the teams have got, it's not like other single-seater cars – you can't just go stiffer or softer. We should keep in mind that Force India uses the Mercedes gearbox, and the FIA suspension clampdown may have affected it as much as the Mercedes works team. But without the resources to get on top of this as quickly, it may take Force India a bit more time.

We didn't see much of the Renault on

track – it had a few reliability issues – but it genuinely looks like a good step forward relative to the opposition. Renault has definitely improved its ride quality, which was a huge weakness last year. I don't think it's brilliant, but it's a great deal better than it was, and that will naturally give the drivers a bit more confidence to lean on it.

Last season Renault was in the Sauber/Manor pack more than in the midfield. This year, depending on how much the engines can be turned up, I

expect Renault will be in that Haas/Toro Rosso/Force India/Williams battle at the start of the season.

Toro Rosso had a really difficult first week, and its share of Renault reliability issues, but it is still right in that battle. I'm a little surprised there isn't more collaboration between Toro Rosso and Red Bull, considering their relationship.

You can see that Haas and Ferrari have had more collaboration than Toro Rosso and Red Bull when you look at the design philosophy. That's a little bit

confusing, especially given the level of regulation change we've had.

Red Bull has clearly gone for a low-drag car, while Toro Rosso has got quite a bit of drag when you look at the GPS data and the speeds down the straight. It's clearly behind Red Bull, with a similar engine.

Again, though, this will be a team that could benefit if Renault allows it to turn the engines up in Melbourne. If drag continues to be a problem it will need all the power it can get. >>



Toro Rosso looks more draggy than Red Bull



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## McLaren-Honda is impossible to read



IT WAS PAINFUL TO SEE MCLAREN HAVE the pre-season it did. McLaren-Honda should be at least the fourth-best team with the resources it has.

I saw the car do four laps. Two were installation laps, and the other two looked OK, but not great. I don't think that's a fair reflection on McLaren; the reality is it hasn't had time to do set-up

work. I don't think it would be right for me to judge a car I saw for four laps. It's just impossible. It really struggled with driveability, and didn't look like a nice, comfortable car to drive.

I'm a bit confused. I think back to the days of McLaren-Honda in the 1980s and '90s, when they permanently had cars running around Suzuka with Allan

McNish or Jonathan Palmer or Emanuele Pirro doing development work over thousands of laps.

Geoff Willis told me that when he worked at the last Honda Formula 1 project, Anthony Davidson would pound around in a test mule just doing the laps, getting the reliability and performance up. Has Honda carried

out that sort of programme in secret? If so, it hasn't worked.

With all the resources Honda has in Japan and half of the grid of Super Formula, surely Honda could have a test hack running at Suzuka every day just making that engine better?

I'm not able to understand why this project is so deep in the mire.

## Sauber is off the back

AESTHETICALLY THE SAUBER IS A nice-looking car, but out on track it lacks the downforce of the midfielders. It's where you'd expect it to be.

With all due respect to Sauber, when you're coming into a big regulation change, the top three teams have shown that the rich have got richer. It's a factor of having more people, more resources, more simulation tools.

But the good news is we genuinely have at least a two-horse race up at the front, and possibly a three-horse race if Red Bull and Renault bring an update to Melbourne. That's exactly what Formula 1 needs right now.





# F1 22





# 2017



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Your definitive guide to the season ahead >>

# THE FAVOURITE

## Lewis Hamilton's quest for a fourth crown

The British star is at the top of his game, relishing the prospect of beating his idol Ayrton Senna's world-championship tally

By Adam Cooper, Special Correspondent

[@adamcooperF1](#)

**W**ill 2017 be a walk in the park for Lewis Hamilton as he chases the fourth Formula 1 World Championship he so desperately craves? One view is that with old adversary Nico Rosberg gone,

and his replacement Valtteri Bottas inevitably taking time to find his feet at Mercedes, the title is Hamilton's to lose.

The reality is likely to be far more complex. Bottas could well deliver a consistent challenge from the start of the season, while Barcelona testing suggests that Red Bull and Ferrari are both in the mix. Hamilton may not find it as easy as some think – which will make achieving his target so much sweeter. Competition is what drives him on, and he relishes the opportunity for a fight that extends behind the Mercedes camp.

"I'm always going to be gunning for it," he says when asked about his approach to his 11th season at the top level. "Still got the same drive. I want to win the world championship this year. I'm still searching and fighting for that fourth title, that's my sole goal."

"And also continuing to help this team be successful and add to the spectacle – more overtaking, more great overtaking manoeuvres. There are drivers out there that I want to be on track competing with, and for people to see that, and see the excitement. One thing is for sure: the team expects nothing but the best from me, and that's what I'm going to give."

There's no question that 2016 was a mentally draining year for Hamilton. From early in the season reliability problems and startline issues put him on the back foot relative to Rosberg, and four wins in the last four races were not enough to redress the balance.

In his mind he was convinced he should have won the world championship, all things being equal. The only upside of coming second was that he was excused from most winter PR duties, which gave him plenty of time to get his head together. Losing is always a great motivator for any racing driver who has reached the very top and, when he appeared at Silverstone for his first laps in the new W08 last month, he was raring to go.

"I actually feel younger than ever, which is surprising!" he says. "I feel invigorated, I feel motivated, especially after seeing this team, and how hard they work, and how amazing this car looks. I'm super-excited to still be in the sport, and still in the best team and in a position to be able to try to exploit that."

Hamilton is a racer, pure and simple. The sudden and unexpected news of Rosberg's retirement probably gave him pause for thought – as it did for every driver who's done nothing but drive karts or cars since they were seven or eight and put life outside F1 on indefinite hold. But while Rosberg was satisfied with the buzz that came with winning one title, Hamilton wants to experience that again, as he has made clear: "I'm full of energy, I'm massively driven, and of course the experiences of last year... I'm not world champion right now, and I want to change that."

They may be almost the same age, but unlike Rosberg Hamilton doesn't have a wife and child. But he has been able to build a whole other life away from motor racing. The commuting to and from Los Angeles between races and pursuit of a red-carpet lifestyle may not go down well with purists, but it works for him. Crucially it serves as a relief valve, allowing him to get away from the pressures of F1, then return to the paddock refreshed, and potentially enjoy a longer career than might otherwise be the case.

"There's a different vibe for people, isn't there?," says his father Anthony. "Find a partner, settle down, have a kid, take on responsibility; or party, go and enjoy yourself, fly your planes. Lewis is in such a happy place that he's going to be a tough guy to beat."

"Nothing changes with Lewis. This is the sport that he loves. He's going to approach this season exactly the same way he approaches every season. And I think he's excited for this year, because the cars look great, don't they?"

Technical changes can often be a source of motivation, and in this case they were specifically devised to make the cars faster and more challenging to drive. Hamilton believes that the new rules play to his strengths, and even the need to change his training routine to deal with higher cornering loads helped to make the otherwise tedious winter days more bearable. ➤





PETRONAS

44 L. HAMILTON



"I like that it's wider, I like that it's bigger, I like that it's beefier," says Hamilton of the Wo8. "And that it's got more downforce. It's not an evolution of last year's car, so it's not just a small step. Now the difference between us drivers is who goes out and is able to exploit the car the best, fastest. That's what I'm excited about.

"We're flat in corners where we've never been before. It's great and it feels amazing in the car. I hope it splits the men from the boys."

What will also be different in 2017 is the dynamic at Mercedes, and not just because of Rosberg's departure. Team principal Toto Wolff has encouraged Hamilton to say what's on his mind – behind closed doors – in an effort to address the tensions that boiled over during the past few seasons.

"There was a lot of controversy between the two drivers," says Wolff of the Hamilton-Rosberg relationship. "And there was also controversy created between the drivers and the team. Of course that sells, that's headlines, and nobody wants to hear that it's plain sailing.

"What we have decided is just to increase the

communication, talk to each other much more, and say when things are not going in the right way, rather than hear it from the press. In that relationship you can constantly improve."

It's an approach that has gone down well with Hamilton, who has put the past behind him.

"Naturally, relationships never stay perfect," he says.

"They are always up and down, that's the way of life.

Communication is the key. In such an intense year sometimes communication does get lost, and at the end of 2016 it was

great to be able to start with a clean slate. That's where we are this year."

Is Hamilton a little frustrated that he won't get a chance to race against, and beat, Rosberg in 2017? He's adamant that he – and the sport

– won't miss his former team-mate. "Generally I only ever miss my dogs, and my mum, so I doubt that's going to change!" he jokes. "We've still got 20 great drivers that are going to be competing, we've still got Max [Verstappen], we've still got [Sebastian] Vettel, we've got great, great drivers there. I don't think the sport will lose anything. The sport is still in good shape with some great drivers, and hopefully a very strong competition."

**"We're flat in corners  
where we've never been  
before. It feels amazing"**





Hamilton relishes  
"bigger, beefier"  
2017 machinery

# LEWIS HAMILTON'S FIRST 10 F1 SEASONS

## 2007 4 wins, 2nd in championship

A sensational rookie Formula 1 season with McLaren almost brings Hamilton the world title, but his battle with team-mate Fernando Alonso and significant errors allow Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen to sneak through and defeat them both.



## 2008 5 wins, champion

Hamilton, now McLaren's clear number one, battles Ferrari's Felipe Massa throughout the season. After scoring one of the great wet-weather wins at the British GP, Hamilton snatches the title on the very last lap of the season in Brazil.

## 2009 2 wins, 5th in championship

McLaren's first car under the new regulations is not a good one, but the MP4-24 improves during the season. Hamilton becomes a factor at the front in the second half of the year and scores two fine victories.



## 2010 3 wins, 4th in championship

Reigning champion Jenson Button joins Hamilton at McLaren. Both take wins, and Hamilton is one of four drivers to go to the Abu Dhabi finale with a chance of the crown, but Sebastian Vettel's late Red Bull run proves too strong.

## 2011 3 wins, 5th in championship

Arguably his worst year so far in F1. A clearly unhappy Hamilton makes various mistakes and is beaten comfortably by Button, who takes second in the drivers' standings behind Vettel's dominant Red Bull. >>



ALL PICS: LAT



Reinvigorated  
Hamilton is  
raring to go

Wolff is keen to take the changes forced upon Mercedes by Rosberg's retirement as a positive, observing that "disruption" can be good for any company as it evolves. He acknowledges that the arrival of Bottas will help the team management to foster a different kind of atmosphere.

"The relationship between Lewis and Nico was good and bad," says Wolff. "Because on one side they'd known each other forever, and that gave it a bit of a base. But we don't >>



know what was part of that joint history. And you could see that, sometimes, it got really controversial.

“With Valtteri it’s all back to the start. It looks good at the moment, but I have no doubt if the rivalry were to get intense, and they were to fight on track for hopefully race wins or podiums or championships, that’s not always going to be an easy ride. That’s the nature of the story.”

“I can imagine it’s going to be a lot different,” says Hamilton, “because me and Nico had a history when we got to being team-mates, and me and Valtteri have no history, so it’s a clean slate in terms of our relationship, and our new partnership.

“It’s a brand new book. How we behave as men will generally determine how interesting that book is, and how it goes. With me and Nico, it was like two different chapters, or whatever! So I’m excited about it.”

Bottas is Hamilton’s fifth team-mate in F1, after Fernando Alonso, Heikki Kovalainen, Jenson Button and Rosberg – a list that includes three world champions. When the stakes are so high, any intra-team relationship will be stressful at times, but Wolff believes Bottas is the ideal partner for Hamilton.

“Fire and ice!” he jokes. “They are two different personalities, but Valtteri fills the shoes of Nico. He’s a quiet guy, who is fast, intelligent, and non-political. He’s going to fit well with Lewis. That dynamic between the drivers is very important.”

At this stage Lewis is more than happy that his team-mate is Bottas. If the seeds of any doubts were sown by the Finn’s close personal relationship with Wolff – one of his chief mentors for many years – he’s kept them to himself.

Of more concern perhaps is what happens in 2018, when contracts run out and Mercedes has the opportunity to headhunt someone like Vettel, changing the dynamic once more. It could be argued that it’s in Hamilton’s interest to make it work with Bottas, and encourage the team to keep him on board for the long term.

“He seems like an easygoing guy,” says Hamilton of his new team-mate. “On the outside we’re all easygoing. I’m sure when he’s in the car he’ll be harder than ever, and I wouldn’t want anything else.

“I’m always up for the unknown. I have no idea how competitive Valtteri is going to be, where his strengths and weaknesses are going to be, how do you get ahead, how do you stay ahead, when it’s super-intense, when the chips are down?

“All these different experiences we’re going to have. But I think we’ve started on the right foot. I hope to continue to work as hard as I can with him and the team to make sure that, whatever the case, it’s a positive for the team.”

Elaborating on that theme he says: “Often when a new driver joins a team you’ve got new energy. You’ve got new ideas, fresh blood.

“Valtteri comes with a real calm, positive energy, and I think what he’s learned from his years at Williams he’ll be able to bring and add to the foundation we already have at Mercedes, and help us be better than we were before.”

Hamilton has a soft spot for his new team-mate’s home country, which may help them to bond. “I’ve had Finnish trainers; my doctor [the late Aki Hintsa] was Finnish; I’ve had friends in Finland who I’ve always found easy to get



Above: Hamilton reckons Bottas will bring new energy to the Mercedes team. Below: fans’ support plays significant part in Hamilton’s motivation

along with. I love the Finnish way. I’ve been able to work with Finnish people and adopt that, and it’s helped me to be the driver I am today.”

Personalities are important, but the bottom line is that Mercedes wanted the most competitive driver available, someone who could push Hamilton to the limit in the way that Rosberg did.

“It’s always a risk when the second driver is not quite on that level,” says Wolff. “That overall as a team you’re losing out because also the lead driver isn’t able to improve his pace. But with Valtteri, I don’t see that risk. He’s not only very experienced, but also very fast. He’s been on the podium nine times with Williams, he has won many major junior series.”

Hamilton insists he doesn’t need such external motivation: “I don’t feel I’ve ever had to have a team-mate or anyone to keep me on my toes. I’ve always wanted to push myself to be better. Naturally when you have a competition, the aim is to be on your toes from day one, regardless.”

In the end the identity of his team-mate doesn’t really matter – he has to beat everyone on the track, whether they have the same equipment or not.

“I don’t think Lewis is worried about anybody,” Anthony Hamilton insists. “As he’s said, the one thing that does bother him to a degree is if you are going to be a race







driver, be a race driver. Don't say you're a race driver and then ask me, 'What are your lines?'

"I think Lewis is just going to focus on his job, because at the end of the day he likes winning races, he likes winning championships – that's what his focus is going to be. I don't think he cares about anybody else, what other people are doing. It's just, 'If it's all fair and equal, I'll do the best I can.' And we know what that is."

How this season unfolds is certainly nothing we can take for granted. Can Hamilton finally join the elite list of four-time champions – something that his idol Ayrton Senna didn't have the chance to do?

"I've definitely achieved more than I could have dreamed of," says Hamilton. "When I got into the sport I obviously wanted to do something similar to Ayrton. We all have dreams, and it's hard to sometimes envisage and reach those dreams and goals, and I have done. Getting to F1 was one, winning a grand prix, matching Ayrton in wins and championships, but there's so much more now."

"I'm still fit, I'm still hungry, I'm going for that fourth title. I've got an incredible support structure around me, and my fans, who want a championship just as much as I do. It's not just me arriving thinking I want to get it. I want us to get it, and that includes the team. And that's what I'm going to be working towards." ❄



## 2012 4 wins, 4th in championship

Hamilton is back on form – he beats Button by two points – but McLaren failures at key moments mean he finishes well behind Vettel and Ferrari's Alonso. Hamilton decides to leave McLaren and join Mercedes.

## 2013 1 win, 4th in championship

The intra-team rivalry with Rosberg begins. Hamilton finishes ahead in the points, but Rosberg wins more races. Mercedes suffers tyre problems – which cost Hamilton in particular – but shows improved form.



## 2014 11 wins, champion

Mercedes produces the best package for the new hybrid-turbo regulations and dominates. After early setbacks, Hamilton comes on strong, taking the title in the Abu Dhabi finale and beating Rosberg 11-5 on wins.

## 2015 10 wins, champion

A more comfortable season for Hamilton. Mercedes maintains its edge despite a Ferrari revival, and Hamilton outpaces Rosberg until the title is won at the United States Grand Prix, with three races still to go.



## 2016 10 wins, 2nd in championship

A combination of unreliability and poor starts costs Hamilton in his fight with Rosberg as Mercedes dominates again. Despite four straight wins at the end of the campaign, Hamilton loses the title to Rosberg by five points.



ALL PICS: LAT







# THE NEW RIVAL

## Valtteri Bottas on his make-or-break year

Mercedes' new recruit has his big chance in 2017, and doesn't fear the challenge of going up against Lewis Hamilton in the same team

By Jonathan Noble, Special Correspondent

[@NobleF1](#)

**U**nless you're a fitness fanatic, there can't be very much in life more mindnumbingly boring than hours spent on an exercise bike. But for Valtteri Bottas, it was during such a mundane gym session in Abu Dhabi last year that his world turned upside down. Having stayed on in the Middle East after last year's season finale, Bottas was pounding away on the bike one evening when he saw his trainer Antti Vierula get excited about some messages that were arriving on his phone. The cause of the commotion soon became clear. Vierula told him that Nico Rosberg had just dropped his retirement bombshell in Vienna.

"Initially I just thought that this was very surprising from him," recalls Bottas of that crazy evening. "It actually took maybe half an hour until I actually realised, 'Wait a second, someone needs to fill the seat.' So initially it was a surprise, but then very quickly I realised it could be an opportunity. Obviously it was a very long shot at that point."

Back in Vienna, Mercedes boss Toto Wolff was waylaid at the FIA prize gala, first watching Rosberg reveal his news and then later speaking on stage. But as he and his departing champion left the press conference, his phone was already red-hot with calls from interested drivers. Bottas was one of the first.

"I think he had just come out of the press conference of Nico's announcement," says Bottas of how quickly he threw his hat into the ring. "He was walking out from that, so I think I was one of the first ones – if not the first one..."

As Wolff received calls from almost the entire grid, Bottas was the frontrunner. Indeed, it seemed to be a straight fight between him and Mercedes junior Pascal Wehrlein.

In Bottas's favour was the fact that Wolff had long been a supporter of the Finn, helping to support and manage his career throughout his climb to F1 and lengthy spell at Williams. He'd long had faith that Bottas was in the top league and just needed frontrunning machinery to prove it.

Had Bottas been a free agent, then it would likely have been a formality for the change to happen. But he wasn't, and Williams had already made it clear – when Renault came knocking in the late summer and tried to lure him away from Grove – that there was no escape route.

"When you have a contract with one team it's not like you can just go to another team," says Bottas. "Of course, we had a contract and they could have decided not to discuss it at all. So for that I'm very happy we could make it work."

Wolff was on the phone sharpish to Williams, but the situation wasn't straightforward. While Williams did not want to stand in Bottas's way, it was in a tricky spot because it needed an experienced hand alongside rookie Lance Stroll. Initially there didn't seem to be any suitable candidates.

But when Felipe Massa was approached in late December and seemed open to the idea of a comeback, things started to nudge forward. Even so, putting together a deal that involved Bottas, Mercedes, Williams, Massa, Wehrlein and Sauber was never going to be the work of a moment, and there were times when the whole chain was in danger of breaking down.

For Bottas, switching between training camps in Monaco and Finland, these were tough days. At any moment, the biggest opportunity of his career – one that perhaps comes once in a lifetime – could be taken away from him and he would be powerless to prevent that from happening.

"I have to admit that it was definitely more difficult to relax during the winter and New Year because everything was still [uncertain]," he reflects. "I didn't know for which team I was going to drive and this was a thing that I wanted so much that I just couldn't... my brain was rolling all the time. I couldn't stop thinking about it because I just wanted it so much."

By January 16, though, things had lined up perfectly. Bottas, who had used the turmoil as an inspiration to get sucked in to his toughest-ever winter-training programme, visited Brackley and signed the contract.

It marked not the end of his journey, though, but the start of the real hard work – days at the factory getting to know new systems, new philosophies, a new simulator, new engineers, new people around him. With only a one-year contract guaranteed, there was going to be no second chance to get this right. "I would have preferred to have started the preparation earlier, but it was not possible, >>



"So, Nico, what's the secret to beating Lewis?"

## "We can definitely race very hard with Lewis, but be fair and respect each other"

so we needed to deal with it," he says.

The step up from midfield hopeful at Williams to potential title contender at Mercedes has forced Bottas to go much deeper into his own performance. That meant not only pushing on with the relationships with those he'll be working with, but also reflecting on his own abilities: ironing out his weaknesses and building on his strengths.

"I've been working quite a lot to fix any weaknesses and make any strengths better with the team," he explains. "Some things, like first-lap performance, in terms of gaining or losing positions, it could have been a lot better – sometimes it has been quite bad, actually.

"So I've been analysing those kinds of things in detail and I know exactly the reasons for all the mistakes that I've made in F1, for all of the things that I could have done slightly better.

"I know how it can be done, and I always want to face any issues. That's the way to improve."

Getting comfortable within his new environment and ensuring he's bringing his best are factors that he can control; but on the other side of the garage he has to face, in Lewis Hamilton, one of F1's fastest men – and someone who has been at the centre of a few team-mate showdowns in his career.

In the end, Rosberg retired because he could not dig deep again to cope with the pressure and intensity of fighting for



a world championship against Hamilton. It's not what you would call a ringing endorsement of the job, but Bottas does not seem scared at the prospect – nor that this is in effect an audition year.

"I just see it as a great new page in my career," he says. "I know that in terms of driving skill all the work that I do, that I can do it – and I definitely can prove to the team that I deserve the place.

"I know how F1 works. It's completely normal that the team wants to see how I perform and that's why it would be difficult to immediately go to a longer contract. But that's actually more or less what I'm used to anyway – it has been many times for me that still in the middle of the year you're unsure what's going to happen. So it's nothing new for me.

"Obviously it's in a different league, but that's fine. It doesn't change anything. Luckily the one thing that still matters to me is to perform on the track. And I just need to keep that in mind: not to think too much about other stuff."

But, when it comes to it, how is Bottas going to balance the need to be a team player for the good of Mercedes against the requirement to be selfish against Hamilton for his own ambitions?

"It is definitely tricky to be a team player and at the same time always trying to put yourself in front," he replies. "It's kind of a new situation for me.

"I think the best way for me is to carry on as I have always done, so I do everything for the team.

Bottas's instinct is to be a team player, but a selfish streak will be revealed when necessary



Bottas accepts it will take time to settle in at Mercedes





LAT IMAGES

## Hamilton is still not getting his crew back

ONE OF LEWIS HAMILTON'S bugbears last year, as he battled for the title with Nico Rosberg, was that there had been a winter reshuffle of his car crew.

Team boss Toto Wolff was determined that the two sides of the Mercedes garage should not get too entrenched on the back of consecutive title fights, so ahead of the 2016 season he switched five mechanics between the cars.

Hamilton made reference to it throughout the year, bringing it up in the Spanish GP aftermath and even suggesting in Abu Dhabi that the real reasons would make "interesting reading" one day, although Wolff was always adamant that there was no conspiracy.

The departure of Rosberg and the arrival of Bottas could have provided the perfect opportunity for Hamilton to get 'his' men back, but instead Bottas will be working with the same crew that Rosberg had last year.

Having the guidance of experienced hands, such as race engineer Tony Ross, plus a bunch of people around him who have already had a season working together, will be a big help to Bottas as he gets up to speed.

Having confessed at the first pre-season test that changing teams was perhaps a bigger upheaval than he expected, every element now counts in helping him make progress.

"It's how the team approaches the simple things like debriefs and meetings, and different checklists in terms of setting up the car," says Bottas of the key differences he's found early on.

"There can be many different things about how you set up the car, and I'm trying to get comfortable with those because I'm a driver who likes to understand everything that's going on with the car and what's really affecting what.

"Also, on track the communication with the team... getting that absolutely perfect is always going to take time. With how the car behaves there is still a little bit more work to do, adjusting the balance, understanding the steering wheel - there's plenty more to experience and to learn.

"Plus trying to remember the names of the people in the team. I think there are more than 800 in [Mercedes HQ at] Brackley. There has been a lot of work, and there is still work to be done. But it's not impossible."

But at the same time I have my own goals and in F1 you do need to be selfish if you want to win, and I think I have [that capacity].

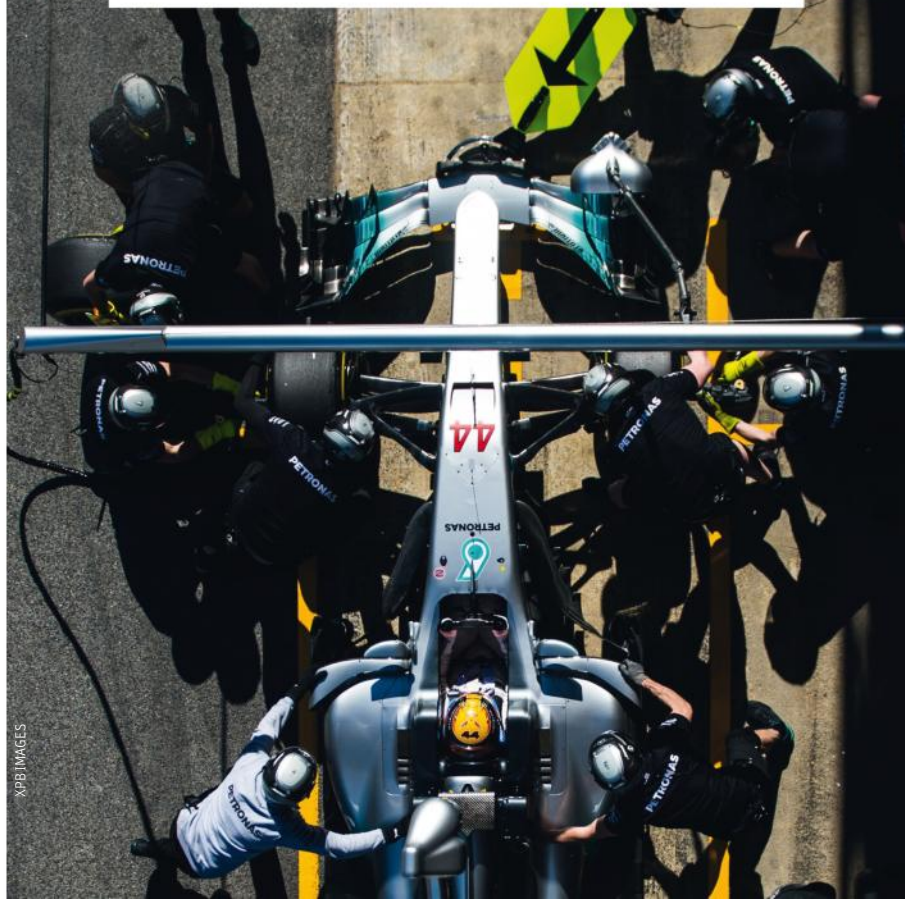
"It just depends on the situation, and calculating what's best overall. I cannot say more than that. We will see during the year how it goes. I normally get on with everyone and I believe we can definitely race very hard with Lewis, but be fair and respect each other."

Bottas is realistic about what to expect. Being successful in modern F1 is about marginal gains, and that's why staying at a team for a long period delivers its own benefits. Bottas is going up against Hamilton at the team the three-time world champion has made his own. As the outsider, it will take him time to adjust, to know who to approach to get things done, to build up trust and start to direct things himself.

Few are expecting Bottas to jump in and be a Hamilton-beater from the off. But the potential is definitely there. And don't expect the man himself to start doling out excuses about how difficult things are.

"I know I can do it," he says. I just want to get everything started. I think the main thing is just always to remind myself that it's no help at all if I start putting pressure on myself, or taking pressure from outside. I've experienced that.

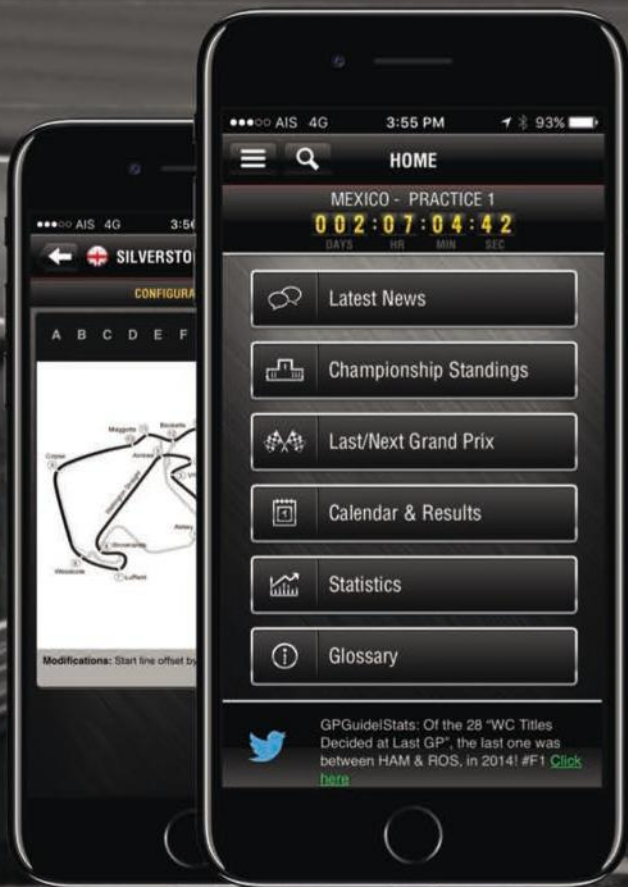
"So I just need to trust my skills, go day by day and race weekend by race weekend, do every single bit perfectly, and drive the wheels off the car - it's very simple in the end." ❄



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# Red Bull's leadership duel

Daniel Ricciardo was arguably the best driver of 2016, while Max Verstappen seems set for stardom. We assess how they stack up heading into the new campaign

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

**T**he battle between Red Bull team-mates Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen has the potential to be one of this season's most explosive storylines. Arguably not since Ron Dennis paired rookie Lewis Hamilton alongside double world champion Fernando Alonso at McLaren in 2007 has there been such a strong driver line-up at a top team.

That looks like a bold call when you consider this pairing has only five grand prix wins and not a single world title between them so far, but these two drivers have already made their mark on F1 in a manner that goes way beyond bare statistics.

Ricciardo has grown into one of F1's most consistently outstanding operators since arriving on the scene in late 2011. He has been named Autosport's number-one F1 driver for two of the past three seasons, was Alonso's best driver of '16, and not many can say they've seen off four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel across a season in the same team – in their first season in that team.

Max Verstappen is a whirlwind – gusting through F1's established order with terrifying and devastating ferocity. He is nothing short of a sensation, already F1's youngest ever race-winner, and a driver of such dynamic quality that he has provoked the ire of world champions, caused rules to be rewritten, and moved even Hamilton – arguably the most gifted driver of his generation – to heap praise on him publicly.

McLaren has Alonso, Mercedes has Hamilton, Ferrari has more world championship wins among its line-up than any other team on the grid, but Red Bull likely has the best pairing this year. F1's intra-team battles are fascinating – the closest thing we get to an equal contest of wills. Neither Ricciardo nor Verstappen are world champions yet, but they are most certainly heavyweight pretenders, fighting to be the number-one contenders for Nico Rosberg's vacated title. >>



# DANIEL RICCIARDO

## QUALIFYING SPEED

This is probably the most outstanding aspect of Ricciardo's game. He is quite brilliant at feeling how to extract the most from a tyre over a single lap, which in the Pirelli era has required an intelligent and tactical approach, as well as pure speed.

Ricciardo has been faster than his team-mate across the balance of every season he's raced in F1 – quicker than Vitantonio Liuzzi, Jean-Eric Vergne, Sebastian Vettel, Daniil Kvyat, and Max Verstappen.

His composure, and Lewis Hamilton-like ability to deliver a lap at the key moment when the pressure is at its greatest, really stands out – whether it be putting a Toro Rosso inside the top six in Bahrain in 2012, defeating the faster Ferraris to make the front row in China last year, beating both Mercedes drivers to pole in Monaco a few races later, or digging deep to outqualify Verstappen at the death in Spain.

## RACECRAFT

This is an underrated element of Ricciardo's arsenal of driving weapons. He is arguably less spectacular than Verstappen, but that should not be mistaken for a lack of aggression. Ricciardo is, in his own words, always prepared to "have a crack", as Vettel found out in Spain last season.

Those who've worked closely with the Australian say he is particularly strong at modulating his brake pressure in the heat of battle, which allows him to race hard without (usually) making errors. The way he snuck down the inside of Valtteri Bottas's Williams at last year's Italian GP, and ran side-by-side with Vettel all the way through Mexico City's Turn 4/5 complex – banging wheels without crashing – are great examples of his fine judgement.

Fernando Alonso once praised Ricciardo's driving as "unbelievable" after a wheel-to-wheel fight in the 2014 German GP. Praise doesn't come from many higher places than that in F1.

## TEAMWORK

Not all top drivers have the right character and personality to bring a group of people together, but Ricciardo has always been blessed with an easygoing temperament outside the cockpit, which means he doesn't have to rely solely on the force of his driving talents to encourage those around him to pull in his direction.

This also allows him to develop healthy relationships with his team-mates (Christian Horner says he's been like an "older brother" to Verstappen), and criticise the team – which he did vocally after last year's Spanish and Monaco GPs – without causing irreparable damage.

"One thing that stands out is Daniel's attitude and the way he carries himself," his race engineer Simon Rennie told Autosport in late 2015. "Out of the car he's quite light-hearted, but once he gets in the car that stops and it becomes very focused. The fact that he can switch between the two makes him very easy to work with."

## EXPERIENCE

Ricciardo has raced in F1 for five full seasons, started more than 100 grands prix, and driven for a proper frontrunning team for three years

in succession. Experience is not something he lacks, but the experience of a full-blooded title fight is something that's missing from his CV.

But that's not down to him. Red Bull-Renault has yet to produce a car capable of putting Ricciardo into title contention. Everything we have seen so far suggests that he has all he needs to withstand the pressure and deliver at the crucial moments, but until he is actually thrust into the thick of a title battle we can never know for sure.

## MENTAL STRENGTH

Ricciardo's laid-back approach in the garage, and calm inside the cockpit, mask a steely determination that lurks beneath his self-proclaimed 'honey badger' persona. The way he executed his first grand prix victory at the 2014 Canadian Grand Prix, and held off faster cars to win again in Hungary and Belgium, demonstrated his capacity to stay calm under new and extreme pressure. He is also very good at playing to his own strengths, which helped him see off Vettel's challenge in '14, and – so far at least – keep Verstappen at arm's length.

"He's very focused and calm," says Rennie. "He's just confident in his ability. Not arrogant, just willing to go up against anyone in the pitlane."

## WEAKNESSES

Like all top drivers Ricciardo has few of these, and none are particularly obvious. The only potentially worrying trend from last season was an occasional tendency to disappear from races that began badly.

In Canada and Japan he got stuck behind Kimi Raikkonen's Ferrari after early setbacks, and couldn't recover. Similarly, in Austria he got overtaken by Verstappen on the first lap and gradually lost touch with the leading group. Several times – Spain and Abu Dhabi last year in particular – he has lost out strategically, following the team's instructions to the letter and paying the price. Sometimes it is necessary to take matters into your own hands.

There are also some question marks about his relative prowess in the wet. His excellence in leading much of the Monaco GP suggests he can get it done in adverse weather, but his performances relative to Verstappen in last year's British and Brazilian GPs were underwhelming.

3 DANIEL RICCIARDO

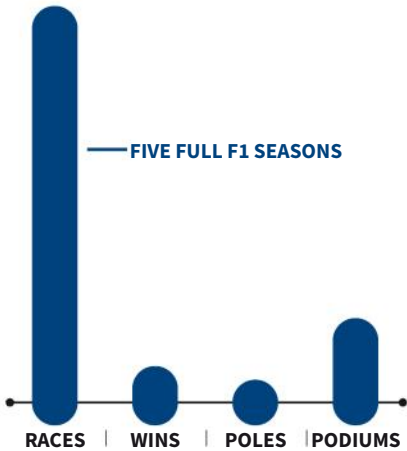
Qualifying speed	●●●●●●●●●●
Racecraft	●●●●●●●●●●
Teamwork	●●●●●●●●●●
Experience	●●●●●●●●●●
Mental strength	●●●●●●●●●●
Weaknesses	●●●●●●●●●●





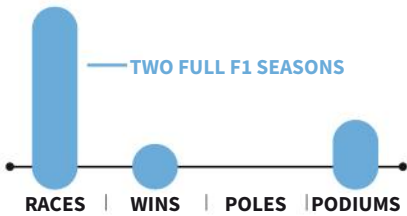
# CAREERS COMPARED

● Ricciardo v Verstappen ●



## DANIEL RICCIARDO

RACES	109
WINS	4
POLES	1
PODIUMS	18
BEST CHAMPIONSHIP FINISH	3rd (2014, 2016)



## MAX VERSTAPPEN

RACES	40
WINS	1
POLES	0
PODIUMS	7
BEST CHAMPIONSHIP FINISH	5th (2016)



# MAX VERSTAPPEN

## QUALIFYING SPEED

Not an area where Verstappen is outstanding – yet. He was evenly matched with Carlos Sainz Jr at Toro Rosso in 2015, and was comfortably beaten by Ricciardo after switching to Red Bull four races into last season.

In fact it took Verstappen until July's British GP to get the better of Ricciardo on a Saturday, a feat he managed just six times in 2016. But he is improving rapidly, and outqualified Ricciardo for four of the last six races of '16, once he felt settled and confident enough to plot his own set-up path.

What he certainly has done is force Ricciardo to raise his own game – pretty much from the moment they became team-mates. This constant game of one-upmanship helps drive the whole Red Bull project forward.

## RACECRAFT

Undoubtedly the most dynamic and exhilarating element of Verstappen's skillset. He has

already shown time and again an extraordinary, instinctive capacity in wheel-to-wheel situations. Brilliant moves around the outside of Felipe Nasr at Spa's Blanchimont and Sergio Perez at the Senna S at Interlagos in 2015; quick-thinking passes on Ricciardo on the first laps of the Canadian and Austrian GPs last year; superb racing of Nico Rosberg's faster car in Canada, and the wet weather of Britain and Brazil.

Not all are enamoured with Verstappen's ruthless approach to racing, and those weavy defences against Kimi Raikkonen in Hungary and Belgium eventually led to a rules clarification; but whether you like his style or not, Verstappen is certainly a driver to be feared in battle.

## TEAMWORK

Verstappen is still very young, so his personality is evolving as he establishes himself in F1.

He is highly ambitious, and prepared to push those around him to get what he wants. Often, young and inexperienced drivers get browbeaten by teams – especially big ones – into following directions they are not comfortable with, but Verstappen has been well educated in F1's intricacies by his father Jos, and those who've worked with Max closely say the electricity of his driving talent, never-say-die attitude, and ability to make something from nothing in races compels the team to follow his lead.

At Toro Rosso there were a few occasions – Singapore 2015 and Australia '16 spring to mind – where Verstappen refused team instructions to pursue his own path. This produced mixed results, and created tension, but he has subsequently displayed a reluctant capacity to put the team's interests before his own – playing rear gunner for Ricciardo in Hungary last season, and reigning in some of his naturally combative instincts during their wheel-to-wheel fight in Malaysia.

Selflessness doesn't sit easy with Verstappen, but he is learning quickly how and when to pick his battles.

## EXPERIENCE

A driver who has completed only two seasons at the highest level will be lacking in this area, but Verstappen has shown an extraordinary capacity to learn quickly. He has also particularly

impressed Red Bull motorsport chief Helmut Marko with his maturity, deep knowledge of F1's history, and clear picture of his own future.

"I couldn't believe I was sitting next to a boy, who had the maturity of a 25-year-old man," said Marko of Verstappen before he signed for Red Bull.

Ricciardo describes Verstappen as a “racing nerd”, and this ferocious work ethic is helping him offset his lack of experience in F1.

## MENTAL STRENGTH

Anyone who doubts Verstappen's mental strength should remember how he handled criticism of his defensive driving technique.

Raikkonen questioned his conduct in Hungary and Belgium, Vettel called him rude words in Mexico, Jacques Villeneuve said he could kill someone if he didn't change his ways – world champions queuing up left and right to put this unruly teenager in his place.

But Verstappen was utterly unmoved. If anything he went on the attack, suggesting that Villeneuves in glass houses shouldn't throw stones... Verstappen's mental strength lies in his individualism. He doesn't care what others think; he just does his thing, and if you don't like it, that's your problem.

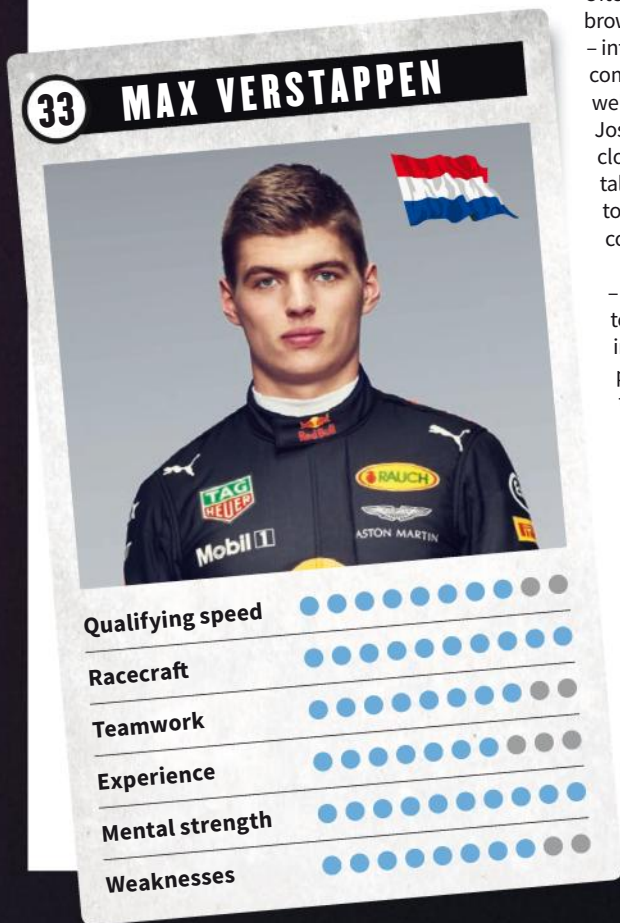
## WEAKNESSES

Verstappen might be mature beyond his years, but there are still traces of immaturity in his driving. He's still developing his technique in qualifying, and his aggression is not always tempered by appreciation of the bigger picture.

His immediate attempt to repass Nico Hulkenberg at Turn 1 in Abu Dhabi after a slow start, which ended in contact and a spin, is a case in point – though his recovery from that difficult situation was outstanding.

Verstappen sometimes lacks composure when races aren't bending to his iron will – his panicked radio message to Toro Rosso after getting taken out at the start of the 2015 Russian GP, rogue approach to strategy in Australia last year for fear team-mate Sainz was gaining the upper hand, taking on a personal revenge mission against Ferrari after that first-corner collision at Spa, or arriving to an empty pitlane after a tricky first stint in Austin.

But he's a fast learner, doesn't tend to repeat mistakes, and can usually rely on his fierce racer's instinct and extraordinary feel for the tyres to dig himself out of trouble.







# FINAL SCORES

● Ricciardo v Verstappen ●

QUALIFYING SPEED

WINNER **10/10** 8/10

RACECRAFT

9/10 **10/10** WINNER

TEAMWORK

WINNER **9/10** 8/10

EXPERIENCE

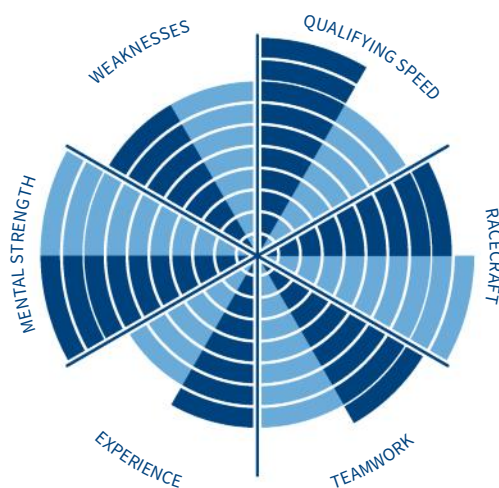
WINNER **8/10** 7/10

MENTAL STRENGTH

EQUAL **10/10** 10/10 EQUAL

WEAKNESSES

EQUAL **8/10** 8/10 EQUAL



## WINNER Ricciardo

**Ricciardo 54 - 51 Verstappen**

Not much to choose between these two, which is what makes them such a formidable pairing.

Ricciardo has a narrow edge at the moment, mainly because of the extra composure that comes with age and experience.

Verstappen can't shortcut that process, but, as Ricciardo says, it's "scary" to think how good he could become if he carries on developing at his present rate.

Their partnership is yet to sour in the way Vettel and Mark Webber's did, which is good news for Red Bull. But their personal battle is still bound to be fierce this season, which can only be good news for F1. 🏁





# Is Ferrari's revival real?

The famous Italian squad's form has been up and down in recent years, but its testing pace has grabbed people's attention.  
Our resident ex-F1 racer takes a closer look

By Karun Chandhok

🐦 @karunchandhok

**T**he clichés are all there: Ferrari is Formula 1's biggest team; at every F1 race you have more Ferrari fans than any other team; there's more pressure to succeed on Ferrari than any other team; F1 needs Ferrari to be successful. We've all heard them, said them and, if we're honest, we believe them. And just as F1 itself is going through arguably its biggest change in the last three decades, Ferrari heads into 2017 needing a big year.

It is not an anniversary it will want to celebrate, but it's now 10 years since Ferrari last won the drivers' world championship, and that's an awfully long time for a team with the budget, resources and talent pool that's available at Maranello. In fact, if we consider the last five seasons, Ferrari has won just eight out of 98 grands prix – another stat that it probably doesn't want to shout about, but unquestionably is aware of.

Flashback to 1993. Luca di Montezemolo has just drafted in Jean Todt to steer the ship. The Frenchman



XPB IMAGES





sets out to recruit the best driver of that generation in Michael Schumacher, as well as a strong technical and organisational line-up: Ross Brawn, Rory Byrne, Paolo Martinelli, Stefano Domenicali and Nigel Stepney. Piece by piece they rebuild the personnel and infrastructure within the team, which hasn't won a drivers' title since 1979.

Ferrari convinces Bridgestone to produce tailor-made tyres that suit both the car and Schumacher. Then it goes on a victory spree and in the five years from 2000 to '04 wins 67% of the races (57 out of 85). The legacy of this regime carries on until the team produces the F2007, which carries Kimi Raikkonen to his world championship. Is it a coincidence that it's the last title Ferrari has won?

Flash forward to 2015. I'm on the outside of Turn 3 watching pre-season testing at Barcelona. It's a great vantage point where you can really see the strengths and weaknesses of every car – there's nowhere to hide. Sebastian Vettel is settling in to his new team. The Ferrari looks reasonably good, but certainly not a Mercedes-beater. Sure enough, in Australia the German finishes more than 34 seconds behind race winner Lewis Hamilton, but at the next round something amazing happens.

It's lap four of the Malaysian Grand Prix and the safety car comes out. Mercedes calls both of its cars in for fresh tyres. From the Ferrari pitwall, the instruction is issued to Vettel to stay out. Recently appointed chief race engineer Antonio Cuquerella smiles and wonders why Mercedes has given up track position and chosen to do an extra pitstop with both cars. He's sensed an opportunity to capitalise on the error. As the race unfolds, it appears that Mercedes lacks the pace of Ferrari in these high temperatures and Vettel cruises to victory, proclaiming "Ferrari is back! Ferrari is back!" on the radio for the whole world to hear.

After a dreadful 2014, the Maurizio Arrivabene-led squad has a reasonable year on the whole, winning three races and comprehensively beating Red Bull. Finishing 275 points behind Mercedes doesn't exactly count as being 'back', but at the end of the year there's reasonable cause for optimism: the power unit is better and the James Allison-led technical squad has a bit of stability going into the following year.

March 2016. I'm on the outside of Turn 3 watching pre-season testing at Barcelona. The Ferrari looks better than 12 months previously. Raikkonen comes out of Turn 2 and >>

**New Ferrari looks comfortable, predictable, well-planted, consistent and above all fast**



accelerates towards the long right-hander. The nose of the car goes into the apex without the hint of understeer seen the year before. This looks promising. The times look promising. Could Ferrari finally challenge Mercedes?

We get to Melbourne and the red cars blast into the lead off the line. Vettel first, Räikkönen second, and they don't look to be under pressure from the two Mercedes. The race gets red-flagged for Fernando Alonso's accident, and I recall saying to Channel 4 F1 editor Mark Wilkin: "Everyone will just put mediums on and run to the flag. Ferrari has this in the bag." I'm standing in the pitlane when the blankets come off the cars. Red sidewalls, another set of super-softs. That would mean an extra pitstop and they'd give up track position. Hmm... Bit different to Malaysia a year ago.

In Canada Vettel takes the lead and the team elects to bring him in under the safety car. This once again means an extra pitstop and giving up track position. The exact opposite to Malaysia a year ago. A trend starts to form.

James Vowles and his team of strategists at Mercedes have worked out that track position and the power of the undercut is vital.

In Singapore Ferrari leaves Räikkönen out a lap too long after a fairly heated discussion on the radio that's broadcast to the world, and Hamilton undercuts him. In Japan once again Mercedes uses the undercut to get Hamilton ahead of Vettel, and after the race a Mercedes man smiles to me and says: "They still haven't worked out the power of the undercut."

Then Vettel's engine lets go on the warm-up lap in Bahrain, there are gearbox issues, a risky strategy of running long in Austria where ultimately Vettel's tyre blows, and first-corner incidents in China, Russia and Belgium.

But perhaps most worrying is a lack of pace relative to Red Bull. This plays out publicly in Germany where the team instructs Vettel to pit and attempt an undercut.

He sounds rather confused when he comes back with: "Who do you want to undercut?" It seems like the man in the cockpit realises just how far behind the opposition they are – more than the people with all the numbers.

Ferrari then splits with the highly respected Allison and promotes Mattia Binotto to lead the technical team. An engine man replaces an aero man, ahead of the biggest aero rule change in recent times. Eyebrows are raised up and down the paddock, but people who know him speak highly of Binotto. The role of a technical director nowadays is no longer about drawing things – it's about organising, motivating and prioritising resources.

In Ross Brawn's book *Total Competition: Lessons in Strategy from Formula One*, which came out last year, he talks about the blame-game culture that existed at Maranello before he arrived, when people were subject to public naming and shaming. He stopped all of that and created an environment of job security crucial to people's peace of mind and creativity.

Which brings us to this season.

I'm on the outside of Turn 3 at Barcelona watching the 2017 pre-season test. Ferrari has spent most of the week focusing on the medium tyre, with an occasional run on the softs. This week the team starts to do the shorter performance runs. Ferrari has arrived with a media lockdown – no comments, no predictions, no showboating. In fact Vettel even backs off on his fastest lap to try to hide the SF70H's true performance.

A Silver Arrow comes into view. Three-time world champion Hamilton is typically hard on the brakes, the car looking like it's on the ragged edge. He's on the throttle coming out of Turn 2 and the car responds well but doesn't look super comfy.

Unquestionably and predictably, it's very fast. Four-time world champion Vettel appears in the red car. He looks just as fast into the apex of Turn 1, but more comfortable. Out of Turn 2 into 3, the nose goes in sharply. Accelerating through Turn 3, the rear appears to be absolutely planted. This looks good.



Glory days: Schumacher leads the field at the start of the 2004 Hungarian GP





I need a bit more confirmation of Ferrari's form, so I carry on walking around to Turn 4 and then the slower Turn 5. In both places the SF70H gives the drivers confidence to attack the entry. The car obviously feels comfortable enough that Vettel is able to get into a routine of consistently driving the same line, leaning on the car lap after lap. This looks very good.

Interpreting pre-season testing form is a dangerous game. You have to guesstimate the fuel loads that the drivers are carrying, you don't know what engine modes are being used and you need to look at what tyres people are running at what time of day.

Having said that, once you spend enough time watching from the side of the track, you can start to see which cars are working well and which ones aren't. And the Ferrari certainly is. Is it a Mercedes-beater? The stopwatch won't lie when we get to qualifying in Melbourne...

What's also encouraging is that the car looks good not just on the medium tyre. When Ferrari switches to the softs or super-softs, the car is able to instantly deliver a lap time that reflects the delta between the tyres that we would expect. This is good news as it shows that Ferrari is seeing a predictable balance shift between the tyres that it's able to compensate for. There were too many occasions last year when Vettel got to Q3 and couldn't deliver a lap time he felt was good enough because he couldn't get the tyre to work.

From a reliability standpoint it's so far, so good. Sure, Ferrari hasn't racked up the same mileage as Mercedes, but in general the car has been reliable enough to allow the team to run through its programme.

Ferrari is F1's biggest team; at every F1 race you have more Ferrari fans than any other team; there's more pressure to succeed on Ferrari than any other team; F1 needs Ferrari to be successful. And I would like to see Ferrari fighting for the championship again. 🍀

Ferrari showed promise in testing in 2015 and '16, but failed to follow through. Will its pace this year herald a convincing title challenge?



Tech chief Binotto is in upbeat mood as he confers with Arrivabene during testing

# FERRARI'S MEN BEHIND THE WHEEL

THE DRIVER LINE-UP AT FERRARI IS A REALLY interesting mix. Sebastian Vettel went to Maranello to try to emulate what his idol Michael Schumacher achieved years previously.

Schumacher was able to work intimately with Jean Todt to build the team he needed around him. This hasn't quite worked out for Vettel, and you wonder if he's grabbed the bull by the horns in the way that Schumacher would have. Would he have allowed Ferrari to lose James Allison? Would Schumacher have got the team to circumnavigate the testing rules and pounded around Fiorano in something resembling a current car? Would he have ensured that Maranello had the super-dyno to do off-track testing before Brackley?

But perhaps the question should be: 'Is Vettel as motivated to turn Ferrari around as Schumacher was in 1996?' I hope so.

Full disclosure: I've always been a Vettel supporter and believe he has more pure talent than people give him credit for. No, he didn't win four world championships because of the car. He won because he's bloody good. But now, to quote Schumacher in 2000, "it's not about a third world title, it's about a first with Ferrari".

At the end of 2015 the paddock thought that '16 was going to be the farewell tour for Kimi Raikkonen and we would now be seeing a young hotshot lining up alongside Vettel. But towards the end of 2015 Raikkonen and his race engineer Dave Greenwood made a few changes to the team around him and the Finn started to have a bit more confidence in what was going on. A comfortable and confident Kimi is a fast Kimi, and he finished last year ahead 11-10 in qualifying and not far behind Vettel in the points.

Raikkonen's apolitical nature is exactly what Ferrari needs. Sure, he's never going to be the great motivator galvanising the troops, but that's what Vettel is there for. Raikkonen's role is to harness his experience and inherent talent and carry on showing the consistency he displayed in 2016, which was by far his best campaign since he rejoined Ferrari. You never know, combined with his wage cut, on recent form he's suddenly a very attractive proposition for the team to hang on to for 2018!





**“It’s not fun,  
it’s even  
painful –  
real pain”**

McLaren-Honda racing director Eric Boullier hasn’t enjoyed testing.  
So what can we expect from the team in 2017?

**By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor**

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

**T**he current McLaren-Honda Formula 1 project is certainly not doing justice to the legend of the past. Two seasons down, McLaren-Honda Mk2 is yet to win a race, yet to finish on the podium, and yet to finish better than fifth in any grand prix held since the start of 2015.

These results are not worthy of an alliance that dominated F1 in the late 1980s and early '90s and, the longer the drought goes on, the more serious the damage it inflicts upon two famous and proud motorsport names.

Last season represented a big improvement, with a better level and consistency of performance and results. But a distant sixth in the constructors’ championship, battling to make Q3 at every race, is nowhere near good enough for a combination formed with the sole aim of becoming world champion again.

The 2017 season offers McLaren-Honda an opportunity to make a big leap forward – new cars, designed to sweeping new aerodynamic regulations, with more freedom to develop its underperforming V6 hybrid turbo engine too. Meanwhile, McLaren itself is changing, ushering in a post-Ron Dennis era – new faces, new names, new management, new livery, and high expectations that the season ahead will bring

a big upturn in the team’s fortunes.

But pre-season testing has not gone well. The new Honda engine is down on power and woefully unreliable, so McLaren is already far behind its rivals in unlocking and understanding the potential of its new car. All is not well and, as the first race of the season fast approaches, already McLaren-Honda faces some difficult questions.

### **What is the least we can expect from McLaren-Honda in 2017?**

The team will not publicly set its targets for this season, for fear of suffering embarrassment if they are not met. Privately, the minimum expectation is to break out of the midfield and latch on to F1’s current ‘big three’ – Mercedes, Red Bull and Ferrari.

“If you follow the logic, from ninth in year one, sixth last year, obviously we want to do better,” says McLaren racing director Eric Boullier. “I can’t say which position we want, but definitely if you want to fight the big teams you need to be with them...”

McLaren-Honda was F1’s fourth-best team on certain circuits last season, but that took a lot of time and development. Based on its difficult start to this year in testing, the team is likely to begin this campaign well and truly on the back foot, mired in a tight midfield pack, or possibly off the back of it.





### So how far behind is Honda?

Pretty far behind, as it stands. Its revamped engine layout, featuring new, lean combustion technology, is so unstable that it's actually producing less power than its 2016 unit, because the new engine cannot be turned up without failing. The hope is that solutions will be in place in time for the first race, but already it's looking like Honda will start the season battling to recover a deficit to its rivals rather than applying pressure to them.

"Honda has been quite motivated to change the complete layout of the engine, and obviously they face some issues they didn't have last year," explains Boullier. "The new layout is a clever one, and actually Honda matched a couple of targets, but the reliability and the performance are not good enough – they need to address driveability, efficiency and reliability. But it's going to be fixed, and once it's fixed you can power up, and we will get back to where we were at the end of last year."

### Is the McLaren chassis actually any good?

It's fair to say that the bulk of McLaren-Honda's problems lie in the depths of its troublesome V6 engine, but not all of them do. Last year's car was strong under braking and at slow speed, but struggled for grip in medium and high-speed corners.

Performance at Honda's home race in Japan was so poor that McLaren undertook a special study to understand the problems. Jenson Button suggested that there was an issue with the consistency of McLaren's floor, and the centre of gravity of the Honda engine also hurt the car in high-speed sweepers.

McLaren has worked to rectify the "four or five" things that contributed to these handling difficulties. "We spent a lot of time last year after Japan to understand why most of the people, including ourselves, can rate our chassis the fourth best and yet we were miserable in Japan last year," says Boullier. "We understood why, and we spent some time to make sure we addressed it and don't have a repeat."

### Will Alonso stick around if 2017 goes badly?

Fernando Alonso is a free agent again after this season, and he may well feel relieved about that situation, given McLaren-Honda's plight.

Alonso was matter-of-factly critical of Honda's new engine in testing, but was also quick to say that a bad season wouldn't necessarily force him out of F1 at the end of the year, and that he still feels he is driving at his best. That sounds very much like a coded 'come-get-me' call to potential suitors...

"We want him to stay, obviously," says Boullier. "The project is not going as fast as we want in terms of developing performance, but it's OK. I think he still wants to be with us as long as possible – as long as he's motivated."

"It's more about not losing patience and making sure he can be competitive. If we don't deliver in his own timeframe then he will take his own actions, which is normal. We just need to be more competitive, and then he will be the happiest driver."

### Can McLaren-Honda survive another poor season?

McLaren-Honda will survive so long as both parties want to remain together, but the lack of results is exacting a heavy toll, which will only get heavier the longer the drought goes on.

Relations are already strained internally, and it will take a monumental effort to avoid the relationship breaking apart. Presently, both parties are committed to a long-term contract, and Honda's presence is important for F1's limited manufacturer presence. But another poor season could stretch this commitment to breaking point.

"I don't want to think about it, to be honest," says Boullier of the prospect of another difficult campaign. "I don't want to go through another bad season like we had the last two years. It's massively damaging, and keeping people motivated, including myself, drivers... We are motivated, we are professional, and we are privileged to work for McLaren, but it's not fun. It's even painful – real pain." ❧

# Meet McLaren's next F1 superstar

Stoffel Vandoorne has rightfully entered F1 with fanfare. We met up with him at McLaren's HQ

By Lawrence Barretto, F1 Reporter

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**W**hen McLaren announced its 2017 driver line-up, the attention was focused on Jenson Button stepping down from his race seat to take on the role of reserve. But among the reaction from team personnel was a bold claim from Fernando

Alonso. The double world champion suggested that Button's replacement, Stoffel Vandoorne, is the driver to lead McLaren into the future.

"Jenson and I felt that we have to help Stoffel get into F1 because we know that in the future he will be maybe running McLaren," said Alonso. "[This year] I will try to do my own job, but Jenson and I will be helping Stoffel as much as we can because in the future he will be the man."

That is quite an endorsement from a driver who is widely considered to be one of the greatest to have ever raced in Formula 1. Vandoorne responded by admitting that he has "big shoes to fill", but remained "very confident" about his chances in what will be his first full season at the pinnacle of motorsport.

Vandoorne benefits from a stunning junior record, a big reputation and the bonus of having scored a point on his F1 debut after receiving a late call to replace the injured Alonso in the 2016 Bahrain Grand Prix. No wonder expectations are high.

But how did he come to find himself sitting alongside Alonso for the 2017 F1 season? Key, it seems, was a text message to ex-F1 driver Alexander Wurz. "I first got in touch with McLaren in 2011," says Vandoorne. "I was part of the FIA young-driver academy, and I just went to a grand prix and texted Alex [Wurz mentored the academy drivers] to ask if he was around."

"We met up in the paddock and he presented me to a couple of people. One of those was [McLaren communications chief] Matt Bishop. He gave me his card. From then on I kept sending reports after every race I was doing. Nothing much happened for maybe half a year or even a bit more. He was always replying and saying, 'Keep sending the reports', and I did until they replied to invite me to a meeting at Woking."

The relationship was established, but he had to deliver on >>

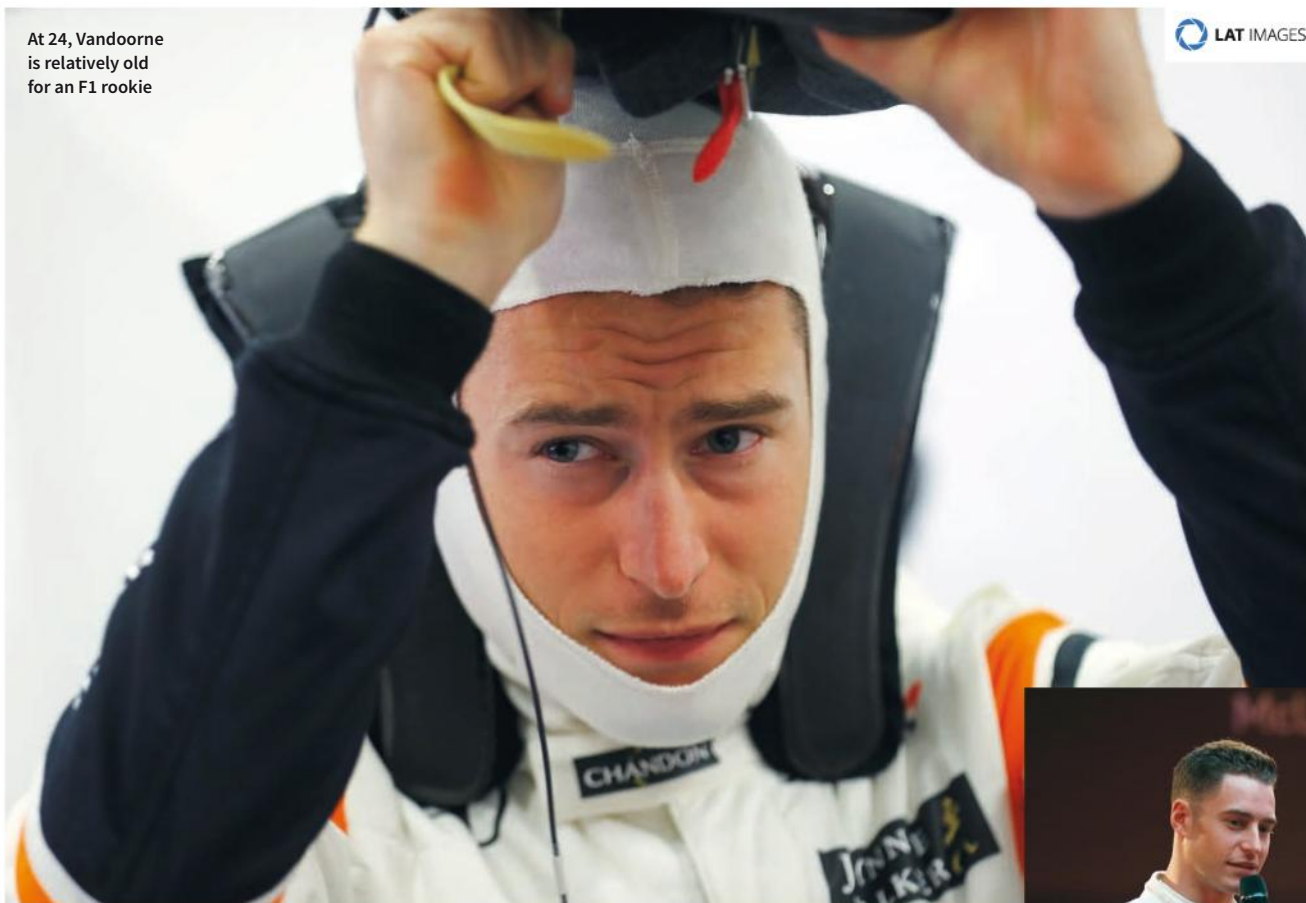






At 24, Vandoorne is relatively old for an F1 rookie

LAT IMAGES



track. In 2012 he clinched the Formula Renault 2.0 Eurocup with Josef Kaufmann Racing, scoring four wins, 11 podiums and six pole positions. That led to the call he had been hoping for: “Sam Michael [then McLaren’s sporting director] called me up the next day and asked me if I wanted to join the young-driver programme. I said, ‘Yes, of course.’”

A season in Formula Renault 3.5 followed. He made a decent fist of his rookie year, winning on his debut and pushing second-year McLaren junior Kevin Magnussen hard, but had to settle for second in the standings. His form for a rookie, though, was such that McLaren had little choice but to move him into GP2 with ART Grand Prix for the following season. This came as no surprise to Jamie Dye, managing director of the Fortec Motorsport squad with which he had raced in 2013.

“He was always very professional and very polite,” says Dye. “In terms of fitness and his approach, you could really see he had made a step up over the winter. He was such a good personality. You’d hear him laughing and joking in the truck when he had done the job, but he was very serious about work when it was required.”

Dye highlights Vandoorne’s strength for preparation and ability to switch on performance when it really matters. “We were never the quickest on a Friday [in free practice], but we could almost guarantee a front row on the grid the following morning,” says Dye. “Friday was learning day, there was no

pressure and Stoffel knew it was the rest of the weekend that counted. So while everyone else would have been out there trying their hardest, Stoffel would just be very calm, level-headed and focus on preparing a foundation.”

Fortec is renowned for its ability to school young drivers, and this was an environment in which Vandoorne excelled. “He was very inquisitive,” adds Dye. “He spent a lot of time with his engineers trying to understand where he could improve. He simply wanted to learn.”

“He didn’t get very stressed. He was very calm on the radio, even when he was on a hot lap. When things went wrong, he didn’t blame anyone, he didn’t cause a scene. He just refocused and got on with it. I think he deserved to win that year, but it wasn’t to be. Every time he got close to Magnussen, Magnussen pulled away. But he carried on with a smile on his face – he didn’t let it get to him.”

Vandoorne was runner-up in GP2 with ART in 2014, then dominated the following season. An F1 drive beckoned and it looked as though he would replace Button alongside Alonso for ‘16, only for McLaren to have a late change of heart and stick with its line-up.

“It was quite tough for me to find out I didn’t get the drive, because I’d won the championship in GP2 and I felt like I had done everything possible,” he says. “But then I remembered I still had two rounds left in GP2, and I really wanted to turn around and show that they should have put me in the car. That’s when we won the final races and broke all the records in GP2.”

“It made me stronger, made me realise I had to keep fighting for a position in the team. Last year I stayed very patient, I didn’t push, not asking about the drive every weekend. I stayed calm, tried to do my job as good as possible, spent a lot of time at the factory. It’s more or less the only thing I could have done.”



Super Formula stint in 2016 was impressive





Left: Alonso is mentor as well as team-mate. Right, inset: Vandoorne with McLaren PR kingpin Matt Bishop, who saw the Belgian driver's potential

It's that strength and pragmatism that he drew upon when he got the call to make his F1 debut in Bahrain last year, after Alonso was ruled out on medical grounds following a crash in the season-opening Australian Grand Prix. Vandoorne was in Japan, as part of his Super Formula commitments with the Honda-powered Dandelion team. Though he got some sleep on the flight over, he spent much of his time poring over data to ensure he was as ready as he could be for a race that could prove crucial for his future.

It proved to be a strong weekend for Vandoorne. Having not tested the 2016 car before Friday practice, he outqualified Button by just over half a tenth to start 12th, two places ahead. He then finished 10th after a combative race in the upper midfield. It was a performance that impressed racing director Eric Boullier.

"At least he didn't have enough time to think about it, so it didn't put the wrong pressure on him, and we definitely didn't put any pressure on him," says Boullier. "He did a brilliant job."

"I think in Bahrain when he stepped in he showed everybody he was ready to race [full-time] in Formula 1. [This year] he will be a little bit of a youngster, which we can develop and he can benefit from the experience of our other two drivers."

Despite the strong showing in Bahrain, Vandoorne refused to let himself get carried away. He focused on his reserve duties, integrating himself further at McLaren, while also delivering impressive performances in his Super Formula campaign, which yielded two wins, three podiums and a pole position. It was this ability to get the most out of the situation he found himself in that set him up so well for the future, according to Button.

"If you look at what Stoffel has achieved in the lower formulas, it's a lot," he says. "He's definitely a standout driver coming through. He's also been well-educated in the world of Formula 1. Being third driver here and learning from two world champions, it's the perfect position to be in jumping into an F1 car."

Even when it became clear that he was set to replace Button for 2017, Vandoorne refused to believe it until the contract was signed, conscious of what had happened the previous year. "It was the Monza weekend, and it was Ron [Dennis] who phoned

me up to tell me they had taken the decision to put me in the car," he says. "It's something I will remember forever, which is normal as it was my first proper F1 contract. I had a good feeling I was going to get the drive, but until you have the contract in

yours hands, there are no certainties. To finally get that news was kind of a relief, but I was also very happy and proud."

Vandoorne understands that his performance in Bahrain will lead to increased expectations, but it appears he has the experience and the mentality to deal with it. "Because of that result, everyone is going to expect a lot, which is normal," he says. "Everything I've done in the past will contribute to that, to people expecting a lot. I'm expecting a lot of myself as well; I will try to do the best I possibly can and will just do the same I've done in every series. That's something that works for me. I know what I want from a car. I'm going to try to pull a good bunch of people around me. Having a strong relationship with your engineer and the team management is very important."

At 24, he's a relatively old rookie in the modern era. That's seven years older than Max Verstappen was when he made his debut. Pascal Wehrlein was 21, Carlos Sainz Jr 20 and Esteban Ocon 19. Although he will have a bit of catching up to do, from what he's shown in junior formulas – the way he applies himself and gets results – that delay in entering F1 could serve as a benefit and accelerate his development.

Sensibly, he's not making any bold predictions for this season. McLaren's struggles of the past two years have been well documented, while testing so far has suggested this could be another challenging season, so Vandoorne's approach is no surprise.

"I'll definitely prepare like I've always done and try to get the most out of every situation," he says. "Not making mistakes is already a big part of it, because mistakes don't bring you further up the grid. In terms of performance, we'll have to see where we are. Providing there are no big mistakes and we feel we've done everything more or less like it should be, then we should be able to fight for good results."

Even if McLaren struggles, Vandoorne has a strong marker in Alonso against whom to judge himself. So should results be hard to come by, this could actually be a good thing for the newcomer as it will eliminate some of the pressure that falls on a rookie. Vandoorne has been schooled well and demonstrated he has the talent and a brilliant work ethic. Those attributes bring pressure, but he appears well equipped to deal with it. And it's clear he has the belief that he can deliver in F1.

"I know there are a lot of expectations because of all the results I have in the past, so I see it as quite normal," he says. "I'm aware of that, and it would be wrong for me to worry about that now because I know I'm capable of doing a good job when everything is right and I feel it's going to be the same in F1. When everything is right, and I make the most of every situation, I feel I can perform at the top." ❀

# Nico Hulkenberg

By Scott Mitchell, Features Editor

[@ScottAutosport](#)

**N**ico Hulkenberg has made what seems to be at best a sideways step from Force India to Renault, but he's confident his transition to a factory team can reap long-term rewards.

**SCOTT MITCHELL** This is a big break for you after being at smaller teams. How important is it for your career?

**NICO HULKENBERG** I think it's very good that this has come up. It was time for a change, to leave Force India even though we've done great stuff together. Eventually you need a change in your life, and this opportunity came at the perfect moment. I'm with a manufacturer, one that has a great history in Formula 1 and has been so successful in previous years and wants to return there. Obviously there's still a long way to go, but I think it's great for me to face that challenge with the team, that we work on it together to bring Renault back to the top.

**SM** There was a joke that even the Pope was offered a drive at Renault, so how wanted did you feel?

**NH** As soon as we started talking you could tell from both sides that it was wanted. We moved quite fast and in the end the deal was done in quite a short amount of time. That's a sign that both sides were in favour of it and wanted to make it happen.

**SM** When Frederic Vasseur's exit was announced, how disappointed were you? Or had he played his role already getting you into the team?

**NH** No, I was disappointed. It would have been great to have him on board. He's a great guy who understands the principles of racing and handles the management side very well. From that point of view the team took a little bit of a hit there. There was some friction or discussions and they couldn't agree among each other.

**SM** You've moved from a team that prided itself on maximising limited resources to one with clear backing – how different is it?

**NH** Being with a manufacturer is just a different game. You feel the power, the support, the resources they have. You see the factory is two or three times the size, the amount of people, what they are building. The commitment is definitely there; you see they are taking this seriously.

**SM** What's your assessment of the engine and the chassis performance from testing?

**NH** Not a disaster, but also not great. I think we're somewhere in the middle. The thing is, whenever we drive and whenever we're out there, we learn quite quickly. From that side it's worked pretty well. I see ourselves in the midfield at the moment. More important is that the

base car we have right now is a very good one, and from here we can take it step by step and work our way up.

**SM** Can you compare the Renault engine with the Mercedes one from last year?

**NH** It's not [ideal] to compare because the new cars are a lot more draggy, so you're comparing apples and pears. We've not discovered the Renault engine in a good mode, but I think there's a lack of power there and work to do.

**SM** So what are your goals this year?

**NH** This year [the goal] is to see the team grow in the right way, to build the foundation that will then allow us in the coming years to go for bigger aims and goals. This year it would be nice to really establish ourselves in the midfield, collect points, and maybe have a few surprises in there. More importantly, to set it up for 2018 and '19.

**SM** How much has the artificial limit from before been removed by Pirelli introducing more-durable tyres?

**NH** There is still degradation eventually – they don't last forever. But you can drive to your natural limit. It feels and looks like this, but we'll only know more once we've done a few races. It's more towards my driving style; it's more natural. I'm very much in favour of that and I hope it [stays] like that.

**SM** What's the major change – did you feel you got on top of that management with the previous tyre?

**NH** I certainly think I improved a lot in that respect in the last three years. It

was something you had to work on and improve because it was part of the game, but it was not something I enjoyed or liked doing. That's why I hope that the picture we see now with degradation will stay like this for the year. Obviously it's winter testing and the temperature is not high, so when it gets warmer the degradation goes up. I still hope they will allow more pure pushing and racing.

**SM** The GPDA mantra is that happy drivers equal a happy Formula 1. How much of a difference has it made? Is there more raw enjoyment?

**NH** Yes! Yes, for sure. If you go faster it's always more spectacular. If you go flat through Turn 3 at Barcelona it's a hell of a ride. It's pretty amazing – it's difficult for the public and you guys to understand, you don't get that sensation. It's pretty bloody cool.

**SM** It is difficult to get people to understand that sensation, isn't it...

**NH** Yeah, it's quite difficult to transport that to the public and somebody [watching] on television to make them understand how physical it is. It's the right idea. I think you'll definitely see more drivers this year after the race coming out from the scales more knackered. 🌀

**“You'll definitely see more drivers after the race more knackered”**





RENAULT  
SPORT

# Stronger... *faster... better?*

Grand prix cars have more downforce, wider tyres and are more physical to drive this year. But will F1's new regulations achieve their objectives?

By Edd Straw, Editor-in-Chief

🐦 @eddstrawF1

**WEIGHT** INCREASED BY 26KG TO 728KG

**CAR WIDTH** 200MM INCREASE

**FRONT WING** 150MM WIDER

**TYRES** 60MM WIDER AT THE FRONT



**Y**ou would not expect Formula 1 to write its rulebook based upon a 1970s cult American television series, but that's exactly what's happened for 2017. Steve Austin, the titular star of *The Six Million Dollar Man*, was broken and rebuilt "better than he was before – better... stronger... faster". F1 was also regarded by many as broken, leading to this attempt to reconstruct the grand prix car in the same vein.

Stronger? Well, the cars themselves are built to the same safety standards, but the organic bit in the middle has to be able to stand up to higher lateral loads, up to an increase of around 1g in places. That's led to drivers modifying their training regimes and adding a little muscle mass. Esteban Ocon, for example, heading into his first full season, put on 5kg over the winter. So that's a resounding yes.

Faster? Certainly. Within half a day of testing starting, the cars were below the pole-position time for last year's Spanish Grand Prix. By the end of the eight days of running at Barcelona, the fastest time was 3.366s quicker. So that's also a success, as it was always going to be with tyres 25% wider and a hike in downforce thanks to the easing of aerodynamic restrictions. For evidence of the difference, take a look at the side-by-side onboard comparison of Lewis Hamilton's pole lap from 2016 against Kimi Raikkonen's fastest time from the final day of testing released by Formula One Management and available on [f1.com](http://f1.com).

But better? There's the rub. The new regulations were formulated based on one founding principle, one that wasn't subjected to a great deal of scrutiny before F1 set course and went full steam ahead. The idea was to make the cars three to five seconds faster, a little harder to drive, and ideally allow drivers to push harder on the Pirelli tyres by making them degrade at a steadier rate. Changes to the front and rear wings, diffusers and a loosening up of the areas where teams are allowed to put aerodynamic devices – hence the appearance of the shark fins and more complex bargeboard/turning-vane systems – have significantly increased overall downforce. Some of this is the same downforce the much-vaunted 2009

**“The way you attack the corners, the way you feel the grip, has been a good surprise”**

rules aimed to cut on the basis that it would improve the racing.

The result is cars that the drivers like (although the tyres are, at best, a qualified success). Fernando Alonso has been a strong critic of the direction racing has taken in recent years, with drivers having to operate within their limits, and he's certainly happy with what the changes mean when behind the wheel even of a troublesome McLaren-Honda.

“The way you attack the corners, the way you feel the grip, has been a good surprise,” he says. “To be able to drive the way you want and not like a small child, so the tyres don't overheat, that's the best way to feel a Formula 1 car. It's been fun to drive freely again.”

But how many times has F1 been criticised for making changes to please itself rather than the fans? For while fans will appreciate the fact that drivers can be more attacking, it's not going to do a lot for the show. As Lewis Hamilton points out, we're likely to see races more like those produced in the last season before Pirelli became the tyre supplier. And while 2010 produced an epic title fight, and some memorable incidents, many fans complained about the racing at the time because, frankly, not that much happened. »

**REAR WING** 200MM WIDER, 150MM LOWER

**TYRES** 80MM WIDER AT THE REAR

**DIFFUSER** 50MM HIGHER, 50MM WIDER, 175MM LONGER



More downforce means more turbulence, so it's harder to follow another car

"There's much more downforce, which is something we always wanted," said Hamilton during the first test. "As a driver you always want to go fast through the corners."

But the idea of being able to push hard throughout a stint simply hasn't transpired. During the first test, some drivers suggested the tyres were standing up very well, although the lap-time drop-off didn't entirely back that up. By test two, it was clear what was happening. There may have been an improvement, certainly, but the days when drivers could set fastest laps at the end of stints in the Bridgestone era are not even close to returning. Now *those* were low-deg tyres.

"You cannot push 100% every lap. The tyres still degrade," said Hamilton during the second test. "The tyres are a lot harder than last year. And they

are definitely a little bit less prone to melting... overheating. But they still do. And it's not even really hot here, so in places like Malaysia we will still have serious drop-off and still have degradation as we've always had."

In fact, it was always a misapprehension that the degradation was going to vanish. The target was a two-second drop-off over 10 laps, and testing suggested it was less than that. We'll need to see a bigger range of tracks and genuine race situations to evaluate whether that is the usual performance of the tyres, but if you've got thermal degradation then there's always going to be an element of management going on. After all, if you go for a run, you complete it faster by pacing yourself rather than splitting it up into a series of sprints and rests; in the same vein, pitstops are very costly and to be

avoided even if you have to give up a chunk of lap time.

But it's not just about the overall drop-off. The drivers will have to continue to be careful when following other cars for fear of accelerating the degradation. Because even though the wear isn't a problem and the tyres can go a long way physically, accelerated degradation is going to play havoc with lap times and tyre strategies.

You could argue that this is an overly negative interpretation of testing, but it's an inevitable consequence of taking this approach with the rules. More downforce creates more

turbulence, so it's harder to follow. Braking areas are a little shorter, and with more grip the cars will move around a little less and drivers can get away with being less precise. So you get fewer mistakes, fewer unexpected chances,

and you rely on opening the rear wing using the DRS even more than you did previously if you want to make a pass. But that should come as no surprise to anyone paying attention to the past quarter-century of grand prix racing.

If anything, the second pre-season test strengthened this perception. During the first test, as teams got a handle on the tyres and the cars, it was hoped that things would improve more in this area. But Renault driver Nico Hulkenberg was among those to revise his opinions.

"It's different to last week — following another car was tough and I could feel a good loss of downforce," says Hulkenberg. "Not just in the fast corners, but also in the low and medium-speed corners. At the moment, I would guess similar [downforce loss following another car]."

It's important to note that Barcelona has never been a good

**"The tyres are harder, but they still overheat. We'll still have degradation"**





Alonso is relishing the 2017 car's physicality



Epic title fight in 2010, but not a lot of racing

circuit for overtaking. Even in the DRS era, the braking zone into the first right-left has not been a straightforward place to get ahead of a rival without a significant performance advantage, so it's not all bad news. But in terms of overtaking, particularly what might be called 'proper' passing without DRS assistance, the only factors that could improve that are the fact that the tyres are a little more robust in terms of overheating and that a single lock-up won't ruin a set.

"If you had a front lock last year, the tyres were straight away destroyed and now it's not the case," says Haas driver Romain Grosjean, who locked up more than most last season. "Overheating was an issue when you were following another car and you wanted to go for an overtaking manoeuvre. You lose downforce, but if you lose downforce then you slide more, and if you slide more you overheat the tyres more and have no chance. You are still going to lose a big chunk of downforce, but if the tyre at least sticks and doesn't overheat then it gives you a chance."

So the upshot is that there are some gains. But the cost to each team of the changes and the new research-and-development paths they have had to take probably dwarfs the \$6 million figure needed to turn a severely injured astronaut into a superhuman. And while the cars are a bit quicker, the drivers are a bit happier, and we will at least see them a step closer to their limits, it's still not the magnitude of improvement F1 should have aspired to.

At least, unlike so many recent changes, these regulations are a step in the right direction. But as always, the main driving force behind good racing is having at least a couple of teams at the front with a similar performance level. If 2017 can deliver on that – and testing suggests Mercedes and Ferrari could be in that situation, with Red Bull as the wildcard – then it could be an outstanding season. But if that does happen, beware crediting too much of that to the new regulations. ❄

## What else is new?

CHANGES TO THE TYRES AND aerodynamic rules are just the most obvious differences for 2017. Here's a rundown of the key sporting-regulation changes.

### TYRE-CHOICE FREEZE

For the first four races of the season, teams will not be allowed to decide how many of each of the designated three slick tyre compounds (from the five available: ultra-soft, super-soft, soft, medium, hard) they have available for each driver.

### EXTRA INTERMEDIATES

Drivers will no longer have to bank on a wet Friday to receive an extra set of intermediate tyres. Should the FIA expect a "high" chance of rain in final practice on Saturday, all drivers will be given an extra set of inters even if Friday practice is bone dry.

### ENGINE DEVELOPMENT CHANGES

The token system limiting engine development has been dropped. But new limits are set on the weight, dimensions and material make-up of certain components. Minimum weights for the internal-combustion engine's crank assembly, plus the MGU-H and the MGU-K ancillaries, now apply, as does a total weight for the energy-recovery systems, which now can't be reduced in volume in-season for packaging reasons. Each cylinder head also has a maximum compression ratio.

### ENGINE SUPPLY

The FIA is keen on parity of engine

specification, wanting each make to avoid variance within a single year's engine package. It has thus mandated that manufacturers must supply customers with the same spec of engine that they use themselves. The cost of supply must also be €1m cheaper than in 2016. Old-spec engines are still allowed, hence Sauber's deal to run a '16 Ferrari.

### ENGINE USE

Drivers remain limited to using up to four power units without incurring grid penalties, but can no longer stockpile fresh engines by making several changes at one event, knowing the maximum penalty is a back-of-the-grid start. Only the last engine used in this scenario may be carried forward to the next race.

### FUEL

Only five different fuel formulations per competitor are permitted across the year, with just two allowed at any single race. The fuel limit has also been increased – from 100kg to 105kg – to allow for the extra drag created by this year's new cars.

### STANDING WET RESTARTS

Wet races will no longer restart behind the safety car. Cars will still circulate to clear the track (these laps count towards the race distance), but will then restart from a standing position on the grid, rather than performing a single-file rolling restart. If a race is stopped, it will restart behind the safety car without a standing start.



A lock-up should no longer mean the tyres are toast





# WILLIAMS RACE DAY HOSPITALITY & MUSEUM TOURS



## RACE DAY HOSPITALITY

Watch an F1 race live at the home of Williams. The Williams Conference Centre offers a unique way to experience the thrills of a Grand Prix with a live link up to the team at the track

## MUSEUM TOURS


Housed in the award-winning Williams Conference Centre is Sir Frank Williams' private Grand Prix Collection, the largest of its kind in the world, spanning the history of the team since 1978



**Gary Anderson's**

# Team by team

Autosport's technical expert examines the runners and riders

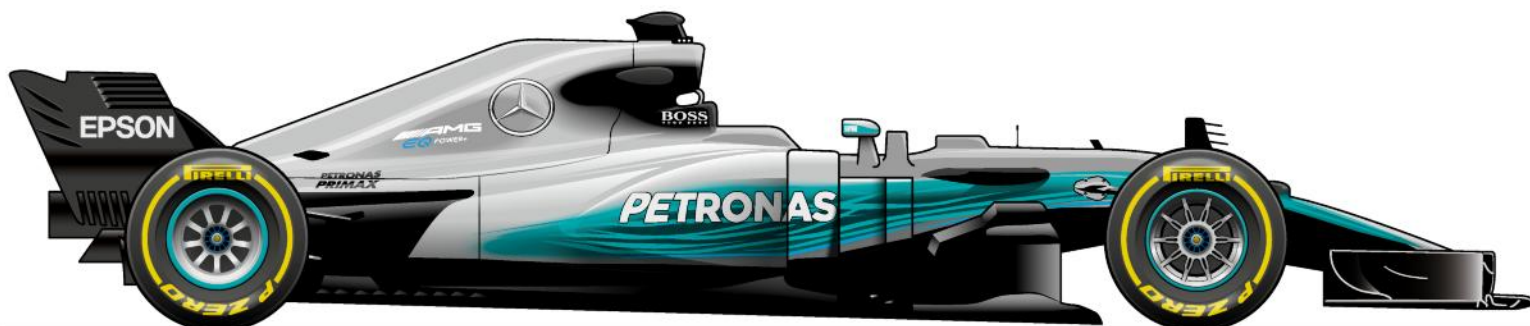
 @autosport



# MERCEDES

CAR **Mercedes W08** ENGINE **Mercedes M08**

The F1 benchmark once again starts the season as favourite, but the new challenges of 2017, and pre-season testing, suggest it may not be quite as easy for the Silver Arrows as the team chases a fourth straight crown



**STARTS 148 | FIRST GP FRANCE 1954 | WINS 64 | POLES 73 | FASTEST LAPS 47 | 2016 1ST**

**W**hen you've won all but eight races during a three-year period, there are very good reasons for that – so there's no doubt Mercedes is favourite going into this season. It has the budget, a three-time world champion driver, a strong power-unit package and technical strength in all areas. But no team is perfect, and the car I saw in testing appeared to have a slight understeer problem and may not have the kind of advantage that Mercedes has been used to.

Over the past three seasons the question that was asked on many occasions was, 'Is it the chassis or the engine that led to their domination?' In my opinion it was both, but at the first test at Barcelona the powerplant was the dominant factor and the chassis was lagging behind.

There is also the question of the change in technical leadership. The loss of Paddy Lowe seems to have happened rather easily, and it's

always dangerous when you've had so much success to make changes. You have to wonder what the reasons are, but in his place does come James Allison. He's been highly rated for some time, and with good reason. Some of the progress we've seen from Ferrari this year will have resulted from the direction he set. But he's also a very different kind of person from Lowe, so we'll have to see how he fits in with the team.

What will be interesting to see is how Mercedes reacts if it's under consistent pressure. There have been some strange calls made when it hasn't been plain sailing, and I think we could see the team tested in a different way this year.

When a team has dominated, you are always looking for reasons why that could end, and this year the changes both internally and to the rules are all there, waiting to trip up Mercedes.

I've no doubt there will be plenty more victories, but if it's close with Ferrari or Red Bull then we may see some hidden weaknesses exposed.



**LEWIS HAMILTON**



**VALTTERI BOTTAS**

<b>2nd</b>	2016 POSITION	<b>8th</b>
<b>32</b>	AGE	<b>27</b>
<b>188</b>	STARTS	<b>77</b>
<b>Australia 2007</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Australia 2013</b>
<b>1st (53 wins)</b>	BEST FINISH	<b>2nd</b>
<b>1st (61 poles)</b>	BEST QUALIFYING	<b>2nd</b>
<b>31</b>	FASTEST LAPS	<b>1</b>

## THE MAN TO BEAT

There's no sign of Hamilton getting bored of winning races, and championships. He'll see Nico Rosberg retiring as his chance to assert himself completely in the team and make up for missing out on the title last year. He's a great driver – the only significant criticism is that sometimes he doesn't seem to be as focused on the job as he should be. If things start to go against him, he needs to show he can deal with it. But he has the ability to dominate.

## A SURPRISE PACKAGE

When a driver steps up from a good car to a potentially great one, they have to show what they can do under the intense pressure of having to produce a result every weekend. Bottas has driven some fine races with Williams and he deserves this opportunity. He's also going to be more of a problem for Hamilton than some think. I always liked having younger, motivated drivers in the car and, with four seasons under his belt, Bottas is getting his big chance at the right time.





# RED BULL

CAR **Red Bull RB13** ENGINE **Renault RE17**

Red Bull ended last year on form, and the new regulations for 2017 seemed perfect for the title-winning team to move back to the front. But initial signs have been underwhelming – is there more to come?



**STARTS 224 | FIRST GP AUSTRALIA 2005 | WINS 52 | POLES 58 | FASTEST LAPS 52 | 2016 2ND**

**T**he worry is that it could be the same old story this year for Red Bull – a good car let down by a Renault engine that isn't quite up to the mark. I'm still expecting to see more aerodynamic developments on the car for the Australian Grand Prix, but even then it looks like Red Bull isn't going to be in as strong a position as everyone had hoped over the winter.

Based on testing form, Red Bull looks to be going into the season third, a few tenths behind Mercedes and Ferrari. On the positive side, the talk over the past few months has been of the team getting stronger as the campaign goes on, so you could be generous and say everything is going to plan. But how often do we see teams starting behind and making up the deficit as the season progresses? Mercedes and Ferrari will not stand still.

But for F1's sake, we need to see Red Bull doing well. It has an outstanding driver line-up – arguably the best on the grid – with Max Verstappen having

proved over the past couple of years that age is just a number, and Daniel Ricciardo showing he's a strong all-round package. Another year of not being able to challenge for wins every race weekend would be a waste of both.

In testing, the power delivery didn't look perfect, which is a concern, but that seemed to be the package's only obvious weakness. If Renault can continue tackling its issues, and design guru Adrian Newey can find a little more downforce with some last-minute parts I have no doubt will be jetted out to Melbourne at the last minute, then Red Bull will be in good shape in Australia. If the gains aren't enough, then the team will be in a similar position to the one it's been in for the past few years.

But if the car is anywhere near the front, we know Red Bull is sharp enough to take it the next step and fight for championships and wins. Let's hope the team can make it a three-way fight. A Hamilton-Vettel-Ricciardo-Verstappen battle would be one to behold.



**DANIEL RICCIARDO**



**MAX VERSTAPPEN**

<b>3rd</b>	2016 POSITION	<b>5th</b>
<b>27</b>	AGE	<b>19</b>
<b>109</b>	STARTS	<b>40</b>
<b>Great Britain 2011</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Australia 2015</b>
<b>1st (4 wins)</b>	BEST FINISH	<b>1st (1 win)</b>
<b>1st (1 pole)</b>	BEST QUALIFYING	<b>2nd</b>
<b>8</b>	FASTEST LAPS	<b>1</b>

## READY TO CHALLENGE

This is a driver ready, able and determined to fight for the world championship. He's shown he can qualify and race well, and there's no question he has the desire, but he has two problems. Firstly, he has Max Verstappen on the other side of the garage. Secondly, the Red Bull may not be the car he needs to fight for the title, at least at the start of the season. If things don't go well, I suspect he'll get frustrated; but if they do, I'm sure he'll seize his opportunity.

## THE NEXT GREAT

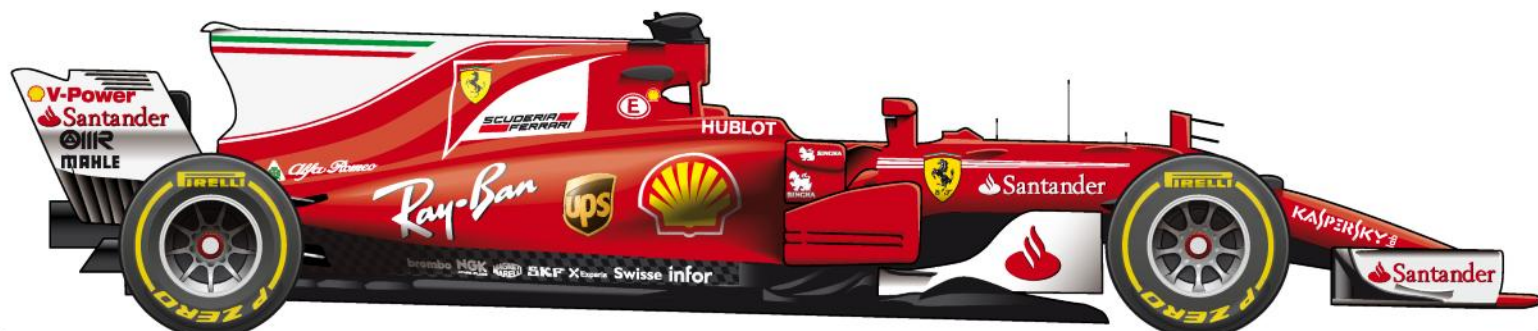
The days when everyone was asking what Red Bull was thinking, throwing him into Toro Rosso in 2015 and then promoting him, have gone. Verstappen is doing what all great young drivers do: upsetting the established stars, getting some great results and showing that, if you are good enough, you are old enough. If the car is up to it there's no doubt Verstappen is ready to win a title, provided he doesn't get himself into too many scrapes.



# FERRARI

CAR **Ferrari SF70H** ENGINE **Ferrari 062**

After being one of the biggest disappointments of 2016, Ferrari was one of the success stories of pre-season testing. Now it's time to prove it can do more than just win the 'winter world championship'



**STARTS 928 | FIRST GP MONACO 1950 | WINS 224 | POLES 208 | FASTEST LAPS 237 | 2016 3RD**

**W**hat we saw from Ferrari during testing was very encouraging. The car looked superb on track, good under braking, on turn-in, mid-corner, and there were no obvious traction problems on corner exit. There's no doubt that, after a very difficult 2016, a good step has been made. The question is: is it enough?

We will probably get part of the answer in Melbourne, when teams reveal their start-of-season packages. But based on pre-season, things are looking encouraging for Ferrari, which appeared at least to be on a par with Mercedes. The lap times are one thing, but the fact that the car looked painted to the road in all conditions is not something you can create purely by running light.

The pace is reward for an aggressive aerodynamic approach, particularly around the bargeboard/turning-vane area. My only question about that is how complex it is and therefore how

sensitive it may be to conditions. So far we've only seen the car run in the relative cool of Barcelona, but Ferrari struggled in higher temperatures last year so it could be very different when things get hot.

If the car is as good as it looks, the next question is whether the team is up to it strategically. Last year we saw Ferrari throwing away too many good positions and making strange calls that made little sense. And losing James Allison was not a good thing; you have to ask whether some of the effectiveness of this car was a result of what he put in place before he left, and therefore whether it's sustainable. They have some very clever people at Maranello; someone needs to sweep emotion aside and let them get on with their jobs.

Ferrari has appeared to be a team hit by politics in the past couple of years. What it needs is a strong leader willing to lay down the law and not just blame individuals, and it's possible that the leadership at Ferrari is what could let it down even from a good technical base.



**SEBASTIAN VETTEL**



**KIMI RAIKKONEN**

<b>4th</b>	2016 POSITION	<b>6th</b>
<b>29</b>	AGE	<b>37</b>
<b>178</b>	STARTS	<b>251</b>
<b>USA 2007</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Australia 2001</b>
<b>1st (42 wins)</b>	BEST FINISH	<b>1st (20 wins)</b>
<b>1st (46 poles)</b>	BEST QUALIFYING	<b>1st (16 poles)</b>
<b>28</b>	FASTEST LAPS	<b>43</b>

## NEEDING A REVIVAL

Things started so well for Vettel at Ferrari in 2015, but last year he was clearly not happy and certainly wasn't driving to the maximum of his ability. If the Ferrari is able to challenge Mercedes, there are a few doubts about whether the old hunger is still there. So if the car is good, you'd hope last year will become a distant memory and Vettel can focus on getting the best out of it. But if there are still problems, the season could go the other way.

## ENIGMATIC VETERAN

Nobody has any doubts about how good Raikkonen can be, but it's hard to understand his performances. Last year was the best of his second stint at Ferrari, and his consistency in the second half of the season was surprising. I've always favoured having young, motivated drivers who want to get the best possible results no matter what the situation, and I'm not sure Raikkonen is the driver Ferrari needs. But he still could support Vettel effectively.

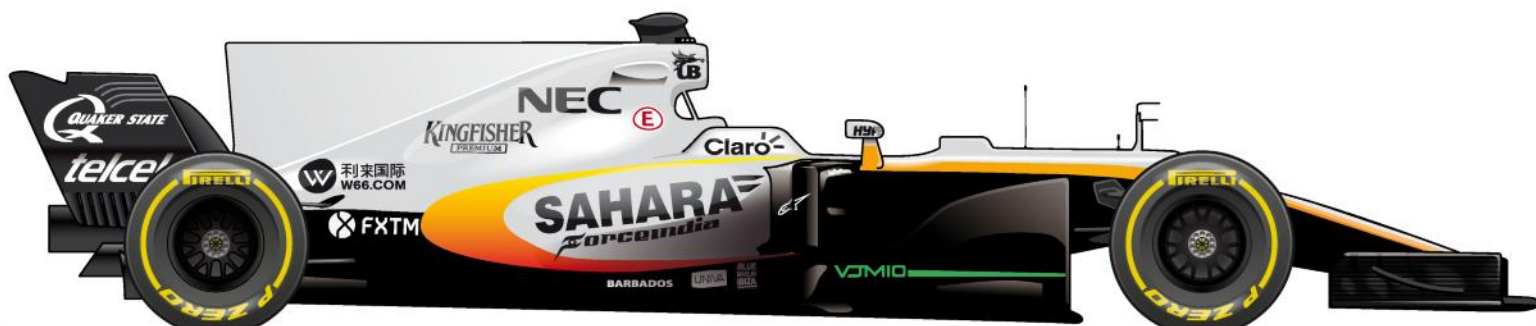




# FORCE INDIA

CAR **Force India VJM10** ENGINE **Mercedes M08**

This efficient squad has its work cut out to maintain its giant-killing level of performance, but there's no reason to think it can't once again be near the front of the battle behind Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull



**STARTS 171 | FIRST GP AUSTRALIA 2008 | BEST FINISH 2ND | POLES 1 | FASTEST LAPS 4 | 2016 4TH**

**A**fter climbing to fourth in the championship last year, the team's hopes should be to keep moving forward, but the reality is that Force India isn't going to be in a position to challenge the big three this time.

It's in the thick of the battle for fourth place and if it can hold on to that, and perhaps even close the big points gap to the top three, then that will be a very good return for a team operating on limited resources. But judging from testing that won't be easy, with so many teams in that midfield battle.

Where Force India excels is in choosing the right development path and sticking to it. That good decision-making, led by Andrew Green (who I worked with right at the start of this team in its Jordan guise over 25 years ago), is what allows it to get the most out of its budget and facilities. That's what makes it possible to beat teams like Renault and McLaren.

What Force India does need to do is ensure that it delivers better

consistency. That's the only real criticism of the team. There have been plenty of times when it has got big results, but to be the standout best of the rest you need to be there in Q3 all the time, locking out the fourth row and bagging regular double points finishes. This is an area the team has improved on over the years, but there is still room for another step.

One area of consistent strength, which could be a big help if it's again battling with Williams for fourth, is the driver line-up. There are drivers who would pay big money for these seats, but Force India has always ensured that, even in the case of a driver like Sergio Perez, who does bring significant backing, the first priority is that they are capable of getting the results.

The change in regulations will have taken a toll on the development budget, so it will be important that what Force India does have in the pipeline works well. But this team has managed to do well in those circumstances before, and can do it again.



**SERGIO PEREZ**



**ESTEBAN OCON**

<b>7th</b>	2016 POSITION	<b>23rd</b>
<b>27</b>	AGE	<b>20</b>
<b>114</b>	STARTS	<b>9</b>
<b>Australia 2011</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Belgium 2016</b>
<b>2nd</b>	BEST FINISH	<b>12th</b>
<b>4th</b>	BEST QUALIFYING	<b>17th</b>
<b>3</b>	FASTEST LAPS	<b>0</b>

## A KEY ASSET

Perez has thrived at Force India, and he can be relied upon to score points consistently and pick up big results when they're on the table. He's gone through the difficult times, particularly at McLaren, and proved he's able to learn from his mistakes. The new regulations may not allow his tyre-management strength to be so significant, but he's a quick driver who has proved he can hold his own and will enjoy being the clear lead driver for the first time.

## A DEVELOPING ACE

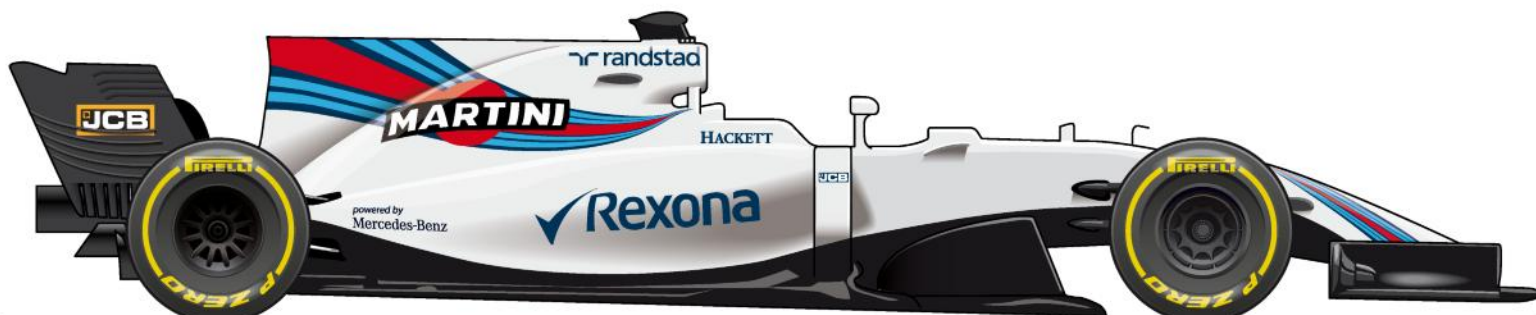
It was difficult to see too much from Ocon during his half-season with Manor, but up against a strong teammate he showed well, even if he was a bit inconsistent. He's rated highly, and Force India opted for him over fellow Mercedes junior Pascal Wehrlein. Now in a car capable of scoring points consistently, he needs to show that he's capable of doing the same in a part of the field that is likely to be very competitive.



# WILLIAMS

CAR **Williams FW40** ENGINE **Mercedes M08**

The famous team appears to have built a solid performer for the new regulations, but is the driver line-up strong enough given how close the midfield battle for points is likely to be this season?



**\*STARTS 646 | FIRST GP SPAIN 1977 | WINS 114 | POLES 127 | FASTEST LAPS 131 | 2016 5TH**

\*since 1977 (WGPE)

After making a great step forward last time the rules changed in 2014, Williams has slowly slid back from sometimes giving Mercedes something to think about to being in the midfield. This rule change is not as big, but getting the best from these bigger Pirelli tyres will be no easy feat. While it's clearly not up there with the big three, Williams is still looking strong in the battle for fourth.

There have been plenty of changes over the winter. Technical chief Pat Symonds left in December, with Paddy Lowe joining the team this month. That will always cause some disruption, and it will be interesting to see Williams progress in terms of how it develops and makes the best out of its car.

There seemed to be problems last year with aerodynamic understanding. As you work more on the tiny detail of the aero, you need to know exactly why you are doing things. That seems to be where Williams has had some problems, even though, in the first year of the new

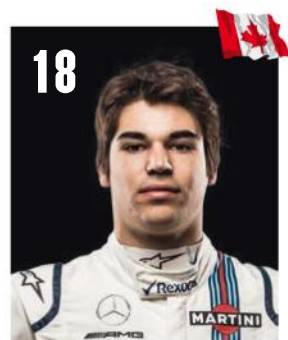
regulations when things weren't quite so precise, it had a good development rate.

But the car does look OK and certainly should be able to qualify and race in the top 10, even if it's about fighting for the fourth row rather than the front.

With Felipe Massa coming out of retirement, and rookie Lance Stroll joining, you have to ask if the driver line-up will make the most of the car. Both have ability, but are at either ends of their careers. What a team needs is a driver who wrings the neck of the car every weekend — we'll see if these two are able to do that.

The other key question is whether the team gets the most out of it. Last year Williams finished behind Force India, which seems to be sharper when it comes to making the right strategic calls and maximising its results. So that's another area that needs to improve.

With such a potentially tight midfield bunch, those two possible weaknesses could make the difference between fourth in the championship and eighth.



**LANCE STROLL**



**FELIPE MASSA**

N/A	2016 POSITION	11th
18	AGE	35
0	STARTS	250
N/A	FIRST GP	Australia 2002
N/A	BEST FINISH	1st (11 wins)
N/A	BEST QUALIFYING	1st (16 poles)
N/A	FASTEST LAPS	15

## GIVE HIM A CHANCE

There are plenty of people criticising Stroll because of his background and the cash that has gone into his career, but the fact is he won nearly half the races in European F3 last year and has made the most of his opportunities. Yes, he had a few offs in the first test, but he's 18 so let's actually give him a chance to settle in and show what he's really made of. Money doesn't make you fast, so let's judge him by his performances and his results as we would any other driver.

## NOT LONG AWAY

His retirement wasn't very long, but even so it's rarely a good thing when a driver comes back like this. Williams replaced Massa, and he couldn't find a competitive seat elsewhere, so he's not exactly first choice. Last year there were times when he seemed to be winding down. Although he also had some good moments, he's a downgrade from Valtteri Bottas. Maybe you could argue he will perform better in what is a 'bonus' year.

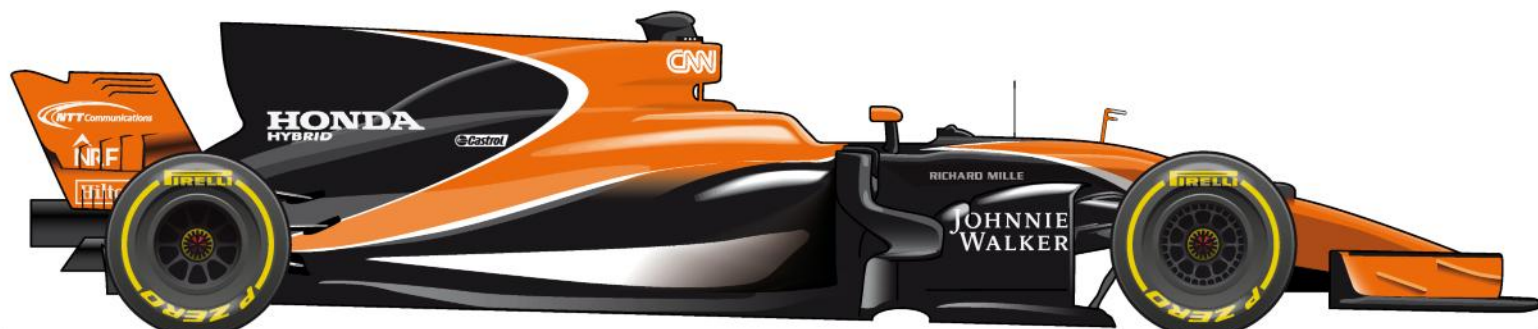




# McLAREN

CAR **McLaren MCL32** ENGINE **Honda RA617H**

Hopes that the McLaren-Honda partnership was gradually moving towards the front appear to have been dashed by poor pace and reliability in testing. And it seems the engine isn't the only problem



**STARTS 801 | FIRST GP MONACO 1966 | WINS 182 | POLES 155 | FASTEST LAPS 153 | 2016 6TH**

**M**cLaren hasn't always been delighted by my criticism of its progress, but all I can say is look at the performance of the car in testing. The fastest lap was 2.714 seconds off the quickest, there were too many technical problems and on track it didn't look like a good car with a bad engine – it looked like it wasn't very good all-round. So there are clearly problems on McLaren's side as well as Honda's.

We've been waiting since 2015 for McLaren-Honda to get its act together, and, unless there is a miracle between the end of testing and the Australian Grand Prix, it's got a long way to go this year. Honda has been blamed for most of the problems, and there are certainly weaknesses there, but you also have to ask what part McLaren is playing in this. Could it do better?

I've worked with Honda in the past and, if you are very clear with your objectives and feedback, and work with them to find the solutions,

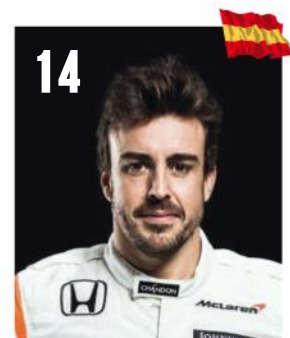
you can make progress. But you do need to be willing to make your point and, both in its dealings with Honda and internally, McLaren needs someone willing to bang the table and make everyone involved look closely at what they are doing and fix it.

McLaren hasn't won a race since 2012. And when it did have the best engine in its last season with Mercedes three years ago, it was only its second-best customer team, behind Williams and just ahead of Force India. So we can't pretend this is a team making good cars let down by the engine. There are some core problems to be addressed.

We can only judge the team by its results. And, on current form, even matching last season's level seems to be a long shot. McLaren-Honda at the very least needs to be winning the battle for fourth and should be snapping at the heels of the big three. If it can't recover this year, you have to ask if it ever will.



**STOFFEL VANDOORNE**



**FERNANDO ALONSO**

<b>20th</b>	2016 POSITION	<b>10th</b>
<b>24</b>	AGE	<b>35</b>
<b>1</b>	STARTS	<b>272</b>
<b>Bahrain 2016</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Australia 2001</b>
<b>10th</b>	BEST FINISH	<b>1st (32 wins)</b>
<b>12th</b>	BEST QUALIFYING	<b>1st (22 poles)</b>
<b>0</b>	FASTEST LAPS	<b>22</b>

## FRUSTRATED GREAT

This could be an interesting year for Alonso, and not for the right reasons. He's not been afraid to show his feelings with McLaren and Honda over the past couple of years, but that's nothing compared to how unhappy he will be if things don't turn around fast. Alonso is one of the best, but there are times when he gets frustrated and doesn't show his talent. If he's going to waste another year battling for minor points, I can't see him putting up with it.

## THE STAR ROOKIE

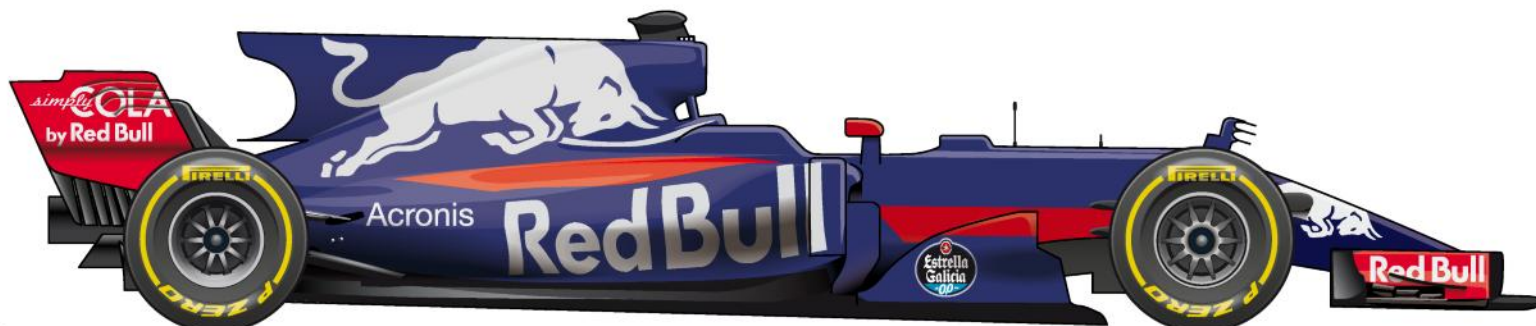
Vandoorne would have hoped for better pre-season testing, and a stronger car, for his first season in F1 after that fine debut drive in Bahrain last year. But he will be motivated and just has to approach it with the mindset of getting the best out of what he has and doing well compared to Alonso. If he can do that, it should not do his reputation too much harm. It's going to be a long, hard season, but it's up to him to show what he can do in tricky circumstances.



# TORO ROSSO

CAR **Toro Rosso STR12** ENGINE **Renault RE17**

Red Bull's 'other' team has switched back to Renault power for 2017 and produced arguably the best-looking car for the new rules as it strives to move forward again after a difficult end to last year



**STARTS 206 | FIRST GP BAHRAIN 2006 | WINS 1 | POLES 1 | FASTEST LAPS 1 | 2016 7TH**

**R**ed Bull's second team has been doing a good job in recent years on limited resources, and its major weakness from last season – using a year-old engine – has been eliminated. That said, the move from Ferrari to Renault power may bring its own problems.

Last year's car was compromised by the lateness of the switch to Ferrari power, and inevitably changing to Renault will have created a few of its own challenges. Not least among those is that the Renault engine has not been without its troubles during testing.

Technical director James Key has a good handle on decision-making and that's why there have been occasions in recent years when Toro Rosso has been closer to Red Bull than might have been expected, certainly at the start of the season, before slipping back. Toro Rosso is relatively strong aerodynamically and that, combined with Key setting the right direction – and a bit of good fortune – could

make it a contender for best of the rest behind the big three.

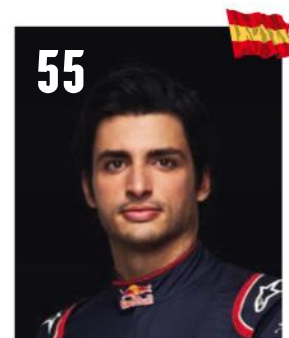
But testing has not gone perfectly and there seem to be a few problems. While Toro Rosso is in the big group from fourth place back, we haven't seen as much from it as from some of its rivals. So going into the season, expectations are for it to start off very much mid-pack.

Toro Rosso also has an unusually experienced driver line-up. As Red Bull's junior team, it's used to having young drivers, but the combined total of five seasons in F1 for Daniil Kvyat and Carlos Sainz means it has drivers who can be expected to deliver consistently and keep the mistakes to a minimum.

If the team can continue to get stronger as the season goes on – something that will be helped compared to last year thanks to the up-to-date engine – then it should be able to score points consistently and maybe spring the odd surprise, especially with the ever-improving talent of Sainz at the wheel.



**DANIIL KVIAT**



**CARLOS SAINZ**

14th	2016 POSITION	12th
22	AGE	22
57	STARTS	40
<b>Australia 2014</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Australia 2015</b>
2nd	BEST FINISH	6th
4th	BEST QUALIFYING	5th
1	FASTEST LAPS	0

## TIME TO DELIVER

Is Kvyat lucky to still be in F1 given his struggles last year? Probably, but he has been kept on for a reason and you'd hope he now has the experience to deal with his situation. He's certainly fast, and he's experienced some highs and very low points in F1. Now is the time when he has to prove he belongs in F1, or surely he is going to run out of chances. His task won't be made easier by being up against Sainz, so this could be another challenging year.

## UNDERRATED STAR

Sainz has gone from strength to strength since Max Verstappen left the team, to the point where he's looking like a very real contender either for promotion to Red Bull or another big team. He's got qualifying pace and has delivered some very good races, particularly in the closing stages of last season when the disadvantage of the old-spec Ferrari engine was really hurting. If he can take another step, Toro Rosso will have a strong team leader.

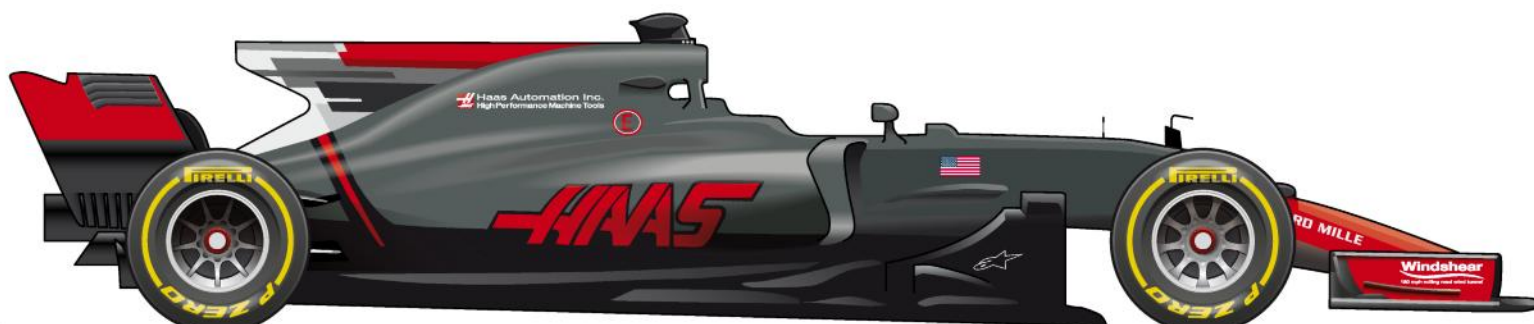




# HAAS

CAR **Haas VF-17** ENGINE **Ferrari 062**

That tricky first season was dealt with very well by the new American team last year. Now things get really tough, but the signs are that Haas will be in the mix of the intense midfield battle



**STARTS 21 | FIRST GP AUSTRALIA 2016 | BEST FINISH 5TH | BEST QUALIFYING 7TH | FASTEST LAPS 0 | 2016 8TH**

**D**oing well in your first season, when you've been able to focus completely on your car in the build-up to coming into F1, is one thing. But being able to deliver a good car in the second year, on which you have to do all the work while trying to get the best out of your existing machine, is a far bigger challenge. But the signs from testing are that Haas has done a good job and goes into 2017 with a car capable of being a contender in the big midfield battle from fourth back.

Haas has certainly got a very sensible set-up for what is still a small team. It has a technical partnership with Ferrari, and Dallara does its design work, which can leave the core team to concentrate on getting the best out of the package. That said, I am surprised how similar the design concept of the turning vane/ bargeboard area is to the Ferrari, given that no other teams have gone this way. But it could be a coincidence.

The main challenge for Haas is showing that it can avoid the problems

of last year. There's a lot to learn for a new team, and there were times when it couldn't seem to recover from a bad session and didn't understand how to solve a problem — such as the braking issues we saw that really seemed to upset Romain Grosjean — that had arisen. That partly seems to have been down to not being able to learn from the data quickly enough. That's to be expected in the circumstances, but in year two, with all that experience, consistency has to be the aim.

If Haas can match or improve on its eighth place in the constructors' championship, it will be a good return for year two. And judging by the promise the car showed in testing, there's every chance it can be a consistent points finisher.

Haas also has a strong driver line-up in Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen, two drivers with ability and something to prove, so all the ingredients are there for a decent year. That could be vital up against Williams and Force India.



**ROMAIN GROSJEAN**



**KEVIN MAGNUSSEN**

13th	2016 POSITION	16th
30	AGE	24
102	STARTS	40
<b>Europe 2009</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Australia 2014</b>
2nd	BEST FINISH	2nd
2nd	BEST QUALIFYING	4th
1	FASTEST LAPS	0

## MAKE THE BEST OF IT

There are two sides to Grosjean. He's very fast and, as he showed with some good results in the early races last year, if there is an opportunity to deliver, he will. But on the other hand there are times when he seems to ask the car to do things he can't do. As we saw with the braking problems last year, sometimes Grosjean doesn't react well to situations not being right. Sometimes you just have to make do with what you have on race day.

## THIRD TIME LUCKY?

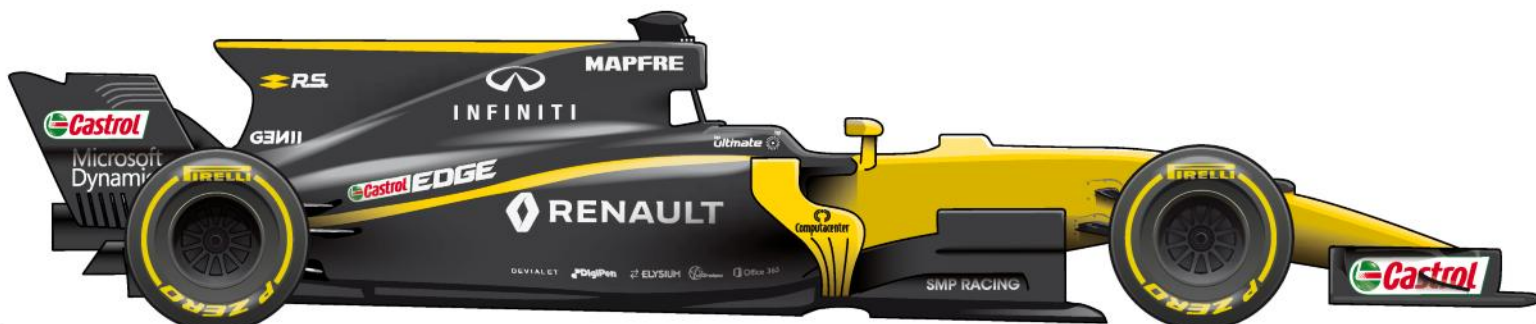
This is Magnussen's third team in three full seasons racing in F1. McLaren decided Stoffel Vandoorne was the better prospect and Renault wasn't confident enough to offer him the security that Haas has. Magnussen is certainly a quick driver and he's capable of some very good races, but the fact that both of his previous teams in F1 had reservations about his approach can't be a coincidence. He needs to be willing to work hard, or this could be his last chance.



# RENAULT

CAR **Renault RS17** ENGINE **Renault RE17**

The first year of Renault's return as a constructor was always going to be tough and the expectation is for a big improvement this season. Early signs are encouraging and Nico Hulkenberg should be a real asset



**\*STARTS 321 | FIRST GP GREAT BRITAIN 1977 | WINS 35 | POLES 51 | FASTEST LAPS 31 | 2016 9TH**

\*Renault chassis only

**L**ast year was a strange one for Renault, with the late takeover meaning that it was never going to be a strong season. It made sense to just let 2016 go and focus on '17 as the real first campaign for this 'new' Renault team. It's on this year that we can judge the effectiveness of the work done in '16.

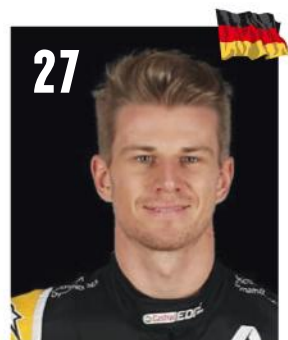
On the positive side, from watching Barcelona testing the car is obviously an improvement. Last year's car didn't respond well to bumps and kerbs and sometimes it looked like all the drivers could do was hang on. This year's car is far more usable and, while it's not up there with the best, it's certainly able to hold its own in the big middle pack.

The big question is whether the power-unit package is up to it, which is the same problem Red Bull and Toro Rosso have. During testing there were all sorts of difficulties, particularly with the ERS system, and right now you wouldn't bet the house on many Renault-powered cars finishing races consistently at the start of the season.

If the works team has a good base car to build upon, then they can just get on with it and let what should be a different department sort out the engine problems. I think the chassis side can just keep their heads down and allow Red Bull to apply the pressure on the powerplant side of the company. After all, it's going to be Red Bull that Renault/Enstone will be judged against.

Away from the track, it's clear things are building up nicely. Enstone in its various guises over the years has always had quality, and competitiveness comes and goes with levels of investment. So, by getting back good people to replace those who it lost over the years and integrating them with the top-line personnel that had remained, there is potential. The facilities are also being improved, so this is a team that could get to the front in a few years.

For now, it's in the midfield battle and I'd expect it to be getting towards the front of that. It's a factory team and should be able to beat the independents even early on in its rebuilding process.



**NICO  
HULKENBERG**



**JOLYON  
PALMER**

<b>9th</b>	2016 POSITION	<b>18th</b>
<b>29</b>	AGE	<b>26</b>
<b>115</b>	STARTS	<b>20</b>
<b>Bahrain 2010</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Australia 2016</b>
<b>4th</b>	BEST FINISH	<b>10th</b>
<b>1st (1 pole)</b>	BEST QUALIFYING	<b>13th</b>
<b>2</b>	FASTEST LAPS	<b>0</b>

## THE HARD WAY

I believe Hulkenberg is still among the best drivers on the grid, even though he's never finished on the podium and his performances have been a bit erratic over the past couple of years. A chance at one of the established top teams has passed him by, so now he has to do it the hard way with a Renault squad that should be on the up. He's at that point where either he has to show he's still got that desire, or that he's just accepted being in a midfield car.

## A SECOND CHANCE

Palmer didn't have a great start to last year, but he kept his head down and his performances became stronger. In a difficult car and up against a more experienced team-mate, that was a good effort. Even though he wasn't Renault's first choice for 2017, he's earned a second chance and it will be interesting to see how he builds upon last year. But he's got a tough challenge in Hulkenberg and it looks like he's going to have to prove himself all over again.

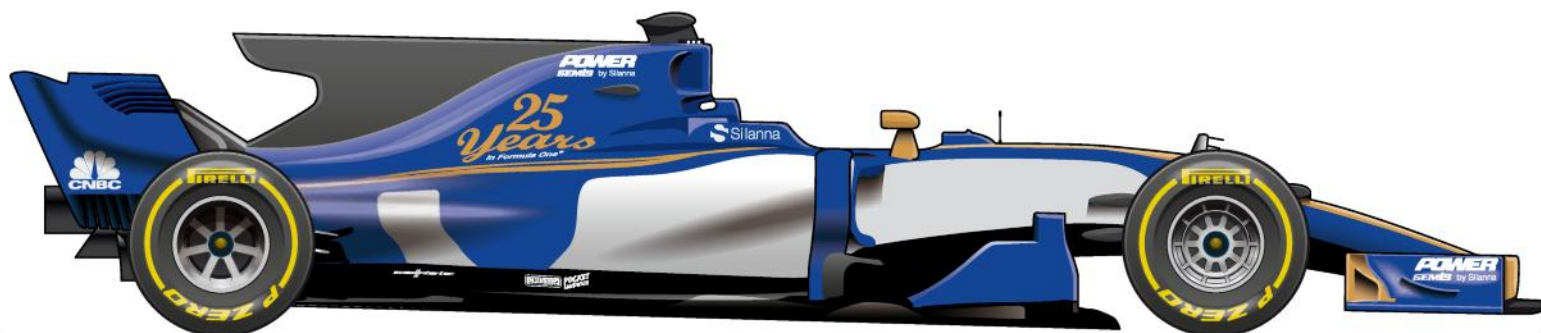




# SAUBER

CAR **Sauber C36** ENGINE **Ferrari 061**

New investment saved Sauber at the end of last season and now the rebuilding process begins. Initial indications are that its new challenger is solid but unspectacular, which could leave it at the back



**\*STARTS 421 | FIRST GP SOUTH AFRICA 1993 | WINS 1 | POLES 1 | FASTEST LAPS 5 | 2016 10TH**

\* includes BMW Sauber from 2006-09

**O**n the one hand, Sauber is a team that's rebuilding after some difficult years now it has new investment from Longbow Finance, so you have to make some allowances. On the other, it's made questionable choices. Using the 2016 Ferrari engine package is only going to hold it back as the season progresses.

The team says this is to help with knowing the parameters for packaging to help it focus on the car design, which is a debatable position to take given that the gains you'll get from an up-to-date engine will likely outweigh that. And even if the decision had to be made earlier, there's always a way with the right commitment to change things.

It's all going to add up to a difficult year for Sauber although, with Manor gone and its place in the top 10 of the constructors' championship assured, that isn't as costly as it might have been. In testing, the car looked fine, but it also performed exactly as you would expect a back-of-the-grid car

to do. It was well balanced, but just didn't have the overall grip to carry the same speed in the corners as other cars. That means this is going to be a season of grabbing the odd points finish when circumstances allow.

What really matters is what's going on in the background in terms of getting the right people in to rebuild the team's capacity and laying the foundations for the next few years. Sauber has good facilities, but since BMW's withdrawal at the end of 2009 it has found it difficult to use them to good effect. Losing people like Mark Smith, who left the team last year, isn't great and the key will be to get some stability into the technical leadership.

Last year, we didn't see much in the way of upgrades — at least not until the new investment came in. So hopefully we'll see some steps during the year that prove the new ownership is serious about getting Sauber back to the level where it's a consistently strong midfield runner.



**MARCUS ERICSSON**



**PASCAL WEHRLEIN**

<b>22nd</b>	2016 POSITION	<b>19th</b>
<b>26</b>	AGE	<b>22</b>
<b>56</b>	STARTS	<b>21</b>
<b>Australia 2014</b>	FIRST GP	<b>Australia 2016</b>
<b>8th</b>	BEST FINISH	<b>10th</b>
<b>9th</b>	BEST QUALIFYING	<b>12th</b>
<b>0</b>	FASTEST LAPS	<b>0</b>

## A DIFFICULT JOB

Ericsson is a better driver than he was able to show during his first year in F1 in 2014 with Caterham, but I doubt he's ever going to be a championship contender. On his day he's fast, and overall last year he was more impressive than team-mate Felipe Nasr, even though he didn't score any points. There were still a few bad days, but his consistency was better than in previous seasons. He's still going to have his work cut out up against Wehrlein.

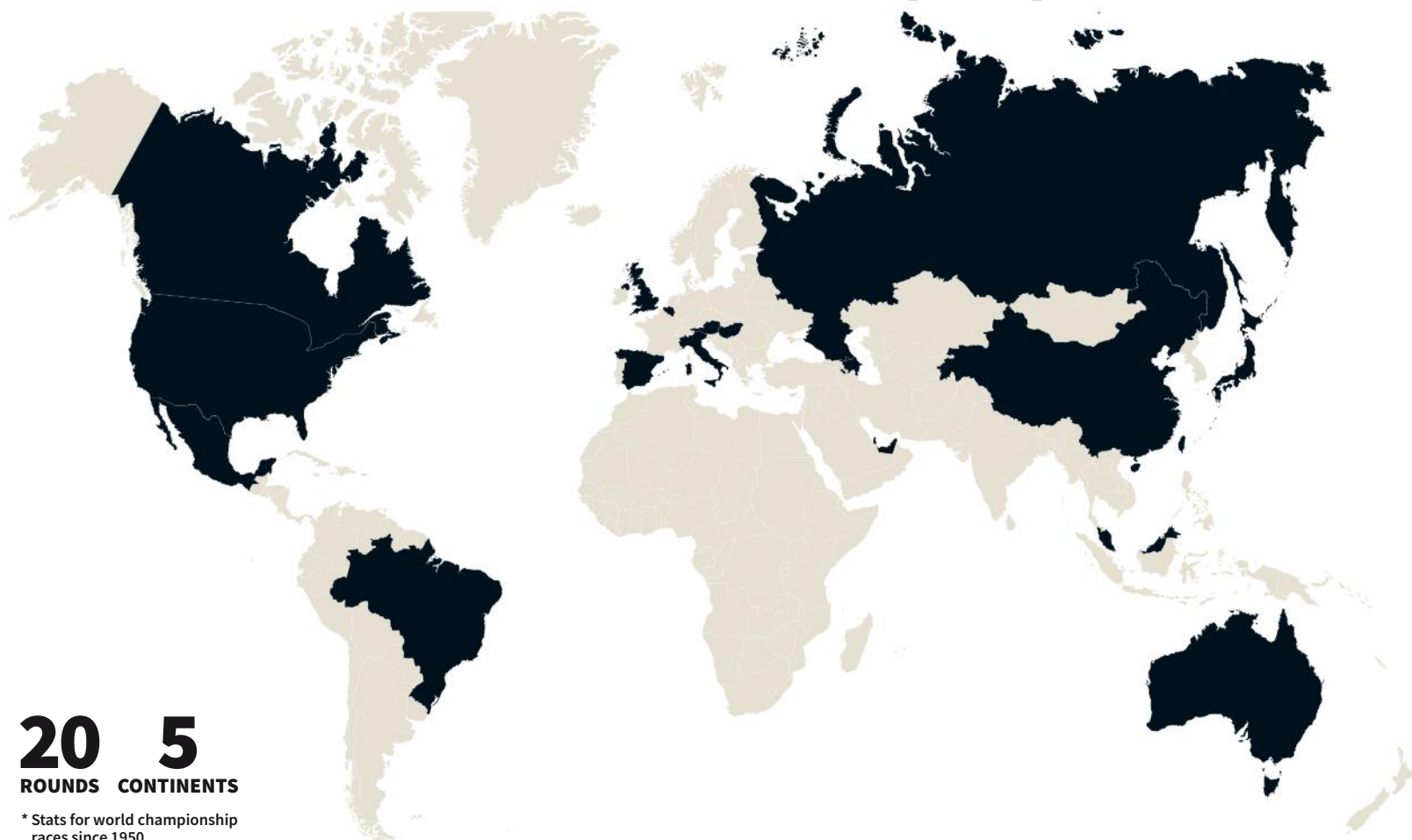
## THE NEW LEADER?

He looked an impressive young driver last season, although the fact that there are so many questions about his attitude suggests he has a bit to improve on when it comes to working with people. He's certainly quick and showed with Manor that he's capable of fine performances in poor machinery. Wehrlein needs to build on that and show he is willing to learn from the mistakes of 2016. I expect him to become the team's lead driver.



# Track guide

All the essential information\* you need to know for the 20 rounds of the 2017 Formula 1 World Championship



**20** **5**  
ROUNDS CONTINENTS

\* Stats for world championship races since 1950



## Australia

**ROUND 1/20**  
Albert Park, March 24-26



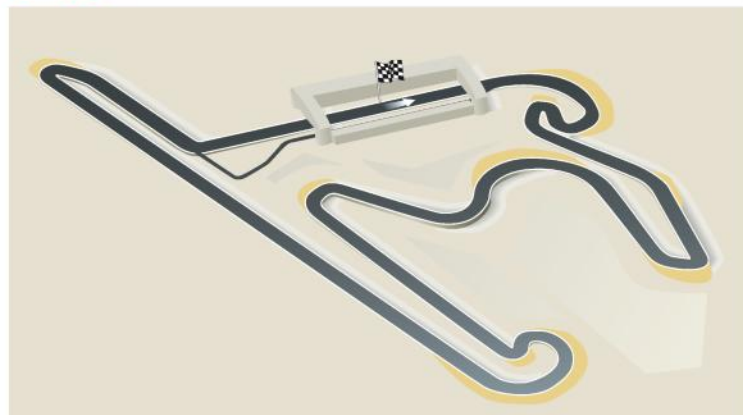
**FIRST GP** 1996  
**GPs HELD** 21  
**LAPS** 58  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.295 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 191.118 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 9  
**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg  
**LAP RECORD** 1m24.125s, Michael Schumacher, 2004  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 6am BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1



## China

**ROUND 2/20**  
Shanghai International Circuit, April 7-9



**FIRST GP** 2004  
**GPs HELD** 13  
**LAPS** 56  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.387 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 189.559 miles

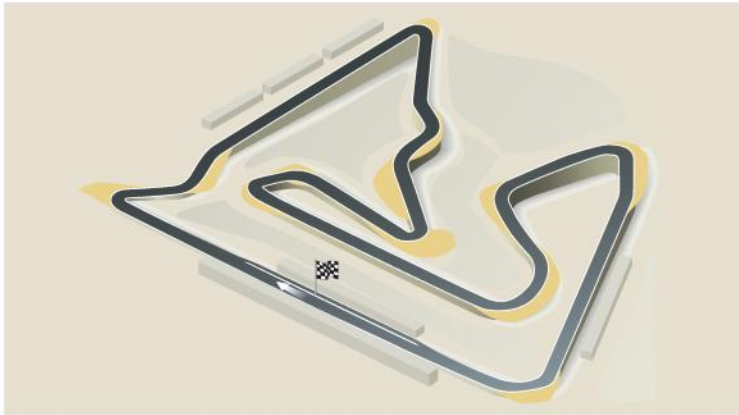
**WINNERS FROM POLE** 8  
**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg  
**LAP RECORD** 1m32.238s, Michael Schumacher, 2004  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 7am BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1





## Bahrain

**ROUND 3/20**  
Bahrain International Circuit, April 14-16



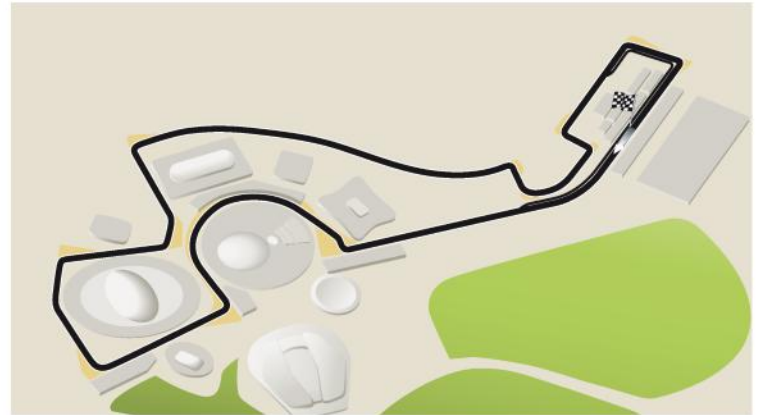
**FIRST GP** 2004  
**GPs HELD** 12  
**LAPS** 57  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.363 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 191.530 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 5  
**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg  
**LAP RECORD** 1m31.447s, Pedro de la Rosa, 2005  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 4pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4



## Russia

**ROUND 4/20**  
Sochi Autodrom, April 28-30



**FIRST GP** 2014  
**GPs HELD** 3  
**LAPS** 53  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.634 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 192.467 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 2  
**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg  
**LAP RECORD** 1m39.094s, Nico Rosberg, 2016  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4



## Spain

**ROUND 5/20**  
Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, May 12-14



**FIRST GP** 1991  
**GPs HELD** 26  
**LAPS** 66  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 2.892 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 190.826 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 19  
**2016 WINNER** Max Verstappen  
**LAP RECORD** 1m21.670s, Kimi Raikkonen, 2008  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1



## Monaco

**ROUND 6/20**  
Circuit de Monaco, May 25-28



**FIRST GP** 1950  
**GPs HELD** 63  
**LAPS** 78  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 2.074 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 161.734 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 28  
**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton  
**LAP RECORD** 1m17.939s, Lewis Hamilton, 2016  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4



## Canada

**ROUND 7/20**  
Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, June 9-11



**FIRST GP** 1978  
**GPs HELD** 37  
**LAPS** 70  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 2.710 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 189.686 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 17  
**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton  
**LAP RECORD** 1m13.622s, Rubens Barrichello, 2004  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 7pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1



## Azerbaijan

**ROUND 8/20**  
Baku City Circuit, June 23-25



**FIRST GP** 2016  
**GPs HELD** 1  
**LAPS** 51  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.730 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 190.170 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 1  
**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg  
**LAP RECORD** 1m46.485s, Nico Rosberg, 2016  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 2pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4



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## Austria

**ROUND 9/20**  
Red Bull Ring, July 7-9



**FIRST GP** 1970  
**GPs HELD** 28  
**LAPS** 71  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 2.688 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 190.773 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 8  
**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton  
**LAP RECORD** 1m08.337s, Michael Schumacher, 2003  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1



## Britain

**ROUND 10/20**  
Silverstone, July 14-16



**FIRST GP** 1950  
**GPs HELD** 50  
**LAPS** 52  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.660 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 190.263 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 18  
**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton  
**LAP RECORD** 1m30.874s, Fernando Alonso, 2010  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4



## Hungary

**ROUND 11/20**  
Hungaroring, July 28-30



**FIRST GP** 1986  
**GPs HELD** 31  
**LAPS** 70  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 2.722 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 190.531 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 13  
**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton  
**LAP RECORD** 1m19.071s, Michael Schumacher, 2004  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1



## Belgium

**ROUND 12/20**  
Spa-Francorchamps, August 25-27



**FIRST GP** 1950  
**GPs HELD** 49  
**LAPS** 44  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 4.352 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 191.415 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 17  
**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg  
**LAP RECORD** 1m47.263s, Sebastian Vettel, 2009  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4



## Italy

**ROUND 13/20**  
Autodromo Nazionale di Monza, September 1-3



**FIRST GP** 1950  
**GPs HELD** 66  
**LAPS** 53  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.600 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 190.587 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 23  
**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg  
**LAP RECORD** 1m21.046s, Rubens Barrichello, 2004  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1



## Singapore

**ROUND 14/20**  
Marina Bay Street Circuit, September 15-17



**FIRST GP** 2008  
**GPs HELD** 9  
**LAPS** 61  
**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.147 miles  
**RACE DISTANCE** 191.897 miles

**WINNERS FROM POLE** 7  
**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg  
**LAP RECORD** 1m47.187s, Daniel Ricciardo, 2016  
**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm BST  
**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4



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## Malaysia

**ROUND 15/20**

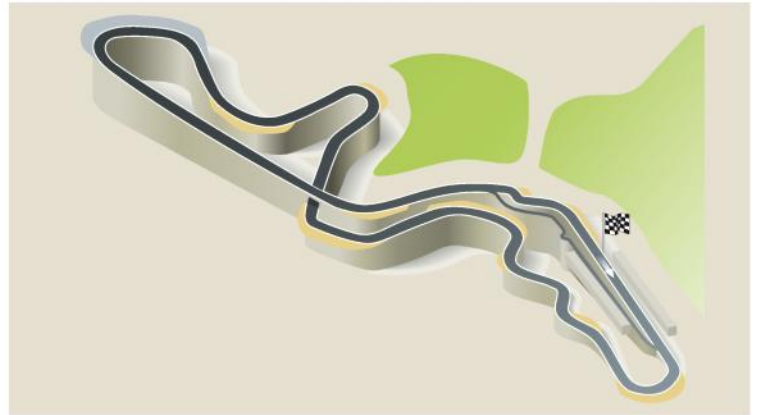
Sepang International Circuit, Sept 29-Oct 1

**FIRST GP** 1999**GPs HELD** 18**LAPS** 56**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.444 miles**RACE DISTANCE** 192.879 miles**WINNERS FROM POLE** 9**2016 WINNER** Daniel Ricciardo**LAP RECORD** 1m34.223s, Juan Pablo Montoya, 2004**RACE STARTS (UK)** 8am BST**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4

## Japan

**ROUND 16/20**

Suzuka International Racing Course, October 6-8

**FIRST GP** 1987**GPs HELD** 28**LAPS** 53**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.608 miles**RACE DISTANCE** 191.054 miles**WINNERS FROM POLE** 13**2016 WINNER** Nico Rosberg**LAP RECORD** 1m31.540s, Kimi Raikkonen, 2005**RACE STARTS (UK)** 6am BST**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1

## United States

**ROUND 17/20**

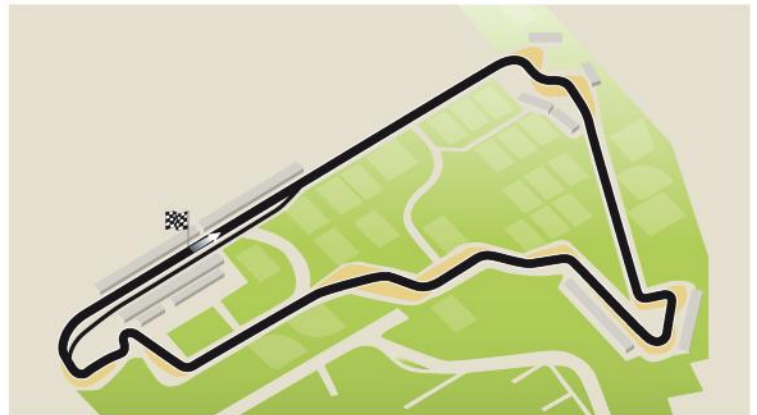
Circuit of the Americas, October 20-22

**FIRST GP** 2012**GPs HELD** 5**LAPS** 56**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.426 miles**RACE DISTANCE** 191.634 miles**WINNERS FROM POLE** 2**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton**LAP RECORD** 1m39.347s, Sebastian Vettel, 2012**RACE STARTS (UK)** 8pm BST**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4

## Mexico

**ROUND 18/20**

Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, October 27-29

**FIRST GP** 1963**GPs HELD** 17**LAPS** 71**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 2.674 miles**RACE DISTANCE** 189.738 miles**WINNERS FROM POLE** 9**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton**LAP RECORD** 1m20.521s, Nico Rosberg, 2015**RACE STARTS (UK)** 7pm GMT**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1

## Brazil

**ROUND 19/20**

Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace, November 10-12

**FIRST GP** 1973**GPs HELD** 34**LAPS** 71**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 2.677 miles**RACE DISTANCE** 190.083 miles**WINNERS FROM POLE** 14**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton**LAP RECORD** 1m11.473s, Juan Pablo Montoya, 2004**RACE STARTS (UK)** 4pm GMT**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1

## Abu Dhabi

**ROUND 20/20**

Yas Marina Circuit, November 24-26

**FIRST GP** 2009**GPs HELD** 8**LAPS** 55**CIRCUIT LENGTH** 3.451 miles**RACE DISTANCE** 189.739 miles**WINNERS FROM POLE** 3**2016 WINNER** Lewis Hamilton**LAP RECORD** 1m40.279s, Sebastian Vettel, 2009**RACE STARTS (UK)** 1pm GMT**LIVE ON** Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4



# Meeke leads Citroen's surprise recovery

The season started badly for one of rallying's great names, but in Mexico a little luck and a lot of work brought redemption

By David Evans, Rallies Editor

[@daviddevansrally](#)







Meeke survived  
a late diversion  
via a car park

**T**wo words said it all: thank you. He followed them with a brief look to the skies. Kris Meeke knew he'd teetered on the brink of disaster. Heck, he hadn't

teetered on the brink of it, he'd dived headlong through a hedge into the middle of it. But somewhere, somehow he'd weaved his way through parked cars, found the right road and got back on it.

Two years ago, on the same stretch of road, the Rally Mexico press office was stopped in its tracks when Meeke retired live on TV after whacking the front-right wheel of his Citroën DS 3. That powerstage moment was nothing compared with this one.

But the picture was confused. As Meeke headed into the hedge, the images beamed from the camera on the side of the Citroën began rolling and rolling and spinning and rolling. Oh. My. God.

This looked like a huge accident. Hang on, there's a perfect C3 WRC racing around the car park... How's that? It was just the camera becoming dislodged. Leading by 37 seconds before the start of the stage, Meeke could still be in this.

He was. Joy. Despair. Hope. Victory.

At the stage end, rescue completed, Meeke stepped from the car and walked away. Walked anywhere. Heart pounding, head desperately trying to compute what on earth had just happened.

Eventually, he composed himself. "I'm a lucky, lucky boy," he said after surviving the final-stage drama to take victory. "Thank you."

Now, let's rewind. Let's consider the wider implications rather than the latest insane moment of an unbelievable season.

### The fightback

Most recently, think America's Cup, San Francisco, 2013. Oracle Team USA down and out. They won. Or that night in Istanbul when Liverpool were dead, buried and on their way home, only to come back from 3-0 down and win club football's biggest prize. Further back, Botham's Ashes in 1981. Astonishing, breathtaking sporting comebacks written forever into history.

Really, that was the size of the job. Returning to the WRC after taking a year out as a works force to develop the new C3 WRC, Citroën had been expected to be back at its best. And its best was *the* best, the kind of form that took 17 world titles in 10 years. But for the first two rounds of this season, Citroën Racing was a shadow of that once-towering colossus.

Shocking results in Monte Carlo and Sweden got under the skin of the Versailles squad, and Citroën arrived in Mexico if not quite on the ropes, then certainly being backed towards them.

Step forward Meeke, Paul Nagle and a reliable, quick, and what's more »»



entirely predictable C3 WRC. Forget the low-slung World Touring Car-ish racer from Monte Carlo and the evil-minded ditch-bound beast from round two. This car worked. And here's how it happened.

It's fair to say that relations within Citroen were strained post-Sweden. Monte had been a specific set-up issue and could be excused. But the same story in the snow didn't sit well. Questions were starting to be asked and fingers extended ready to point the blame. And the frustration has been more evident in Meeke's deportment than anywhere else. From the season's first shakedown in Gap, the Dungannon man has had the worries of the world etched across his face. This year is his chance, his moment. Surely it couldn't be slipping away.

There was no change at shakedown for Mexico. The intense glower remained. This was not looking good. The wayward car still wasn't to his liking. Where was the thing of beauty he'd spent the previous year building?

One more run. Give it one more run. Even though darkness was falling on Leon and everybody's thoughts were turning to Thursday's Mexico City spectacle, Meeke and the engineers tweaked the differential settings and gave it a go.

Eureka? Not quite. But wholesale pessimism gave way to a degree of optimism as Meeke began to get more confidence and a more direct response from the front of the car.

The degree of performance improvement Meeke unlocked from the Citroen would be somewhat masked by starting 10th and on a road that now offered far more grip than the slippery surface championship leader Jari-Matti Latvala had skated across nine cars earlier.

Sure enough, Meeke was quickest by 7.3s. But it wasn't just the running order that looked to have eased his passage towards redemption; many of his rivals were suffering overheating issues.

### Alarm bells ringing

El Chocolate is an agonisingly slow stage that twists and turns its way up to an

elevation of 2746 metres, or a shade over 9000 feet. There's precious little air being forced through the radiators and into the gasping engines as they toil away, rarely north of third gear.

If ever there were going to be overheating issues on this event, it would be here – even though the ambient temperature was lower than expected at between 20 and 25 degrees.

The metaphorical alarm bells were replaced by physical ones inside the cars as engine temperatures rocketed dangerously to 120 degrees. At that point, matters are taken out of a driver's hands as the electronics dive in and cut the power. One of the primary heat sources under the bonnet is the turbo; an aggressive anti-lag map works the blower harder than ever, when the drivers are constantly on and off the throttle and the turbine never stops spinning. The temperatures, therefore, never stop rising.

Meeke's chief rival Sebastien Ogier was – unsurprisingly – the man who managed this mini-crisis best and went second quickest; an admirable effort from second on the road. Meeke moved further clear on the next stage, despite stalling twice in an uphill corner, and would start Saturday morning 20.9s ahead of Ogier's Ford Fiesta WRC.

### The big test

Saturday's playing field was the level one the world had been waiting for. It was Meeke versus Ogier: same road, same grip, same game.

First blood went the way of the champ as he nicked nine tenths out of the Citroen on the opener. Meeke bounced back in the next two and went to lunch having added a further 2.6s to his lead.

While shakedown had allowed Meeke to find the mark that would lead him back to his mojo, it also caused him some serious concern. A puncture ruled one of his soft-compound Michelins out of the equation. At some point, he would need to buck the trend and go his own way with tyres. That moment had arrived. With stormy rain rumbling around the



Set-up changes unlocked pace in the Citroen that had been absent in the previous rounds

Guanajuato hills, the rest of the world championship went soft. Meeke departed service with four hards beneath him.

With concern writ large across his face, he offered: "This loop could be decisive..."

Ogier was quickest, but Meeke contained the time loss to 2.2s. There have been some wild emotions inside the Citroen already this year, but getting to the end of that stage Meeke and Nagle shook hands. That was a big step.

Ogier spun in the next stage, but it mattered little – the leader was already five up at that point in SS13. Ahead of the stage, Meeke had lifted two soft tyres from the boot, bolted them on to the rear, and everything clicked.

By the end of the day he was more than half a minute in the clear. "Told you that loop would be decisive," he said with the kind of grin we hadn't seen enough of since Rally Finland last year.

### How did they do that?

So how did Citroen turn it around? What changed? Team principal Yves Matton pointed to the gravel.

"We had," he said, "done so much of the testing on gravel. This car was set up on gravel and we were very happy to be back on this surface after results we were not







## “We have optimised some parts of the new suspension, but some items are not solved”

Yves Matton

expecting in the first two rounds. When things are not working, like they were not in Monte Carlo and Sweden, it can put everything in doubt, but this wasn't really the case for us.

“In Sweden we went away from the gravel set-up we had established for this car. It was not a good choice. In terms of the differential, we took an option we knew from the previous car that had active differentials [the C4 WRC] and it seems it wasn't working properly on this car. It seems we were wrong to take the same philosophy for the active diff.

“Maybe it wasn't the real advantage to have experience of this kind of transmission from the past! For Mexico, we made changes to the differential and we took the set-up we trusted [from testing] for the gravel.”

The C3's suspension is a work in progress, but it remains a strange decision to retain anything from what was clearly the DS 3 WRC's weak spot.

“We started working more on the suspension before the start of the season,” said Matton. “What we have is an evolution of [what was on] the DS 3.

“Once we started testing, we saw that some of these parts were penalising this car more than the previous car, but we need time. For sure, we have optimised some parts of the new suspension, but some items are not solved and we are working on that. We will give more focus to this area in the future and we will be working with Ohlins.”

Understandably, Sunday afternoon's result gave Citroen the chance to take a breath. Then take stock. >>



### GOING LOCO IN ZOCALO

PRIOR TO WATCHING THE LAST BOND MOVIE, I had very little idea about Mexico City's Zocalo square. OK, I'll admit it, I didn't even know it existed. The scenes of James Bond taking on baddies in a loop-the-looping helicopter were just about enough to grab me.

But the chance to see a dozen or so World Rally Cars tearing up the same stretch of asphalt was of real interest – not least because of the 24 million potential rallying converts who might be watching. In the end a very small (actually, minuscule) percentage of them came to their nation's most famous plaza.

And that – on top of the 18-hour day required to get down there, get through breakfast with the mayor, complete a recce, get some snaps done and shake some hands – ensured the WRC's arrival in Mexico City wasn't greeted as warmly as it might have been by some.

There's no denying there were some rough edges, but they can be filed. And when they are, we can expect the masses to start marching on the square. This was the very essence of taking rallying to the people and the Rally Mexico organisers have to be applauded for such a brave initiative.

Next year we need the stage in daylight; the centrepiece of the square is a 357-square metre flag billowing from a 50-metre flagpole, which tends to lose a little bit of its impact when it goes dark. And we need some sort of grandstand or elevated seating for the fans watching streetside. Those two things, plus a slightly more sympathetic itinerary, and we're onto a winner.

There was, of course, plenty of social-media criticism about the desire to run two miles in the city costing the rally close to 50 miles of gravel on Friday morning, when the trucks carrying the cars back to Leon were delayed and stages two and three had to be binned. But I'm afraid they're wrong. I'll trade you hostages of fortune for nothing ventured...

And the 22 people who died in the road accident that delayed the trucks offered more than enough perspective.







“Fundamentally,” continued Matton, “we have built a good car. The changes we have coming don’t need a [homologation] joker or anything like that.”

### Blowing the balloon back up

Let’s be frank, Meeke didn’t just win in Mexico, he came as close as he’s ever come to dominating. OK, last mile or so excepted, he never looked like he’d extended himself to set those times. It might have been a different story had the trio of Hyundais not hiccupped their way through the opening day, hobbled by a fuel-related misfire. As for Toyota, the Finnish-built cars simply weren’t at the races.

The Yaris WRCs would never recover from getting too hot on day one. Internal damage to the engines ensured that Latvala and Juho Hänninen never got the chance to turn up their cars at the weekend.

Sunday afternoon was about vindication for Meeke and Citroën. “There was a hell of a lot of frustration after those first two rallies,” said Meeke. “All the talk was of the new era, Citroën coming back, and then somebody burst the balloon. We had all put in so much work, so it’s a real weight off everybody’s mind that we’ve been able to come here and show the true potential of this car.

“And the chance for me to come here and go head to head with Ogier – that

was important. I’ll be honest, I was worried when we went out on Saturday morning. I said to the boys, ‘He could walk away here...’ but he didn’t.

“This is not one of my favourite rallies of the season. I’ve done it twice and struggled twice, it’s just not my kind of rally with its slow, technical, tricky stages – I prefer the faster European gravel. So, to come here and win is really special for the team and for me.”

But Meeke’s no mug. He knows Ogier still poses a massive threat across the spread of the season.

Hyundais were held back by misfires on day one of the rally

Ogier drove with his head last week. He had a crack a couple of times, but recognised that the time wasn’t coming, so he drove like a champion. He took second, bagged the points and put himself back on top of the table.

It was the same sort of approach from Thierry Neuville, who landed his first podium of the year with third. The Belgian has shown his speed on rounds one and two. Round three was about putting points down. He did that.

Ogier’s M-Sport team-mate Ott Tänak was fourth and just missed a hat-trick of



ALL PICS: MCKLEIN.DE





Ogier banked points for second place

## RESULTS ROUND 3/13, RALLY MEXICO, MARCH 9-12

POS	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Kris Meeke (GB)	Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	3h22m04.6s
2	Sebastien Ogier (F)	Julien Ingrassia (F)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+13.8s
3	Thierry Neuville (B)	Nicolas Gilsoul (B)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+59.7s
4	Ott Tanak (EST)	Martin Jarveoja (EST)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m18.3s
5	Hayden Paddon (NZ)	John Kennard (NZ)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+3m32.9s
6	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)	Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC · Toyota Yaris WRC	+4m40.3s
7	Juho Hanninen (FIN)	Kaj Lindstrom (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC · Toyota Yaris WRC	+5m06.2s
8	Dani Sordo (E)	Marc Marti (E)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+5m22.7s
9	Elfyn Evans (GB)	Daniel Barritt (GB)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+8m41.8s
10	Pontus Tidemand (S)	Jonas Andersson (S)	Skoda Motorsport · Skoda Fabia R5	+10m51.9s
<b>OTHERS</b>				
13	Valeriy Gorbunov (UA)	Sergei Larens (RUS)	Eurolamp WRT · Mini John Cooper Works WRC	+21m06.8s
15	Stephane Lefebvre (F)	Gabin Moreau (F)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	+51m55.9s
16	Lorenzo Bertelli (I)	Simone Scattolon (I)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+1h05m20.4s



podiums, but his effort was enough to ensure M-Sport heads east with a 36-point lead in the makes' race.

Back in service, as the dust began to settle on Sunday afternoon, Meeke wasn't all that bothered about talking points.

The prolonged periods of silence were punctuated by a giggle. It's not often you hear him do that. But he was on Sunday. "I still can't believe it," he said. "Paul said to me, 'You're going to wake up in a cold sweat one night next week and think: 'Did that really happen?'' I think he might be right. But, you know, I've had enough bad luck, this time I got a chunk of good luck."

"I'll be honest, when I was driving around that car park, it felt like a lifetime and we had a puncture. When I crossed the line everybody was dumbstruck and just staring at us. I had no idea. I rode the bike up to the big man (Cristo Rey, the statue of Jesus Christ at the top of the Cubilete mountain) last weekend. Maybe he was looking down on me today."

Through the trees, into a field, off a parked Volkswagen and out the other side — no wonder Meeke talked of this one as his bogey stage. On Sunday it very nearly became a double-bogey.

But now, no matter. Meeke and Citroen are back. And what's more, they're back in an absolute thriller of a season. Three rallies, three winners, and more drama than you could shake a phoenix at. 🍀

### DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ogier 66; 2 Latvala 58; 3 Tanak 48; 4 Sordo 30; 5 Neuville 28; 6 Meeke 27; 7 Breen 20; 8 Evans 20; 9 Paddon 17; 10 Lefebvre 10.

### MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 M-Sport WRT 103; 2 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC 67; 3 Hyundai Motorsport 65; 4 Citroen Total 55.

### STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS0 Street Stage CDMX1 0.98miles	Hanninen 1m51.1s	Hanninen	Meeke +0.3s
SS1 Street Stage CDMX2 0.98miles	Ogier 1m44.8s	Hanninen	Tanak +1.6s
SS2 El Chocolate1 34.11miles	Cancelled		
SS3 Las Minas1 12.23miles	Cancelled		
SS4 El Chocolate2 34.11miles	Meeke 39m15.6s	Meeke	Ogier +9.7s
SS5 Las Minas2 12.23miles	Neuville 14m12.6s	Meeke	Ogier +15.7s
SS6 Street Stage Guanajuato 0.68miles	Neuville 57.3s	Meeke	Ogier +14.9s
SS7 SSS Autodromo de Leon1 1.43miles	Meeke 1m40.0s	Meeke	Ogier +18.0s
SS8 SSS Autodromo de Leon2 1.43miles	Evans 1m38.0s	Meeke	Ogier +20.9s
SS9 Media Luna1 17.04miles	Sordo 17m01.4s	Meeke	Ogier +20.0s
SS10 Lajas de Oro1 23.80miles	Sordo 28m17.5s	Meeke	Ogier +22.7s
SS11 El Brinco1 6.27miles	Neuville 5m27.1s	Meeke	Ogier +23.5s
SS12 Media Luna2 17.04miles	Ogier 16m44.0s	Meeke	Ogier +21.3s
SS13 Lajas de Oro2 23.80miles	Meeke 28m10.6s	Meeke	Ogier +39.5s
SS14 El Brinco2 6.27miles	Tanak 5m22.2s	Meeke	Ogier +36.9s
SS15 SSS Autodromo de Leon3 1.43miles	Evans 1m37.5s	Meeke	Ogier +36.0s
SS16 SSS Autodromo de Leon4 1.43miles	Evans 1m38.1s	Meeke	Ogier +33.4s
SS17 Street Stage Feria de Leon2 0.83miles	Ogier 1m16.9s	Meeke	Ogier +30.9s
SS18 La Calera 20.48miles	Meeke 21m53.7s	Meeke	Ogier +37.2s
SS19 Derramadero (Power Stage) 13.63miles	Neuville 12m13.9s	Meeke	Ogier +13.8s



# Bourdais turns IndyCar back to front



He started at the tail of the grid, but a controversial caution promoted Sebastien Bourdais into contention. And then he drove beautifully

By David Malsher, IndyCar Correspondent

[@David Malsher](#)

**S**cott Dixon is a teammate of Sebastien Bourdais in Chip Ganassi's IMSA SportsCar team and he has a high level of respect for his fellow four-time US open-wheel champion. But in IndyCar they race for rival teams — Dixon for Ganassi, Bourdais for Dale Coyne Racing — and, after last weekend's

Grand Prix of St Petersburg was won by the Frenchman, Dixon was pulling no punches.

"The way Bourdais got to the front was fabricated," he fumed, while others simply marvelled at Bourdais' climb from last place on the grid to Victory Lane. "You might as well draw the running order out of a hat if that's what they're going to do strategy-wise in Race Control."

Dixon's bone of contention was indeed the pivotal point of the 110-lap race and

Bourdais closes in on Pagnaud. He would eventually pass his fellow Frenchman

it came as early as lap 26, when Mikhail Aleshin and Tony Kanaan collided at Turn 4. The field was put under caution to remove debris, the pits were closed, and all those who'd qualified near the back — so had switched to an alternative strategy by already making a pitstop — lined up behind the faster qualifiers and were poised to reap the benefit.

Sure enough, the pits opened and the leading duo — James Hinchcliffe in his Schmidt Peterson Motorsports car and





LAT IMAGES

Dixon – dived pitward but resumed down in 10th and 11th. Up at the front, Team Penske's reigning champion Simon Pagnaud, who had qualified only 14th, was thus granted the lead, ahead of Bourdais, Marco Andretti and the second Coyne car of series rookie (and reigning Indy Lights champion) Ed Jones. So fine were the margins for fuel and rear-tyre life on the partly repaved 1.8-mile airport/street course that there was little hope for those dumped by misfortune to charge forward and still have enough grip and gas to reverse the situation.

Bourdais would pass Pagnaud for the lead on lap 37, and over the remainder of the race proved able to absorb everything that his fellow Frenchman could throw at him, which was a worthy enough achievement in itself, given their extremely different circumstances. But Dixon's primary point was that the full-course yellows for the Kanaan/

Aleshin clash had been unnecessary as well as ill-timed. "There was no debris there," he said. "Actually there was a small piece but you'd have had to hit the wall to get to it! So I don't know what the yellow was for.

"Normally those guys [in Race Control] understand that it's a critical stage of the race and they've got to let that go. It's not like [the debris] was on a part of the track that you race on, so you can't have them flipping the field, otherwise qualifying is meaningless."

Bourdais, who himself has never been slow to remonstrate with officials about any perceived slight, could have empathised with Dixon. In fact, he probably would have done had he not instead been overcome with emotion at scoring a 36th Indycar win in such unlikely circumstances. Bourdais had been cast to the back of the grid having lost his car under braking during »



Rahal wasn't impressed with the brakes

## BRAKING NEWS

THE BIGGEST TECHNICAL TALKING POINT OF the IndyCar weekend – aside from Honda's apparent step forward – was overheating brakes. Last September, IndyCar announced it was to switch from Brembo to Performance Friction Corporation as its sole brake supplier. Later it was decided that 2017 would be a transition year, with Brembo calipers retained but with PFC pads and discs. For certain teams and drivers, this combo proved incompatible.

Just before heading out to qualify 10th, Graham Rahal explained: "Yesterday [Friday] I went down into Turn 1 and at the 400ft [braking] board I stomped on the pedal like I used to, and missed the whole corner. The next lap I went to the 300 board, barely touched the brakes, I made the corner perfectly fine.

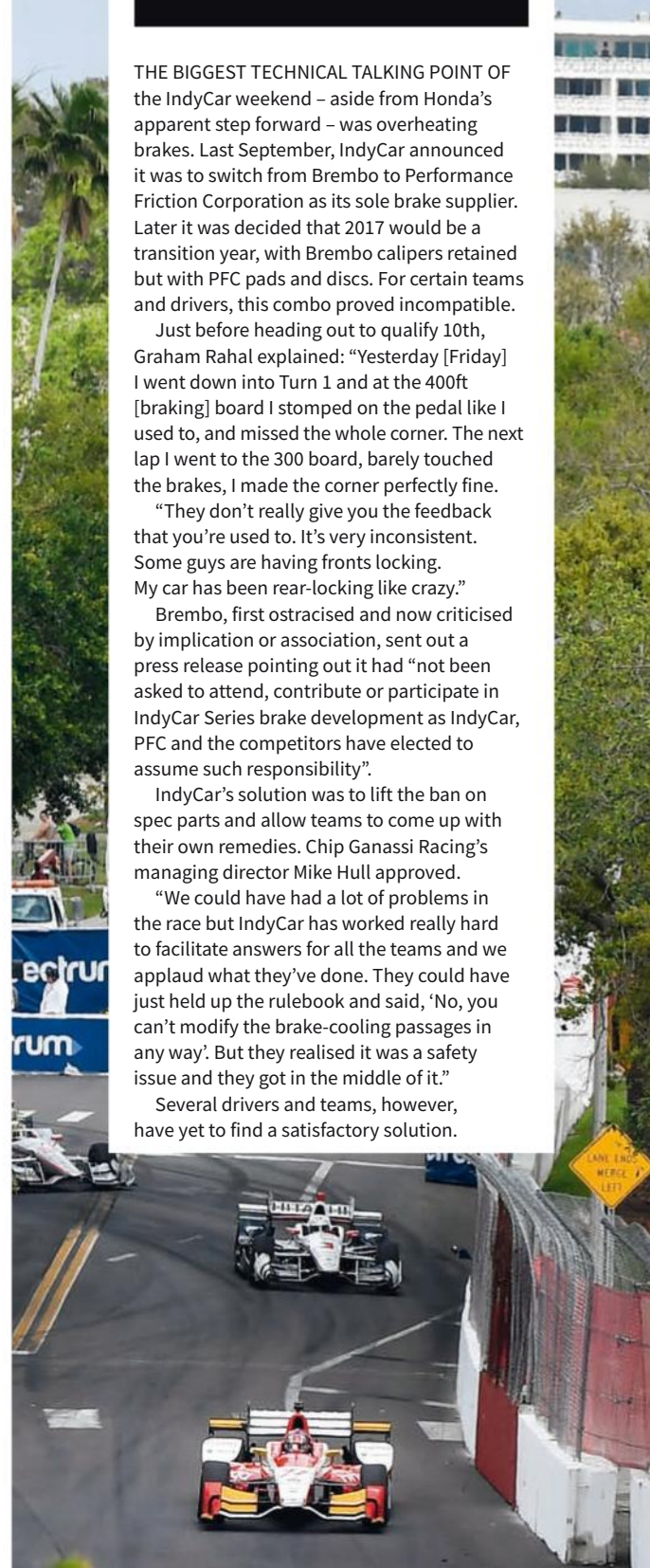
"They don't really give you the feedback that you're used to. It's very inconsistent. Some guys are having fronts locking. My car has been rear-locking like crazy."

Brembo, first ostracised and now criticised by implication or association, sent out a press release pointing out it had "not been asked to attend, contribute or participate in IndyCar Series brake development as IndyCar, PFC and the competitors have elected to assume such responsibility".

IndyCar's solution was to lift the ban on spec parts and allow teams to come up with their own remedies. Chip Ganassi Racing's managing director Mike Hull approved.

"We could have had a lot of problems in the race but IndyCar has worked really hard to facilitate answers for all the teams and we applaud what they've done. They could have just held up the rulebook and said, 'No, you can't modify the brake-cooling passages in any way'. But they realised it was a safety issue and they got in the middle of it."

Several drivers and teams, however, have yet to find a satisfactory solution.







qualifying, which according to the new-for-2017 rules not only erased his two fastest laps but also prevented him from taking any further part in the session.

The post-race euphoria he felt in what has become his hometown would eventually put him in reflective mood, as he recalled both his first race there and, 13 years later, his decision to join Coyne along with Craig Hampson, his race engineer in those dominant Newman/Haas Racing years.

"I caught myself thinking about 2003, when we started the opposite way," he said. "We dominated the weekend, were on pole, cleared the field, then all hell broke loose. I found myself tapping the wall in Turn 8, threw it away.

"It was kind of redemption day here. To come out on top with a lot of friends and family on-site, the whole community supporting the effort, it was just a great

feeling. I couldn't really be any happier for Honda and Dale for giving me the opportunity to put the band back together and make it happen."

But in a weekend of surprises the first came when several cars encountered braking issues (see panel, p101), leaving their drivers unable to fine-tune their set-ups, and thus jumbling the predicted order. But that didn't fully explain the other surprise — nine of the top 12 qualifiers were Honda-powered. Penske's Will Power took pole for the seventh time at this track, and that landed the first blow for Chevrolet, while his newest team-mate Josef Newgarden was fourth. But Dixon was second and all four Ganassi cars made it through; three Andretti cars, led by Takuma Sato, also made the grade; and Hinchcliffe lined up third.

Chevrolet lost its highest-calibre bullet as a result of Power locking up into the first corner at the start, giving himself

**Dixon, here passing Rossi, recovered to third after losing ground with yellow**

**Sato had a strong first outing with Andretti, and led the race briefly**

such a bad flatspot that he actually considered pitting immediately once the yellows flew for a Turn 3 crash between Graham Rahal, Charlie Kimball and innocent victim Carlos Munoz. Power didn't pit, but on the restart he was immediately passed by Hinchcliffe, the flatspot led to a tyre deflation, and so he ducked into the pits on lap 14, around mid-stint. Then a crew member left a wheelgun and hose in front of the car at the end of the tyre change, and Power was assessed a drivethrough penalty for driving over pit equipment.

Power was one of the group, therefore, to benefit from the debatable full-course caution and, after a brilliant restart followed by some severe fuel-saving, he ran third in the final quarter of the race. Yet without another caution period to give him some kind of a fuel reserve, he didn't have the pace to hold off the recovering and determined Dixon, who passed him to take third. In fact, the whole race turned into a bust for Power when a fuel-feed problem left him stumbling around the track at such reduced pace that he was black-flagged.

Fourth place, achieved by passing team-mate Sato on the last lap, was a deserved reward for Ryan Hunter-Reay who had suffered badly from brake issues throughout the weekend, and had even crashed his car heavily on Sunday morning when a "team issue" — believed to be a loose brakeline — caused yet another shunt as its rear anchors appeared to add no retardation value.

In his rebuilt car, Hunter-Reay had to







duck into the pits at the end of the final warm-up lap for engine recalibration, but managed to stay on the lead lap in time to join the back of the field. Thereafter he charged hard all race, passing Hinchcliffe, who had suffered a slow pitstop dropping him behind Dixon, and whose car's handling eventually deteriorated so badly that it confined him to ninth.

Despite losing fourth at the last gasp, Sato was left pleased. Not only had he bounced back from a heavy shunt on Friday to end up quickest of the Andretti cars in qualifying, he also led a couple of laps and recovered from a slow stop when a wheelgun failed.

Behind Sato, Helio Castroneves benefited from a particularly slick final pitstop from Penske, as it jumped him ahead of Andretti. This pair had qualified down in 16th and 15th respectively, both battling handling difficulties — plus another mysterious component issue, that curtailed Helio's practice time. Penske stayed tight-lipped on that one.

Newgarden's first race for Penske was inconclusive as he was one of the many wrong-footed by the lap-26 caution, and never seemed to have the pace to recover in the manner of a Hunter-Reay or Dixon.

But compatriot Spencer Pigot deserves praise. After a so-so rookie season in 2016, last weekend he looked the same fast and incisive kid who won the '15 Lights title. In the early stages he passed Alexander Rossi, Pagnaud and Kanaan, before his left-rear brake overheated and caught fire, prompting a long stop by his Ed Carpenter Racing crew. 🍷

Power grabbed pole, but lost early lead to Hinchcliffe (here running third)

Dixon to Bourdais: "I think that should be mine, mate"

## RESULTS ROUND 1/16, ST PETERSBURG (USA), MARCH 12 (110 LAPS – 198.000 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Sebastien Bourdais (F)	Dale Coyne Racing · Dallara-Honda	2h04m32.4153s
2	Simon Pagnaud (F)	Team Penske · Dallara-Chevrolet	+10.3508s
3	Scott Dixon (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing · Dallara-Honda	+27.4985s
4	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport · Dallara-Honda	+36.1147s
5	Takuma Sato (J)	Andretti Autosport · Dallara-Honda	+36.1675s
6	Helio Castroneves (BR)	Team Penske · Dallara-Chevrolet	+42.0285s
7	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Autosport · Dallara-Honda	+49.5217s
8	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske · Dallara-Chevrolet	+50.0443s
9	James Hinchcliffe (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports · Dallara-Honda	+58.8628s
10	Ed Jones (UAE)	Dale Coyne Racing · Dallara-Honda	+1m01.8611s
11	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport · Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
12	Tony Kanaan (BR)	Chip Ganassi Racing · Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
13	JR Hildebrand (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing · Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
14	Mikhail Aleshin (RUS)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports · Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
15	Conor Daly (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises · Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
16	Max Chilton (GB)	Chip Ganassi Racing · Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
17	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing · Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
18	Charlie Kimball (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing · Dallara-Honda	-5 laps
19	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske · Dallara-Chevrolet	99 laps-fuel feed
20	Spencer Pigot (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing · Dallara-Chevrolet	71 laps-brakes
21	Carlos Munoz (CO)	AJ Foyt Enterprises · Dallara-Chevrolet	32 laps-suspension

**Winner's average speed** 95.391mph. **Fastest lap** Dixon 1m02.0786s, 104.384mph.

### Qualifying

**Q3** 1 Power 1m01.0640s; 2 Dixon 1m01.2219s; 3 Hinchcliffe 1m01.3039s; 4 Newgarden 1m01.7229s; 5 Sato 1m01.9851s; 6 Kanaan 1m02.0824s.

**Q2** Dixon 1m00.9293s; Hinchcliffe 1m01.1891s; Newgarden 1m01.1915s; Sato 1m01.2691s; Power 1m01.3176s; Kanaan 1m01.3211s; 7 Chilton 1m01.3516s; 8 Rossi 1m01.5198s; 9 Kimball 1m01.6066s; 10 Rahal 1m01.6181s; 11 Munoz 1m01.7399s; 12 Hunter-Reay 1m03.1588s.

**Q1 - GROUP 1** Dixon 1m00.9602s; Newgarden 1m01.1110s; Sato 1m01.3775s; Kanaan 1m01.5067s; Rossi 1m01.5347s; Rahal 1m01.5874s; 14 Pagnaud 1m01.6129s; 16 Castroneves 1m01.7159s; 18 Jones 1m01.7598s; 20 Daly 1m02.2030s; 21 Bourdais no time.

**Q1 - GROUP 2** Power 1m01.0506s; Kimball 1m01.1823s; Hinchcliffe 1m01.2237s; Chilton 1m01.3032s; Munoz 1m01.5238s; Hunter-Reay 1m01.5416s; 13 Pigot 1m01.5898s; 15 Andretti 1m01.6070s; 17 Aleshin 1m01.7674s; 19 Hildebrand 1m01.8465s.

### Championship

1 Bourdais 53; 2 Pagnaud 41; 3 Dixon 35; 4 Hunter-Reay 32; 5 Sato 31; 6 Castroneves 28; 7 Andretti 26; 8 Newgarden 24; 9 Hinchcliffe 23; 10 Jones 20.



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# Goodwood's Marshall law

The two-driver Gerry Marshall Trophy for Group 1 touring cars will be one of the highlights of the Members' Meeting this weekend, so we talked to some of the stars in the leading entries

By Kevin Turner, Editor

🐦 @KRT917



## The reigning champion

### Chevrolet Camaro Z28 Oliver Bryant

American V8 heavy metal has been the thing to have for the Gerry Marshall Trophy over the past couple of years. GT and historic ace Oliver Bryant closed down Gordon Shedden to take victory last season in the recently restored ex-Richard Lloyd Camaro, but faces a couple of new challenges this time.

The first is an extra 100kg added to the car's minimum allowed weight, and the second is the fact the race is now a full hour, up from 50 minutes.

"It's a case of how the tyres and brakes will hang on because the race is longer and we have extra weight to stop," says Bryant, who will share the car with father Grahame. "The brakes are standard – you throw them in the bin after each event."

Despite the restrictions, the 5.7-litre machine should still be one of the quickest cars around the high-speed Goodwood circuit. "It's cool," adds Bryant. "The post-historic-type tyres give decent grip and the car doesn't roll much. If it's wet it'll be horrible, but in the dry it's pretty stiff and has a strong engine."

"The car is quick around Goodwood because of the straights, but through the corners the Rover is much better. Shedden and Chris Ward will be quick. They're a good pairing, the car has been developed and has won before."

"It might come down to how well the old man goes!"





## The all-round package

### Rover SD1 Gordon Shedden

The JD Classics-run Rover won the inaugural Gerry Marshall Trophy at Goodwood in 2014, driven by Chris Ward and Andrew Smith. It has been competitive each year since, though vanquished by American V8s, with historic ace Ward and British Touring Car star Gordon Shedden finishing second last year.

With the longer event this time around and the added weight to the Camaros, Shedden feels the 3.5-litre V8 he again shares with Ward should have a good chance, unless it's wet.

"It's a good overall package," says the triple BTCC champion, who has twice won the Goodwood Revival RAC TT with Ward in a

Jaguar E-type. "It looks like a lumbering bus, but it drives really well. The cars JD put out are lovely and a few things came to light last year so they've had a bit of a fettle.

"Theoretically we should have the legs of the Ford Capris, but the Camaros are so powerful. The question is will they last the distance? We'll be fine and keep going round and round. But if it rains the Mini will be lapping us!"

Once again, Shedden will not drive the car before the event, but he sees that as part of the appeal: "Half the fun is just jumping into stuff we're not driving all the time. It's something different."

## The period icon

### Ford Capri III Rob Huff

The Ford Capri was *the* car to have for much of the Group 1 era (or 1.5 as the loose regulations were often dubbed). Once the big American V8s had been expunged at the end of 1975, the Capri II and then Capri III set the pace until the bigger-engined Rover SD1 got into its stride in 1982.

The three-litre V6 machine tends to get outgunned at Goodwood, though Steve Soper and John Young did finish third in the enduro last year. And World Touring Car ace Rob Huff, who again shares Richard Meins's Capri this weekend, thinks it's one of the best chassis.

"It's awesome," he says. "The Capri was probably ahead of its time. For most historics the power massively outweighs the handling and brakes, but the Capri has far more grip than any historic car I've driven. You can really grab it by the throat and drive it hard."

Huff concedes a tighter track would be better for the Capri to really challenge the V8s, but still thinks a strong result is possible.

"Around Goodwood, we haven't quite got the power – the Rovers have a little less grip than us but quite a lot more grunt," he adds. "Goodwood is a power circuit, whereas at somewhere like Brands Hatch I think we'd be more evenly matched.

"I'll fancy our chances a bit more if it rains, though I am not sure Richard would! But Goodwood for me has always been about having fun – the whole reason I started racing in the first place."







## The classy German

### BMW 530i Darren Turner

The striking BMW saloon has provided a welcome sight in the tin-top race. It's power-to-weight ratio isn't quite on a par with the leaders, but the well-balanced chassis means it can punch above its weight.

Emanuele Pirro and Phil Perryman finished sixth in 2015 and the combination of GT ace Turner and FIA Masters Historic Formula 1 champion Nick Padmore should be a potent one this weekend.

"I've not driven it yet – in true Goodwood fashion it'll be rock up

and drive it in qualifying – but Nick said it went really well in testing," says Turner, who will also race his own Turner Mk1 in the Weslake Cup.

"The BMW is probably a bit underpowered compared to some of the other cars, but so long as we get some wheel-to-wheel racing it should be a fun weekend. And it looks great. The reason I love the event is it's like going back to club racing and I'll have two very different cars to drive.

"Nick's the man in some of these historic cars so I am hoping to learn a few tricks."

BMW is outgunned and outnumbered, but has a strong driver line-up



## The cheeky challenger

### Mini 1275 GT Andrew Jordan

One of the fan favourites is the diminutive Mini of 2013 British Touring Car champion Andrew Jordan and marque specialist Nick Swift.

The agile front-wheel-drive machine has been a podium contender before, but Jordan believes the pace improvement of the more powerful cars now makes that less likely.

"Obviously our weakness is straightline speed and our strength is corner-entry speed," he says. "Realistically to get a result we need it to rain. In the wet we'll challenge much more, but there's only so much the rain can do against the speed of the Camaros and Rovers.

"With the extra weight on the Chevrolets, the Rovers should be very strong this year."

Swift is a popular Goodwood character and Jordan enjoys racing with him. "Nick's good fun, is quick and gets stuck in – he does it properly," adds Jordan, who tested the Mini at Brands Hatch last month.

"I love driving the Mini, it's like a go-kart. It feels really well sorted."

### TIMETABLE

#### Saturday March 18

- 0900-1555 Practice and high-speed demonstrations
- 1615-1635 Derek Bell Trophy for 1964-70 one-litre F3 cars
- 1730-1830 Gerry Marshall Trophy for 1970-82 Group 1 saloons

#### Sunday March 19

- 0900-0920 Weslake Cup for 1958-66 A-Series-engined sports and GT cars
- 0940-1000 Brabham Trophy for 1954-60 rear-engined GP cars
- 1025-1045 Hailwood Trophy for 1970-84 250cc and 350cc GP motorcycles

- 1125-1150 High-speed demonstrations
- 1205-1225 Archie Scott Brown Trophy for Listers raced up to 1966
- 1245-1305 S F Edge Trophy specials
- 1340-1350 GT1 high-speed demos
- 1410-1455 Graham Hill Trophy for 1960-66 GT cars
- 1515-1535 Varzi Trophy for French and Italian GP and Voiturette cars up to 1939

- 1555-1610 Gerry Marshall Sprint for 1970-82 Group 1 saloons
- 1630-1640 Three-litre sports-prototypes demonstration
- 1700-1720 Pierpoint Cup for American V8 saloons up to 1966
- 1740-1800 Surtees Trophy for Group 7 sports-prototypes



## ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...

### Derek Bell Cup, 1000cc F3

Five-time Le Mans winner Derek Bell won on his race debut in a Lotus 7 at Goodwood's 60th Members' Meeting on March 14 1964, and in F3 at the 66th and 70th editions over the next two seasons, in Lotus 31 and 41 respectively. Favourites in the 1000cc 'screamer' class' historic evocation include Andrew Hibberd (Brabham), reigning champion Simon Armer (March 703), Jonathan Hughes (Merlyn) and Sam Wilson (Tecno), plus wily American James King – 40 years after he won Cadwell Park's British F3 round, driving a two-litre March-Toyota 773 – in the same Chevron in which he snatched victory at 2015's 73rd MM.



### Graham Hill Trophy, GT cars 1960-66

Graham Hill won Goodwood's last Tourist Trophy GT race in 1963, piloting a Ferrari 250 GTO entered by Maranello Concessionaires, thus the GT fest carries his name. It's to a double-driver format this year, with the Prancing Horse represented by the Pearson brothers Gary and John (250 LM, left) and last year's sprint-race winner James Cottingham paired with Dutchman Nicky Pastorelli (250 GTO/64). Michael Gans/Andy Wolfe (AC Cobra) will take some stopping, but house captains Anthony Reid (sharing Stefano Rosina's Bizzarrini 5300GT) and Emanuele Pirro (in Shaun Lynn's Cobra) could strike for the V8s.



HAWKINS

### S F Edge Trophy, Edwardians

The jaw-dropping spectacle of Duncan Pittaway (1921 GN Curtiss), young South American Mathias Sielecki (1923 Delage DH V12) and Julian Majzub (1916 Sunbeam Indianapolis) jostling for the lead made the new event on last year's programme an epic. Pittaway has entered his aero-engined hybrid for extrovert wheelsmith Patrick Blakeney-Edwards this time and bravely saddles the majestic 28-litre Fiat S76 speed-record car he drives to events! Denied by barely quarter of a second last year, Sielecki wants gold. Hughie Walker (GN Thunderbug) and Ben Collings (Mercedes 60hp) will head the chase in the weekend's wackiest race.



HAWKINS

### Archie Scott Brown Trophy

The life of Archie Scott Brown, who overcame physical disability to become one of the leading sportscar drivers of the 1950s, will be marked by a new race this year. The all-Lister event will include Jaguar and Chevrolet-powered racers. Gary Pearson (Knobbly-bodied Lister) and Chris Ward (Costin) battled it out at the Revival last year and should be at the sharp end once again, but Martin Stretton, Sam Hancock, Jon Minshaw and Phil Bennett (all in Knobblys) could all challenge them. Fred Wakeman's 1963 Lister-Jaguar coupe provides a contrast to the open sports-racers. Marcus Pye and Kevin Turner





# Parente starts on another Long road

**PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE**  
**ST PETERSBURG (USA)**  
**MARCH 11-12**  
**ROUND 1/11**



McLaren of Parente in spectacular pose at Turns 11/12 chicane

ALVARO PARENTE AND PATRICK LONG picked up where they left off last year by taking the wins in St Petersburg.

Key to reigning champion Parente's win in the opening race was the second lap, in which the Portuguese vaulted his Flying Lizard-run K-PAX Racing McLaren from third to first. He grabbed second place from the Audi of Pierre Kaffer into Turn 1. Then, when ex-Formula Master ace Daniel Mancinelli guarded the inside line into Turn 4, Parente swept around the outside of the Ferrari and into the lead.

Parente was just over two seconds in front as the race moved into the final 10 laps, but then showed mastery with lapped traffic to extend an advantage of over 10s.

The fight for second was eventually won

by Australian James Davison in the TRG Aston Martin after a scrap with Long (the Wright Motorsports Porsche driver who was pipped to the crown by Parente last year), Mancinelli and Kaffer. Long took the final podium spot, while four-time champion Johnny O'Connell came through to secure fourth in his Cadillac.

Long emerged from a chaotic first corner in race two to take a lead he would not lose. Ex-Porsche Supercup ace Alex Riberas, who has joined the series in an R Ferri Motorsports Ferrari, claimed the pole, but the Spaniard and Parente both ran wide at the first corner, and Long snuck his Porsche into the lead.

O'Connell also took advantage to move his Cadillac into second and the veteran

kept the pressure on Long, while also surviving the close attentions of Riberas. A late caution caused by the stranded Aston of Davison allowed O'Connell one last chance, but Long held firm to win. Riberas completed the podium while Parente recovered to claim fourth.

American-based Scot Ryan Dalziel took a brace of eighths in his Mercedes.

## RESULTS

**Race 1 1 Alvaro Parente (McLaren 650S GT3)** 34 laps in 49m54.853s; 2 James Davison (Aston Martin Vantage GT3) +10.135s; 3 Patrick Long (Porsche 911 GT3-R); 4 Johnny O'Connell (Cadillac ATS-VR); 5 Bryan Sellers (McLaren); 6 Alex Riberas (Ferrari 488 GT3). **Race 2 1 Long** 39 laps in 51m03.600s; 2 O'Connell +1.475s; 3 Riberas; 4 Parente; 5 Michael Cooper (Cadillac); 6 Alec Udell (Porsche).

# Truex hits Vegas jackpot as Keselowski slows

**NASCAR CUP**  
**LAS VEGAS (USA)**  
**MARCH 12**  
**ROUND 3/36**

BRAD KESELOWSKI'S MISFORTUNES provided Martin Truex Jr with his eighth-career Cup win — and his first at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

While Truex and his Furniture Row Racing Toyota led the most laps and won the event's first two 80-lap stages,

Keselowski powered into the lead late in the race and appeared set to take his second consecutive win.

But with two of the 267 laps remaining, the #2 Penske Ford suddenly slowed on the track, allowing Truex to pass for the lead and claim the victory. Keselowski's team wasn't immediately able to diagnose the problem, but it left him with no brakes and the inability to turn his car. He still managed to nurse it home to a fifth-place finish. Ahead of him, Kyle Larson took his

Truex (right) fights it out with Keselowski

Ganassi Chevrolet to second, Chase Elliott was third in his Hendrick Chevy and Penske's Joey Logano was fourth.

Logano and Kyle Busch made contact twice on the final lap while battling for third. Busch came away with the worst of it, spinning out and finishing 22nd. After the race, he started a fight on pit road with Logano and the two had to be separated by NASCAR officials.

Keselowski still managed to assume the points lead by one over Larson. Kevin Harvick, who entered the weekend atop the standings, finished 38th in Nevada after blowing a tyre and hitting the wall, dropping him to eighth.

**JIM UTTER**

## RESULTS

**1 Martin Truex Jr (Toyota Camry)** 267 laps in 2h56m39s; 2 Kyle Larson (Chevrolet SS) +1.495s; 3 Chase Elliott (Chevy); 4 Joey Logano (Ford Fusion); 5 Brad Keselowski (Ford); 6 Denny Hamlin (Toyota); 7 Ryan Blaney (Ford); 8 Jamie McMurray (Chevy); 9 Matt Kenseth (Toyota); 10 Clint Bowyer (Ford). **Playoff qualifying 1 Keselowski 132/1 win**; 2 Truex 127/1; 3 Kurt Busch 93/1; 4 Larson 131; 5 Elliott 129; 6 Logano 119; 7 Blaney 106; 8 Kevin Harvick 91; 9 Kasey Kahne 88; 10 McMurray 86; 11 Trevor Bayne 82; 12 Bowyer 73; 13 Kenseth 71; 14 Aric Almirola 70; 15 Hamlin 68; 16 Paul Menard 62.





Andretti-run  
Herta leads  
points after win



IMS/LLC PHOTOGRAPHY

# Herta, Telitz are rookie stars

**INDYLIGHTS**  
**ST PETERSBURG (USA)**  
**MARCH 11-12**  
**ROUND 1/10**

COLTON HERTA STARRED ON HIS Indy Lights debut with a win and a second place to leave St Petersburg with the series lead ahead of fellow rookie and race winner Aaron Telitz.

Telitz, the reigning Pro Mazda champion, nailed his start from pole position in race one. Despite a wild challenge from Juan Piedrahita that saw the Colombian skittering past four rivals and the Turn 1 apex, Telitz turned in and the Belardi Auto Racing starlet checked out for the remainder of the race.

Behind Telitz, much of the attention was focused on Herta, who had been annoyed to qualify the Andretti Steinbrenner Racing entry on only the third row. Herta made up one position as front-row qualifier Kyle Kaiser fell back, then another when reigning BRDC British Formula 3 champion Matheus Leist, who had run second initially, pitted his Carlin machine with an engine problem.

Next up, Herta prevailed to take third after a long tussle with Shelby Blackstock. With nine laps to go, Herta made a wild and vain attempt to grab second from Carlin driver Neil Alberico, but four laps later he used the new push-to-pass system and the Euroformula Open graduate grabbed second place.

Telitz had long gone, to the tune of 11 seconds, but Herta had provided a

foretaste of race two, in which he would be starting from pole. Alongside him was 2016 series runner-up Santiago Urrutia, who had endured a long pitstop to replace a broken tie-rod in race one. But the Uruguayan had no answer for Herta, and the 16-year-old American led from start to finish, surviving a few restarts.

Instead, Urrutia had to deal with pressure from Kaiser and then a severe challenge from 2016 Pro Mazda runner-up Pato O'Ward, who was enjoying a one-off weekend (for now) with Team Pelfrey. The Mexican was not intimidated by Urrutia's pace or reputation and, having passed Kaiser, even tried a brave outside pass on the Belardi car at Turn 1. Unsurprisingly he found himself elbowed back to third, which was still a great debut in the series, especially in light of the fact that O'Ward's deal only came together in the week leading up to the race.

Race one winner Telitz, who had qualified only 10th for this second race, climbed to fifth, never looking likely to make a move on fourth-placed Kaiser. Telitz could be content with a two race tally that read 1-5, but it was Herta who stole the show with his win and second.

**DAVID MALSHER**

## RESULTS

**Race 1** 1 Aaron Telitz 35 laps in 40m12.2907s; 2 Colton Herta +11.0330s; 3 Neil Alberico; 4 Shelby Blackstock; 5 Pato O'Ward; 6 Kyle Kaiser. **Race 2** 1 Herta 45 laps in 1h00m24.3956s; 2 Santiago Urrutia +1.7797s; 3 O'Ward; 4 Kaiser; 5 Telitz; 6 Blackstock. **Points** 1 Herta 59; 2 Telitz 49; 3 O'Ward 39; 4 Blackstock 34; 5 Kaiser 34; 6 Urrutia 33.

# IN BRIEF

## PRO MAZDA

Reigning US\$2000 champion Anthony Martin made the perfect debut in the next step up the Road to Indy ladder by claiming a double in St Petersburg. The Cape Motorsports-run Australian pipped Victor Franzoni to pole for race one, then led him throughout the opener. TJ Fischer fended off Carlos Cunha for third. Martin took another pole-to-flag win in race two. Cunha challenged and passed fellow Brazilian Franzoni for second, but then coasted to a halt, allowing Franzoni and Fischer to replicate their race-one results.

## USF2000

Mazda Road to Indy scholarship winner Oliver Askew leads the points after taking a win and a second in the St Petersburg opener. Robert Megennis took pole for the first race and led all the way in his Team Pelfrey car. Askew recovered from an early fourth, passing Guyanese Calvin Ming for second and then challenging Megennis by the end, with Rinus van Kalmthout in turn on his tail. Askew chased polesitter Parker Thompson early in race two. After an early caution, Canadian Thompson ran wide at Turn 1, Askew slipping his Cape Motorsports car into the lead. Van Kalmthout claimed second, while Thompson recovered to take third.

## UAE FORMULA 4

South African Jonathan Aberdein wrapped up the title in style, the Motopark driver claiming three wins from four races on the Yas Marina club circuit. Aberdein beat Logan Sargeant in the first race, then also won the reversed-grid second from Charles Weerts. Sargeant beat Aberdein on the road in race three, only for a track-limits penalty to drop the American to second. Leonard Hoogenboom (Motopark) pipped Aberdein and Sean Babington in the finale, before Aberdein got a track-limits penalty.

## TCR MIDDLE EAST

Britain's Josh Files added this title to his 2016 German crown with a double win in the Bahrain finale, despite missing the first of the series' three rounds. Files led the first race all the way, his Lap57 Honda Civic chased for most of the distance by the Volkswagen of Luca Engstler, before the German was passed on the last lap by the sister points-leading Team Engstler Golf of Brandon Gdovic. That put Files just two points adrift of Gdovic, and he overhauled the American in the finale. Davit Kajaia ran second in his Mulsanne Racing Alfa Romeo Giulietta before he retired, promoting Gdovic to the position.

## NEW ZEALAND TOURING CARS

Simon Evans wrapped up the title in the first round of the Hampton Downs finale. The brother of Mitch Evans scrapped with the Toyota Camry of Jason Bargwanna, before his Holden Commodore moved in front on the last lap. In wet conditions, Bargwanna and Evans then shared the wins in the two races held on Sunday.



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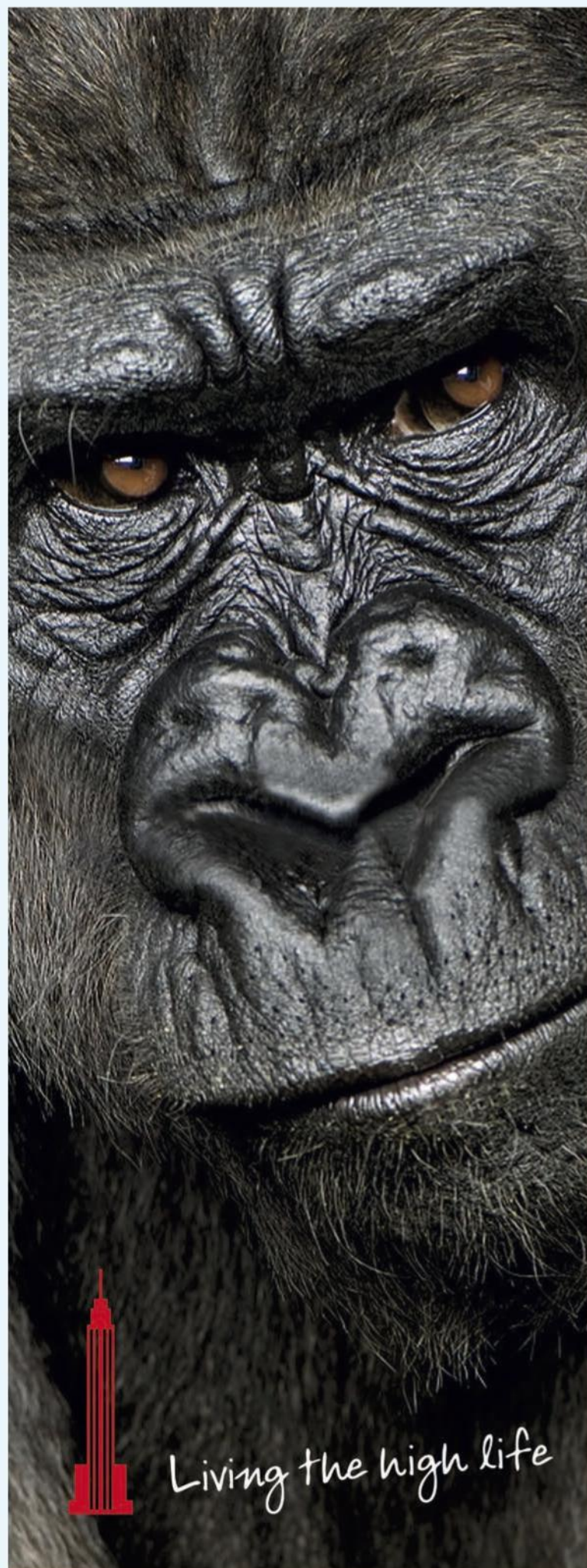
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The event will be held at the Epsom clubhouse of the Royal Automobile Club and will include a stage interview hosted by Henry Hope-Frost, covering Nigel's F1 and IndyCar career.

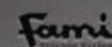
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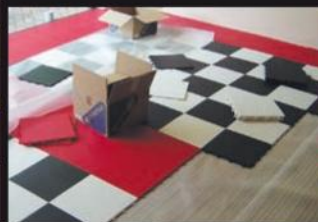
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Anderson drove ex-Brise car for Autosport last year



**JACK BENYON**  
**GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR**

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THE BRISE NAME, PLUS CALLUM Grant's return, are just two reasons why the Historic Sports Car Club's Formula Ford 1600 championship for Kent-engined machines is set for a corker of a season in 2017.

In fact there are many more. And condensing them all into this column would prove as tough as winning the series. It's very competitive – Grand Prix Editor Ben Anderson can attest to that after driving, fittingly, an ex-Tim Brise Merlyn (Autosport, November 24, 2016). Poles and race wins are decided by the tenth, not seconds.

It's also a happy hunting ground for young drivers like Grant and fellow frontrunner Ben Tilley. The level of competition can teach the whippersnappers a thing or two, and goes a fair way to breaking down the stereotype that you have to be north of 40 to take part in, or enjoy, historic racing.

Perhaps most importantly, this season presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This year is Formula Ford's 50th anniversary. Imagine the honour of being able to say you won the most competitive and closely fought Kent-powered category, 50 years on from when it began.

## Brise returns to Formula Ford roots after 43-year break

THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF EX-FORMULA 1 driver Tony Brise will return to motor racing in 2017 after a 43-year stint on the sidelines.

Tim Brise was a leading young single-seater racer in the early 1970s, but stopped competing in 1974 after having two major accidents in Formula 3. In both cases the rollhoop failed and Brise considered himself lucky not to be seriously injured. Now aged 63, he is returning to his racing roots to campaign a Merlyn Mk20, starting at Donington Park on April 8. He raced a similar car in '71, but was better known as a works Elden driver.

Brise, whose Kent-based business produces high-performance alternators, decided it was time to race again in the Formula Ford 50th anniversary season.

"It's a late-life crisis! I spent a lot of my career in rallying, but I fancied doing some racing and decided that if I didn't do it now, I never would," he said.

"A lot of our customers are in historic racing and it sounds like good fun. I want to be as competitive as I can and I found a Merlyn Mk20."

His brother Tony died in the 1975 light-aircraft crash that also claimed the life of Graham Hill and four other members of the Embassy Hill F1 team. Tony Brise had competed in just 10 grands prix, but is regarded as having world championship-winning potential, having frequently outperformed Alan Jones in their period as team-mates during the '75 season.

● Callum Grant is targeting a third Historic Formula Ford title this season in his Merlyn Mk20. The Lancastrian won the championship in 2012 and again last year, and is hoping to make it three as the category's 50th anniversary is celebrated. Grant also plans to race his father's Historic FF2000 Delta and the Merlyn Formula Junior of John Sykes.

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## BRITISH F4

# Caroline returns to F4 with Carlin

BRITISH FORMULA 4 RACE WINNER JAMIE CAROLINE is targeting the championship this season after sealing a move to top team Carlin.

Caroline, 18, finished 10th in the standings last season in a disrupted campaign that began with Jamun and finished with Fortec Motorsport.

With many of last year's 10 British F4 race winners moving up the ladder, Caroline is currently the only one back in the series for this year, and will be vying to complete a hat-trick of titles for Carlin following Lando Norris (in 2015) and Max Fewtrell (last season).

"I had a learning year [in 2016] so I know a little bit more about the championship," said

Caroline. "It's like with Ginetta Juniors – I started with TCR and then moved to HHC and won the title [in 2015]. I want to win the championship in everything I do.

"It's going to be difficult as my team-mates have been really fast in testing – I think it will go to the last round like it did last year.

"My team-mates will be my main rivals, but the Double R boys have been quick and Arden too, so it's all shaping up to be a close year."

Caroline, who has retained backing from Pirtek, has completed a number of test days with the Carlin team over the winter. "I've been on top a few times in testing," he said. "I

hadn't been out since the [BRDC British] F3 Winter Series but I've done six days so far.

"I didn't get on well at Fortec – with Carlin it's been that little bit better in every aspect."

● Karting champion Oliver York has been confirmed as Fortec's first British F4 signing for this season. The 15-year-old won the IAME International Final last year. He will now graduate to car racing taking part in F4's Challenge Cup, for drivers competing in a maximum seven of the 10 rounds. Joining York in that category is Olli Caldwell (Arden), Luca Allen (Falcon) and JHR's Manuel Sulaiman.

## SUPER TOURING

## Howson gets Super Touring test in Primera



LE MANS 24 HOURS LMP2 class winner Matt Howson will test a Nissan Primera Super Touring car next month ahead of a possible race outing later this year.

The Mancunian, who took class honours at Le Mans in 2015 with an ORECA-Nissan, credits the super touring period of British Touring Car history as one of the inspirations that kickstarted his own motorsport career.

"I'm going to test this Nissan Primera, which

is a 1999 ex-David Leslie car," said Howson, 33. "It's something I've always loved. I partly got into racing because of Super Touring cars."

While any deal to race is still to be discussed, Howson confirmed that the HSCC's calendar looked attractive.

Leslie finished second in the BTCC in the Ray Mallock Ltd-run car in 1999, winning three races. Laurent Aiello in the sister Primera won the title.

## PORSCH CARRERA CUP GB

## GT4 champ Wylie joins Carrera Cup

ROSS WYLIE WILL JOIN SLIDESPORTS FOR a debut campaign in the increasingly popular Porsche Carrera Cup GB in 2017.

Wylie has been a British GT regular since 2014, when he claimed the GT4 title for the Beechdean AMR team. He then stepped up to GT3 as a McLaren Young Driver alongside Andrew Watson, but after a difficult season he returned to Aston Martin machinery with Motorbase Performance last year.

"The deal only came about a couple of days ago, so it was all very last minute," commented Wylie. "I had in my head we were probably going to go back to British GT. But it's always been in the back of my head that I would love to enter Porsche Carrera Cup."

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## BRITISH GT

# British GT and Mini JCW get live TV

BRITISH GT AND THE MINI CHALLENGE JCW class will receive live TV coverage on free-to-air television this year.

The two series announced a new deal with the Front Runner channel last week, which will screen live broadcasts of all UK rounds this season. The channel reaches 19 million UK homes and is available on all major service providers, including Freeview, Sky, Virgin and BT. The deal has been jointly brokered by British GT organiser SRO and

Mini UK, which has increasingly invested in the Challenge in recent seasons via parts and technical support.

Mini UK product manager Nicolas Griebner confirmed that the investment from his company was "substantial".

"For Mini, motorsport is big business," he explained, "and having live TV is essential for getting the excitement of our racing across and spreading the word of the championship to a broader audience."

## IN BRIEF



### BERGER AND RAVAGLIA TO GOODWOOD

Inaugural World Touring Car champion Roberto Ravaglia and F1 race winner Gerhard Berger will do battle in this weekend's Gerry Marshall Trophy at Goodwood. Ravaglia and Berger both drive Belga-liveried Ford Capris. Triple British Touring Car champion Colin Turkington will also take part, in a Triumph Dolomite Sprint.

### CENTURY HAS A SECOND CAR IN GT4

Factory Ginetta squad Century Motorsport has added a second G55 to its attack on the GT4 class of the British GT Championship. Ginetta works driver Mike Simpson and Anna Walewska take one entry, with Britcar chargers Jacob Mathiasen and Stephen Fresle in another. Mathiasen and Fresle finished joint top in the Britcar points last season, but lost the title on countback.

### EX-BASEBALL PRO TO LMP3 WITH UA

United Autoports has confirmed American duo CJ Wilson and Andrew Evans as its first driver pairing for the new UK LMP3 Cup Championship this year in its first Ligier JSP3. Wilson – a former professional baseball player for the Texas Rangers and Los Angeles Angels – has previously raced Mazda MX-5s in the USA and owns his own racing team.

### FOX MOTORSPORT LAUNCHES ACADEMY

British GT4 race-winning team Fox Motorsport has launched a young-driver Academy, with the aim of preparing karters for a career in cars. The academy signees will benefit from one-to-one tuition in a Ginetta G40, plus simulator and physical training at the Position One facility, and a host of racing equipment.

### SHARPE TO MG CUP IN MONTEGO RACER

Henry Sharpe will take his MG Montego to the MG Cup in 2017, debuting the car in the championship's first race on April 9 at Donington Park. Sharpe – who used to race a Maestro – raced the car for one event in the 750 Motor Club's Hot Hatch championship, but is targeting honours with fellow MG racers in 2017.



## CREVENTIC 24 HOUR SERIES

# Cooksport switches to Creventic

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP TEAM Cooksport has decided to withdraw from the series and instead focus on endurance racing, after a successful debut in the Dubai 24 Hours earlier this season.

The team finished second in the A2 class in the enduro in a converted Clio Cup car and now plans to enter more Creventic events this year.

Team boss and British Touring Car Championship racer Josh Cook said: "We planned to have another shot at it [the Clio Cup] this year, but the Dubai 24 Hours changed our perspective and direction we wanted to go in as a team."

Cooksport's decision means Shayne Deegan, who was due to drive for the team, will now set up his own squad.

The 22-year-old Mini Miglia champion will compete full-time in the Clio Cup this year. "This was something we wanted to do long-term, but it has come a bit sooner than we thought," said Deegan. "I'm treating it as another learning year before we go for the title – we are setting a target to be finishing in the top 10 in the championship."



## GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING

# Cartwheeling Lotus back to action

A YEAR AFTER IT CARTWHEELED INTO a pedestrian tunnel, Lotus 18 chassis 915 will return to the Brabham Trophy grid at Goodwood this weekend.

Stephen Bond was fortunate to escape major injury during the 74th Members' Meeting, and the former UDT Laystall Racing car has now been completely rebuilt for Andrew Hibberd to race.

The chassis damage was repaired by Peter Denty, and Hibberd Motorsport has

completed the rebuild on the car, which is likely to be put up for sale after the Goodwood race is complete.

"It's been a big project and I hope it will be going well for the Members' Meeting," said Hibberd, who raced Lotus 18 chassis 912 at Monaco last May. "It will be a race to remember."

Hibberd will also race his father Michael's one-litre Brabham BT18 in the Derek Bell Trophy at Goodwood.





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# Farewell sprinting saint David Render

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

[@Autosport](#)

**SPEED EVENTERS MOURNING THE RECENT LOSSES OF** David Good and Terry Smith were further saddened last week by the death of sprinting's senior statesman Captain David Desmond Render, at 92. Having survived the Second World War against overwhelming odds, then forged successful business and motorsport careers in parallel, David supported hillclimbing's flat racing cousin through thick and thin, also sponsoring the national championship through his Warecrete concern. He was justly regarded as the discipline's patron saint.

Born in 1924, Render joined the army on his 18th birthday, graduating from Sandhurst as a second lieutenant. He went to war at 19, a few days after the D-Day landings in Normandy, and as an inspirational tank commander led his Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry company from the front, fighting through Europe until the armistice. David's extraordinary memoirs, in which he recalled two tanks being blown from under him, were published last year in the book *Tank Action: An Armoured Troop Commander's War 1944-45*, written with Stuart Tootal.

David made his competition debut in a Morgan at the 1948 Brighton Speed Trials, and Madeira Drive on the Sussex coast remained special. He recorded Best Time of Day [BTD] there in 1976 – in the ex-Jacky Ickx/Ronnie Peterson F1 Lotus 76/2, loaned by his pal Colin Chapman, whom he had helped financially in hours of need – and on his final appearance in '96, following open-heart surgery in his Pilbeam MP43 sportscar.

Having raced an Allard in 1950, placing second at Goodwood's 2nd and 3rd Members' Meetings and Silverstone, Render made sprinting his niche, first scoring national points in 1971. A hairy road-going Lotus twin-cam-engined Fiat 600 and Ginetta-Buick G12 preceded Brabham, Lola, March, Pilbeam, Toleman and SPA chassis powered by BDA, Hart,

Cosworth DFV and DFL engines. In '78 he also enjoyed sorties in Chapman's Lotus 77/1, Mario Andretti's '76 Japanese GP winner.

Omnipresent on airfields, seafronts and circuits across three decades, David was crowned RAC British Sprint champion in 1983 and '86, yet only scored maximum points in six rounds – at Duxford aerodrome in '74 (Brabham BT29X); Blackpool, RAF Bassingbourn, Curborough and Weston-super-Mare in '76 (Lotus 76) and Curborough in '80 (Lola T560). Even though he was competing when there was a single Run-Off per event, his 1115 point tally remains unsurpassed long into today's double-header era.

Render also assisted Ray Rowan, RAC Sprint and Hillclimb champion in 1981 and '89 respectively, mentored Martin O'Connell (twice British F3 National class champion, now Historic race ace) and helped '95 Hillclimb champion Andy Priaulx en route to Touring Car stardom. They, Great Britain and the sport as a whole salute you David.

● The passing of John Surtees will be keenly felt at Goodwood's 75th Members' Meeting on Sunday, 57 years to the day after his four-wheeled debut there at the 39th MM. A loyal supporter of Lord March's events, John finished second in his final car race, the 2000 Revival's RAC Tourist Trophy Celebration in David Piper's Ferrari LM, having led from pole and going clear in the early stages.

I will also miss MGA and Historic FF2000 Lola racer Eric Houlst and pro mechanic-turned-rapid Lotus Cortina pedaller Dave Hunter who both succumbed to cancer last week. In recent years Dave had guided son Owen to the 2012 Saxmax title and fourth in last year's BMW Compact Cup series. 🌿



## THIRD F1 RACE FOR MONACO HGP

The Automobile Club de Monaco's announcement that it will run a third three-litre F1 race, for 1978-80 cars, at next year's Grand Prix Historique has triggered a marketplace frenzy as buyers clamour for the best machinery. Tyrrell 009/010, Arrows and Ensign (above) values have soared as potential rivals to early Williams FW07s.



## RIDGWAYS DOUBLE UP IN HFF2000

Father and daughter Graham and Jennifer Ridgway will compete against each other in Historic FF2000 this season, having previously shared a Reynard SF78. Jennifer, who used the machine in Classic F3's invitation class, will be out in the ex-Stuart Boyer, Parmalat-liveried SF79, which she tested at Donington last week.



## BEN TUSTING TO RACE F3 MARTINI

Ben Tusting, eighth in last year's HSCC Historic FF1600 championship on half a season in one of Mike O'Brien's Classic Team Merlyn Mk20s, is graduating to Classic F3. The former HFF2000 racer tested father Robert's Martini MK37 at Donington last Thursday and will race it in the season-opener there on April 8.

ALL PICS: WALKER

# WHAT'S ON



## WRC TV needs to be maximised

RALLY MEXICO MARKED THE THIRD round of what has been a spectacular start to the 2017 World Rally Championship. The crews have now faced each type of surface in their most extreme form. Monte Carlo's frozen asphalt roads, Sweden's snow-covered gravel tracks and Mexico's high-altitude gravel terrain have all provided their own challenges. The championship is still without a title favourite and, with 10 rounds remaining, this season is set to be the best for years, so the onus is on the WRC and its broadcasters to do it justice in their coverage.

Updated regulations have allowed teams to design inspiring rally cars that hark back to the Group B monsters of the 1980s. Such a jump forward has bucked the trend of a continual cap in power, cost and aero since the demise of Group B in 1986. The additional power, driveability and grip of the 2017 cars was evident in Ott Tänak's record-breaking average speed of 85.65mph through Stage 9, Knon, in Sweden.

With such radical changes to the

cars' design, it is appropriate to assume that broadcasters would take the responsibility of explaining these changes over the opening rounds of the season.

The new regulations were introduced on Monte Carlo's weekend-highlights show by qualified engineer and Citroën's lead driver Kris Meeke. By taking a brief walk around the C3 WRC, he noted key changes to the engine as well as new aerodynamic devices, rear-wing profiles

TV cameras don't always get across the tension behind the on-stage action



and the rear diffuser. It was a good introduction, but at just 90 seconds it lacked any depth.

A further technical review was shown in the weekend highlights of Rally Sweden. Engineers from the four manufacturer teams offered an insight into the details of the twin-profile rear wing, wide diffuser and rear-wheelarch openings. Combined with close-up video footage, it gave viewers a look at variations between teams' designs, and the intricacies of these cars.

Daily highlights in Mexico contained a segment featuring New Zealand's top rally driver Hayden Paddon explaining the changes made to his Hyundai i20 to adapt to the rough gravel terrain. Ducting to cool the brakes, and suspension changes, were evidently important in the leg-one stages that followed.

But one issue that WRC TV coverage must address is how it captures the drama and emotion of each rally, and how it's portrayed to the viewer. El Chocolate, SS4 of Rally Mexico, was



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## HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

You Tube MEEKE'S LUCKY ESCAPE TO VICTORY

**Search for:** WRC – Rally Guanajuato Mexico 2017:

**Kris Meeke's exit in SS19**

Rally Mexico winner Kris Meeke received payback in full for all the bad luck that's punctuated his career with his extraordinary recovery from a final-stage off. Owners of the parked cars and bikes will feel the Almighty was smiling down on them, too.



New cars are dramatic,  
and they deserve world-  
class broadcasting

McKLEIN/LAT



### CLASSIC F1

SKY SPORTS F1  
Monday 2100

It's now just over a week until the first Formula 1 race of the season, and Sky Sports F1 has started showing classic F1 races. This week tune in for highlights of the dramatic 1986 Australian Grand Prix.

## INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

### SEBRING 12 HOURS IMSA SPORTSCAR

Rd 2/12  
Sebring, Florida, USA  
March 18

### MUGELLO 12 HOURS ENDURANCE SERIES

Rd 2/7  
Mugello, Italy  
March 18

### NASCAR CUP

Rd 4/36  
Phoenix, Arizona, USA  
March 19  
Live Premier Sports TV,  
Sunday 1900



NASCAR CUP

LAN IMAGES

dramatic to say the least as every team, bar Citroen, faced overheating problems. Championship leader Jari-Matti Latvala lost one and a half minutes in that stage alone, and his emotion was obvious during his stage-end interview. However, the TV coverage struggled to build on the drama of that stage.

This is something WRC Live Radio has no issues with. Colin Clark and co are able to add to the drama rather than subdue it, creating a fan-friendly service.

Red Bull's entry into WRC coverage has certainly added an alternative approach to how each round is reported, with big names Mark Webber, Andreas Mikkelsen, Craig Breen and Matthew Wilson presenting the action. If Red Bull can build on its coverage of the opening rounds, its free-to-view coverage presents an exciting prospect for the remainder of 2017.

But for this thrilling season to be rightfully showcased, the WRC must considerably improve how it sells itself as a world-class product.

ADAM HALL

## UK MOTORSPORT

### BORDER COUNTIES RALLY

Jedburgh,  
Scottish Borders  
March 17-18  
British Rally Championship

### OULTON PARK BARC

March 18  
Caterham Academy, 2CV,  
NW Sports/Saloons

### GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING

March 18-19  
See our preview, page 104

### DONINGTON PARK 750MC

March 18-19  
Club Enduro, BMW 330,  
750 Formula, Historic  
750, Bike Sports, Sport  
Specials, Classic Stock  
Hatch, M3 Cup, Bernie's  
V8s and Classic Allcomers,  
Armed Forces

### MONDELLO PARK IMRC

March 19  
Formula Vee, Future  
Classics, Fiesta ST,  
Fiesta Zetec, Legends,  
Sports Cars



## FROM THE ARCHIVE

Flames lick from the exhaust of Alain Prost's Ferrari 641 as the Frenchman harries Gerhard Berger's McLaren MP4/5B for second place in the 1990 Italian Grand Prix. Prost made it past, but couldn't get close to race winner, and Berger's team-mate, Ayrton Senna.

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# MY FIRST MOTORSPORT MEMORY



## MARCUS SIMMONS

[@MarcusSimmons54](#)

### MIND BLOWN BY COLOUR AND NOISE OF F2

**M**y father had already taken me to a handful of club meetings – as well as the 1972 Tourist Trophy – by the time he steered our poo-brown K-reg Ford Cortina onto the M3 and headed down towards the A303 on Easter Monday '73. But what awaited us when we reached Thruxton really blew my mind.

I was six years old, already familiar with names such as Tony Brise, Roger Williamson and Ian Taylor from seeing them in Formula 3, but Thruxton's round of the European Formula 2 Championship ratcheted up my new obsession even further. The entry was so big that it needed two heats to decide the finalists, and the sheer speed, noise and colour of the first heat as it blasted up to the Complex was a sensory overload. Exotic names too, with Carlos Pace (which dad and I pronounced as it was spelt) in the Matchbox Surtees leading the first heat before Patrick Depailler and his Alpine took over. Second heat, and it was Jochen Mass in another Surtees battling Williamson's Wheatcroft GRD.

With the final run over 50 laps, constant noise as the field strung out, and tinny-and-ineffective loudspeakers, I can't remember ever having any idea of who was leading, but the records show a last-gasp victory for Henri Pescarolo (above, behind Depailler) in Ron Dennis's Motul following a Gerry Birrell/Mike Beuttler clash at the chicane in the closing stages.

Also capturing the imagination was the support race for what is now known as the BTCC, with Frank Gardner's Chevy Camaro leading the BMW CSL of Brian Muir and Dave Matthews's Capri, chased by legions of Escorts, Minis and Imps. Funnily enough, I'd get to know Matthews a couple of decades later through covering the exploits of son James (now the fiancée of Pippa Middleton) in Formula Renault and F3. There was a European Super Vee race too, featuring plenty of Nordic names (including Gunnar Nilsson) that were often even more unpronounceable than the F2 racers.

But it was F2 that really did it for me. Looking at the results, it seems incredible that the names of Jody Scheckter, James Hunt, Vittorio Brambilla and Jean-Pierre Jarier – who were also among the field – didn't even register with me at the time. But there a seed was sown that would result in Simmons father-and-son becoming avid F2 fans. This passion for roving-across-Europe single-seater competition remains with me still – in a way, the current F3 European Championship, which I cover for Autosport, is not a million miles in feel from what enthralled me as a kid. 🏁

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