

**F1 HAMILTON'S HAMMER BLOW AT SUZUKA**

# **AUTOSPORT**

**JAPANESE GP**

## **GAME OVER?**

Another Ferrari failure leaves Lewis 59 ahead with 100 up for grabs

**"It hurts, but we still have a chance"**

**SEBASTIAN VETTEL**



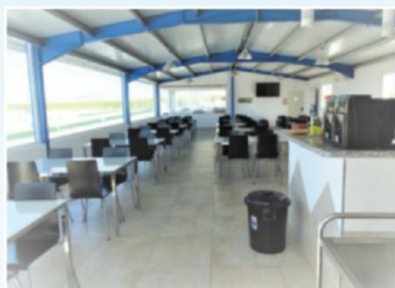
**MEEKE BEATS OGIER IN DRAMATIC RALLY SPAIN**



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**SITUATED IN SOUTHERN SPAIN NEXT TO GRANADA**





# One too many issues for Ferrari in 2017

A LITTLE OVER A MONTH AGO, LEWIS HAMILTON had just taken the lead of the Formula 1 drivers' championship, having trailed Sebastian Vettel for most of the 2017 season.

Mercedes' performance at the Italian Grand Prix was mightily impressive, but Ferrari's surprisingly strong race pace the previous weekend in Belgium suggested the scene was set for a tough title fight in the final quarter of the season at more conventional tracks.

Speed-wise, that was bang on. Mercedes struggled in Singapore, and Ferrari had the quickest car in Malaysia. And the team reckoned it should have won the Japanese GP at Suzuka last weekend.

Only it didn't. And not only that, but Vettel scored a meagre 12 points across those three races. Hamilton scored 68, despite the difficulties of the rapid-but-temperamental Wo8 – Valtteri Bottas took just 37 points in the sister Silver Arrow in that time.

As Edd Straw argues (see page 12), this may yet prove to be Hamilton's finest title campaign, but Vettel and Ferrari have made it far too easy over the past six weeks. The chances of Vettel snatching his fifth title are now mathematical rather than realistic, and it may be that Hamilton ends up winning his fourth crown by a margin that does not represent how competitive the season has been.

After Singapore, I wrote that Vettel's startline manoeuvre had robbed us of a great grand prix. As Ben Anderson shows in this week's race report (p14), the combined missteps of the German and the Ferrari team have probably robbed us of a dramatic showdown. That may be great for Hamilton fans, but it's a shame for F1.



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**COVER IMAGE**

Etherington/LAT Images; McKlein

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
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# NIGEL ROEBUCK

## Waiting in the wings

Would the current Formula 1 teams be able to rid their cars of aerodynamic devices overnight, as they had to in Monaco in 1969?

 @autosport

### BACK IN THE DAYS OF ALAIN PROST AND AYRTON

Senna demand for tickets at Suzuka was such that you had first to *apply* for the right to buy one, and every year three million people would do that. Hard to believe in this era – there were lots of gaps in the grandstands last weekend – but that’s the way it was.

If the pulling power of Formula 1 is no longer what it used to be, still there abides a passion for it in Japan, and Suzuka remains one of the great cathedrals of motor racing, the only sadness being that inevitably the challenge of it, as with Spa, has been lessened by the latest generation of cars. Anything that serves to equalise the drivers, to turn daunting corners into ‘easy flat’ is surely to be deprecated.

Still, until Ross Brawn is able to effect necessary changes for the next Formula 1, it is what it is: the cornering speeds of the current cars may be mind-blowing, but don’t expect much in the way of order changes. Kevin Magnussen’s inventive pass of Felipe Massa apart, Sunday’s overtaking was essentially confined to DRS into Turn 1.

Recently I was chatting with a friend – an *old* friend, as you will see from what follows – about the deleterious effect on racing of downforce, something inevitably relished more by the drivers than by those paying to watch them.

When once asked to define his ideal Formula 1 car, Frank Williams replied instantly: “Easy – a thousand horsepower

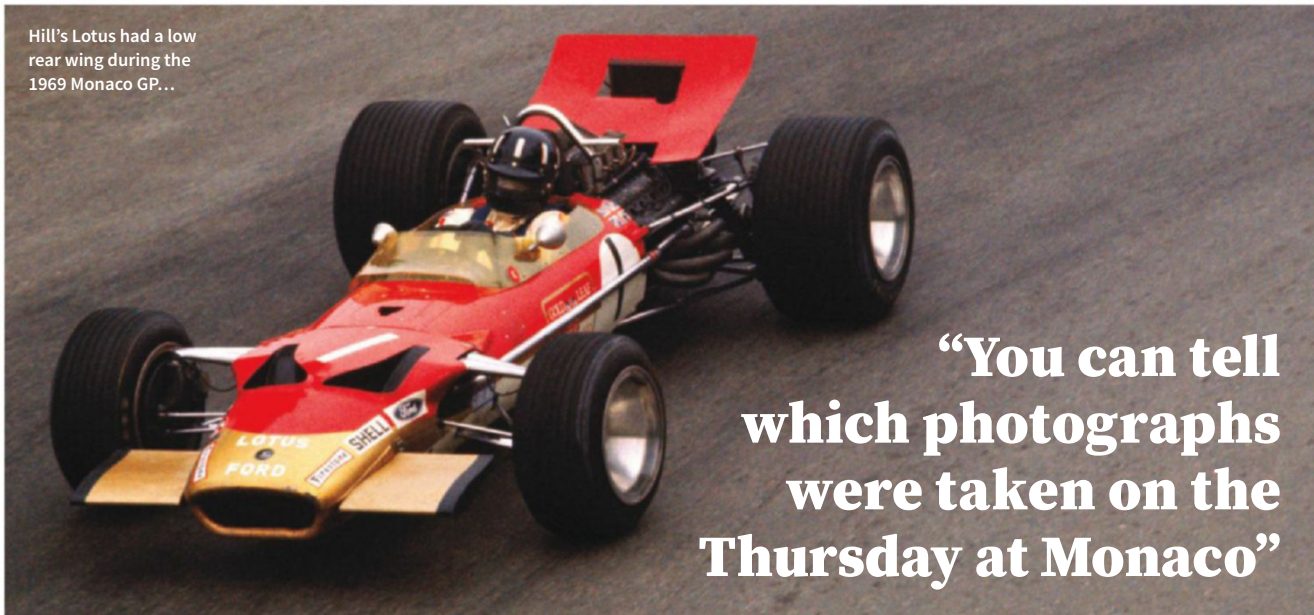
and no wings!” Imagine, my pal murmured, if we had that now, and that got us on to reminiscing about the 1969 Monaco Grand Prix, which we both attended in our youth.

It was not, I have to say, an especially memorable race, with the front row cars – Jackie Stewart’s Matra and Chris Amon’s Ferrari – both retiring early, but it was notable for providing Graham Hill with his final grand prix victory, and for the fact that in the course of the meeting a major rule change was introduced in a manner barely credible today.

Wings had come to Formula 1 the previous year, introduced at Spa by Ferrari and Brabham, and although they were small and unsophisticated their worth was instantly apparent, as Amon remembered: “I was on pole by almost four seconds, but in fact I ran with and without the wing in practice, and set about the same times – what you gained in the corners you lost on the straights. Jacky Ickx decided against using it in the race, but although I went with it, I can remember thinking, ‘Now what can of worms are we opening here...?’”

Every other team soon followed suit, and perhaps inevitably, given the way Colin Chapman’s mind worked, the wings introduced by Lotus – mounted very high, and on flimsy struts – were the most extreme. While they worked well, these were ‘suck it and see’ days in aerodynamics, and more than once the inadequate struts collapsed, resulting – of course – in instant loss of downforce.

Hill’s Lotus had a low rear wing during the 1969 Monaco GP...



**“You can tell which photographs were taken on the Thursday at Monaco”**





...after the previous high-mounted one was banned following Thursday practice



At Barcelona's Montjuich Park in 1969 both Hill and Jochen Rindt had catastrophic accidents for just this reason, Rindt suffering injuries that kept him out of the next race, Monaco. It was now that Jochen – who had anyway hated the whole concept of wings from the start, feeling they detracted from the art of car control – wrote to Chapman.

'I got hold of this incredible picture, which pretty much explains the accident – I didn't know it would fly that high. Now to the whole situation, Colin. I have been racing in F1 for five years, and have made one mistake (I rammed Chris Amon at Clermont-Ferrand), and had an accident at Zandvoort due to gear selection problems, but otherwise managed to stay out of trouble. This situation changed rapidly when I joined your team.

'Honestly your cars are so quick that we would still be competitive with a few extra pounds added to make the weakest parts stronger. Please give my suggestion some thought. I can only drive a car in which I have confidence, and feel the point of no confidence is quite near.'

Pretty forthright stuff in those days when PR was nowhere in sight, but if Rindt had concerns about his car in general, he was not alone in believing that something had to be done about the way wings were going. Why, even the governing body was giving the matter some thought.

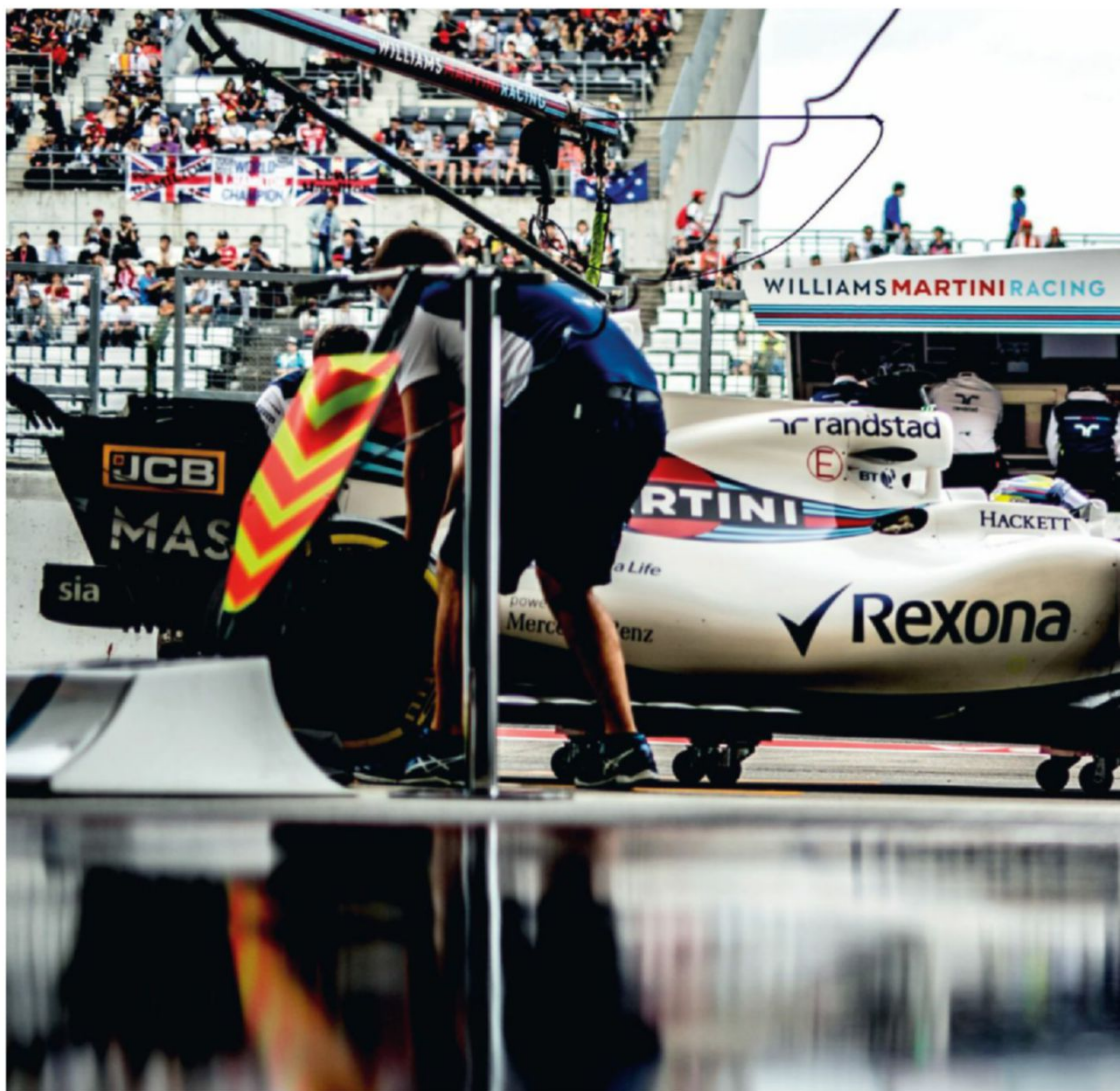
At that time the competition arm of the FIA was the CSI, which duly convened a meeting specifically to discuss the question of wings. The CSI chose the Thursday evening in Monaco – after the first day of practice.

Look at photographs from that event, and you can tell which were taken on the Thursday, for only then did the cars have wings: following its meeting, the CSI announced they were to be banned forthwith. Thus the mechanics set to work – and at eight o'clock the following morning the newly shorn cars took to the track, their drivers not knowing quite what to expect.

Typically, though, they made the best of it. On the Thursday Stewart – with wings – had set the fastest time, and by Saturday afternoon's final session he had improved – without them – by three-tenths of a second. Smoke and mirrors, you might say, but in those days improvisation was a way of life in Formula 1, and they were masters at it.

'Aero', as I said, was primitive back then, with bargeboards, diffusers, T-wings and the like unknown: the mechanics had simply to unbolt the wings, the drivers to adapt. Given the numbing complexity of aerodynamics in 2017, one somewhat doubts that a similar edict at Suzuka last weekend could have been complied with quite so readily; probably, though, Lewis would still have won. 🌟





FORMULA 1

## Kubica tests this week as

WILLIAMS IS EDGING CLOSER TO finalising its line-up for the 2018 Formula 1 season, with Robert Kubica set to take part in a one-day test at Silverstone this week.

The seat alongside Lance Stroll next season has become the most coveted on the grid, with Williams having received enquiries from several drivers and made its own contact with others.

The Williams board is mulling over four potential drivers for the season: would-be-comeback star Kubica, the incumbent Felipe Massa (above), ex-Force India and current DTM racer Paul di Resta, and Mercedes protege Pascal Wehrlein. Wehrlein's Sauber team-mate Marcus Ericsson and dropped Renault driver Jolyon Palmer are believed to be out of contention.

As part of its evaluation of Kubica, who Williams feels could be the top-line driver it requires to maximise the potential of next year's challenger, the team will run the one-time F1 winner in a 2014-spec car, which has been used by Stroll for circuit familiarisation during last season and at tests this year.

Renault ran out of time to do further testing with Kubica when Carlos Sainz Jr, who the team had chased since last year, became available. Williams is now picking up the baton with a more targeted testing programme. The 32-year-old Kubica is keen to get more mileage as his

confidence in an ability to return to F1, following his 2011 rally accident, continues to grow.

Kubica will complete a day at Silverstone, followed by another one-day test at the Hungaroring — where he drove a 2017-spec Renault for a day during in-season testing in August — ahead of the United States Grand Prix.

Williams reserve di Resta will also get a run out in the 2014-spec Williams before the Austin race. He has been pushing for a return to a full-season race seat for the first time since 2013, when he left Force India, after a strong performance as Massa's stand-in at this summer's Hungarian GP.

The team wants to give him a chance to get some proper mileage as well as giving it data to compare with Kubica. Should Williams ultimately choose Kubica, it could sign 31-year-old di Resta as a reserve again and slot him in to replace the Pole if required next season.

But Massa has said that running Kubica and di Resta in 2014 cars will not give Williams enough information to judge their potential. "It doesn't change anything for me," said Massa, who is in his fourth season of racing for Williams after being coaxed out of retirement for this term when Mercedes snapped up Valtteri Bottas to replace the retiring Nico Rosberg. "Even if you do a test with cars that are four





FORMULA2

## Russell set for Norris F2 battle

NEWLY CROWNED GP3 CHAMPION

George Russell would “love” the chance to take on fellow Brit Lando Norris in Formula 2 next season.

Russell sealed the GP3 title at Jerez last Sunday, while fellow McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Norris is almost certain to wrap up the Formula 3 European Championship at Hockenheim in this weekend’s finale.

“I’d love to be team-mates with him because I think there’s a lot of hype around him,” said Russell. “My goal next year will be to try and win F2, which is where it’s looking like I’ll be racing. Lando is definitely going to be one of the main rivals there and I’d prefer having him as my team-mate in the same equipment to me as [opposed] to in another team. I want to be the best and you’ve got to beat everybody.”

While Norris has been tipped for a drive with Prema Racing, Autosport understands that DAMS is Russell’s most likely F2 destination for 2018.

Russell is also open to returning to Formula 3 to race in the 2017 Macau Grand Prix, but such a scenario would mean he drives in at least three different categories – F3 at Macau, GP3 on the Formula 1 support bill in Abu Dhabi, and then F2 for its post-season test at the Yas Marina track in three weeks. “I’d say it’s more likely no than yes,” he said.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



## race for Williams hots up

years before, they are completely different. You cannot evaluate too much.”

Massa remains in contention to keep his seat next year – for what would be his 16th F1 season – and insists he is “relaxed” about his future. He wants to stay on for another year and feels he still has a lot to offer the squad.

“I am enjoying doing the best I can in the last races this year, and I don’t know what is going to happen next year,” said Massa. “I am quite keen to do another season. I can do it in a great way, I can give a lot to the team like I did already. But I don’t decide, the team decides. I have given a lot to the team, and F1 as well, and if people are happy I will stay.”

Wehrlein emerged as a fourth option earlier this month, with Mercedes understood to be pushing to place him at Williams, to which it supplies engines. With Sauber in talks about the closeness of its partnership with Ferrari, that will include a driver element, and Mercedes is aware that Wehrlein may not be able to stay on at the Hinwil team for another season.

Williams ideally needs one of its drivers to be over the age of 25 as part of its arrangement with

its title sponsor, alcohol brand Martini, and that appeared to rule out 22-year-old Wehrlein.

But it is believed that there is room for negotiation on the issue should the team decide he is the best driver to partner Stroll and help the team move up the grid, which in turn would increase visibility for its sponsors and boost the chances of winning more prize money. One solution would be to sign a reserve driver, such as di Resta, who could act as Martini’s ambassador.

When asked what he made about the speculation surrounding his team-mate for next year, Stroll – who is on a multi-year deal – said: “The team will sort that out; my job is just to drive the car that is on my side of the

garage. They will figure out the rest.”

Massa has called for a decision before his home race in Brazil, which takes place on November 12, with the Brazilian expected to head to Formula E if he doesn’t keep his seat. It is believed that Williams is keen to achieve that deadline, not only as a gesture to Massa but also to end the speculation and allow for some stability to begin preparations for next season.

LAWRENCE BARRETT

**“My job is just to drive the car on my side of the garage”**



## IMSA/INDYCAR

## CASTRONEVES TO IMSA AS KANAAN GETS FOYT RIDE

THREE-TIME INDIANAPOLIS 500 winner Helio Castroneves will make a full-time switch to the IMSA SportsCar Championship with Team Penske next season, while his fellow Brazilian veteran Tony Kanaan has earned a stay in the IndyCar ranks by joining AJ Foyt Racing after being dropped by Chip Ganassi Racing.

Penske had already confirmed Juan Pablo Montoya and Dane Cameron in one of its two new Acura DPi cars, but postponed talks with Castroneves until after this year's IndyCar season was over.

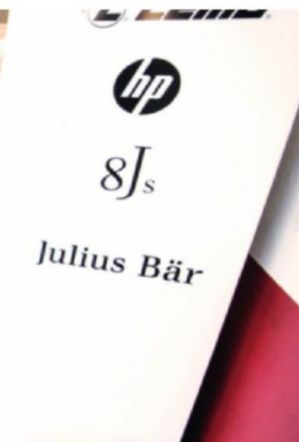
"Helio has been a valuable member of Team Penske for almost 20 years, and we are looking forward to sharing more success together," said team owner Roger Penske. "Competitors like Helio, Rick Mears and Mark Donohue are what have made Team Penske what it is today."

Over 20 years in Indycars, Castroneves took 30 wins, 54 pole positions, and finished inside the top five in the championship 14 times. His 30th win, scored at Iowa Speedway this season, meant he surpassed Mears as Penske's most successful driver.

Kanaan's multi-year deal at Foyt is for the famed #14 car, where the 2004 champion replaces Carlos Munoz, although it is understood that Munoz and Conor Daly are both in play for the #4 seat.

"If I can have a person like AJ to help me, even at this point of my career, it's awesome," said Kanaan. "He's a legend."

DAVID MALSHER



## FORMULAE

## Nissan to take over e.dams Formula E programme

THE DECISION TO REPLACE RENAULT WITH NISSAN in Formula E has been agreed, Autosport has learned.

Multiple sources have confirmed to Autosport that the Renault-Nissan alliance, one of the world's biggest automotive partnerships, has green-lighted Nissan's move into the electric single-seater series. And Mike Carcamo, the head of Nissan motorsport arm NISMO, visited the Renault e.dams team and the FIA during the Valencia pre-season test last week.

FE is without representation from a Japanese manufacturer at present, but series CEO Alejandro Agag said at Valencia that he expected that to change. Honda has expressed an interest in FE but is not planning to enter in the short-term, while Toyota has never formally registered a desire to compete.

Official confirmation from Nissan is not thought to be imminent, with an announcement at next year's Geneva Motor Show believed to be a strong possibility.

Renault e.dams launched its 2017-18 challenger, the Z.E.17, last month at an event in Paris, likely precluding any major rebranding for this season.

The move will give Nissan a major international racing programme for the first time since axing its failed LMP1 project at the end of 2015, and will allow Renault to focus on its F1 programme. As e.dams holds the FE entry, it is expected to remain in place as the operating team. The position of lead driver Sebastien Buemi is understood to not be under threat, despite racing for Nissan's rival Toyota in the World Endurance Championship.

SCOTT MITCHELL



## FORMULAE

## Turvey tops Valencia test runs

OLIVER TURVEY SET THE PACE IN Formula E pre-season testing last week, narrowly edging Sebastien Buemi for the best time.

NIO driver Turvey topped the opening day of the test, but an extra chicane was added on the start-finish straight for day two that added around three seconds to the lap.

The second day was headed by Renault e.dams man Buemi, but on

the final day Turvey's morning benchmark outpaced Daniel Abt by a tenth, and was fractionally faster than Buemi had managed previously.

Although Audi's Lucas di Grassi looked dominant over long runs, one-lap pace suggests the field is more compressed than ever in qualifying trim. The top six places were filled by six different teams and five different powertrains.

Felix Rosenqvist ended the test third fastest for Mahindra, ahead of Audi driver Abt, DS Virgin's Sam Bird and Renault customer Techeetah's Jean-Eric Vergne.

Only four tenths of a second separated the top 10, which was completed by Nico Prost (Renault), di Grassi, Jerome d'Ambrosio (Dragon) and Alex Lynn (DS Virgin).

SCOTT MITCHELL





FORMULA1

## Palmer walks from Renault

LAST WEEKEND'S JAPANESE GRAND PRIX was Jolyon Palmer's last for the Renault Formula 1 team, with Carlos Sainz Jr replacing him from the next race in the United States.

The Briton ended months of speculation surrounding his future by revealing on Instagram after qualifying on Saturday that the Suzuka race was to be his last.

Renault said the decision had been reached "mutually", with Palmer leaving F1 on the back of a 12th-place finish in Japan, having scored nine points in 35 grand prix starts.

"It's been pretty clear, Carlos has signed for next year and [Renault chief] Cyril [Abiteboul] made it clear he wanted him in the car this year as well," Palmer told Sky Sports. "After this race it's a couple of weeks' gap and it made sense for it to be the time to part ways. It's a shame for me not to finish the season; I've been here a while and I respect the decision and wish Carlos and the team all the best for the future. I'll work for something else on my future."

Abiteboul added: "It's not a unilateral decision – it was made jointly and amicably with Jolyon, Jonathan [Palmer's father] and the team, and I really must thank them, because they understood the team position and the team point of view, and what we are trying to achieve."

Sainz said he only found out 30 minutes before the announcement was made on Saturday night, with the Spaniard to leave Toro Rosso, after 56 starts that have yielded

112 points, to partner Nico Hulkenberg. He will be replaced by Daniil Kvyat, who returns to Toro Rosso, having been stood down to allow the team to evaluate 2016 GP2 champion Pierre Gasly's potential for a seat next year.

But there remains uncertainty over who will be Kvyat's team-mate at Austin. The team originally announced that Gasly would stay on, meaning he would miss the opportunity to contest the Super Formula title with the Honda-powered Team Mugen at the Suzuka finale on the same weekend. The Frenchman is only half a point off the lead.

But since then it has emerged that a decision about where Gasly will race has yet to be made. Gasly has said that he would choose F1 if the decision was up to him. Honda also says that its priority is for Gasly to race in the US GP, even if it means that the Japanese manufacturer would sacrifice the Super Formula title to rival Toyota.

"We would like Pierre to finish the rest of the season with Toro Rosso as he is a potential regular driver for the team next year," said Honda motorsport chief Masashi Yamamoto. "So he should gather as much experience as he can in Formula 1 this year."

At the time of going to press, Red Bull had yet to announce its plans. It is believed that regardless of whether Gasly drives at Austin or not, he is set to compete in the final three races of the season – the Mexican, Brazilian and Abu Dhabi GPs.

LAWRENCE BARRETTO

## IN THE HEADLINES

### PEUGEOT TO STAY IN WRX WITH LOEB

Peugeot has reaffirmed its commitment to the World Rallycross Championship with nine-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb. The French manufacturer, which competes with the Peugeot Hansen team, added that WRX's readiness to adopt an electric class was key to its marketing, as it plans to be offering 80% of its models in electrified form by 2023. "Our ambassador Sebastien Loeb will support us in this daring new adventure," said Peugeot chief executive Jean-Philippe Imparato. "The goal of the 2018 season will be to win the title."

### WILSON TO RETURN FOR INDY 500

Stefan Wilson, the younger brother of the late Justin Wilson, will make his second attempt at the Indianapolis 500 next year. Wilson, the 2007 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner, started the '16 Indy 500 but passed up his drive this year to allow Fernando Alonso to take part. He will drive with Andretti Autosport in support of the Driven2SaveLives campaign, which promotes awareness of the importance of organ, tissue and eye donation and transplantation. Justin Wilson was a registered donor and as a result the lives of five people were saved following his fatal accident at Pocono in 2015.

### NOEL CUNNINGHAM-REID 1930-2017

The winner of the 1957 Nurburgring 1000Km with the great Tony Brooks, Noel Cunningham-Reid has died at the age of 86. Cunningham-Reid started competing on regularity trials with an Aston Martin in '54, raced a Lister-Bristol in '55, and earned a full-time drive with HWM in '56. After a test with the factory Aston team he was rewarded with a seat in '57, with the highlight being his win in Germany. He had never driven on the Nordschleife before the race, but impressed Brooks with his handling of the brand-new DBR1/300. He stopped racing at the end of that year and turned his attention to game, even being listed as 17th greatest partridge shooter of all time.

### GOOD NEWS FOR GINETTA, BR1 IN LMP1

Ginetta has taken a firm order of three chassis from an as-yet-undisclosed team for its new customer LMP1 car. The team plans to run two cars in the World Endurance Championship, using the third as a spare. Meanwhile, the Dallara-built Russian BR1 LMP1 challenger has hit the track. SMP Racing plans to field two of the cars in the WEC, and it will be offered to customers.

### TCR MOVES FINALE FROM ABU DHABI GP

The TCR International Series finale has dropped off the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix support card. Instead, the fast-growing tin-top series will race in Dubai the previous weekend, on November 17-18. Last weekend's Zhejiang round featured a debut win for the brand-new Hyundai driven by tin-top veteran and TCR debutant Gabriele Tarquini and run by BRC Racing Team (see p47).







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## AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

# IndyCar and F1 men get stakes in Aussie squad

INDYCAR GIANT ANDRETTI AUTOSPORT AND the United Autosports team of McLaren Formula 1 boss Zak Brown have taken a stake in the Walkinshaw Racing Australian Supercars team.

Currently operating as HSV Racing, the team will be known as Walkinshaw Andretti United from January 1. The move follows a number of rumours of changes in the ownership structure at Walkinshaw Racing, including speculation of a complete buyout by United. Instead, the current owners will remain involved alongside Andretti and United.

"To be able to partner with both Andretti Autosport and United Autosports is an honour," said Walkinshaw Racing chairman Ryan Walkinshaw, whose late father Tom fronted tin-top giant TWR

as well as the Arrows F1 team. "We've looked at what both companies have to offer the team moving forward, which is why everyone should be so excited."

The tie-up looks set to take some of Andretti's IndyCar drivers to Australia for the late-season endurance races from 2018, with Marco Andretti having already raced a Supercar back in '12. "I think there's a very, very good chance that a couple of our drivers will be coming down here and trying it out for the long-distance races," said team owner Andretti.

The team has already recruited Team BMR technical director Carl Faux, who designed the Subaru Levorg taken to the British Touring Car Championship title this year by Ash Sutton.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN AND MATT JAMES



## MACAU GT WORLD CUP

# Rosenqvist set for Macau GT attack

FORMULA E FRONTRUNNER Felix Rosenqvist is set to return to Macau next month in an attempt to add victory in the FIA GT World Cup on the Chinese street circuit to his pair of Formula 3 Grand Prix wins.

The Macau expert, who has also finished second twice in the F3 GP, is understood to have lined up a drive with the US Scuderia Corsa Ferrari team, class winner at

the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2016, for the GT3 blue-riband event on November 18-19. He is expected to drive the same Ferrari 488 GT3 (above) that claimed the 2017 IMSA SportsCar Championship GT Daytona title with Alessandro Balzan and Christina Nielsen.

Scuderia Corsa could not comment on the plans, but there is an obvious link between the team and the Swedish driver.

Ex-Formula 1 racer Stefan Johansson manages Rosenqvist and is also sporting director for the Los Angeles-based squad.

Rosenqvist would be attempting to become only the second driver after fellow two-time Macau GP victor Edoardo Mortara to win both the F3 GP and the Macau GT Cup, which was given FIA World Cup status for 2015.

GARY WATKINS

## OBITUARY

## ROBERT YATES 1943-2017

A FAMED TEAM OWNER AND engine builder in NASCAR, Robert Yates died last week at the age of 74.

Yates began his NASCAR career at Holman-Moody Racing in 1968 before landing a job at Junior Johnson's team in 1971. His engines powered Bobby Allison's and Cale Yarborough's successes, including Allison's 1983 Cup title with DiGard Racing.

In late 1988 Yates launched his own Robert Yates Racing team. Davey Allison (son of Bobby) won the '92 Daytona 500 and finished third in that season's standings. RYR expanded to a two-car team in '96 with Dale Jarrett and Ernie Irvan, and won that year's Daytona 500 with Jarrett. Three years later Jarrett claimed what would be the only Cup title for a Yates driver, followed up with another Daytona 500 victory in 2000.

Yates's drivers won 57 Cup races, and NASCAR paid tribute to his success: "His excellence spanned decades, from the 1983 championship powered by his engines and the '99 title captured by the cars he owned, both of which helped earn him a deserved spot in the NASCAR Hall of Fame Class of 2018. And though he was a master at his craft, it was Robert's passion and character that endeared him to every single person he encountered."

Yates's son Doug took over RYR on his father's retirement at the end of 2007. While the team was later merged into Richard Petty Motorsports, Yates Jr remains one of NASCAR's top engine builders.

JIM UTTER







# His finest hour

Should Lewis Hamilton win a fourth world title this year, it will undoubtedly be his greatest achievement so far

By Edd Straw, Digital Content Manager

[@eddstrawF1](#)

**LEWIS HAMILTON HASN'T WON THE 2017 FORMULA 1** World Championship, and he might yet lose it to Sebastian Vettel. Should Hamilton succeed, it will be the greatest of what will then be four titles.

This is not to say the others were in some way unworthy, but cast your mind back to July and things weren't going well for Hamilton. Having lost a surefire victory, thanks to a loose headrest in Azerbaijan, Hamilton finished only fourth in Austria after picking up a grid penalty for a gearbox change, while Vettel was a close second to Valtteri Bottas.

Given his history of not always reacting to adversity in the best manner, there was a risk that Hamilton's title push would unravel. But after trading wins with Vettel at Silverstone and the Hungaroring, he has shown no such weakness.

So what is it about this campaign that's particularly impressive? Firstly, while the challenge from within the Mercedes team is weaker – an established Nico Rosberg at the top of his game would surely have posed a bigger threat than newcomer Bottas – there has been serious opposition from Ferrari and Vettel.

Two of Hamilton's titles have come without any serious opposition from a rival team – in 2014 and '15, when the only significant rival was team-mate Rosberg.

Hamilton's first title, in 2008, was very different. That year, it was a two-team battle between Hamilton at McLaren and Felipe Massa at Ferrari. It was a great fight, with Hamilton passing Timo Glock with 20 seconds of the season remaining to nab the point he needed.

But there were plenty of errors from Hamilton – notably smashing into the parked Ferrari of Kimi Raikkonen at a red light at the pit exit in Canada. Hamilton has unquestionably had a much stronger run overall in 2017.

In Singapore, Hamilton said after qualifying that he needed a miracle to limit the ground lost to Vettel in the points race, and ended up winning. Yes, the start shunt that resulted in both Ferraris and Max Verstappen retiring played a big part in that, but Hamilton was there to capitalise when he could.

It was a similar story in Malaysia. The Ferraris were faster, hit trouble and Hamilton recovered from an appalling run in Friday practice to take second place. He didn't put a foot wrong in that race and, unlike Vettel's reaction to a slow start in Singapore, he was unflustered by Verstappen passing him.

That can be portrayed as extremely easy pickings – just wait for Ferrari to get it wrong and profit. Anyone can do that,

right? Well, that's to underestimate the nature of elite sport and the unique pressures it brings.

It's very easy to make glib comments about how high-level athletes are overpaid and have an easy time of it. One common complaint is that this isn't real pressure – try being in the military in a war zone. It's true that elite sport isn't life and death – although occasionally it can be in motorsport. But that's what it feels like to those in the spotlight.

At the highest level, the mental side is critical. It's why you hear drivers talking about taking one race at a time and not thinking about the championship; if you get drawn into contemplating the big picture, the more immediate little picture of doing the best possible job in every corner, lap, practice session and race is neglected.

It's impossible to be sure what these pressures do to drivers. Take Vettel's move at the start in Singapore. Having made a bad getaway, did the knowledge of the stakes, and the need for Ferrari to take every opportunity to win, prompt him to mount his overly aggressive defence? Perhaps.

Had Vettel held the lead in Singapore and won, it might well have looked easy. But it's the need to calm this mental turmoil that makes that kind of win so impressive. It's what makes Hamilton capitalising on it and

winning against the odds in Singapore so remarkable. It's what makes him digging deep and grabbing an unlikely pole position at Sepang, or being faultless at Suzuka, the stuff of a champion.

Since winning at Silverstone, Hamilton has turned the tables on Vettel. To do that, it's meant he hasn't made split-second misjudgements, and never let the fact that the wider world is more interested in the big picture than in the millions of minute details that make the real difference distract him.

The bottom line is that the margins have been small this year. And Hamilton has not been the one to crack. Vettel has. Even at Spa, under pressure from a Ferrari that was quick in the race, Hamilton delivered the goods.

That could change. The pressure of getting so near the ultimate goal may yet cause Hamilton to become his own worst enemy. And we'd have to revise the provisional conclusions I've made about the Hamilton we've seen this season. But based on what we've witnessed, Hamilton is stronger than ever and will march towards the championship over the coming four races.

It may look easy. It will have been anything but. 🏆

**“Had Vettel held the lead in Singapore and won, it might have looked easy”**



# FEEDBACK

## In the thrall of mountain kings



Thanks to Motorsport.tv for televising the whole of the Bathurst 1000 – what a spectacle! More than six hours of fantastic coverage of the second great endurance race this year, the first being the Le Mans 24 Hours.

The weather around the Mount Panorama circuit gave the drivers, organisers and marshals one of the wettest races on record. Superb driving standards as well in such terrible conditions.

I now look forward to both of the greatest endurance races on the planet again in 2018!

**Patrick Wickham**  
Buckingham

*See race report, p48 – ed*

### Invite IMSA to Le Mans

I read with interest David Malsher's overview of IMSA sportscar racing in the USA (Pit+Paddock, October 5),

which is seemingly thriving.

The ACO should take note of that and invite the IMSA series to Le Mans as soon as is practicable to keep manufacturer involvement a given in the 24 Hours.

What is the point of showcasing Le Mans with a gaggle of ORECA-Gibsons and a ByKolles? Ridiculous.

**Jeremy Elliott**  
Byemail

### Back to basics

Following the new technical rules in F1, and now F2, whatever happened to 'add lightness and simplify'?

Back to basics in 2021, Ross.  
**Bob Barker**  
Leominster, Herefordshire

### Does Stroll want an easy ride?

I thought it was a joke that Williams was considering Paul di Resta, as he hardly set Formula 1 alight in his three years there. It seems

**Spectacular Mount Panorama circuit served up a thrilling and dramatic race**

that it's the Strolls who want him. They are keen to get someone who Lance can beat in the seat.

Who next will they ask – Max Chilton, perhaps?

**M Kelly**  
London

### Say hello, wave goodbye

After another Ferrari failure, how soon before Maurizio Arrivabene becomes Maurizio Arrivederci?

**Andrew Andersz**  
Byemail

### Track star/Star Trek?

Is it me or could Pierre Gasly be related to Benedict Cumberbatch?

**Patrick Palmer**  
Byemail

### Record-breaking to the Max

Interesting bit of stats analysis from Brian Harvey (Letters, October 5). Got a sneaky feeling that we'll need to get used to young Mr Verstappen breaking records in Formula 1, again and again...

Wonder what odds I'll get for him beating Sebastian Vettel's record of youngest-ever world champion? With Adrian Newey returning to a more hands-on role at Red Bull, I reckon that this is looking increasingly likely.

**Frances Stewart**  
London SE12

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# How Vettel's title hopes finally died

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor [@BenAndersonAuto](#)

y Emirates













## SEBASTIAN VETTEL'S FORMULA 1 TITLE HOPES ALL BUT EVAPORATED IN THE Japanese Grand Prix, as poor reliability ruined Ferrari's prospects of properly carrying the fight to Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes for the second race in a row.

If Vettel was already clinging on by his fingertips coming into Suzuka, he is surely now only something akin to a fingernail breakage away from certain doom in F1's title race.

Ferrari knew Vettel was in serious trouble the moment he left the garage to take his place on the grid. A broken spark plug caused Vettel's engine — only one race old following his troubles in Malaysia, remember — to lapse onto five cylinders. The team said there was not enough time left before the start of the race to swap the plug, supplied by Japanese manufacturer NGK, for a new one, so Vettel's fate was sealed.

The Scuderia felt sure Vettel would have beaten Hamilton in Japan, given he started well enough on five cylinders to make it to the first corner still comfortably in second place. Ferrari reckoned Vettel's launch was better than Hamilton's, and good enough that Vettel would have taken the lead had full power been available. From there, given Mercedes' qualifying advantage is not so apparent in races, or in the hotter conditions that were prevalent at Suzuka on race day, the grand prix would have been Vettel's to lose.

But within four laps it was all over, Vettel dropping like a stone thanks to his lack of power.

Max Verstappen passed him with a Kamui Kobayashi-esque lunge on the brakes into the hairpin on lap one, Vettel was overtaken by three cars at once on the pit straight at the start of lap two, then demoted further by Sergio Perez's Force India shortly after the safety-car restart on lap four.

Realising this was a lost cause, Ferrari threw Vettel's towel in for him and called him into the pits to retire. And with that, another potential 25 points were lost, as was Vettel's last realistic chance of denying Hamilton this championship.

It would be easy to look at this recent sequence of events and determine that poor Ferrari reliability has cost Vettel the title, but it goes much further than that.

Had Vettel not started poorly and had his rear tyre punctured by Verstappen in June's Canadian GP, he would have finished second in that race instead of fourth, gaining six points back on Hamilton. Had he not had his moment of madness behind the safety car in Azerbaijan he would have inherited victory in that race instead of finishing fourth, gaining 13 more.

Pushing the front-left Pirelli tyre past breaking point at Silverstone made the difference between finishing third or seventh and chucked another nine points in the bin, while choosing to start the Singapore GP from pole in second gear, before aggressively defending position, cost another likely

victory and the 25 points that go with it.

Without that shunt, Hamilton would likely have done no better than fourth in Singapore, swinging things in Vettel's favour by another 13 points. Add those to the 13 extra Vettel should have earned by winning in Malaysia (plus the three Hamilton would drop for finishing third), and the 25 gone begging in Japan (minus seven from Hamilton's total) and it's conceivable that, with a 'perfect' season, Vettel should be leading this championship by 55 points, rather than trailing by 59.

Freak reliability problems are part of the game, of course, as Hamilton found to his cost last season. But Ferrari and Vettel have thrown away enough points regardless that, even with these recent engine failures, they should have built enough of a buffer for Vettel to leave Japan still leading.

When your car is not the out-and-out fastest on the grid, which the Ferrari is clearly not, you cannot afford mistakes if you want to win, whether they be from driver, team or suppliers. Ferrari technical director Mattia Binotto spoke of Ferrari's plans to reorganise its quality-control department in the wake of those

turbo-compressor inlet manifold failures on both cars at Sepang, but this will come too late to save Vettel's season.

It's also vital not to overreact, which has not been the Scuderia's strength in defeat in the past. Vettel spoke after

the Japanese GP about the pain of this latest setback, and the need to "protect" Ferrari after the "incredible job" it has done to transform itself into a title contender this season, but what will hurt most is how Ferrari's reliability problems once again let Hamilton off the hook and cleared his path to victory.

Hamilton is on one of those runs where he can seemingly do no wrong — perhaps even walk on water if he wants to. In Singapore, he pretty much did to steal victory on a generally uncompetitive weekend for Mercedes, as Vettel, Verstappen and Kimi Raikkonen crashed out in front of him.

In Malaysia, Hamilton gained six points on Vettel on a weekend when he should have lost ground thanks to more Mercedes set-up trouble. In Japan, he was given a double boost — Vettel's woes, plus the fact that the other man to make a strong start among the leading group, Verstappen, was coming from too far back to challenge for the lead.

"The start was OK," reckoned Hamilton. "The initial getaway was not spectacular, there was a bit of wheelspin. It was pretty much under control from there. I saw Max had done a big lunge >>>

## "Ferrari's reliability problems once again let Hamilton off the hook"





Verstappen  
harried Hamilton  
right to the end

into Turn 11 [the hairpin], so I saw them [Ferrari] drop back a step.

"From then I was just trying to manage the pace, manage the tyres. It was a long way to go, the hottest the track had been all weekend, so it was really crucial, knowing the Ferraris and Red Bulls are very, very quick in the race, that I looked after the tyres the best."

The track temperature was 15C hotter than in qualifying, where Red Bull had been a second off Mercedes' pace. The W08 struggled in the heat in Malaysia, and team boss Toto Wolff reckoned Sunday's hotter weather in Japan pulled it back towards Red Bull in the race.

In the end, tyre life proved quite important in denying Verstappen any chance of threatening Hamilton's superiority at the front. The Red Bull

looked quite racy initially, but dropped back following the first virtual-safety-car period — called for Marcus Ericsson's crash at the second Degner — and gradually lost touch as the RB13 developed a blister on its left-front tyre.

"We saw it in the first stint, and because the second stint was 25% longer it reappeared," explained Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. "It was a concern, because you think back to Vettel at Silverstone — it's very easy to pick up a puncture.

We were a little bit nervous about that, so we asked Max to maintain a three-second gap so as not to get into dirty air and damage the tyre further."

Verstappen closed in again following the pitstops, as Hamilton complained he was losing time behind Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas, who ran a long first stint on the harder tyre. At the end of lap 28 of 53, Bottas allowed Hamilton past approaching the chicane, but waited another two laps before finally diving for the pits himself, allowing Hamilton some welcome breathing space from Verstappen's eager attentions.

"It's part of the game," said Horner, who reckoned "everything fell very nicely for Lewis today.

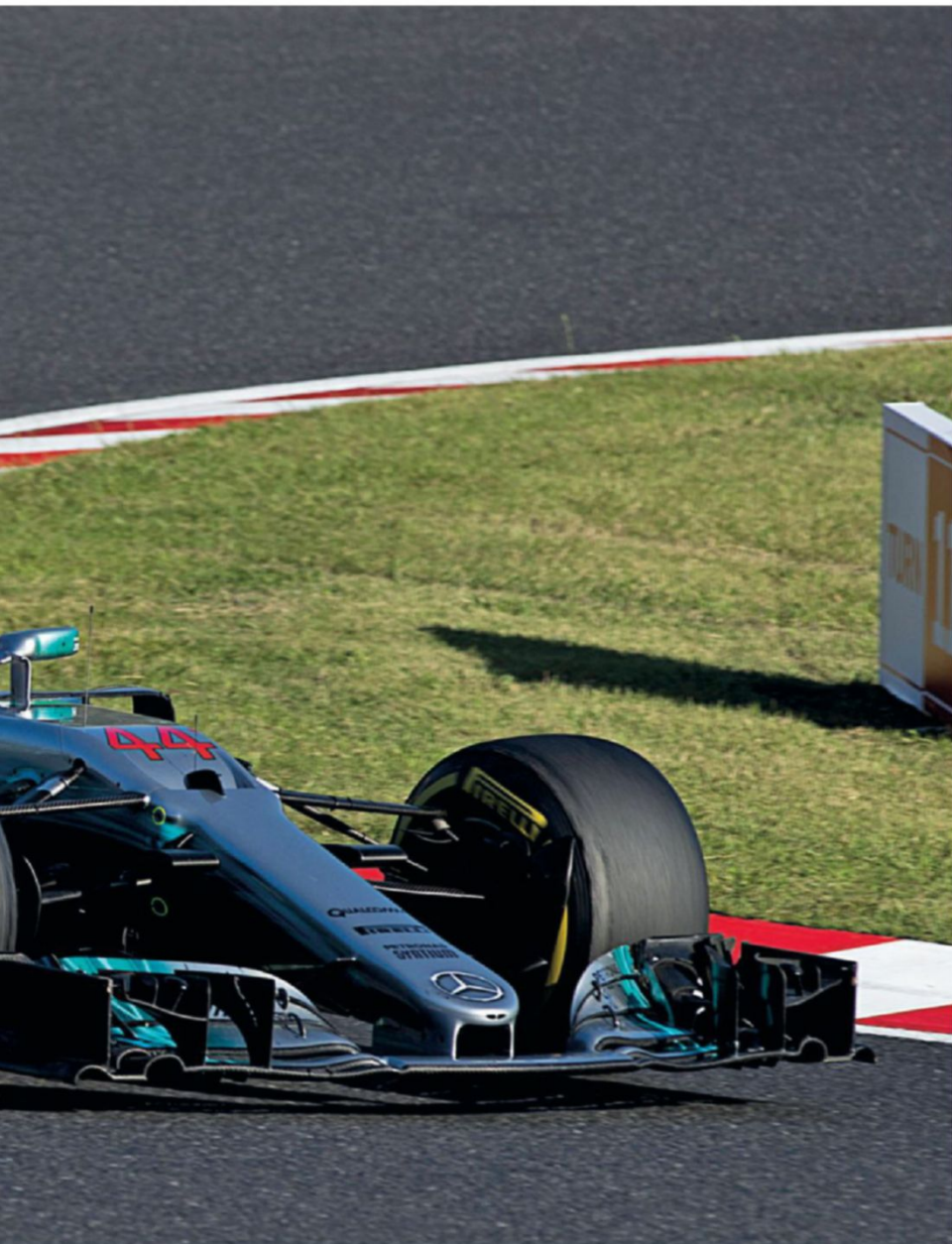
**"It's a team sport. They used Bottas strategically. Can't blame them for that"**

It's a team sport, they used Bottas strategically — you can't blame Mercedes for doing that."

The race descended back into stalemate until Lance Stroll's Williams suffered a sudden failure on its right-front corner while negotiating the Esses in the closing stages.

Hamilton lost tyre temperature under virtual-safety-car conditions, then vital time trying to lap a frenetic battle for the final point between Felipe Massa's Williams and Fernando ➤





Bottas played a part in keeping Verstappen at bay

## QUALIFYING



### LEWIS HAMILTON PULLS OFF STUNNING QUALIFYING

performances with phenomenal regularity, and the effort that bagged him his 71st career pole position in F1 was right up there.

Malaysia required some dig-deep heroism in a difficult car, but also depended on Sebastian Vettel's engine breaking and a bit of typical Kimi Raikkonen underperformance at the vital moment. Japan was a case of Hamilton utterly crushing the opposition in a car finally doing what it was supposed to.

He was quickest in all phases of the session, as he claimed his first pole at Suzuka, obliterating Michael Schumacher's qualifying lap record from 2006 (by 1.635 seconds) in the process.

Hamilton was more than four tenths clear of Vettel after the first runs in Q3 and lowered his own benchmark by a couple of hundredths to confirm pole.

"It is incredible for me, my first pole position here, so ninth time lucky, I am grateful for that," said Hamilton. "Every single time I've struggled here – struggled with finding the right balance, generally not starting on the right foot, and if I have started on the right foot, I've gone in the wrong direction. It's always been up and down.

"This is the first car I felt has been underneath me all weekend, [just] small tweaks here and there in the right direction, and ultimately a good job done. It's a real confidence boost to our group."

Vettel's Ferrari was provisionally second fastest after the first

**"It's incredible, my first pole position here, I am grateful"**

Lewis Hamilton

Q3 runs, but a small improvement at the end was not enough to stay there, as Hamilton's Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas sneaked ahead by 0.140s. Vettel was not too concerned, knowing Bottas faced a five-place penalty for a gearbox change.

"In the last run in Q3 I tried a bit more than there was," Vettel explained. "Valtteri wasn't a threat, so I took a bit more risk, but it didn't work."

Bottas, who almost crashed at the second Degner in Q1 after shunting at Spoon in final practice, pulled it together when it mattered, but was still three tenths off Hamilton.

"The guys did a great job getting the car back together," said Bottas. "My driving was really getting better through qualifying.

"It's been a tricky weekend, not quite so clean, and going slightly over a kerb in practice three can make a massive difference. I had to reset, go for it. I used the soft tyre in Q2, so that mixed up my rhythm slightly. The lap in the end was not perfect, but not that far off."

Red Bull had been within half a second of pole in Malaysia, but was almost a second off in Japan. Daniel Ricciardo ran less downforce than Max Verstappen but they qualified just 0.026s apart, and Ricciardo said the gap to pole was around 0.5s bigger than expected.

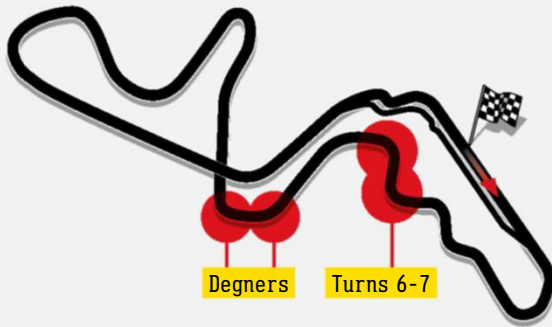
"It was the best we could do with what we had," he said. "Mercedes do perform better on cooler surfaces. Their car's no donkey."

It certainly wasn't at Suzuka, and it was unstoppable in Hamilton's hands.





“ENORMOUS ENTRY SPEED AND IMPRESSIVE COMMITMENT AS THEY ATTACK THE APEX”



SILVERSTONE, SPA, SUZUKA – these are the legendary fast circuits where Formula 1’s latest breed of cars and their steroidal aerodynamics should produce the most thrilling results.

Suzuka is perhaps the greatest of them from a driving-challenge perspective, and certainly the cars looked properly fast from trackside.

Starting off at the last part of the Esses you can see the Red Bull drivers immediately exploring the limits in first practice, running right out over the exit kerb through the final left-hander, while the Mercedes drivers leave

more margin to begin with.

Max Verstappen talks about trying to be on the pace within five laps, whatever he’s driving, so it’s no surprise to see him taking a few liberties.

Team-mate Daniel Ricciardo is keeping up pretty well, until he runs massively wide and has to lift off the throttle. The problem is he’s not working hard enough to get the car back over to the right coming out of Turn 6. Ricciardo likes to let his car flow, but that can hurt you sometimes. Here, you need to muscle it more.

Marcus Ericsson always does a noticeably good job at this, sacrificing Turn 6 to



Vandoorne is on it through the Esses

get 7 right. Stoffel Vandoorne has the right idea too, beautifully expansive through the entire sequence in his McLaren-Honda.

One senior paddock engineer suggested the Degners would be an even better showcase for the aerodynamic muscle of these cars, and a trek to the grass mound overlooking the first Degner for final practice doesn’t disappoint –

enormous entry speed and impressive commitment as the drivers attack the right-hand apex with verve.

Valtteri Bottas looks especially committed to start with, before his exuberance gets the better of him further around the circuit at Spoon. Lewis Hamilton, Sebastian Vettel, Kimi Raikkonen (who later crashes at the second Degner), Carlos Sainz Jr and Vandoorne are also impressive

when they’re pushing, as are those Red Bulls of course.

“It’s incredible to come here with this car, this car is mindblowing,” enthuses Hamilton after qualifying on pole. “[Suzuka has] always been one of the craziest roller-coaster rides. It’s insane being thrown around.”

That sentiment is shared by many of his rivals. Formula 1 2017 at its best, no doubt.

**BEN ANDERSON**



Hamilton: “Jeez, this guy’s so much younger than me!”

Alonso’s McLaren when the race went green again.

“I was just controlling the pace, but towards the end lost a lot of temperature in the tyres and waking them up was not so easy,” Hamilton explained. “Then I got traffic, I was stuck behind Fernando and Massa and I was just losing so much time.

“His [Verstappen’s] car was so big in my mirrors. I was thinking, ‘Jeez, this is very, very close’ with a couple of laps to go – but once I got by I just managed to keep it together. We all know how quick Max is – he’s doing a great job, very consistent. We’re quicker in qualifying, but they [Red Bull] are at least within a tenth or so of us in the race.

“It was really just about not making mistakes. I was driving down the back straight at one point thinking, ‘Jeez, the guy behind me is so much younger than me!’ I’ve got to make sure I kind of man up and show my age and make sure that I stay ahead, show that I’m actually still very young at heart.

“It was not an easy walk in the park today. It was very much one that I had to work very hard for.”

Verstappen seemed to come off worse during the late lappery than Hamilton did, getting baulked by Alonso at the hairpin on the penultimate lap, then stuck behind Massa through the Esses at the start of the last, after Hamilton snuck through at Turn 1. But although he had asked permission from Red Bull to attack Hamilton, Verstappen did not feel that the backmarkers ultimately cost him his chance to win the race, despite the tense conclusion.

“I could see Lewis was managing his tyres, and with the traffic it just seems like it was a bit more difficult for him to follow other cars compared to me,” Verstappen said. “I closed up, but it was more like when Lewis was getting held up then I could close up.

“Then maybe you can do something, but when you are really close you start to lose a lot of downforce, so I couldn’t really





Hamilton knows fortune has smiled on him

attack him – but at least I tried. At the end of the day, I think I wouldn't have passed Lewis anyway, because it's really hard once he's in free air. It [the traffic] is of course not ideal, but it wouldn't have made a difference."

But it's easy to wonder how different the complexion of this championship might look had Red Bull raced this competitively from the early stages of the season, as most expected it would before development was derailed by early season windtunnel correlation problems.

Mercedes has endured its fair share of problems too, of course, in what has not exactly been a straightforward campaign for any of the top three teams. Some set-up adjustments allied to cooler weather got the Wo8 back on song in Japan, after the travails of Malaysia, but the key point is that Hamilton has scored big during Mercedes' recent run of adversity.

He could easily have leaked 30 points to Vettel over the past three races. Instead, he has gained 56.

"It's kind of unbelievable really, to think that we are where we are," said Hamilton, who seemed perturbed by engine vibrations on the slowing-down lap that Wolff put down to a bit of good old-fashioned championship-leader paranoia.

"I was excited to have a good race with Sebastian here, as I was in the last race, but he's obviously been incredibly unfortunate. In the world today in Formula 1, it's a lot about reliability – it's about the team's whole performance, not just speed on the track, and I think the team has shown, for many years now, that we have

a very, very solid platform. The guys do such a phenomenal job with how they build the car, in terms of reliability. Mercedes are the real leaders in that area, so I really owe it to everyone back at the factory for providing me with a car that I can utilise my abilities in.

"There's still a long way to go. One hundred points [to be won] is a lot of points. Anything can happen in life. I've just got to try to keep my head down and hopefully continue to perform like this."

For Vettel and Ferrari, winning this championship now realistically depends on some terrible misfortune striking Hamilton's car over the coming races. If Hamilton wins the next one at Austin, and Vettel does no better than sixth, Hamilton will be champion.

Hamilton needs only 42 more points over the remaining four races – the equivalent of three fourth places and a seventh – regardless of what Vettel does, to seal his fourth world championship.

"We still have a chance," said Vettel, more in hope than expectation. "We need to get back, get some rest, then go flat-out for the last four races and see what happens."

That's all Vettel can do now – go for broke. But that spark-plug failure is likely to sound the death knell for his shattered championship dream.

The funny thing is, Mercedes changed Hamilton's sixth-cylinder spark plug in parc ferme ahead of the Japanese GP, as Ferrari left Vettel's car untouched. Success in F1 is often about taking care of tiny details. In this case, they have almost certainly now undone Vettel and Ferrari. ❄

**"It was not a walk in the park today. It was one I had to work hard for"**





## ALONSO RAPPED FOR IGNORING BLUE FLAGS

FERNANDO ALONSO WAS reprimanded for ignoring blue flags during Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen's late battle for victory in Japan.

Alonso was summoned by the stewards for having interfered in the final-lap contest between winner Hamilton and Verstappen, as both drivers tried to lap his McLaren-Honda.

The stewards found that Alonso, who was in a battle for 10th with Felipe Massa, had not let the leaders through early enough.

"Alonso was shown a solid blue indicator light on his dash and waved blue flags between Turn 14 and Turn 15 on lap 51," the stewards said. "He also received a flashing blue light informing him that race leader Lewis Hamilton was closing on him for over a lap before. Alonso let Hamilton pass during lap 52 at Turn 11.

"The drivers have been told they must allow the following car to pass at the earliest opportunity, which means that they should do this for lapping cars regardless of their current battle. Alonso did not do this."

They concluded the offence was less "severe" than other infringements this year, and that it did not impact the race-win battle enough to warrant further punishment.



## Bottas rebuilds confidence after Malaysia nightmare



VALTTERI BOTTAS TOOK a step towards rebuilding his shattered confidence with a strong run to fourth place in the Japanese Grand Prix.

He admitted he faced the most difficult period of his Formula 1 career after struggling massively in recent races in Singapore and Malaysia, but was on better form

at Suzuka, qualifying second fastest behind team-mate Lewis Hamilton as Mercedes found a way to unlock the potential of its latest aerodynamic upgrade package.

Bottas started in sixth, thanks to a grid penalty for an unscheduled gearbox change, but recovered to fourth using an alternative tyre strategy, and fell less than a second

short of beating Daniel Ricciardo's Red Bull to the final podium spot.

"Of course it's not easy to come to this weekend after so many difficulties, but I just had to try to reset somehow and approach the weekend as normal," said Bottas. "I think I managed to perform in a better way, controlling some of the issues I've had before.

## String of failures is weird – Raikkonen

KIMI RAIKKONEN SAYS HIS FERRARI TEAM'S recent run of engine failures is "a bit weird", after it lost more ground in the drivers' and constructors' championships in Japan.

His team-mate Sebastian Vettel retired early on with a spark-plug failure, while F1 title rival Lewis Hamilton won the race at Suzuka. It came after Vettel and Raikkonen suffered engine failures in Malaysia.

Hamilton's win increased his lead to 59 points with just four races and 100 points remaining, while in the constructors' fight Ferrari trails Mercedes by 145.

"It's a bit weird because on Saturdays, OK Seb had an issue before qualifying [in Malaysia], but it has been twice now the cars are running fine in qualifying and the next time we go out on Sunday we found some issues," said Raikkonen, who recovered from starting 10th on the grid at Suzuka to finish fifth.

"We have to see why it is happening and fix it. It's one of those things that suddenly hits."

Raikkonen's weekend was hampered when he paid a "hefty price" for his mistake that led to his crash in final practice and forced a gearbox penalty. The team repaired the car to get him out in time for qualifying, but Raikkonen went wide at the same corner on his first Q3 run and ended up sixth after his second.

In the race, he had a poor first lap, losing five positions after running wide when battling Renault's Nico Hulkenberg. "I had decent speed for overtaking but it obviously wasn't easy," said Raikkonen.







“This track normally can be very difficult to manage the tyres and manage the overheating, and setting up the car can be tricky, but I think in every way this weekend was pretty decent. Without the grid penalty, we should have been in a good position, and pace-wise it was a strong race for me – especially in the second stint. I had good pace and the quickest lap

of the race. Definitely feeling better after this race than the last one.”

Bottas said Mercedes used a “very different” set-up, and made better decisions in terms of aero balance in Japan, where cooler conditions and a different circuit layout and asphalt to Sepang also helped both cars perform better relative to the opposition.



## Force India employs team orders to protect result

FORCE INDIA USED TEAM orders early in the Japanese Grand Prix to ensure that Esteban Ocon and Sergio Perez could make a one-stop strategy work and secure a strong team result.

Ocon finished sixth, with Perez seventh, as Force India pulled 81 points clear of Williams in fourth in the constructors' championship.

During the race Perez told the team that Ocon was too slow and asked if he was allowed to attack, only to be told to “hold position”. Force India chief operating officer Otmar Szafnauer said the team had

instigated team orders early in the race, with Ocon controlling his pace to preserve tyre life.

“We’ve done it before, but never so early,” he said. “It is pre-arranged that you don’t race each other, but from the pitwall our main concern was to make the one-stop work by saving tyres.

“Even when we knew the one-stop was secure, what we didn’t know, and it nearly happened, was do you get a safety car towards the end? So in that middle stint it’s really important to save tyres, because you never know what’s going to happen.”



## Haas back in the points with both cars

HAAS SCORED ONLY ITS SECOND DOUBLE-POINTS finish of the season in Japan as Kevin Magnussen and Romain Grosjean finished eighth and ninth respectively.

Its six-point haul lifted the team ahead of Renault into seventh in the constructors' championship by a single point, and Haas is now only nine adrift of sixth-placed Toro Rosso. Magnussen started 12th and made good progress through the field at Suzuka, including a bold move on Felipe Massa with slight contact at Turn 2 to snatch eighth, with Grosjean following him through.

### Q&A

#### GUNTHER STEINER HAAS TEAM PRINCIPAL



##### Are you pleased to be back in the points after a difficult race in Malaysia?

We’ve had worse afternoons. We had quite a tough weekend until we got here. In the race, the car worked well and both drivers were happy. We’re happy to score six points, because it’s tough in the midfield.

##### What did you make of Magnussen’s move on Massa?

It was a cool move, it was a Kevin move. He can pull this stuff off. We pushed him as we needed to get past, because [Nico] Hulkenberg was pushing. He just did it, he waited until Massa got distracted by something, I guess, and just got on the inside.

##### Is his aggressive driving style a good thing?

I don’t think it’s a bad thing. Everyone calls it aggressive but is everyone expecting everyone to just go around and wave others by? Then no-one comes and watches anymore. This is racing. Last time I think [Fernando] Alonso complained, ‘He fought me’. What do you think he is going to do? He’s not here to make the numbers up. We are here to race as well. I am very OK with what Kevin is doing.

##### How confident are you of holding on to seventh in the constructors’ championship?

I wouldn’t say we’ve got confidence, but we will try. We will work hard. We’ve got closer to Toro Rosso. I think the battle is not over there, it has just started in my opinion. It’s tough. I’d rather be ahead than behind. It’s the same for Toro Rosso. They would rather be nine points ahead than nine behind.”



## Tough race for Sainz, Palmer before switch

JOLYON PALMER FELT HE could have scored a point in his last race for Renault at Suzuka.

The Briton, who will be replaced by Carlos Sainz Jr from the United States Grand Prix onwards, started 18th, following a grid penalty for engine-component changes, and finished 12th.

"I knew I'd have an engine penalty here, so 12th is as good as we could have done," he told Sky Sports.

"Without the VSC [deployed when Lance Stroll stopped on track] and [with] another lap I could have had [Felipe] Massa [who finished 10th]; I was four

seconds a lap quicker and right on his arse at the end. We could maybe have had a point."

Sainz's final race for Toro Rosso lasted just a few corners. He got wide through the Esses, lost the rear and spun across the gravel into the wall.

"We started on the soft tyre –

this gives you a bit less grip, and I was expecting we had to gain places at the start," he said.

"I tried to risk it – normally it works, but today it didn't. I went around the outside at Turn 6, found a lot more dust and dirt than I was expecting, I had a snap and lost the car. Nothing to regret."



## Overweight Ericsson suffers 'annoying' crash

A STRONG JAPANESE GRAND Prix performance turned to disaster for Marcus Ericsson, who crashed his Sauber out of the race at the second Degner in the early stages.

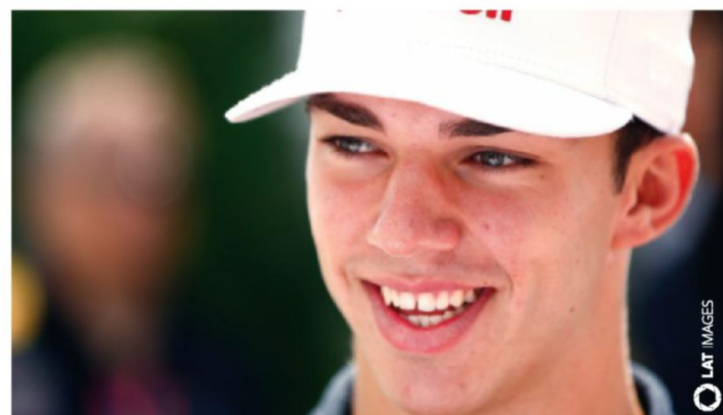
Having outqualified team-mate Pascal Wehrlein, Ericsson made a good start to the race and was running ahead of Fernando Alonso's McLaren when he went off on lap eight and hit the barrier, triggering a virtual safety car.

"Really, really annoying because I was going quite well," Ericsson said. "The problem is our car is lacking quite a bit of pace compared to the

others and it's easy to overdo it. It's no defence for me, because I shouldn't go off anyway."

Ericsson revealed ahead of the weekend he is carrying a weight disadvantage of up to 10kg to Wehrlein. Sauber reduced it to 7kg by adding a lighter front wing and removing Ericsson's drinks bottle.

"With that [the weight deficit] in mind I think it was a very, very good qualifying to be three tenths ahead," Ericsson added. "The [drinking] water system was out and the new front wing was a bit lighter as well, but still it's a good two tenths at least."



## Overdriving Gasly needs to 'reset expectations'

TORO ROSSO NEWCOMER Pierre Gasly admits he is overdriving his Formula 1 car because he is too used to driving Red Bull's superior version.

Gasly was well off team-mate Carlos Sainz Jr's pace in qualifying in Japan, exiting in Q1 after a mistake at the Esses, but produced a strong drive to 13th in the race.

Having suffered back pain during his F1 debut in Malaysia a week earlier, Gasly had a new seat fitted

for Suzuka and suffered no repeat. Attention turned to unlocking more performance from the STR12 he has taken over from Daniil Kvyat, but Gasly admitted after qualifying he is overdriving while trying to discover its potential.

"The potential of the car is quite different from the Red Bull," Gasly said. "I need to accept there are things I cannot do. I need to reset my expectations and work out ways to extract the most from it."

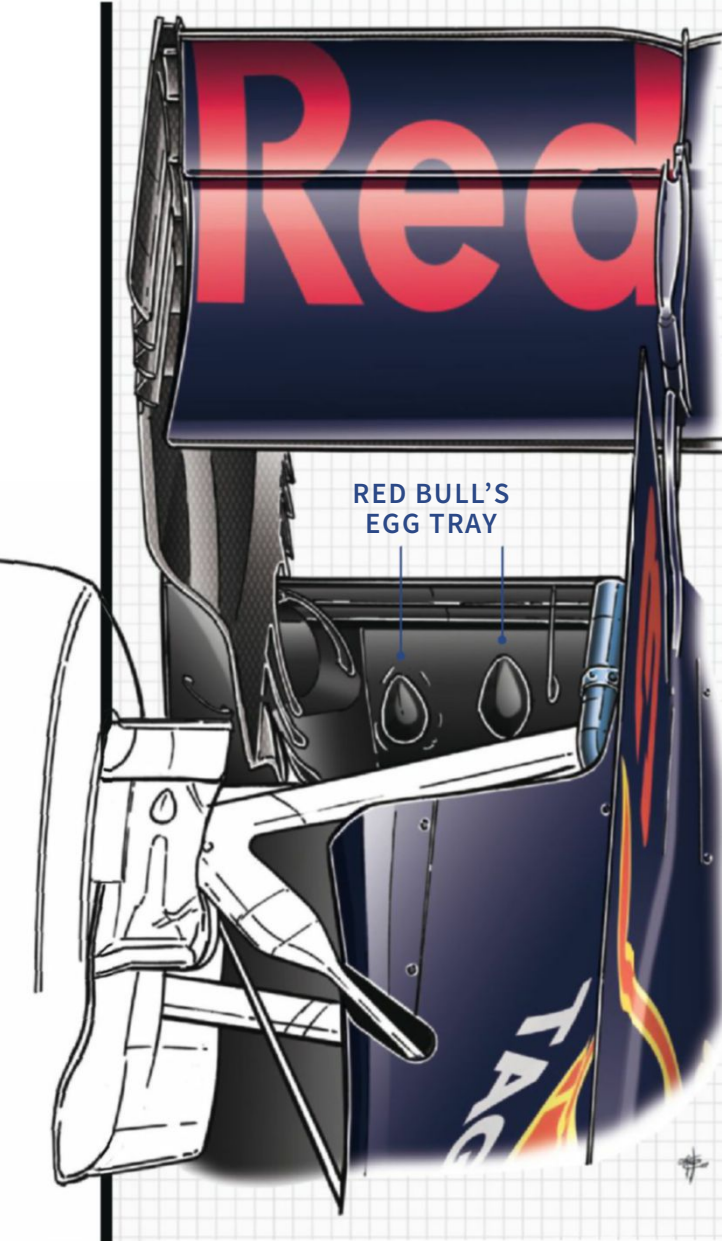






## DRAWING BOARD

BY GIORGIO PIOLA



## RED BULL PUTS ALL ITS EGGS ON THE FLOOR

Red Bull has these two egg-shaped bulges near the trailing edge of the diffuser. I imagine they are either side of a splitter that is mounted on the underside of the diffuser, and are a sophisticated pressure and flow-sensor set-up that allows the team to monitor the diffuser performance.

Red Bull runs its car with more rake than any other team, and in doing so it

makes the complete underfloor work more as a diffuser, creating more underbody downforce.

But it is vitally important to make sure the diffuser is still working at its best through the differing corner speeds and ride-heights that varying aerodynamic loads generate on the car.

Downforce squares with the speed of the car,

so in a 120km/h corner the car will produce something in the region of 800kg of aerodynamic load; in a 240km/h corner the same car will produce 3200kg of aerodynamic load.

That will only happen if everything is working as planned, so the multitude of sensors around the car helps ensure everything is working as it is designed to function.

GARY ANDERSON

## FORCE INDIA'S COMPLEX MONKEY SEAT

Force India's monkey seat is a twin-element component. Together with the two small turning vanes in front of it, it will create a more three-dimensional airflow around the exhaust outlet.

As well as helping the performance of the centre section of the diffuser and rear upper wing, this could also help to increase the pressure differential across the turbo, potentially improving the performance of the MGU-H so that it can better harvest electrical energy on the straights.

GARY ANDERSON



## 'MINDBLOWING' NEW MERCEDES BARGEBOARDS

Both Mercedes cars ran the new aerodynamic package that proved troublesome at Sepang. Both cars – especially Lewis Hamilton's – performed very well here, though. Part of that upgrade was these bargeboards.

The sophistication of them is mindblowing, and it is easy to see that if one of these components is not working as planned then the effects downstream could easily upset the complete

aerodynamic package. The bargeboards are responsible for roughly 15% of the car's overall downforce. They don't create this themselves – they just manipulate the airflow to assist the front wing and underfloor performance.

The multiple turning vanes create a vortex. In conjunction with the slotted floor section in front of the rear tyres, this acts like a skirt to help seal off the sides

of the underfloor, cutting airflow spillage that would normally be pulled under the sides of the floor and reduce

the power of the diffuser.

As I've said many times, these cars work as one aerodynamic component –

change one piece and it can have a massive influence on the rest of the car.

GARY ANDERSON





# F1/JAPANESE GRAND PRIX RESULTS

## STARTING GRID

<b>1</b> Hamilton #44 1m27.319s	<b>2</b> Vettel #5 1m27.791s	<b>3</b> Ricciardo #3 1m28.306s	<b>4</b> Verstappen #33 1m28.332s	<b>5</b> Ocon #31 1m29.111s	<b>6</b> Bottas #77 1m27.651s	<b>7</b> Perez #11 1m29.260s	<b>8</b> Massa #19 1m29.480s	<b>9</b> Vandoorne #2 1m29.778s	<b>10</b> Raikkonen #7 1m28.498s	<b>11</b> Hulkenberg #27 1m29.879s
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## Race results / 53 laps – 191.062 miles

## Fastest laps

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES	TIME IN PITS	POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Lewis Hamilton (GB)	Mercedes	1h27m31.194s	48	○●●	22.724s	1	Bottas	1m33.144s	-	50
2	Max Verstappen (NL)	Red Bull-Renault	+1.211s		○●●	22.620s	2	Raikkonen	1m33.175s	+0.031s	50
3	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	Red Bull-Renault	+9.679s	3	○●●	23.796s	3	Ricciardo	1m33.694s	+0.550s	52
4	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	+10.580s	2	○●●	22.876s	4	Vandoorne	1m33.724s	+0.580s	49
5	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Ferrari	+32.622s		○●●	23.699s	5	Verstappen	1m33.730s	+0.586s	51
6	Esteban Ocon (F)	Force India-Mercedes	+1m07.788s		○●●	24.078s	6	Hamilton	1m33.780s	+0.636s	43
7	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Force India-Mercedes	+1m11.424s		○●●	23.634s	7	Palmer	1m34.095s	+0.951s	50
8	Kevin Magnussen (DK)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m28.953s		●●●	23.065s	8	Gasly	1m34.533s	+1.389s	45
9	Romain Grosjean (F)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m29.883s		●●●	22.781s	9	Stroll	1m34.548s	+1.404s	37
10	Felipe Massa (BR)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		○●●	22.956s	10	Perez	1m34.744s	+1.600s	23
11	Fernando Alonso (E)	McLaren-Honda	-1 lap		○●●	24.636s	11	Ocon	1m34.843s	+1.699s	50
12	Jolyon Palmer (GB)	Renault	-1 lap		●●●	25.618s	12	Alonso	1m35.111s	+1.967s	45
13	Pierre Gasly (F)	Toro Rosso-Renault	-1 lap		●●●	47.757s	13	Magnussen	1m35.338s	+2.194s	50
14	Stoffel Vandoorne (B)	McLaren-Honda	-1 lap		●●●	46.829s	14	Grosjean	1m35.347s	+2.203s	50
15	Pascal Wehrlein (D)	Sauber-Ferrari	-2 laps		●●●○	1m14.294s	15	Hulkenberg	1m35.883s	+2.739s	28
R	Lance Stroll (CDN)	Williams-Mercedes	45 laps-suspension		●●●	46.211s	16	Massa	1m35.943s	+2.799s	50
R	Nico Hulkenberg (D)	Renault	40 laps-DRS		●●●	23.199s	17	Wehrlein	1m36.430s	+3.286s	27
R	Marcus Ericsson (S)	Sauber-Ferrari	7 laps-accident		●●	-	18	Ericsson	1m38.596s	+5.452s	7
R	Sebastian Vettel (D)	Ferrari	4 laps-spark plug		○●	-	19	Vettel	2m06.457s	+33.313s	2
R	Carlos Sainz (E)	Toro Rosso-Renault	0 laps-accident		●	-	20	Sainz	-	-	-

WEATHER Dry, sunny; track 42C, air 25C WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 130.978mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 139.460mph

● New ○ Used ● Ultra-soft ● Super-soft ● Soft ● Medium ● Hard ● Wet ● Intermediate

# 2

This was the second time in 37 races that Haas had both cars in the points

# 9

Hamilton took his first Suzuka pole position in nine attempts – he now has a pole at all active circuits

# 10

This was Verstappen's 10th Formula 1 podium in 56 starts

# 50

Palmer ran for the 50th, and possibly final, time on a grand prix weekend – 35 of those are starts

# 1300

Raikkonen has now spent 1300 laps running in sixth during his F1 career

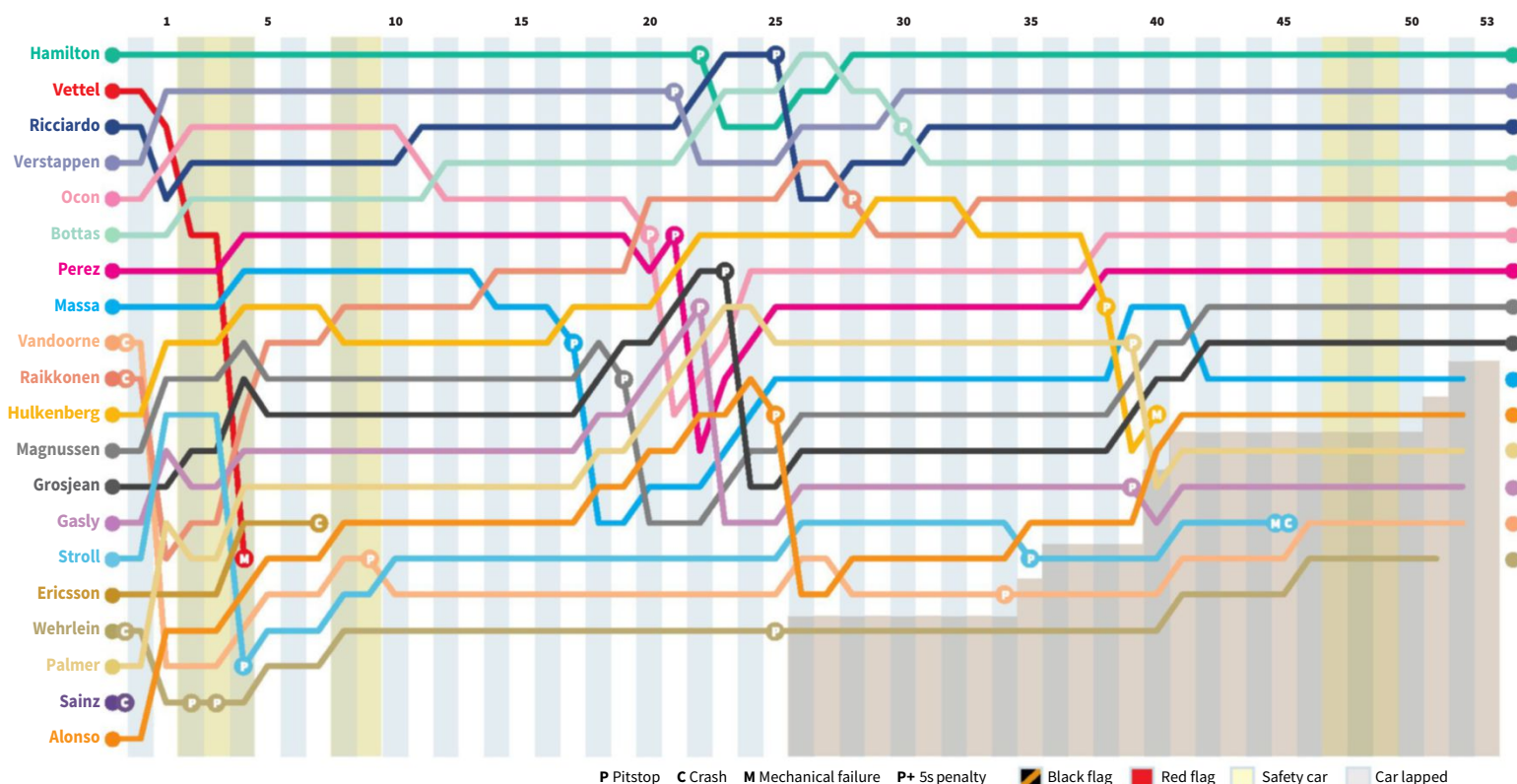
# 1508

Raikkonen also passed the 1500 mark for points scored – only five drivers have more

# 7011

Ricciardo completed his 7000th racing lap in F1 – 38th in the all-time list

## Lap chart / What happened, when







13 Grosjean #8  
1m30.849s



12 Magnussen #20  
1m29.972s

14 Gasly #10  
1m31.317s

15 Stroll #18  
1m31.409s

16 Ericsson #9  
1m31.597s

17 Wehrlein #94  
1m31.885s

18 Palmer #30  
1m30.022s

19 Sainz #55  
1m30.413s

20 Alonso #14  
1m30.687s

### Qualifying 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m29.047s
2	Raikkonen	1m29.163s
3	Verstappen	1m29.181s
4	Bottas	1m29.332s
5	Vettel	1m29.352s
6	Ricciardo	1m29.475s
7	Perez	1m29.696s
8	Ocon	1m30.115s
9	Hulkenberg	1m30.252s
10	Massa	1m30.352s
11	Palmer	1m30.516s
12	Alonso	1m30.525s
13	Sainz	1m30.565s
14	Vandoorne	1m30.654s
15	Magnussen	1m30.774s
16	Grosjean	1m30.849s
17	Gasly	1m31.317s
18	Stroll	1m31.409s
19	Ericsson	1m31.597s
20	Wehrlein	1m31.885s

### Qualifying 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m27.819s
2	Vettel	1m28.225s
3	Bottas	1m28.543s
4	Verstappen	1m28.747s
5	Ricciardo	1m28.935s
6	Raikkonen	1m29.079s
7	Ocon	1m29.199s
8	Perez	1m29.343s
9	Massa	1m29.687s
10	Alonso	1m29.749s
11	Vandoorne	1m29.778s
12	Hulkenberg	1m29.879s
13	Magnussen	1m29.972s
14	Palmer	1m30.022s
15	Sainz	1m30.413s

### Qualifying 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m27.319s
2	Bottas	1m27.651s
3	Vettel	1m27.791s
4	Ricciardo	1m28.306s
5	Verstappen	1m28.332s
6	Raikkonen	1m28.498s
7	Ocon	1m29.111s
8	Perez	1m29.260s
9	Massa	1m29.480s
10	Alonso	1m30.687s

WEATHER Dry, cloudy; track 27C, air 23C

### Race briefing

#### GRID PENALTIES

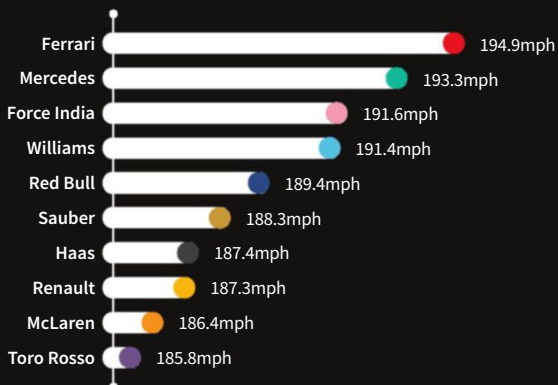
**SAINZ** 20-place penalty for additional power unit elements used  
**ALONSO** 35-place penalty for additional power unit elements used  
**BOTTAS** Five-place penalty for replacement gearbox  
**PALMER** 20-place penalty for additional power unit elements used  
**RAIKKONEN** Five-place penalty for replacement gearbox

#### RACE PENALTIES

**VETTEL** Reprimand for failing to attend national anthem ceremony  
**ALONSO** Two licence penalty points and reprimand for ignoring blue flags

## SPEED TRAP

Fastest for each constructor in qualifying



### Free practice 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m29.166s
2	Hamilton	1m29.377s
3	Ricciardo	1m29.541s
4	Raikkonen	1m29.638s
5	Bottas	1m30.151s
6	Verstappen	1m30.762s
7	Ocon	1m30.899s
8	Hulkenberg	1m30.974s
9	Grosjean	1m31.032s
10	Vandoorne	1m31.202s
11	Magnussen	1m31.216s
12	Alonso	1m31.235s
13	Perez	1m31.530s
14	Stroll	1m31.602s
15	Palmer	1m31.757s
16	Massa	1m31.912s
17	Sainz	1m32.252s
18	Gasly	1m32.501s
19	Wehrlein	1m32.897s
20	Ericsson	1m33.397s

WEATHER Dry, cloudy; track 24C, air 20C

### Free practice 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m48.719s
2	Ocon	1m49.518s
3	Perez	1m51.345s
4	Massa	1m52.146s
5	Stroll	1m52.343s
6	Raikkonen	no time
7	Hulkenberg	no time
8	Palmer	no time
9	Ericsson	no time
10	Vettel	no time
11	Alonso	no time
12	Wehrlein	no time
13	Sainz	no time
14	Vandoorne	no time
15	Bottas	did not run
16	Ricciardo	did not run
17	Verstappen	did not run
18	Grosjean	did not run
19	Magnussen	did not run
20	Gasly	did not run

WEATHER Wet, raining; track 17C, air 15C

### Free practice 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m29.055s
2	Hamilton	1m29.069s
3	Vettel	1m29.379s
4	Verstappen	1m29.910s
5	Ricciardo	1m30.018s
6	Ocon	1m30.109s
7	Hulkenberg	1m30.315s
8	Alonso	1m30.424s
9	Perez	1m30.563s
10	Palmer	1m30.764s
11	Massa	1m30.764s
12	Vandoorne	1m30.770s
13	Sainz	1m30.799s
14	Magnussen	1m30.982s
15	Stroll	1m31.011s
16	Gasly	1m31.353s
17	Grosjean	1m31.459s
18	Ericsson	1m32.579s
19	Wehrlein	1m32.698s
20	Raikkonen	1m33.962s

WEATHER Dry, cloudy; track 28C, air 22C

# SEASON STATS

## Drivers' championship

1	Hamilton	306
2	Vettel	247
3	Bottas	234
4	Ricciardo	192
5	Raikkonen	148
6	Verstappen	111
7	Perez	82
8	Ocon	65
9	Sainz	48
10	Hulkenberg	34
11	Massa	34
12	Stroll	32
13	Grosjean	28
14	Magnussen	15
15	Vandoorne	13
16	Alonso	10
17	Palmer	8
18	Wehrlein	5
19	Kvyat	4

## Constructors' championship

1	Mercedes	540
2	Ferrari	395
3	Red Bull	303
4	Force India	147
5	Williams	66
6	Toro Rosso	52
7	Haas	43
8	Renault	42
9	McLaren	23
10	Sauber	5

## Wins

Hamilton	8
Vettel	4
Bottas	2
Ricciardo	1
Verstappen	1

## Fastest laps

Hamilton	7
Vettel	3
Raikkonen	2
Alonso	1
Bottas	1
Perez	1
Ricciardo	1

## Pole positions

Hamilton	10
Vettel	3
Bottas	2
Raikkonen	1

## Qualifying battle

HAM	11	5	BOT
RIC	5	11	VER
VET	11	5	RAI
PER	11	5	OCO
STR	2	13	MAS
STR	1	0	DIR
VAN	3	12	ALO
VAN	0	1	BUT
GAS	0	2	SAI
KVY	6	8	SAI
GRO	10	6	MAG
HUL	16	0	PAL
ERI	5	9	WEH
ERI	2	0	GIO



# The Suzuka swifts

Some sharp reversals of form at the end of Formula 1's Asian leg

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

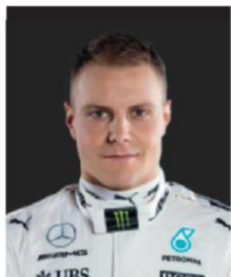
[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

## MERCEDES



**9 LEWIS HAMILTON**

A sublime qualifying effort again from Hamilton, who got quicker with every lap and looks on a different level to his rivals on Saturdays. The race was made easier by Vettel's problems, as Hamilton's start wasn't great. He also came under pressure from Verstappen. Did enough to get the job done.



**7 VALTTERI BOTTAS**

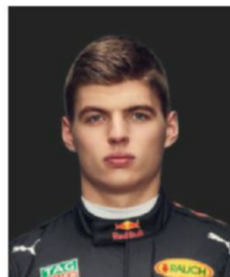
Bottas was better than he was at Sepang, but still a decent chunk off Hamilton in qualifying, after surviving a crash in final practice and a near-shunt in Q1. Once past Vettel and Ocon in the race, his pace compared well with Hamilton's, and he wasn't far off catching Ricciardo. A return to respectability.

## RED BULL



**8 DANIEL RICCIARDO**

Felt Red Bull underperformed in qualifying at Suzuka, but there probably wasn't much more to come given the power deficit. Near enough matched Verstappen's pace in the race, but got outmuscled by his team-mate at Turn 1 after an iffy start, then spent too long stuck behind Ocon.



**9 MAX VERSTAPPEN**

The Malaysian GP winner felt that sticking with Red Bull's higher downforce settings hurt him too much for the straights in qualifying. That was his only blot. Aced the start, nailed Ricciardo and a hampered Vettel on lap one, and worried Hamilton with tenacity, all while managing blistering tyres.

## FERRARI



**9 SEBASTIAN VETTEL**

Hamilton took all the plaudits, but Vettel's effort in almost splitting the two Mercedes in qualifying was Herculean too, given how prodigiously fast the silver cars were over one lap. Vettel's start was impressive, given his engine had already lapsed onto five cylinders, but from there he was a sitting duck.



**6 KIMI RAIKKONEN**

Reckoned he paid a "hefty price" for crashing in FP3. In terms of his grid penalty that's true, but it doesn't explain how decent Q1 pace went missing in Q3. Got bullied off the road by Hulkenberg on lap one and took 20 laps to recover to fifth. Pace was respectable after that, 0.126s per lap slower than Hamilton.

## FORCE INDIA



**8 SERGIO PEREZ**

Having recovered from the virus that afflicted him in Malaysia, Perez was stronger in qualifying, though not as strong as his team-mate. That 0.149s proved vital, as Perez was told to hold station despite feeling he had the pace to attack Ocon in the race. Until Force India secures fourth place, it's going to come down to qualifying.



**9 ESTEBAN OCON**

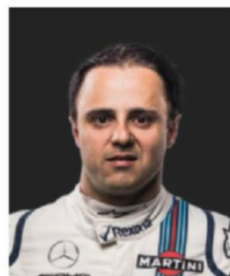
Ocon found a good groove in Malaysia before his race unravelled, and he rediscovered it in Japan, again qualifying best of the rest. Snuck past Ricciardo on lap one and enjoyed a cameo in third place until the pace of faster cars behind told. Was slightly quicker than Perez on super-softs; evenly matched on softs.

## WILLIAMS



**5 LANCE STROLL**

Stroll was impeded in Q1, but Williams said he wasn't fast enough to progress anyway and still needs too long to build up speed. Rose to 11th on lap one, but punctured so switched to a two-stop strategy, creating a race with Vandoorne. Was holding the McLaren off until his Williams broke.



**7 FELIPE MASSA**

Massa was "really happy" with his qualifying and so was the team, and it was pleasing to see him make Q3 after just missing out in Malaysia. He didn't have the greatest of races, though. Struggled with degradation and lost three points to Magnussen's pass, but clung to the final one while under pressure.

## McLAREN



**6 STOFFEL VANDOORNE**

Was pushing Alonso hard again in qualifying, but ended up fractionally slower after a weak second run in Q2. Grid penalties gained him a top-10 start, but he was eased off the track through the opening turns on lap one. Switched strategies, but got stuck behind Stroll and condemned to a forgettable race.



**8 FERNANDO ALONSO**

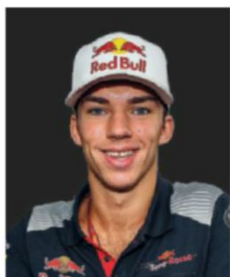
Alonso was on better form in Japan, and was the quicker McLaren driver in qualifying. His race was a study in clean execution and tyre management. Held up the leaders, couldn't pass Massa, and was fortunate the late VSC period stymied Palmer's charge, but still a strong effort to finish 11th having started last.



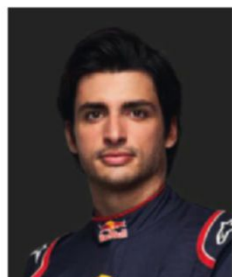


SUTTON

## TORO ROSSO

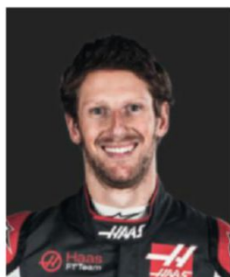


**7 PIERRE GASLY**  
Qualified poorly, and admitted to overdriving a car not as capable as the Red Bull he's tested before. Did a very solid job for 72% of the race, keeping pace with the battle for eighth. Then Gasly locked his brakes so badly he had to make an extra pitstop, which dropped him behind Alonso and Palmer.

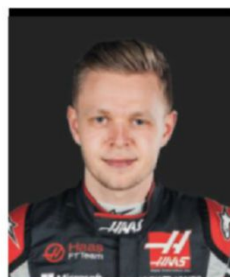


**5 CARLOS SAINZ JR**  
Sainz departed Toro Rosso with a whimper rather than a bang in Japan. Threw his car at the scenery on lap one, which was silly having built his strategy around saving tyres in qualifying knowing he would start at the back. The only highlight was a strong lap in Q1, which split the McLarens and was quicker than Gasly.

## HAAS

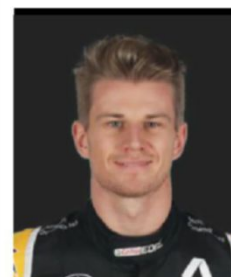


**7 ROMAIN GROSJEAN**  
Grosjean felt his Haas had the speed to be inside the top 10 in Q1, so adding more front wing after a "massive" moment at Turn 11 was probably ill-advised given his subsequent crash at the Esses. Loses marks for that and a poor first lap, but otherwise his race was decent as he chased Magnussen home.

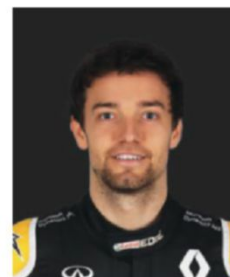


**8 KEVIN MAGNUSSEN**  
Magnussen did a good job to steal ahead of Palmer's Renault in Q2 and was only a couple of tenths shy of making Q3, though it's difficult to know whether more was possible given Grosjean's crash. Magnussen's race was definitely strong, particularly his forceful and opportunistic pass of Massa at Turn 2.

## RENAULT



**8 NICO HULKENBERG**  
Battled oversteer in qualifying and reckoned he gave up 0.15s in Q2, just enough to make Q3, so didn't quite get the most from it. Drove well in the race, lunging past Raikkonen and, though he couldn't quite do enough to jump the Massa/Haas battle in the pits, looked a good bet to do it on track until his DRS stuck open.



**7 JOLYON PALMER**  
A solid final grand prix at Renault for Palmer, who wasn't far off Hulkenberg's pace in Q2 until he messed up the final chicane on his second run. Wasn't as fast in the race either, but alternative strategy put Palmer in position to threaten the Massa/Alonso battle for the final point, until that late VSC period intervened.

## SAUBER



**7 MARCUS ERICSSON**  
Ericsson made one mistake in this grand prix, but it had massive consequences. Was almost three tenths faster than Wehrlein in qualifying, which is nearer half a second considering Ericsson's weight disadvantage. Held his ground early on, but took too much kerb exiting the first Degner and threw it away.

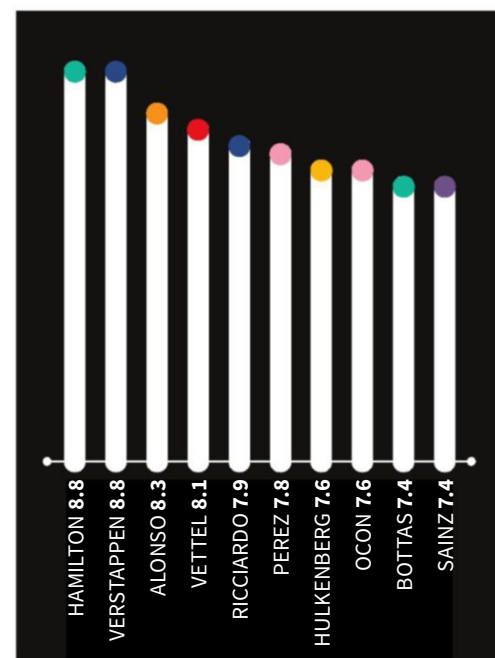


**4 PASCAL WEHRLEIN**  
After a brilliant effort last time out in Malaysia, this was a terrible weekend for Wehrlein, who was near enough on Ericsson's pace in final practice but struggled to get his Sauber balanced through qualifying and the race. Two early pitstops after lap-one contact cut him well adrift of the pack.



Great start was key to Verstappen's second place

## TOP 10 AVERAGE RATING





# Gerard Neveu

The World Endurance Championship boss explains the series' fan survey, and how he sees the future of sportscar racing's pinnacle

By Marcus Simmons, Deputy Editor

 @MarcusSimmons54

## What was the reason for launching the fan survey?

**GERARD NEVEU** It's very easy. We are trying to build a new chapter for the WEC from 2019-20 with a 'reverse' calendar. So the idea was to make sure that we can have a good vision we can share not only with the fan but with the competitor, and to see what is the best way we should use it to make people happy.

## Do you feel it's more important to get the fans' views now, in the wake of the Audi and Porsche withdrawals from LMP1?

**GN** It's nothing to do with it. Audi and Porsche are leaving WEC but it's because they are from the Volkswagen Group and this is for the largest part due to other things – dieselgate. In any case the view of the fan is very interesting because you cannot imagine developing a motorsport category without any fans, especially when we are speaking about a world championship.

## Have you seen any preliminary results yet?

**GN** Yes. At the moment we have around 40,000 answers returned, and we are starting to have a vision regarding some major questions inside the survey. The target we said at the beginning was around 50,000. If we can touch this target it will be the first satisfaction. It means that there is a serious community all around the world following us, and paying attention. After that, we hope to see some direction on different topics regarding the championship; what is the wish, for example regarding technology, or the different categories, or the length of the race, or how they would like to see this series developing in the near future.

## Is it looking as though the fans like the WEC as it is, or are they asking for changes?

**GN** It's mixed, between the fact that we have tradition with famous brands and a specific event like Le Mans, but that they are looking for some modernity regarding the format of the races, the calendar, the visibility of the championship.

## How soon would you be able to act on the results, and can you act on them?

**GN** Next season is what we call the superseason – the [2018-19] calendar is already done, everything is already prepared, because it's coming very soon, so all the things we could be ready to apply very quickly we will do, but I would say that the majority of the answers will be more linked to '19-20, because you need to have some time to modify, to adapt, to take the right decisions, to find the right partner, etc.

## Regarding varying the lengths of the races – some three hours, some 12 hours for example – what would you personally like to see?

**GN** I prefer to have different lengths during the season. I think that we have to adapt the length to the place we are visiting. At Le Mans you have to do 24 hours, there is no question;

at Sebring to do six hours doesn't make sense because they already have a long race with 12 hours and it was logical to do a similar format, especially because when you are in Sebring the fans are coming from very far – you know that they will spend a long time with you over the weekend. When you have a circuit located close to the main city, for example Shanghai, usually they are not coming for a full weekend; it's a day visit. So in this case I think the six hours is more appropriate. The big advantage of endurance is that you can race at day or night, because you have lights on the cars, so it's interesting to do a different format in connection with the place you are visiting.

## Do you think the main focus should remain on LMP1?

**GN** When you build a wall, you have to always take into consideration the foundation stone. And if you want to add some new levels, you cannot do it in the opposite way to the beginning. There is evolution you have to follow, and sometimes you have to anticipate the evolution, but to change everything from my point of view is wrong. To cancel LMP1 is not a good idea, and that isn't really the question. The question is: what is the best business model we can find for LMP1? We need something sustainable for the privateer teams and the manufacturers engaged in it. The point is: is expensive and sophisticated really necessary? Probably not.

## What has been the reaction to the 2018-19 superseason and Le Mans moving to the end of the season?

**GN** I have to say the reaction to superseason has been very positive. When you explain to the people that they will have a double Le Mans in the same season everybody is enthusiastic. For the teams it's very challenging, but at the same time it's very exciting. The marketing side for them is interesting because of course this is the iconic event of the season, so it's the most valuable event. Regarding Le Mans moving to the end of the calendar, I think the teams like the idea because it makes sense to finish with the best event and with the most difficult. For the media and marketing departments it's probably a good thing, because they will have a story to tell to the people of the road to Le Mans from the start of the season until the 'superfinal'.

## He also wants to say...

**GN** We are doing this survey for the fan, and it's exactly the same approach we have on the race day when you come to visit us at the track. At the end we are sharing the same passion. 🏁



To have your say on the World Endurance Championship, head to <https://wecsurvey.motorsport.com/>









# Engineering the future, right now

The first winner of the Autosport Williams Engineer of the Future Award is halfway through her two-year prize placement. We find out how Lizzie Thompson is getting on

By Alex Kalinauckas and Lawrence Barretto

[@autosport](#)

**W**hen he was the Williams Formula 1 technical boss, Pat Symonds wanted a winner of the Autosport Williams Engineer of the Future Award to “one day be able to take my job”. No pressure then on Lizzie Thompson, the award’s inaugural victor.

Since being announced as the first prize winner at the 2015 Autosport Awards, Thompson has completed her Masters degree in engineering science at Oxford University and is now halfway through her two-year placement working within Williams’s various engineering departments at its Grove factory.

“I started in the design office – six months working in engine systems – and then at the beginning of this season I moved on to race operations to help with race support,” she says.

The tasks Thompson has been assigned over her first year have ranged from set projects to hands-on designing of parts for the FW40. But there has also been an element of learning the nuances and understanding required to successfully engineer an F1 car over the course of a season and a race weekend.

“In design, it was quite easy to get stuck in straight away,” Thompson explains. “You can start with smaller parts and work your way up. In the race-support role, it requires a lot of experience to really get all the stuff in. There’s been quite a lot of training – I’ve been sitting in on a lot of simulator sessions with the drivers – and just picking up bits as I go along.”

As well as working from the factory during grand prix weekends, Thompson attended all eight days of winter testing and the in-season tests at Silverstone and the Hungaroring, before going to her first race weekend at the Italian Grand Prix at Monza in September.

Thompson picks pre-season testing at Barcelona as the standout moment from the first year of her placement, which also served to demonstrate the real impact that award winners can have at Williams.

“When I saw the car drive out of the garage with parts that I’d designed on it – that was a really cool experience for me,” she says. “I was in engine systems [at the time]. Obviously we buy our engines but it tends to be all the systems that integrate with it – so I designed some duct components and some bits and bobs for electrical connectors and things like that.”

Although Symonds has since left his post at Williams, the





Tasks within the factory have been varied



Thompson attended test at Barcelona

team's new chief technical officer, Paddy Lowe, has similar expectations about the award winners.

"We don't run training programmes – we're not a university," he says. "It's real work. We have students that we take in even as undergraduates for placements and they don't undergo any type of formal training, they learn by being given job work to do and that's exactly what we're doing with Lizzie. She can take it to a more advanced level because she's a graduate, and she's with us for longer, and hopefully staying after the two years."

Lowe, who meets with Thompson once a month and sets her specific projects to complete, wants to make sure the two-year programme is packed full of opportunities that will assist Thompson's future development.

"It's a unique opportunity to take time out and get lots of experience," he explains. "I'm trying to make sure Lizzie is getting the best use of the time and getting into different areas that she may otherwise never be exposed to. For example, as an engineer, it's useful to find out what happens in marketing. Even finance – engineers typically think finance should be quite dull – but it's actually an important part of the business to understand. So I'm trying to make sure the programme she has includes the sort of breadth that gives her benefits that she won't get when she's properly employed in a role."

Over the Monza weekend, Thompson monitored the data streams from the cars being driven by Lance Stroll and Felipe Massa and was tasked with reporting back on any unusual developments. "I tend to look at both cars and any differences >>



Finalists must impress the judging panel

## Wanted: new F1 tech directors

LAUNCHED IN 2015, THE AUTOSPORT WILLIAMS Engineer of the Future Award has a simple aim – to find a potential future technical director for one of Formula 1's most famous teams.

The applicants are drawn from the UK's most illustrious universities for engineering, and then the selected finalists spend two days at Williams F1 attempting to prove to the judging panel that they have what it takes to get right to the top.

As in the first two years of the competition, the academic progress of the finalists in 2017 is remarkably high. So the challenge for the judging panel is not simply to pick the candidate who is technically accomplished, because they all are, but the one showing that special bit of extra potential.

This means it's not just the candidates' knowledge base that's being put under the microscope, but also their way of working with others, the approach to problems, and their communication qualities. In short, the full range of skills and abilities required for technical leadership in a grand prix team.

**EDD STRAW**







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Engineers' room is the heart of the race weekend for a team

between the two that suggests there might be something strange happening, or something that you should change on one of the cars," she adds.

After spending the second half of the first year of her placement working remotely in race-operations support, Thompson got a chance at the Italian event — where Stroll started on the front row — to see how engineering changes make a real-world difference at the race track.

"You get a much clearer view of what's going on," she says. "It's really good to come to this because I'll be able to understand more of what's happening behind the scenes between the things that you're not seeing [at the factory] — it's good to get an understanding of that and take it home."

Although Williams's senior management views the award as the chance to take the first steps in a career with the team, there is flexibility to each winner's path. While Thompson — who says she's "a guinea pig" as the first person to go through the process — is rotating through Grove's engineering departments, the second award winner, Sam O'Neill, is expected to spend all of his placement working in aerodynamics.

"It will always be different for different people," says Lowe. "Different people will need different things from it. We want to

## "Because it's not been done before, I've been able to shape it"

keep making more of it and Lizzie is the first in hopefully a long series of successful winners."

Thompson's next rotation — after doing a few mini placements in Williams's vehicle-science division — will be to join O'Neill in the aero department after the end of the season, before she goes on to work in the team's stress office.

"[The process] has been really interesting for me," she says. "Because it's not been done before I've been able to shape the programme and express how I think it should go, which departments I'd like to move into, and to help come up with a plan rather than it being really rigid and decided for you."

Now that she's established herself at Williams, Thompson, whose degree covered general engineering rather than a specific motorsport-oriented course, picks her new understanding of how to apply her engineering knowledge to the more instinctive demands of a racing driver as the key thing she has learned.

"There's knowing the engineering but then there's also understanding how the driver fits in and how the data that you're looking at is influenced by the driver, [who have] their own preferences," she explains. "As well as that, understanding the choices that the race engineers make — that's been an experience not many people get to be exposed to."

In the months leading up to the 2018 F1 summer factory shutdown, Thompson expects to have a meeting with Williams regarding her chances of staying on in a full-time role. Although she doesn't yet know if there will be any more chances to assist with the team's work in person at another grand prix at this stage, she's determined to extract the maximum from the second half of her award placement. ❧

Thompson also worked at the Italian Grand Prix this year, monitoring data from both the Williams cars











# Meeke and Citroen out of the ashes

This season has been a struggle, but in Spain it was man and C3 WRC in perfect harmony

By David Evans, Rallies Editor

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

**J**imi Hendrix never took a guitar lesson in his life. Nobody taught David Bowie how to play the piano. They took their instruments and made sense of them. Last week in Spain, Kris Meeke did the same with a Citroen C3 WRC.

For much of the summer this man and that machine have been at complete odds. Not last week. Meeke, Paul Nagle and their French motor crushed allcomers in Catalunya.

## Day one: 72.02 miles; 6 stages

Having answered the 'next-year' question for the millionth time, getting into his Ford Fiesta WRC on Friday morning must have come as a blessed relief for championship leader Sebastien Ogier.

The Frenchman had spent the past week or so telling people that he'd parked 2018 talk while he got on with the business of bringing '17 to a successful conclusion. An explanation of that plan drew the same response.

"Yeah, but where are you going?"

The start of the rally meant the end of such talk. And the start of another familiar conversation: gravel, road-sweeping and running order.

There was a vague threat of rain inland from the Costa Daurada, but Friday dawned beautifully bright, sunny and soon to be hot. This was not what Ogier had ordered. He knew he would be sacrificed, but he had a plan. A plan he wasn't willing to share. Luckily, team principal Malcolm Wilson was in on it.

"Watch him on the Tarmac sections..." he grinned.

This day of Spanish dirt south of Salou is littered with asphalt sections, most of

which strike fear into the drivers who know keeping the tyres in anything resembling good order is one of the season's trickiest tasks. Unless, that is, you're called Sebastien Ogier.

But the whole cleaning thing didn't really happen in the first two stages. Ogier's team-mate Ott Tanak hit the front on SS1 and stayed there after two, but he was slightly bemused. "There's so much loose [gravel] on the roads," he said. "I think it's too thick. There are some lines, but it's not cleaning."

Combined, the Caeseres and Bot tests didn't constitute even half the mileage of the Terra Alta stage that lay in wait at the end of the loop. The 24-miler – morning and afternoon – would be where the day was won and lost.

Arriving at the start of SS3, times were predictably close after such a small amount of competition. Hyundai new boy Andreas Mikkelsen was a largely unnoticed fifth. Starting ninth, there's no doubt he would be beginning to benefit from a more swept road, but the flipside was his lack of knowledge of the i20 Coupe WRC, with just a day of running on the dirt before the start.

Fastest time and the lead after Terra Alta was, therefore, something of a surprise. "I think I'm going to like this car," he smiled after the stage.

And Norway was smiling with him; six tenths of a second behind was private Ford Fiesta WRC driver Mads Ostberg.

Ostberg's run hadn't been so straightforward. "I can't see a thing," he said at the finish. "We have dust coming in somewhere, it's hard to breathe. Always it's something stupid..."

As Ostberg nosed his car in the direction of Salou, service and hopefully something to stick in the hole (if the hole could be found), the rest of the field >>



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crowded into position behind. Ogier was third, four seconds off Ostberg, with Tanak, Meeke, Dani Sordo and Thierry Neuville in close attendance.

Sordo in particular was in determined form. "I don't want to be at the back here," he said. "I'm pushing like hell."

A lack of feeling from the hard tyres hindered Sordo early on, but the problem was the complete reverse for his Belgian team-mate. Neuville was the only driver to run all-soft tyres on Friday morning. The clouds stayed away, the sun shone, the temperature climbed and Ogier's main title rival rocked up at the finish on slicks.

"It was not my choice," he said, stern-faced at the finish. "OK, we managed it. Now we continue."

The focus on the repeated short stages was the all-Norwegian battle. Ostberg moved into the lead by three tenths after SS4, only for Mikkelsen to retake the place by 0.7s one stage later.

Then it was back to Terra Alta. Everybody had learned from Neuville's morning mistake and, after an Indian summer-baked day, the tortuous mix of gravel and asphalt would demand the hardest boots possible.

The only question was how many?



You could certainly get through with one spare, but equations were done across the service park in an effort to chart the improved performance and balance from fitting two new tyres against the extra 20kg carrying a sixth tyre would cost.

Citroen and Hyundai went for six. M-Sport and Toyota took five. Given Hyundai's widely reported readiness to gamble to keep its own and Neuville's title hopes alive, eyebrows were raised when all three i20s headed out of town fully laden.

Such was the intensity of the lead battle, it had carried them 8.5s clear of third-placed Ogier. But the Frenchman was ready. And, don't

**Top: Ogier's a master of tyre preservation on asphalt, keeping them fresh for gravel stages to follow. Above: Meeke was in (relatively) relaxed mood, revelling in how well his C3 was working**

forget, he was ready with a plan.

The 24 miles ahead were split by five miles on an asphalt road that wound its way up and down a hill and through a mix of corners. The tyres were in for a real work-over. Before the Tarmac, the splits were pretty uniform, with most drivers at the races; but afterwards, one number shone through: #1.

Ogier loves this stage because he knows what he can do. And what he can do is demand less from his tyres on Tarmac, while keeping the speed and performance of those around him.

So when the going gets dirty again, there's enough left beneath him to carry him to the finish. That's precisely what happened, and how he arrived at the end of Friday just 1.4s off leader Mikkelsen.

Mikkelsen's challenge had been blunted slightly by a damper problem midway through, while Ostberg had fallen away when the heater in his car couldn't be switched off, rocketing the cockpit temperatures.

"I can't focus when it's like this," he fumed. "Always something..." He dropped from the top to fifth, 7.1s off the front.

Mikkelsen took the plaudits for leading — a great story for the Hyundai newcomer — but it could so easily have ➤



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Tanak flew, but did what was best for the team

## “The feeling wasn’t perfect. Some rain, some understeer. Too slow” Sebastien Ogier

been Meeke making the day-one headlines. The only driver to win more than one stage in the day, he ended the leg third.

“I spun in the last hairpin on the first stage of the afternoon,” he said. “I had to reverse; it cost us five seconds or so.”

The difference to the front? Three.

No matter. Tomorrow would be another day, and a very different day as the teams set about an extended Friday-night service to switch the cars from gravel to asphalt set-up for a weekend of sealed-surface racing.

And the fight was finely balanced, with just 12.8s separating Hyundai top dog Mikkelsen from his buddy and team-mate Neuville in seventh.

The Belgian would, however, be needing something more for the weekend if he was going to fulfil his pre-event ambition of finishing ahead of series leader Ogier.

### Day two: 75.72 miles; 7 stages

The one thing Mikkelsen wanted on Saturday morning was consistency. Learning a new car on asphalt is generally more demanding than on gravel, but learning one in changeable conditions on asphalt is toughest of the lot.

Cloud. Cloud everywhere. That’s what Mikkelsen saw when he pulled back the curtains just after six on Saturday morning.

“Rain coming later,” he said as he

walked to the window of Hyundai’s command centre. “That’s not so good.”

And he didn’t have to wait long. Just after the start of El Montmell, the storm arrived. And departed almost as quickly.

“I struggled for the feeling,” was Mikkelsen’s predictable verdict on a seventh-fastest time that dropped him to third place.

The lead was gone, and gone to the team he passed over — Citroën, and Meeke. Meeke delivered an inch-perfect run to elevate himself into a 9.1s lead over Ogier. Maybe he should start every asphalt round of the championship without a pre-event test on that surface.

“We had the wipers on full at one point,” he said, “but then we went into the forest section and the road was a bit more protected.”

Meeke was relaxed and cast little more than a glance at the times. By comparison, Ogier wasn’t quick enough — and he knew it. “The feeling wasn’t perfect,” he said. “Some rain, some understeer. Too slow.”

Meeke saw his chance and went for it, pushing the car that bit harder down the more circuit-style second stage. A 15.4s lead was the result. “Now we have to look to manage that,” he said. “The car’s phenomenal though.”

As Meeke moved clear, the fight for second intensified, with four drivers within a second of each other. After SS8, it was Sordo-Ogier-Tanak-Neuville, »

### OGIER NEARLY BUT NOT QUITE

TOUCHING DISTANCE ISN’T QUITE TOUCHING. And that’s why Sebastien Ogier retained his natural conservatism after the finish of the Rally of Spain on Sunday.

Yes, he might be 37 points ahead of M-Sport team-mate Ott Tanak, with the only other man capable of lifting the title this year, Thierry Neuville, one point behind the Estonian, but there are still 60 points on offer from the last two rallies.

“Everything is still possible,” said the Frenchman. “We are close, but we are not there yet, so nothing is done.”

Hard to argue with that logic. But what does he have to do in order to dance a jig when Rally GB reaches its climax outside Marks and Sparks in Llandudno in a fortnight’s time? In simple terms, he needs to depart Wales bound for New South Wales with at least 30 of those points intact.

If Tanak wins GB and then takes the five powerstage points too, the best Ogier can hope for is 22 points (second overall and second on powerstage), which would leave him even more tantalisingly close, with a 29-point lead ahead of the final round.

The easiest way for Ogier to look at it is to go to Wales in search of a fifth win on Britain’s round of the championship. That would offer symmetry in that it would bring him his fifth world title.

The championship — and an epic Kris Meeke win aside — the other thing occupying most of the airtime in Salou was Ogier’s destination next season. And word on the Spanish street is that his most likely option will be to stay where he is at M-Sport.

A Citroën deal is reckoned to be financially out of reach of the French firm, and Hyundai’s stable, complete with recent signing Andreas Mikkelsen, is now full.

DAVID EVANS







but one stage later that four had become three, with Neuville dropping time in unusual circumstances.

The #5 Hyundai had lost hydraulic pressure right at the end of SS8. On the short road section between the end of eight and the start of nine, Neuville stopped the car to investigate the issue. The Hyundai then refused to restart. When it did, he was late for the stage, pushed on and promptly went off on the road section, damaging the rear of the i20. Three minutes late translated to a 30s penalty. One second off second place became eighth overall and almost a minute off the lead.

Three stages later and Hyundai's collapse was pretty much complete – even if, ironically, it helped Neuville in the overall classification. Sordo and Mikkelsen both fell victim to the same cut in the same second-gear Savalla corner. Ostberg and Tanak also hit the object buried deep in the right-hander, but without anything like the gut-wrenching consequences for the boys in blue and orange.

The angst was everywhere. Sordo had lost his shot at a possible home

win, Mikkelsen had ruined his good first impression, and Hyundai looked to have thrown away its last chance to challenge M-Sport for the makes' title.

Team boss Michel Nandan said: "This was not a good day, but these things happen and you have to accept it."

Almost in the blink of an eye the fight had gone from the event. After Hyundai's connection with the hidden concrete box (or post, depending who you listened to), the only scrap of note was the 1.5s gap that separated Ogier and Tanak in second and third. That all-M-Sport affair brought its own considerations; yes, Tanak wanted to keep his own championship going, but holding position would pretty much bank the Cumbrians a first world championship crown in a decade.

"No team orders," announced Wilson. "We're close to Kris and Juho Hanninen's close behind. There's everything to play for. Let's keep the guys going and see what happens."

Hanninen drove brilliantly, scoring two fastest times in the morning to home his Toyota in on a podium slot. The Finn ended Saturday the thick end

Victorious Meeke and Nagle put this season's low points behind them

of 20s behind Tanak, with Neuville a similar distance behind him in fifth.

Out front, Meeke would take a 13s lead into the final 46 competitive miles of asphalt this season. An indication of how relaxed he was feeling came as he arrived on the Salou seafront for the notoriously slippery and tricky superspecial.

"I didn't exactly cover myself in glory on the superspecial in Germany," he said. "I have to concentrate here!"

He did. One day to go.

### Day three: 46.14 miles; 6 stages

Two stages in the dark might have spooked a lesser man. Not Meeke. He was ready for the additional challenge that came with running a C3 complete with lamp-pod and map-light. And he loved it.

He won them both and said: "It was beautiful; you go into this tunnel of light and in a car working this well it's just perfect."

Finding a rhythm in the dark made everything that little bit easier when daylight came. And when the sun rose, Meeke kept on winning the stages, taking five from six on the final day.





Ogier and Tanak quarrelled initially over second, but heading into the second loop the Estonian's phone rang. 'Malcolm Wilson' flashed up. He knew what was coming. He settled for third, with Ogier one place ahead and one step nearer another title.

That fifth crown came closer still when Neuville damaged the suspension on the front-right of his Hyundai. With wreckage reminiscent of his team-mate's on Saturday and his own car in Germany, Neuville was out.

Hyundai's darkest hour contrasted hugely with the delight at the front of the field as Meeke and Nagle stood on the roof of their Citroen at the end of the final stage.

Nobody was going to deny them their moment; collectively, this sport has, at times, winced at the pain this pair has endured at times this year.

If Hyundai is looking for a torch to guide them out of the darkness, Meeke would gladly hand over the one he used to find a path back from the pits of despair. Success in Salou was a long way from sorrow in Saarbrücken last time out. 🍷

## RESULTS ROUND 11/13, RALLY OF SPAIN, OCTOBER 5-8

POS	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Kris Meeke (GB)	Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	3h01m21.1s
2	Sebastien Ogier (F)	Julien Ingrassia (F)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+28.0s
3	Ott Tanak (EST)	Martin Jarveoja (EST)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+33.0s
4	Juho Hanninen (FIN)	Kaj Lindstrom (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC · Toyota Yaris WRC	+54.1s
5	Mads Ostberg (N)	Torstein Eriksen (N)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m26.2s
6	Stephane Lefebvre (F)	Gabin Moreau (F)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	+2m43.0s
7	Elfyn Evans (GB)	Daniel Barritt (GB)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+4m37.4s
8	Teemu Suninen (FIN)	Mikko Markkula (FIN)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta R5	+8m22.7s
9	Jan Kopecky (CZ)	Pavel Dresler (CZ)	Skoda Motorsport II · Skoda Fabia R5	+8m54.5s
10	Ole-Christiaan Veiby (N)	Stig Rune Skjaermoen (N)	Printsport · Skoda Fabia R5	+9m04.8s
<b>OTHERS</b>				
15	Dani Sordo (E)	Marc Marti (E)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+14m19.3s
17	Khalid Al-Qassimi (UAE)	Chris Patterson (GB)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	+15m14.8s
18	Andreas Mikkelsen (N)	Anders Jager (N)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+15m39.3s
24	Valeriy Gorban (UA)	Sergei Larens (RUS)	Eurolamp WRT · Mini John Cooper Works WRC	+23m36.2s
25	Jean-Michel Raoux (F)	Laurent Magat (F)	Citroen DS3 WRC	+23m54.8s
33	Jourdan Serderidis (GR)	Frederic Miclotte (B)	Citroen DS3 WRC	+33m04.0s
R	Thierry Neuville (B)	Nicolas Gilsoul (B)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	SS16-suspension
R	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)	Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC · Toyota Yaris WRC	SS15-accident
R	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)	Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC · Toyota Yaris WRC	SS5-engine

### DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ogier 198; 2 Tanak 161; 3 Neuville 160; 4 Latvala 123; 5 Sordo 94; 6 Evans 93; 7 Hanninen 71; 8 Craig Breen 64; 9 Meeke 60; 10 Hayden Paddon 55.

### MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 M-Sport WRT 358; 2 Hyundai Motorsport 275; 3 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC 225; 4 Citroen Total 198.



## STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Caseres 1 (gravel) 7.77 miles	Tanak 7m16.7s	Tanak	Ostberg +1.8s
SS2 Bot 1 (gravel) 4.04 miles	Meeke 4m04.5s	Tanak	Ostberg +2.2s
SS3 Terra Alta 1 (gravel & asphalt) 24.20 miles	Mikkelsen 24m55.0s	Mikkelsen	Ostberg +0.6s
SS4 Caseres 2 (gravel) 7.77 miles	Latvala 7m08.1s	Ostberg	Mikkelsen +0.3s
SS5 Bot 2 (gravel) 4.04 miles	Meeke 3m57.7s	Mikkelsen	Ostberg +0.7s
SS6 Terra Alta 2 (gravel & asphalt) 24.20 miles	Ogier 24m18.9s	Mikkelsen	Ogier +1.4s
SS7 El Montmell 1 (asphalt) 15.16 miles	Meeke 12m22.0s	Meeke	Ogier +9.1s
SS8 El Pont d'Armentera 1 (asphalt) 13.23 miles	Hanninen 10m54.6s	Meeke	Sordo +15.4s
SS9 Savalla 1 (asphalt) 8.77 miles	Hanninen 7m25.3s	Meeke	Tanak +13.5s
SS10 El Montmell 2 (asphalt) 15.16 miles	Neuville 12m25.3s	Meeke	Sordo +13.5s
SS11 El Pont d'Armentera 2 (asphalt) 13.23 miles	Ogier 10m59.6s	Meeke	Sordo +14.1s
SS12 Savalla 2 (asphalt) 8.77 miles	Ogier 7m30.0s	Meeke	Ogier +13.9s
SS13 Salou (asphalt) 1.39 miles	Ogier 2m33.8s	Meeke	Ogier +13.0s
SS14 L'Albiol 1 (asphalt) 3.90 miles	Meeke 4m00.9s	Meeke	Ogier +14.7s
SS15 Riudecanyes 1 (asphalt) 10.16 miles	Meeke 10m20.2s	Meeke	Ogier +18.5s
SS16 Santa Marina 1 (asphalt) 9.01 miles	Meeke 8m09.5s	Meeke	Ogier +23.9s
SS17 L'Albiol 2 (asphalt) 3.90 miles	Meeke 3m58.6s	Meeke	Ogier +26.2s
SS18 Riudecanyes 2 (asphalt) 10.16 miles	Meeke 10m19.5s	Meeke	Ogier +27.3s
SS19 Santa Marina 2 (power stage) (asphalt) 9.01 miles	Sordo 8m07.8s	Meeke	Ogier +28.0s





Leclerc beats Rowland, with the lapped Gelael and Deletraz in their wake

## Leclerc crowned with epic

**FORMULA 2**  
**JEREZ (E)**  
**OCTOBER 7-8**  
**ROUND 10/11**

THE 2017 FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP HAS been dominated by one driver: Charles Leclerc.

Ahead of the Jerez weekend, the 19-year-old Prema Racing star had amassed five wins, seven poles and 218 points from nine rounds. He left Spain with another pole and win but, much more importantly, as the champion — the category's first rookie title winner since Nico Hulkenberg won GP2 in 2009. Simply the class of the field.

Leclerc's plan to seal that title was straightforward: take pole and the race-one win. With those two achievements, it wouldn't matter what the drivers behind him in the standings — led by DAMS driver Oliver Rowland — did in that race.

So Prema applied an unusual strategy in qualifying to give Leclerc the best chance of securing yet another pole. The team gave him a set of medium tyres to complete his first flying laps and get firmly in the zone, before switching to two new sets of softs for his final efforts.

It paid off handsomely, with Leclerc on pole by 0.260 seconds ahead of Luca Ghiotto and Sergio Sette Camara. The thinking behind Prema's approach was that, with overtaking at a premium at the narrow Andalusian circuit, starting first would give Leclerc his best shot to seal the title in race one. But it came at a price, which was paid, as Leclerc would have to start Sunday's sprint race on worn mediums.

For much of the feature event, it looked as if the gamble had worked a treat and that Leclerc would romp to another win and the title. He shot

into an early lead, easily beating Ghiotto and Sette Camara away from the grid, and was 11.4s clear of Rowland, who had fought his way up to second after a lock-up in qualifying had left him starting fourth, after 11 laps.

The pair pitted on lap 12 of the 39-lap race, with Leclerc emerging comfortably back in the net lead, but behind the drivers who had started on the mediums, who were led by Nicholas Latifi. Rowland had been undercut by Alexander Albon and Sette Camara, and had to pass them, which he did with decisive moves before setting off after Leclerc and reeling off a string of rapid laps.

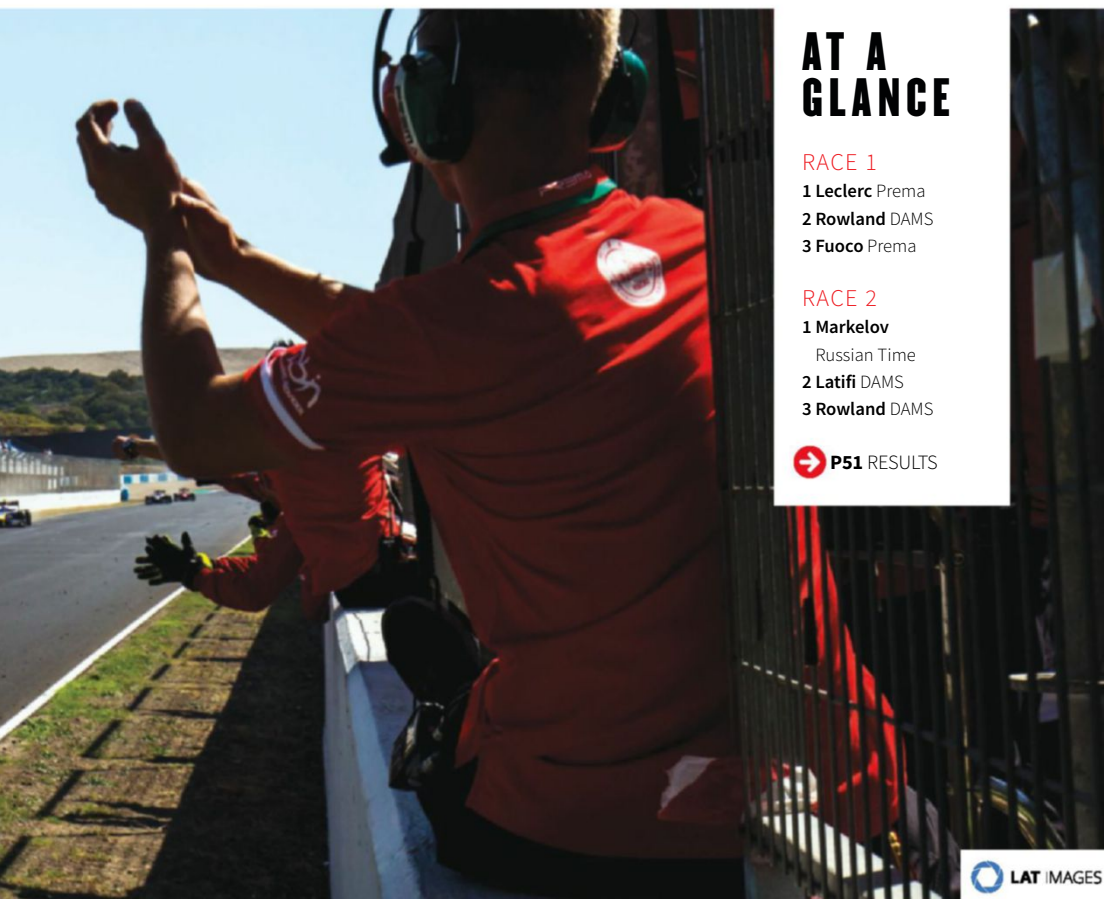
As it entered its final quarter, with the medium starters back down the order on softs, this largely uneventful race was turned on its head. Santino Ferrucci and Nobuharu Matsushita clashed at Turn 1 on lap 32, putting the American out of the race, and the safety car was deployed. Leclerc's advantage was suddenly gone.

Ferrucci's stricken car was cleared away after three laps, and Leclerc thought he had one lap to survive. His cause was aided by the lapped Sean Gelael being in front of Rowland at the restart, which gave Leclerc the chance to set off on one last charge to take glory. Except it wasn't — Prema had mistakenly told him the first lap after the restart was going to be the final tour.

"[But then they said] 'there is an error — there's two laps more', and I had absolutely no tyres left. So I was like, 'Now it's going to be very hard,'" Leclerc explained.

The final two laps were nailbitingly exciting as Rowland suddenly closed in on the lead and put Leclerc under severe pressure. To add to the chaos, Gelael and Louis Deletraz — also a lap down on fresher tyres — were faster than both





## AT A GLANCE

### RACE 1

- 1 Leclerc Prema
- 2 Rowland DAMS
- 3 Fuoco Prema

### RACE 2

- 1 Markelov  
Russian Time
- 2 Latifi DAMS
- 3 Rowland DAMS

→ P51 RESULTS

LAT IMAGES

# victory on melting tyres

the leaders and kept in close formation.

Rowland explained that he had learned from his late-race struggles in Hungary not to stress the tyres after a restart and had a prime view of Leclerc's problems. "I think Oliver might have been laughing in his helmet because I was all over the place," said the Monegasque driver.

But in the end, the Ferrari Formula 1 junior held on, edging out Rowland by 0.230s. His team-mate Antonio Fuoco used the same contra-strategy as Latifi – who finished fourth – to leap up the field to third from a lowly 15th grid spot. Artem Markelov was fifth, and Jordan King sensationally finished sixth after making a bold extra stop under the safety car and storming through the field.

"It feels amazing," Leclerc said of his title win, which he dedicated to his late father, Herve, who passed away in June. "Winning the championship is an amazing way to honour him."

Prema was hugely proud of its driver's efforts. "Charles did what we were expecting since the beginning [of the season]," said team boss Rene Rosin. "He is on my top list of drivers – now is the moment to send him onto the big floor, the highest floor of motorsport, and let's hope he's able to make it."

Rowland also praised his rival, despite losing out on the title: "It's difficult to come in as a rookie, and he had a rookie team-mate as well, so he had to learn everything for himself. That's what makes him strong. He's of a very high level and deserves to be in F1."

Race two was much more-action packed. Alex Palou, making his F2 debut with Campos Racing, charged off into the lead from reversed-grid pole, while front-row starter Ghiotto and King tangled at the second corner, which dropped the Russian

Time driver to the rear of the field.

Then King's engine spectacularly "went bang" and he dropped out of second, which left Latifi and Markelov chasing Palou. Leclerc, Fuoco and Rowland swapped positions regularly early on – each pulling off thrilling passes as they did so – before the Prema pair dropped back on their qualifying-used rubber and pitted for softs.

Rowland made it a four-way fight for the lead, which was eventually won by the Russian Time machine of Markelov, who nipped by Latifi before dispatching Palou and marching clear to seal his fourth win of 2017 by 11.8s. Rowland pressured the sister DAMS car of Latifi for second but could not get by.

Leclerc and Fuoco charged up the order after their stops – Leclerc got as high as fourth but faded dramatically on the last lap when he "just drove over the [tyre] cliff", and he eventually crossed the line seventh behind Nyck de Vries, Fuoco and the recovering Ghiotto, and ahead of Palou, who had a major struggle for grip.

"[Starting on qualifying tyres played] quite a big part," a clearly frustrated Leclerc said after race two. "The plan was win the championship on Saturday. The plan worked but I would have preferred to have a nicer race today. It was a gamble, but we were pretty sure of what we were doing and at the end we are happy and proved that we did well to put everything on Saturday."

It says a lot about the newly minted champion's competitive spirit that he could be down the day after sealing a second rookie title win in two years, to follow his GP3 crown. Esteban Ocon, Max Verstappen – even Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton – may need to watch out for that if Leclerc is on the F1 grid in 2018.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

# Scott takes win record with 12

## EUROFORMULA OPEN

JEREZ (E)

OCTOBER 7-8

ROUND 7/8

ANOTHER EUROFORMULA OPEN weekend, and another dominant double win for Harrison Scott.

The RP Motorsport driver arrived at Jerez with the 2017 title already in the bag, but had his sights on the championship's 11-race-wins record – held by Sandy Stuvik since 2014.

On Saturday, Scott secured a 10th pole of the season, and easily fended off a challenge from Devlin DeFrancesco at Turn 1. Scott shot off to a one-second lead but lost that before the first lap was over as Thiago Vivacqua and Lodovico Laurini collided at Turn 9, putting them both out in the gravel and triggering a safety car.

After the restart, Scott methodically built up another gap over Carlin-run Canadian DeFrancesco and Drivex School's Nikita Troitskiy. But that lead was erased again when Daniel Lu and Petru Florescu clashed going through the long fast left of Turn 8, forcing Lu out.

Scott mastered the restart, and went on to win by 2.3s. Ameya Vaidyanathan fended off Jannes Fittje for fourth.

"It was really tough," Scott said afterwards. "The car was moving a lot and it's so easy to make a mistake. But we had strong pace and to get the win was brilliant."

It was the same story one day later, but with it came history. Scott was simply unstoppable from an 11th pole of the season and he stormed clear of the pack to take his 12th win by 6.7s over Troitskiy and DeFrancesco.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

## RESULTS

**Race 1** 1 Harrison Scott 20 laps in 35m35.501s; 2 Devlin DeFrancesco +2.300s; 3 Nikita Troitskiy; 4 Ameya Vaidyanathan; 5 Jannes Fittje; 6 Simo Laaksonen. **Race 2** 1 Scott 18 laps in 29m17.465s; 2 Troitskiy +6.657s; 3 DeFrancesco; 4 Fittje; 5 Eliseo Martinez Merono; 6 Laaksonen. **Points** 1 Scott 340; 2 Troitskiy 191; 3 Fittje 137; 4 DeFrancesco 132; 5 Vaidyanathan 131; 6 Laaksonen 88.



Great Scott: Brit was unbeatable

FOTOSPEEDY



# Russell is champ as Fukuzumi wins

## GP3 SERIES

JEREZ (E)

OCTOBER 7-8

ROUND 7/8

THINGS COULD HAVE GOT NASTY for ART Grand Prix at Jerez. But in the end, GP3 crowned a deserving and engaging champion, and his two closest title rivals left Spain with their reputations enhanced.

George Russell arrived at the penultimate round hoping to take pole and win race one – as he has done three times this year – and seal the title. He left with the glory, but had to work for it.

Nirei Fukuzumi foiled Russell's bid to get pole, "massively happy" to top qualifying for the first time in GP3. To make matters worse for Russell, closest title rival Jack Aitken pushed him down to third on the race-one grid.

It didn't take long for the fight between those two to come alive. While Fukuzumi scampered clear to score his first win since the Barcelona opener, Russell "saw an opportunity at Turn 2". He muscled his way by to take second from Aitken in a forceful move at the tight right-hander. Aitken was less than impressed – "I'm not keen on crashing, so I gave it to him" – but later said he would have done the same.

With Fukuzumi gone out in front, race one simmered as Aitken looked to retake second. But with Russell in full control, the action between the ART team-mates cooled and Aitken was forced to defend hard from the impressive Dan Ticktum, who had taken fourth in his first GP3 qualifying (Monza's session was washed out). The Red Bull junior, who reckoned he could have qualified even higher had he completed more than 40 laps in a GP3 car before qualifying at Jerez, came home fourth to record DAMS's best finish of the season so far.

Race two was a tense affair won by Alessio Lorandi, who started on reversed-grid pole after race one's eighth-placed finisher Giuliano Alesi was penalised for clashing with the Jenzer Motorsport driver on the final lap.



Russell generously treats Fukuzumi to his well-earned fizz

In the pack behind, Aitken firmly shut the door on Russell approaching Turn 2 at the start, but the rookie made another bold lunge stick at the downhill Turn 6 hairpin. Aitken, again unimpressed by the move, lost further ground to Fukuzumi as he ran wide on the exit.

Russell, now with the chance to seal the title, made sure of it with the fastest lap, but had to repel a late assault from Fukuzumi on the final tour to secure fourth. Lorandi was also under pressure, in his case from Dorian Boccolacci, on

what was effectively a one-lap shootout following a safety car period after Niko Kari and Ticktum came together at Turn 3. Ticktum was out and in the gravel, while the stewards gave the Finn a 10-second penalty that cost him third place and elevated Anthoine Hubert to the podium.

Aitken was "massively gutted" to lose the title, but should come away feeling positive about his driving this year, as should Fukuzumi.

But the day and the title were Russell's. "It feels fantastic," he said afterwards. "Today is the biggest highlight [of the year]. Once I was ahead of Jack, and had fastest lap, I knew I would seal the title."

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



Lorandi scored his maiden GP3 triumph

## RESULTS

**Race 1** 1 Nirei Fukuzumi (ART) 23 laps in 35m57.969s; 2 George Russell (ART) +1.559s; 3 Jack Aitken (ART); 4 Dan Ticktum (DAMS); 5 Anthoine Hubert (ART); 6 Niko Kari (Arden); 7 Dorian Boccolacci (Trident); 8 Alessio Lorandi (Jenzer); 9 Giuliano Alesi (Trident); 10 Julian Falchero (Campos). **Race 2** 1 Lorandi 17 laps in 28m05.939s; 2 Boccolacci +0.743s; 3 Hubert; 4 Russell; 5 Fukuzumi; 6 Aitken; 7 Alesi; 8 Tatiana Calderon (DAMS). **Points** 1 Russell 190; 2 Aitken 140; 3 Fukuzumi 134; 4 Hubert 117; 5 Alesi 99; 6 Lorandi 82.





Truex leads  
Harvick on  
way to victory

## Truex gets into the final eight

**NASCAR CUP**  
**CHARLOTTE (USA)**  
**OCTOBER 8**  
**ROUND 30/36**

SEASON-LONG CLASS ACT MARTIN TRUEX JR became the first driver into the last eight of the NASCAR playoffs by taking victory in overtime.

Truex suffered some early handling issues on his Furniture Row Racing Toyota, but the crew worked away at these and he was up to fourth by the end of the second stage, which — as with the first — was won by Stewart-Haas Ford racer Kevin Harvick. But Harvick then lost the lead to Truex during a round of pitstops.

At the next stops, Kyle Larson (Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet) moved in front, but when he

next pitted his tyre carrier fell over, allowing Truex and Harvick back to the front.

A late spin for Kurt Busch precipitated a caution and the race running into overtime. Truex made it to the flag in front, with Chase Elliott's Hendrick Chevy second. Playoff contender Kyle Busch had a ragged race, featuring contact with the wall, to 29th.

### RESULTS

**1 Martin Truex Jr (Toyota Camry)** 337 laps in 3h38m00s; 2 Chase Elliott (Chevrolet SS) +0.911s; 3 Kevin Harvick (Ford Fusion); 4 Denny Hamlin (Toyota); 5 Jamie McMurray (Chevy); 6 Daniel Suarez (Toyota); 7 Jimmie Johnson (Chevy); 8 Ryan Blaney (Ford); 9 Kasey Kahne (Chevy); 10 Kyle Larson (Chevy). **Points 1 Truex 3106**; 2 Larson 3072; 3 Harvick 3069; 4 Elliott 3059; 5 Hamlin 3056; 6 Kyle Busch 3055; 7 Johnson 3051; 8 McMurray 3044; 9 Matt Kenseth 3043; 10 Brad Keselowski 3042; 11 Blaney 3039; 12 Ricky Stenhouse Jr 3034.

## Cassidy and Hirakawa to the top

**SUPER GT**  
**BURIRAM (T)**  
**OCTOBER 8**  
**ROUND 7/8**

VICTORY FOR TOM'S LEXUS PAIR NICK Cassidy and Ryo Hirakawa on the series' away visit to Thailand elevated them into the championship lead with just the Motegi finale to come.

Cassidy put the car safely through the wet Q1, while in the drier Q2 — and now on slicks — Hirakawa initially looked in trouble as he was mired in traffic, before pipping the Impul Nissan of Jann Mardenborough to pole on the final lap by 0.049 seconds.

Heavy rain just before the start meant most of the field was on wet-weather tyres, and Kiwi

Cassidy led the race from his Welsh flatmate Mardenborough. As the track dried out, the first pitstops provided a chance for a change to slicks. Nevertheless, the leading Lexus was untroubled as Hirakawa brought it home with a 12s margin.

Up to second came the Le Mans team's Lexus of Andrea Caldarelli and Kazuya Oshima, this pair therefore moving into second in the points. Leading the standings before the weekend was the NISMO Nissan of Ronnie Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda. The Italian was one of the few to start the race on slicks but, laden with 59kg of ballast, they could only bring the car home in ninth place.

There was heartbreak late on for Mardenborough and NISMO, as co-driver Hironobu Yasuda suffered engine failure with three laps remaining while running in third place, promoting the Honda of Koudai Tsukakoshi and Takashi Kogure.

### JIRO TAKAHASHI

### RESULTS

**1 Nick Cassidy/Ryo Hirakawa (Lexus LC 500)** 66 laps in 1h42m48.674s; 2 Kazuya Oshima/Andrea Caldarelli (Lexus) +12.121s; 3 Koudai Tsukakoshi/Takashi Kogure (Honda NSX-GT); 4 Yuji Tachikawa/Hiroaki Ishiura (Lexus); 5 Kazuki Nakajima/James Rossiter (Lexus); 6 Heikki Kovalainen/Kohei Hirate (Lexus); 7 Naoki Yamamoto/Takuya Izawa (Honda); 8 Bertrand Baguette/Kosuke Matsuura (Honda); 9 Ronnie Quintarelli/Tsugio Matsuda (Nissan GT-R); 10 Satoshi Motoyama/Katsumasa Chiyo (Nissan). **Points 1 Hirakawa/Cassidy 69**; 2 Caldarelli/Oshima 63; 3 Matsuda/Quintarelli 61; 4 Rossiter 53; 5 Ishiura/Tachikawa 51; 6 Nakajima 47.



TOM'S Lexus  
was untroubled  
in Thailand

## Tarquini's stunning debut

**TCR INTERNATIONAL SERIES**  
**ZHEJIANG (PRC)**  
**OCTOBER 8**  
**ROUND 9/10**

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO TRY new things, as 55-year-old Gabriele Tarquini proved last weekend by giving the brand-new TCR Hyundai a victory on his — and the car's — series debut.

The i30 had been given something called a 'temporary homologation form', which meant that although Alain Menu and Tarquini took a one-two in opening qualifying, they were not eligible for the top-12 shootout and had to start from the seventh row of the grid.

Tarquini stormed through the field and took the lead from the Craft Bamboo SEAT of Pepe Oriola just past half-distance. The fading Oriola was then muscled aside by the Leopard Racing VW of Jean-Karl Vernay — a move that allowed the sister Golf of Rob Huff through — before the Spaniard moved across on the West Coast Racing VW of Gianni Morbidelli, who wasn't deterred and shouldered his way past.

With the Hyundais ineligible for points, Vernay — who was protected by Huff — claimed a maximum score to provide him with a huge boost in the title race against pre-weekend series leader Attila Tassi, who claimed a solitary point aboard his MiRA Honda.

James Nash emerged from the first-lap barging in race two to pull out an enormous lead in his Craft Bamboo SEAT. Frederic Vervisch was holding everyone else up with his Audi, the field in his wake resorting to banger racing — partly due to the scenic-and-hilly, brand-new Zhejiang circuit packing 16 corners into its tortuous two miles.

Once Huff and Morbidelli had battered their way to the fore, they hunted down the fading Nash, who could not hold them back. Menu was fourth, a BoP adjustment hitting the Hyundais with 40kg of ballast and a 5% reduction in power. Tassi was down in ninth, while Vernay pitted with a puncture.

### RESULTS

**Race 1 1 Gabriele Tarquini (Hyundai i30 N TCR)** 19 laps in 30m15.966s; 2 Jean-Karl Vernay (Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR) +1.626s; 3 Rob Huff (VW); 4 Gianni Morbidelli (VW); 5 Pepe Oriola (SEAT Leon TCR); 6 Frederic Vervisch (Audi RS3 LMS TCR). **Race 2 1 Huff** 19 laps in 30m23.840s; 2 Morbidelli +2.403s; 3 James Nash (SEAT); 4 Alain Menu (Hyundai); 5 Oriola; 6 Tarquini. **Points 1 Vernay 207**; 2 Attila Tassi 186; 3 Stefano Comini 165; 4 Roberto Colciago 161; 5 Oriola 137; 6 Nash 115.



Winning Erebus  
Holden turns into  
Griffin's off the  
Mountain Straight



# 'Reject' Reynolds leads the little guys

**BATHURST 1000**  
**MOUNT PANORAMA (AUS)**  
**OCTOBER 8**  
**AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS ROUND 11/14**

IT WAS A TRIUMPH FOR THE SELF-proclaimed 'team of rejects' at Mount Panorama this year, with David Reynolds and Luke Youlden winning the Bathurst 1000 in the Holden of minnow Erebus Motorsport.

It was a race that lived up to every Bathurst cliché in the book. There was rain, there was a drying line, there was a moving fuel window, there was crashing up and down The Mountain, and there was a big swing in championship momentum as the race claimed some big scalps.

There was also an unlikely pair of winners in Reynolds and Youlden. Unlikely, but it was hardly a fluke. Main driver Reynolds and the small Erebus crew arrived into the Season of Endurance in immaculate 'punching-above-their-weight' form. So, when Reynolds qualified on the front row next to the DJR Penske Ford of record-breaking polesitter Scott McLaughlin it wasn't that much of a surprise. The only problem was that McLaughlin was four tenths down the road.

When the rain arrived on Sunday morning, right as the cars were sat on the grid, outright pace didn't matter anymore. Instead it became a race of survival and reliability. The first to be taken out of contention were McLaughlin and

co-driver Alex Premat. Having gone into the race as polesitters, favourites and, in McLaughlin's case, the points leader, it all came to nought when Premat was left stranded at The Cutting on lap 76 with an engine problem.

It could have been bad news from a championship perspective, but thankfully two of his main rivals had problems too. Jamie Whincup was primed to take a big points lead out of the race, and he and Triple Eight Holden co-driver Paul Dumbrell were even in the hunt for victory until they were sidelined by their own engine problem on lap 119, with 42 to go.

Chaz Mostert also looked set to haul himself right into the title equation, only to be caught up in a crazy restart shunt with 17 laps remaining, which meant the best he could manage was 10th.

It was that restart that effectively decided the race. It was the exact point where there was a clear dry line and everyone was scrambling to make it to the end on fuel, having danced with a window that lasts roughly 22 laps.

There were still a number of contenders, including Shane van Gisbergen, whose Triple Eight Holden had the track position, and Mostert and Cam Waters, whose Prodrive Fords both had plenty of speed. Perennial Bathurst menace Garth Tander was right in the mix too with the lead GRM Holden, as was Reynolds, sitting right in the lead pack with enough fuel to make it to the end.

When the race went green with 17 laps to go,

everything changed. A sprinkling of rain on the front straight saw van Gisbergen and Tander slide off before they'd even made the restart line. That then turned into an even bigger crash at Turn 1, which took the Prodrive pair of Mostert and Waters out of the equation.

Reynolds saw his opportunity and grabbed it with both hands. He quickly cleared HSV Racing's Scott Pye, and went for broke.

Having been in the hunt all day, Reynolds had the speed to win right when it mattered. And after one last restart with six laps to go, he drove away from the field to claim a well-earned Bathurst 1000 win.

It was a classic finish, and a monumental moment for the team and both drivers given the past couple of years. After all, Reynolds arrived at Erebus at the end of 2015, having been ousted by title-winning team Prodrive Racing. At that very time the team itself was undergoing huge downsizing after abandoning its ill-fated Mercedes programme. And Youlden only joined them this year, after being given the 'thanks but no thanks' from DJR Team Penske after last year's enduros.

"Right place, right time, let me tell you," said Youlden, finally a winner on his 18th attempt at Bathurst. "A little team of what... do we call it a team of rejects or something? All working together, and it has been mega."





Fabulous effort for Pye and Luff gave them second in HSV Holden



McLaughlin (red car, front) took amazing pole

LAT IMAGES

## IN BRIEF

### FORMULA RENAULT NEC

Yifei Ye scored his first Formula Renault 2.0 win in the opening race of the Hockenheim finale, and then made it two the following day. The Chinese led all the way in race one, while Josef Kaufmann Racing team-mate Sacha Fenestraz had to battle his way past MP Motorsport-run Red Bull junior Richard Verschoor for second. Verschoor then survived contact with Gabriel Aubry to take third. On Sunday, Ye led Fenestraz throughout. Alexander Vartanyan, after switching to Arden, passed MP duo Verschoor and Jarno Opmeer for third. Down in ninth place in both races, Michael Benyahia clinched the poorly supported overall championship.

### ITALIAN FORMULA 4

Ferrari protege Marcus Armstrong leads the points with one round to go after winning one race at Mugello, while Sebastian Fernandez triumphed in the other two. Bhaitech-run Venezuelan Fernandez led Kiwi Prema driver Armstrong throughout the first race, with Lorenzo Colombo third. In race two, Armstrong beat main title rival Job van Uiter, with Leonardo Lorandi next up. Fernandez battled from fourth in the finale, passing Armstrong to win, as van Uiter dropped out of the battle due to a drivethrough penalty for a jumped start. Artem Petrov also passed Armstrong to take second.

### EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Nikolay Gryazin won Rally Liepaja, the final round, in his Skoda after holding off a challenge from the M-Sport Ford of much-heralded 17-year-old Finn Kalle Rovanpera. A heavy crash ended Bruno Magalhaes's hopes of claiming the title and secured it for Kajetan Kajetanowicz. The Pole was lying third when his friends crashed their helicopter on SS11 – one of them died and another was seriously injured, prompting him to withdraw from the rally.

### CHINESE GT

Jake Dennis scored a win at Chengdu, joining series leader Xu Jia in the Kings Linky Racing Audi R8 LMS. They were third in race two, won by Chris van der Drift and Li Chao in their Porsche. From these midweek public-holiday races, Dennis then went to Zhejiang for the Audi R8 LMS Cup. He was involved in a pile-up in race one, won by David Chen from Shaun Thong and Alex Yoong. But in the second he won a great scrap with Mitch Gilbert for victory, as Alessio Picariello claimed the title.

### NASCAR XFINITY

Alex Bowman won a rain-delayed race at Charlotte in a Ganassi Chevrolet for his first national victory. He beat Sam Hornish Jr and Ryan Blaney. The race also set the series' 'Round of 8', with Brendan Gaughan (by one point), Michael Annett, Blake Koch and Jeremy Clements missing out.

# to their Great Race glory

Out of all the drama Pye and Warren Luff came home second in their Holden, while Fabian Coulthard and Tony D'Alberto got something out of the race for DJR Team Penske with third. Coulthard also emerged as the new championship leader, having profited hugely from the misfortune heaped upon his team-mate and Whincup to grab a 91-point lead.

Sunday's chaotic, thrilling affair was a fitting end to what had already been a special weekend at Mount Panorama. On Saturday, McLaughlin etched his name into the Bathurst record books with one of the greatest – if not *the* greatest – laps of all time in the Top 10 Shootout.

There was a sense that something extraordinary was going to happen during pre-qualifying practice on Friday, when Whincup's unofficial lap record – a 2m04.909s – was decimated by no fewer than six drivers. And it was McLaughlin leading the charge, lowering the record with a 2m04.147s, the Kiwi more than half a second clear of the field.

That was impressive enough, but in a way it was expected. Saturday's effort, however, was something different. In the notoriously tricky one-lap Shootout for pole, McLaughlin didn't just break the 2m04s barrier for the first time, he smashed it with a 2m03.831s.

That time left him four tenths clear of Reynolds and therefore secured a comfortable pole, but it was more than that. It was the new

'lap of the gods', the greatest lap of The Mountain since Greg Murphy's 2m06.859s in the Shootout in 2003.

What made the whole deal even sweeter is that Murphy was McLaughlin's childhood hero. And it was Murphy, now a Supercars pitlane reporter, who was first on the scene when McLaughlin climbed out of his Penske Ford.

"That was probably the main thing that went through my mind when I saw the 3.8," said McLaughlin when he reflected on the lap later that evening. I looked up to [Murphy's] lap. Basically for me, Supercars was it.

"That was a pretty special day that one, for not only myself as a fan, but New Zealand as a country, and it was a day I will never forget. This one is another day I will never forget. It was cool to do it, and then for him to interview me at the end, that was pretty special too."

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

### RESULTS

**1 David Reynolds/Luke Youlden (Holden Commodore)** 161 laps in 7h11m45.5456s; 2 Scott Pye/Warren Luff (Holden) +3.8995s; 3 Fabian Coulthard/Tony D'Alberto (Ford Falcon); 4 Dale Wood/Chris Pither (Holden); 5 Shane van Gisbergen/Matt Campbell (Holden); 6 Michael Caruso/Dean Fiore (Nissan Altima); 7 Todd Kelly/Jack Le Brocq (Nissan); 8 Jason Bright/Garry Jacobson (Ford); 9 Tim Slade/Andre Heimgartner (Holden); 10 Chaz Mostert/Steve Owen (Ford).

**Points 1 Coulthard 2431;** 2 Jamie Whincup 2340; 3 Scott McLaughlin 2334; 4 Mostert 2208; 5 van Gisbergen 2142; 6 Reynolds 1803.



# Extreme Speed and consistency as Hartley joins Nissan's winners



At least the ESM cars wouldn't be hard to spot when it got dark

LAT IMAGES

**PETIT LEMANS**  
**ROAD ATLANTA (USA)**  
**OCTOBER 7**  
**IMSA SPORTSCAR ROUND 12/12**

LE MANS WINNER BRENDON HARTLEY joined Extreme Speed Motorsports team regulars Ryan Dalziel and Scott Sharp to win the 20th annual Petit Le Mans last Saturday. Their Onroak-based Nissan DPi, along with the similar car of team-mates Pipo Derani, Johannes van Overbeek and Bruno Senna, held a narrow edge on pace during a thrilling and tumultuous 10-hour race, but had to work hard for their eventual 7.633-second victory over the Dallara-chassised Cadillac DPi-V.R of Dane Cameron/Eric Curran/Mike Conway. Series debutant Team Penske's ORECA-Gibson 07 finished close behind in the hands of IndyCar stars Helio Castroneves/Simon Pagenaud/Juan Pablo Montoya.

The unpredictability began even before the start. Heavy rain had been predicted for later in the race – in marked contrast to the perfect weather conditions that had prevailed all week during practice and qualifying – but the steady drizzle that began shortly before the morning warm-up was completely unexpected. The session, happily, was completely without drama, but the teams were thrown into a quandary in terms of tyre choice for the start just over two

hours later. Eventually, all 39 entries bar Ben Keating's GTD Mercedes were equipped with grooved rubber when the green flag flew on a decidedly treacherous track.

Derani served notice of his intentions right away by slicing past countryman and polesitter Castroneves on the opening lap. The younger Brazilian maintained his lead after everyone had switched over to slick tyres within the opening 10 laps, but the first full-course caution flew moments later when Matteo Cressoni lost control of Scuderia Corsa's GTD Ferrari (the Italian joining points leaders Christina Nielsen and Alessandro Balzan for the final endurance race) under braking for the chicane and inadvertently shoved Castroneves into the gravel trap.

Seven different Prototype cars took turns in the lead (all turning laps within 0.6 seconds of each other), although several frontrunners encountered problems as the race progressed.

Brothers Ricky and Jordan Taylor had already wrapped up the IMSA championship, which was just as well as their usually bulletproof Cadillac succumbed to engine failure inside two and a half hours. The Rebellion ORECA-Gibson of Mathias Beche/Nick Heidfeld/Gustavo Menezes looked very strong, especially in Menezes's hands, until crashing out of the race while leading just after halfway.

Surprisingly, the promised rain never

materialised. Unsurprisingly, the level of intensity never wavered, and the closing stages boiled down to an intense battle between the two ESM Nissans, the pair of Action Express Cadillac DPis – driven by Cameron, Curran and Englishman Conway, who was particularly impressive on his maiden appearance at Road Atlanta, and two-time champions Christian Fittipaldi and Joao Barbosa, plus Filipe Albuquerque – and the Penske ORECA, which had been fortunate to lose only one lap to the early incident and soon was back on level terms.

The outcome ultimately was decided by a couple of penalties inside the final half-hour. Firstly, Albuquerque, in the second-placed Cadillac, was assessed a stop-and-hold for 'unacceptable risk' at a late restart – ironically for a clash with 'team-mate' Cameron. Moments later, race leader Derani reluctantly performed a drivethrough following an incident that caused Ryan Briscoe's Ford GT to crash at the super-fast Esses.

The sister ESM Nissan had been fortunate to lose only one lap when Sharp was punted into the gravel at the four-hour mark. After making up that deficit during one of the many cautions, and then overcoming a minor alternator glitch inside the final two hours, Hartley was perfectly placed to pick up the lead. The charismatic Kiwi then reeled off the final 10 laps to join Tom



Kristensen (in 2002), Allan McNish/Dindo Capello (2008) and Nick Tandy (2015) as the only drivers to score overall wins at both Le Mans and Petit Le Mans in the same year.

"I'm so proud of the team, Ryan and Scott," said Hartley. "We drove a great race, with not a scratch on the car. We were quick and it was an awesome day. I want to say thank you to everyone involved. This was awesome."

The GTLM battle was arguably even more closely contested, with all eight cars turning laps within 0.2s during the race. Californian Bill Auberlen celebrated his 400th start for BMW by snagging the win alongside Briton Alexander Sims and Canadian Kuno Wittmer for BMW Team RLL. Series champions Antonio Garcia and Jan Magnussen, joined by Mike Rockenfeller in the drivers', teams' and manufacturers' championship-winning Chevy Corvette C7.R, finished a scant 1.060s behind after 10 hours of spectacular competition.

Appropriately, other GTLM North American Endurance Cup honours were shared as Patrick Pilet/Dirk Werner claimed the drivers' crown for Porsche and Ford secured the manufacturers' title, both by narrow margins.

A similar battle was waged in GT-Daytona until the consistent pace of South African newcomer Sheldon van der Linde, allied to the proven skills of Californian Connor de Phillippi and Germany's Christopher Mies aboard the Land Motorsport Audi R8 LMS, proved too much for the opposition.

Daytona 24 Hours class winners Michael Christensen/Daniel Morad/Michael de Quesada finished second in their Alegra Motorsport Porsche, followed by the similar car of Patrick Lindsey/Jorg Bergmeister/Matt McMurry and the Mercedes of Ben Keating/Jeroen Bleekemolen/Mario Farnbacher, who deservedly snared the NAEC crown.

**JEREMY SHAW**

## RESULTS

**1 Brendon Hartley/ Ryan Dalziel/Scott Sharp (Nissan DPi)** 402 laps in 10h00m22.867s; 2 Eric Curran/ Mike Conway/Dane Cameron (Cadillac DPi-V.R.) +7.633s; 3 Helio Castroneves/Juan Pablo Montoya/Simon Pagenaud (ORECA-Gibson 07); 4 Pipo Derani/Bruno Senna/Johannes van Overbeek (Nissan); 5 Christian Fittipaldi/Joao Barbosa/Filipe Albuquerque (Cadillac); 6 Misha Goikhberg/ Stephen Simpson/Chris Miller (Oreca). **PC 1 Garrett Grist/ Tomy Drissi/John Falb**; 2 Don Yount/Danny Burkett/Buddy Rice; 3 James French/Pato O'Ward/Kyle Masson. **GTLM 1 Bill Auberlen/Alexander Sims/Kuno Wittmer (BMW M6 GTLM)**; 2 Antonio Garcia/Jan Magnussen/Mike Rockenfeller (Chevrolet Corvette C7.R); 3 Toni Vilander/Giancarlo Fisichella/Alessandro Pier Guidi (Ferrari 488 GTE); 4 Tommy Milner/Oliver Gavin/Marcel

Fassler (Corvette); 5 Gianmaria Bruni/Laurens Vanthoor/Earl Bamber (Porsche 911 RSR); 6 Patrick Pilet/Nick Tandy/Dirk Werner (Porsche 911 RSR).

**GTD 1 Sheldon van der Linde/Connor de Phillippi/ Christopher Mies (Audi R8 LMS)**; 2 Michael Christensen/ Daniel Morad/Michael de Quesada (Porsche 911 GT3 R); 3 Patrick Lindsey/Matt McMurry/Jorg Bergmeister (Porsche). **Points 1 Ricky Taylor/Jordan Taylor 310**; 2 Curran/Cameron 291; 3 Fittipaldi/Barbosa 284; 4 Goikhberg/Simpson 277; 5 Sharp/Dalziel 273; 6 van Overbeek 249. **PC 1 French/ O'Ward 283**; 2 Yount 244; 3 Rice 182. **GTLM 1 Magnussen/ Garcia 334**; 2 Auberlen/Sims 317; 3= Dirk Muller/Joey Hand & Richard Westbrook/Ryan Briscoe 306; 5 Pilet/Werner 295; 6 Vanthoor 287. **GTD 1 Christina Nielsen/Alessandro Balzan 340**; 2 Bleekemolen 320; 3 Lindsey 298.

# RESULTS ROUND-UP

## FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP

### ROUND 10/11, JEREZ (E), OCTOBER 7-8

#### RACE 1 (39 LAPS – 107.306 MILES)

1	Charles Leclerc (MC) Prema Racing	1h01m31.999s
2	Oliver Rowland (GB) DAMS	+0.230s
3	Antonio Fuoco (I) Prema Racing	+0.917s
4	Nicholas Latifi (CDN) DAMS	+1.236s
5	Artem Markelov (RUS) Russian Time	+2.685s
6	Jordan King (GB) MP Motorsport	+6.744s
7	Luca Ghiotto (I) Russian Time	+8.017s
8	Alex Palou (E) Campos Racing	+8.262s
9	Nabil Jeffri (MAL) Trident	+14.483s
10	Sergio Sette Camara (BR) MP Motorsport	+16.226s
11	Norman Nato (F) Arden International	+16.256s
12	Alexander Albon (T) ART Grand Prix	+17.122s
13	Nyck de Vries (NL) Racing Engineering	+17.657s
14	Gustav Malja (S) Racing Engineering	+24.855s
15	Rene Binder (A) Rapax	+26.942s
16	Sean Gelael (RI) Arden International	-1 lap
17	Louis Deletraz (CH) Rapax	-1 lap
18	Nobuharu Matsushita (J) ART Grand Prix	-1 lap
R	Santino Ferrucci (USA) Trident	31 laps-accident
R	Ralph Boschung (CH) Campos Racing	27 laps-engine temperature

**Winner's average speed** 104.631mph. **Fastest lap** Rowland 1m29.906s, 110.172mph.

#### QUALIFYING

**1 Leclerc 1m24.682s**; 2 Ghiotto 1m24.942s; 3 Sette Camara 1m25.257s; 4 Rowland 1m25.316s; 5 Markelov 1m25.422s; 6 Albon 1m25.426s; 7 Matsushita 1m25.450s; 8 de Vries 1m25.470s; 9 Latifi 1m25.477s; 10 Nato 1m25.583s; 11 Palou 1m25.600s; 12 Deletraz 1m25.627s; 13 Ferrucci 1m25.632s; 14 King 1m25.653s; 15 Fuoco 1m25.739s; 16 Malja 1m25.916s; 17 Binder 1m26.121s; 18 Jeffri 1m26.148s; 19 Gelael 1m26.163s; 20 Boschung 1m26.647s.

#### RACE 2 (28 LAPS – 77.040 MILES)

**1 Markelov 43m01.086s**; 2 Latifi +11.840s; 3 Rowland +13.286s; 4 Ghiotto +14.691s; 5 Fuoco +16.497s; 6 de Vries +20.201s; 7 Leclerc +20.510s; 8 Palou +25.027s; 9 Albon +25.613s; 10 Nato +30.411s; 11 Matsushita +34.059s; 12 Deletraz +38.074s; 13 Ferrucci +44.257s; 14 Sette Camara +52.036s; 15 Jeffri +52.395s; 16 Gelael +52.516s; 17 Binder +52.658s; 18 Malja +1m04.836s; 19 Boschung 27 laps-DNF; R King 3 laps-engine.

**Winner's average speed** 107.452mph. **Fastest lap** Binder 1m29.032s, 111.253mph.

#### GRID FOR RACE 2

Decided by result of Race 1, with top eight finishers reversed.

#### CHAMPIONSHIP

**1 Leclerc 249**; 2 Rowland 189; 3 Markelov 177; 4 Ghiotto 164; 5 Latifi 156; 6 Matsushita 115; 7 de Vries 102; 8 Fuoco 98; 9 Nato 91; 10 Albon 66.



Markelov notched up his fourth race win of 2017



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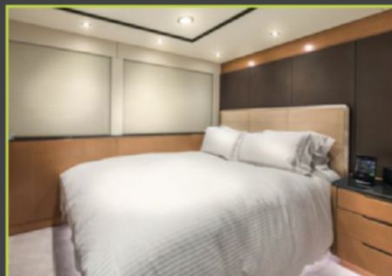


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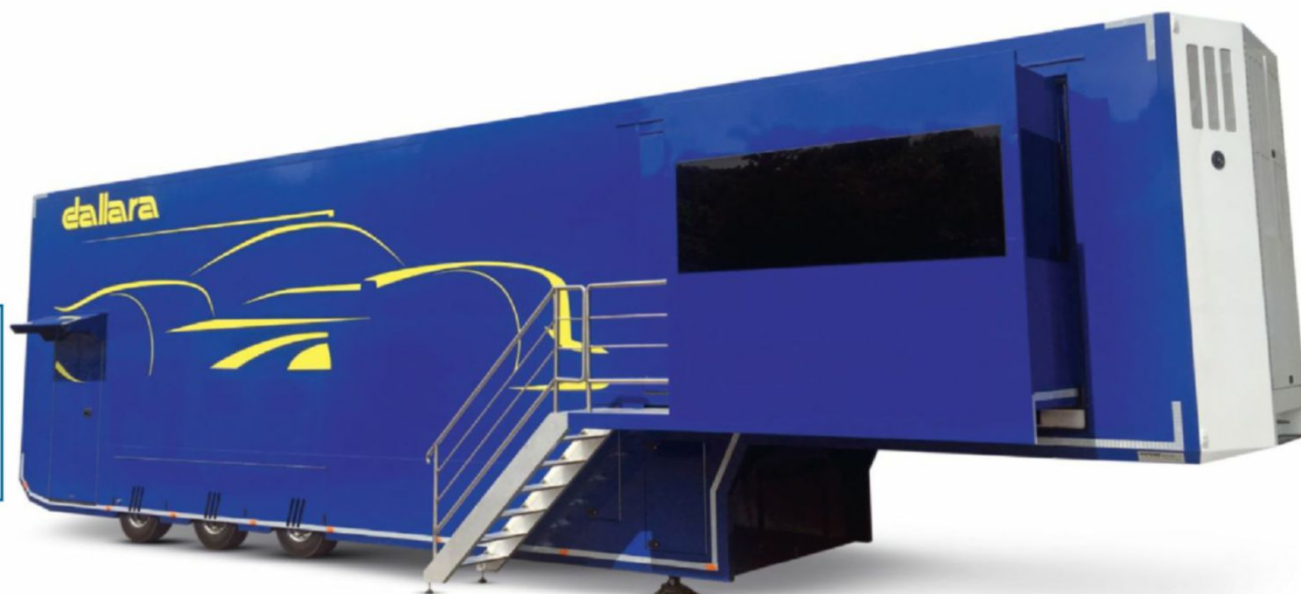


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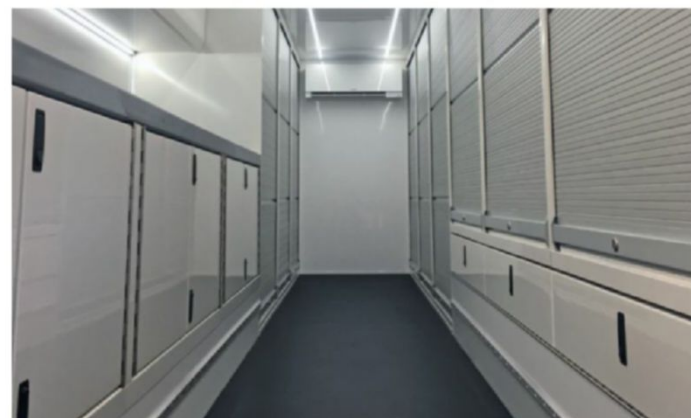
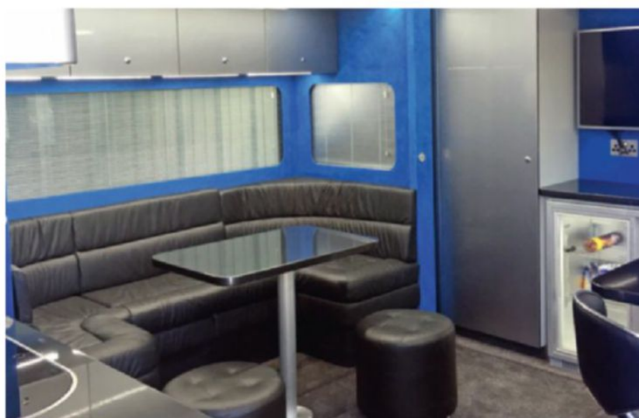
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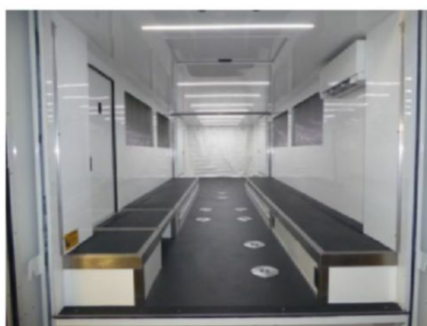
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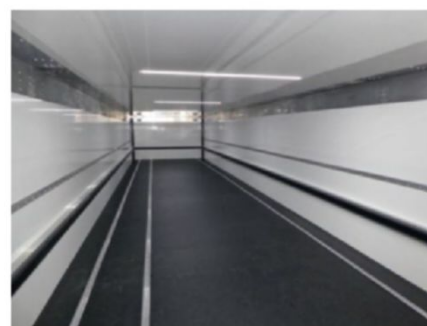
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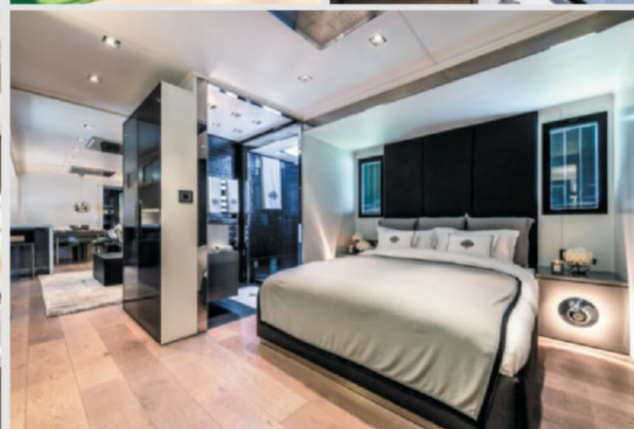


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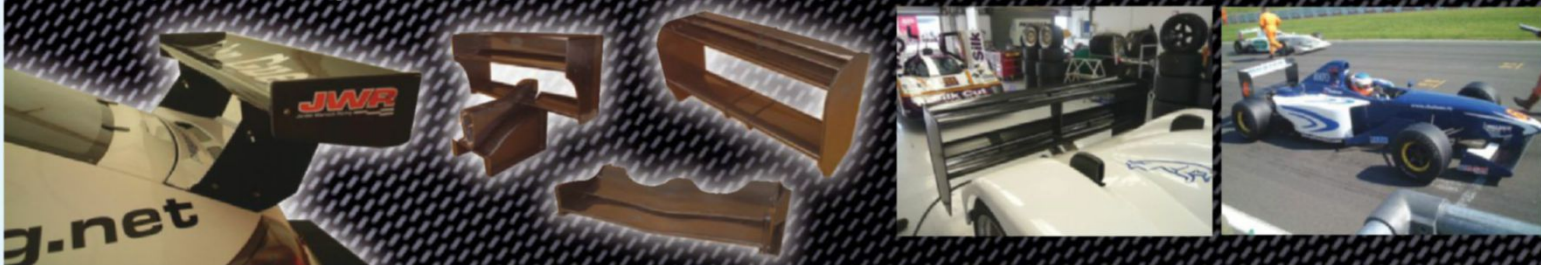
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FORMULAFORD FESTIVAL

## Road to Indy boost for FF1600 Festival

AN OFFER OF A PLACE AT THE Mazda Road to Indy Shootout could boost the Formula Ford Festival to its best entry in years, as the event continues a welcome upward trend in attracting Kent racers.

There's already ample chance to gain an entry to the Road to Indy Shootout in the UK, via winning the British Racing and Sports Car Club FF1600 National Championship, Scottish, Northern Irish or James Beckett-run SuperSeries. But the Festival now offers one more chance for aspiring club racers to put themselves in front of Mazda at Laguna Seca to win a \$200,000 scholarship to compete in USF2000.

"We are looking for the most talented open-wheel racers in the world, and we believe the Festival is recognized globally as a special event," said Mazda operations manager Kyle Kimball.

Autosport also received confirmation that if a person who already has a shootout place wins the Festival, the person finishing second will not automatically take the slot.

"We do have the right to select an 'at-large' driver to attend the Shootout if they show exceptional talent and potential," said Kimball. "But, just like our Mazda Road to Indy scholarships all the way to the IndyCar series are awarded only to champions, that is



Walter Hayes' commitment to Kents has seen it benefit as Zetec and Duratec failed

our policy for the Shootout as well."

The Festival has been attempting to re-establish itself since the Duratec and Zetec variants of Formula Ford – which the Festival favoured – have wilted away. The other major UK-based end-of-season event, the Walter Hayes Trophy, has always remained committed to putting the Kent at the forefront.

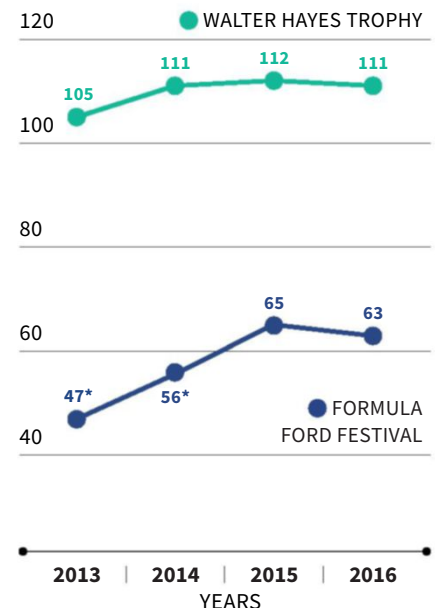
That left the Festival with ground to claw back, which it has been doing in recent years (see graph, right). Whether the Road to Indy offering helps that further remains to be seen.

This year, the Festival had 58 entries as Autosport went to press, five fewer than started last year. Crucially, though, there is still time to enter before the October 21-22 event, and the news of a Shootout ticket could boost that further.

The Festival is the event with the most extensive history, but has had less appeal than its Silverstone-based brother in recent years. The Shootout ticket should go some way to restoring the balance of appeal to ambitious young drivers.

JACK BENYON

### FESTIVAL AND HAYES KENT ENTRIES



\*The Formula Ford Festival was still running Duratec and Zetec variants at this time



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LMP3 CUP

## Lanan to LMP3 with Norma

BRDC BRITISH FORMULA 3 AND BRITISH GT team Lanan Racing is set to contest the LMP3 Cup and Michelin Le Mans Cup next year with a Norma M30.

The Bedfordshire-based squad previously ran a Ginetta Juno in the LMP3 class of the European Le Mans Series in 2015.

The Norma M30 has not been seen so far in the UK-based LMP3 Cup – which has been entirely populated to date by the Ligier JSP3 – but has been used by teams in the ELMS and has been the weapon of choice for this year's Michelin Le Mans Cup LMP3 champions Alexander Toril and Jean Glorieux. The category is cost-capped at €206,000 for a chassis.

Lanan Racing team principal Graham Johnson said: "The car is looking very likely, but there's a couple of things that have to fall into place [to make it happen]. I think we need to have something different, not for

difference's sake – I think the Norma is the faster car. Norma is very keen for us to do something in the UK. We would be one of the few Norma teams, so we would get a lot of support."

Autosport reported last week that for next year the LMP3 Cup will switch from Pirelli to Michelin tyres, which are used in Europe. The UK LMP3 championship was the only major series using Pirellis, limiting the chances of teams from the Michelin-based series making one-off UK appearances.

"I don't think it's going to turn the championship on its head [in terms of numbers]," added Johnson.

"It will make it easier to go to a race in Britain, and previously [the teams] may have thought they don't have a set-up for the Pirellis. It will make it easier for other P3 teams to do both, but it's not a massive deal-breaker, it just takes the edge off the cost."

### BRDC BRITISH F3

## Dempsey and Hillspeed split after a year in F3

CLIFF DEMPSEY RACING HAS ENDED ITS partnership with BRDC British Formula 3 team Hillspeed following the season finale at Donington Park last month.

The two squads entered into a partnership for the 2017 season, but team boss Dempsey revealed the tie-up had now run its course.

"I think both of us knew it wasn't really working," he said. "The system just doesn't suit me. I was very happy with the staff that were there, happy that the car was quick."

"But at the end of the day I'm so used to running my own team that it's very, very hard to work with

anyone else. That's really what the problem is. My handshake is my word, so I stuck there until the end."

Dempsey did not rule out a possible return to F3, running with his own squad. "If I find two drivers with the money then I'd run in F3 myself; I love the series," he added.

### CASTLE COMBE FF1600

## DOUBLE-HEADER BID TO BOOST GRID SIZES

THE CASTLE COMBE RACING Club could run three double-headers next year for Formula Ford 1600 in an attempt to improve grid sizes in the category.

Plans feature nine events across the season, of which three would be 10-lap double-headers, with one dropped score.

Grid sizes for Formula Fords have dropped off at the Wiltshire circuit compared with last year, with an average of only 14 cars per race down from 24, while the National series has continued to grow.

"I think it's people just doing different things. Hopefully it will change for next year," said Jo Lewkowicz, racing club coordinator at Castle Combe. "We're trying to do more double-headers, as it's what they [teams and drivers] have requested in the forum."

Castle Combe's Finals Day will take place this weekend, and includes the annual Formula Ford Carnival race.

So far only 12 drivers have provisionally entered compared with 24 who took part in the race last year.

Four-time event winner Ben Norton said: "It's surprising [more people haven't entered]."

"For the club racer who wants to go racing, to do it at Combe you know you're going to have competitive racing and only go to one circuit."

Entries for the Carnival remain open until tomorrow (Friday) morning.



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# British F4 drivers make NEC bow

BRITISH FORMULA 4 RACE WINNERS Oscar Piastrì and Logan Sargeant made their Formula Renault debuts at Hockenheim last weekend in the final round of the Northern European Cup.

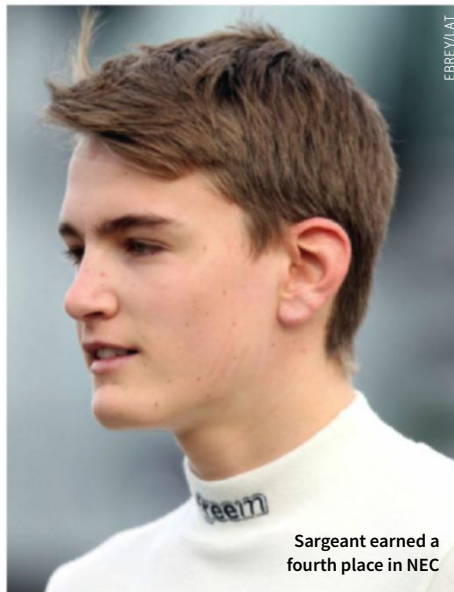
F4 runner-up Piastrì raced with the Arden team – who the Australian also drove for in F4 – and finished eighth in both races.

American driver Sargeant competed with the R-ace GP squad and claimed a best result of fourth in the opener.

Ahead of the weekend, Piastrì said that the Formula Renault Eurocup is a likely destination for him next year.

“It won’t be F3,” he said. “I have done a couple of test days in the Renault car and it really is a beast compared to the F4 cars. I’m expecting it to be a challenge.”

BRDC British F3 runner-up James Pull had his second FR 2.0 outing, this time with Josef Kaufmann Racing, with a best result of seventh.



Sargeant earned a fourth place in NEC

## IN BRIEF



### EX-PETERSON FERRARI GETS COMBE DEMO

Nick Mason’s stunning ex-Le Mans Ferrari 512S (above) was one of the stars of demonstration runs at Castle Combe last weekend. The ex-factory car from 1970 won at the Sebring 12 Hours that year – a famous drive in which Mario Andretti denied Porsche duo Peter Revson and movie star Steve McQueen victory – but retired at Le Mans when crewed by Derek Bell and Ronnie Peterson.

### PORSCHE CHAMP WEBSTER WINS IN JAPAN

Former Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Josh Webster made a winning return to Carrera Cup racing last weekend in Japan. The 23-year-old, who won the GB crown in 2014, headed to Suzuka to take part in the Japanese Grand Prix-supporting Porsche Carrera Cup Japan series, and won the second race of the weekend on Sunday.

### FORES EYES MONO-TO-F4 PROMOTION

Monoposto race winner Alex Fores is targeting a drive in British Formula 4 next season. The 17-year-old won races in the Mono 1800 class last year and took a podium after a late deal to race in the Mono F3 division at Donington Park last month. Fores’s father Richard plans to organise a test to allow his son to measure himself against someone who competed in the series this year.

### HRDC SEASON TO WRAP UP AT DONINGTON

The Historic Racing Drivers’ Club will wrap up its 2017 race programme with three races within the BRSCC Championship Finals meeting at Donington Park this Sunday. The inaugural Coombs Heritage Challenge for pre-’66 Jaguar saloons will conclude with a 30-minute race, while the Academy, A-Series Challenge, Touring Greats and Pre-’63 Touring Cars share two other races.

### CIVIC SWIFT TAKES A PUNT ON TCR UK

Civic Cup champion Carl Swift (below) is planning to enter the inaugural season of TCR UK. Swift, who won the 750 Motor Club category title in 2016, plans to buy a second-hand TCR car to begin testing ahead of next season. Swift has only raced sporadically this year in the 750MC-run Club Enduro and Civic Cup.



## GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

# Crees makes GT4 Ginetta step-up

GINETTA GRDC+ CHAMPION Michael Crees will graduate to the BTCC-supporting GT4 Supercup championship next year with Century Motorsport.

Broadstairs driver Crees, 34, won the GRDC+ title in his maiden season of racing this term, having only done arrive-and-drive karting beforehand. He took seven

wins from the 18 races and never finished lower than fifth.

“The Supercup is going to be a massive step up, but I’m over the moon to even be thinking about it,” said Crees, who will drive Ben Green’s car.

“This time last year I was just karting at Buckmore, and somehow managed to finish second in last year’s Henry

Surtees Trophy event. Things just snowballed from there.

“I’ve had a few laps around Blyton Park in the G55, and it’s very different. I have to get my head around racing with aero and no traction control or ABS.

“But Century seem like a great team and I’m a fast learner so I’m going in wanting to win the Am class.”



## F1600

# Brit Cowley wins Road to Indy slot

BRITON MATTHEW COWLEY SECURED an entry into the Mazda Road to Indy Shootout by winning the US F1600 Championship in New Jersey last weekend.

Cowley and his title rival Zach Holden clashed in the first race of the weekend, putting Holden out. Team Pelfrey driver Cowley fought back through the field to take a podium. The race winner, Yuven Sundaramoorthy, dedicated the victory to his cousin, who was injured in the

Las Vegas mass-shooting.

Cowley joins Jordan Cane on the list of Pelfrey-run Brits who have won the championship, which runs Honda engines and Hoosier tyres with a range of chassis.

“Me and my family can’t afford to do it [USF2000] off our own bat,” he said. “It makes it a lot easier to get the majority of the money and it’s a real opportunity. It’s another big step on the way to becoming a professional racing driver.”





HAWKINS

Jordan will race a pickup truck at Brands Hatch

## PICKUP TRUCKS

## BTCC star Jordan to Pickups

BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP RACER Andrew Jordan will take part in the final round of the Pickup Truck Championship in early November.

The WSR BMW 125i M Sport regular will swap his BTCC machine for a Matt Roach Racing-run truck at the Brands Hatch Indy Circuit meeting on November 4-5. His truck will carry the Pirtek livery that he uses in the BTCC.

Jordan, 28, who claimed the BTCC title in 2013, said he was looking forward to the challenge: "It will be something totally different for me. The action looks great in the series. I know Matt [Roach] from when I raced in Junior rallycross in the UK and this has been a long-standing offer.

"I'm probably not going to get much track time beforehand, and there will be people going for a title, so I'm not sure what to expect, but I'll have to be careful," added Jordan, who finished ninth in the

BTCC this year with three race wins.

The Fireworks meeting at Brands Hatch also features Legends, and the final rounds of the British Truck Racing Championship. BTCC racer Rob Austin made his Legends debut at the same meeting last year.

- BTCC racer Will Burns will make his competition return in the GT Cup this weekend at Snetterton after missing the Brands Hatch BTCC finale through injury.

Burns sustained three fractured ribs and bruising to a lung when his Team Hard Volkswagen CC was collected by Rob Collard's spinning BMW at Silverstone, but the 27-year-old has recovered sufficiently to join LMP3 Cup regular Mike Newbould in an HHC Motorsport Ginetta G55 GT4. It represents Burns's first outing with HHC since 2015, when he finished fifth in the GT4 Supercup, and his first in Pro-Am GT racing.

## FORMULA ACADEMY

## NEW SERIES FOR YOUNG DRIVERS, ENGINEERS

THE FIRST RACES OF A NEW single-seater series that aims to bridge the gap between karting and Formula 4 will take place at Pembrey this weekend.

Formula Academy will feature cars that used to compete in the defunct Formula Renault BARC category, many of which will be engineered by students studying motorsport-related courses.

The series intends to be a learning ground for both drivers and engineers.

A small entry is expected for the first two races, although series organiser Tony Lelliott expects numbers to rise when the category is properly launched next year.

"We have identified that there is a big gap for young drivers who haven't got a large budget," he said.

"For people out of karting the first step is to get into F4, which is £130,000-250,000, so we are trying to create an intermediate step to get some experience and prepare them better for the journey they have got.

"The other side is motorsport engineering courses and colleges – we want to give them a chance to work in a proper race environment.

"For 2018 we want to run a mini-series around the exam periods."

## HISTORICS

## Driver, 75, foils bid to steal rare Alfa

VETERAN HISTORIC RACER Chris Mann foiled the attempted theft of his unique Alfa Romeo 6C 'Disco Volante' on Friday night before racing it at Castle Combe on Saturday.

The stunning 1950s sports car was chained to its trailer, alarmed and boxed in by other cars outside his house, when the attempted

theft took place. The thief unstrapped it and hot-wired the ignition and tried to get it off the trailer. But rugby player Mann, 75, heard the noise and jumped out of bed.

He hauled the villain out of the car but was unable to stop him running away. After a quick check-over, the car was ready for two races at Castle Combe.

- Event sponsor Julian Bronson demonstrated his front-engined Scarab Grand Prix car at the Castle Combe Autumn Classic ahead of late-season HGPCA races at Estoril and Algarve. Plans for the other rare Scarab of Eddie McGuire to also run were scuppered when the car suffered differential problems at Spa recently.



LAWRENCE

Mann aboard his Alfa Romeo Disco Volante





# Castle Combe classic gets bigger and bigger

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

[@autosport](#)

**SATURDAY MORNING'S MISERABLE WEATHER FAILED** to dampen the enthusiasm of Castle Combe Autumn Classic goers, who turned out in their thousands to be part of the venue's sixth annual historic-themed event. Circumstances prevented me touring the marque club displays, but those who did inform me that there were hundreds of collectors' cars in the dedicated parking areas, including many rarities.

Once again a mouthwatering selection of racing cars spanning the 1950s to the '70s filled a large paddock marquee. Three demonstration sessions showcased the 'runners'. Matthew Wurr (driving Mark Longmore's Sid Taylor Racing McLaren M10B) evoked memories of Peter Gethin's Formula 5000 win at Combe in '70. The unique Racing Team VdS Chevron B37 and a Lola T330/332 illustrated the stock-block category's rapid evolution, with Neil Glover and outright pre-chicane lap-record holder Nigel Greensall up respectively.

Among the sports-prototypes, Mark Hales exercised Nick Mason's Ferrari 512S and former Combe GT ace Tony Sinclair drove Grant Reid's ex-John Surtees Lola T70 Spyder. Long-time event sponsor Julian Bronson of Bristol Forklifts ran his Scarab GP car alongside a period Cooper. Andrew Wareing's BRM P261 moved F1's story into the 1960s, while Mark Martin brought his ex-James Hunt Hesketh 308C from '75 and the ex-Quique Mansilla RT3 in which Ayrton Senna won on his F3 debut at Thruxton, 40 miles away, on November 13 1982.

The GT & Sports Car Cup race – new on the card this year – lived up to its billing with a field long on quality and quantity. The GT battle between the AC Cobras of local man Mark Williams (whose father Ted raced an ex-Superspeed

Ford Anglia at Combe in the early 1960s) and Chris Wilson was spectacular. Second overall was a fantastic result for Ben Adams, third time out in the Lola Mk1 that Dickie Le Strange Metcalfe raced there in the '60s.

Entries were up in some regular races, notably the Vintage Sports-Car Club's Owner-Driver-Mechanic showcase for standard and modified pre-war cars. That one of Archie Frazer Nash's Super Sports cars won for the fourth time (Patrick Blakeney-Edwards equalled team-mate Fred Wakeman's second success) was entirely appropriate since the marque's parent company AFN Ltd owned the circuit in the 1960s.

Thanks to sponsorship, the organisers were able to present a case of champagne to each pole qualifier this year, a touch appreciated by successful competitors. John Chisholm related that the bubbly was enjoyed by his fellow 500cc F3 racers – a smaller turnout this year following a drama-beset Angouleme meeting – post-race, although the exertion of his Arnott-JAP's achievement resulted in a holed piston while trying to stay with the more powerful Nortons in a dry race.

More surprises were in store. Having first spectated there in 1967, and eagerly returned as marshal, journalist, competitor and commentator, I was gobsmacked to be presented with a tankard commemorating '50 years of loyalty to Castle Combe' by circuit matriarch Pat Strawford before racing commenced. I'd not stood on the top step of the podium there before – second in a Jade Trackstar in 2007 was my best finish – so my thanks to Pat, CCRC chairman Ken Davies and the circuit team for a much appreciated gesture. I can't make Saturday's championship finals but look forward to returning in 2018. 🍷



## STARIDE ONE-TWO IN COMBE F3 RACE

Darrell Woods and Xavier Kingsland made history at Castle Combe on Saturday, driving Norton-powered Staride cars to an unprecedented one-two finish in the Bristol Aeroplane Company Motor Sports Club 500cc Formula 3 race. The achievement was made all the more special by the presence of first-time visitor Jon Erskine, whose father, Wiltshire-born motorcycle speedway ace-turned-frame builder Mike, made around 10 Starides in Southampton. The first was run by John Habin in 1952.



## WILLIAMS SECOND ON E-TYPE DEBUT

Welsh Jaguar Mk1 ace Grant Williams (right), a multiple Goodwood winner in the ex-John Coombs/Roy Salvadori BUY 1 that father Tony raced as a Special Saloon in the '70s, finished second on his E-type debut in Saturday's Castle Combe Autumn Classic marque race. The Newport tyre dealer, who drove compatriot Andrew Davies's 1961 FHC for the first time in wet qualifying, led before clutch issues intervened, enabling Harry Wyndham (left) to blast past.

ALL PICS: READ



**CASTLE COMBE**  
 AUTUMN CLASSIC OCTOBER 7

# Walker is Miles faster in Autumn Classic

PHILIP WALKER AND MILES GRIFFITHS were the big winners as the GT & Sports Car Cup made a sensational event debut before a knowledgeable and appreciative audience at last Saturday's sixth Castle Combe Autumn Classic.

On his first outing at Combe, Walker waged war from the start in his two-litre Lotus 15, trading the lead with Ben Adams (Lola Mk1) and Mark Williams (AC Cobra) as battles raged throughout the superlative 39-car field. A mandatory one-minute single-driver pit hold disadvantaged Adams and ignition problems hindered Williams in the final reckoning.

"It's great racing with Philip," said Griffiths, who had qualified second in the grizzly wet conditions that blighted the morning. "He did the hard work. My job was to keep it running, not make mistakes and bring it home. The car ran faultlessly."

As pole-starter Chris Milner kept his Jaguar E-type in contention for Nigel Greensall to beat a strong Healey posse for GT3 honours, Williams and Chris Wilson topped the GT set in their Cobras. Williams clipped a car while leading overall, resuming fourth (sans headlight) behind Wilson, but thereafter his V8's ignition timing slipped, blunting its power. When the unrelated Nigel Williams took Wilson's car over, Mark regained third as his rival slowed. TVR Granturas topped GT2, Rick Bourne/Malcolm Paul beating Joe Ward/Hugh Colman by 25 seconds.

Having "thrown some resource" at making his Frazer Nash Super Sports quicker, to counter an ever greater threat from Eddie Williams in Charles Gillett's example, Patrick Blakeney-Edwards repeated last year's Vintage victory over a record field on a drying track. Tim Kneller (Riley) and tricyclist Sue Darbyshire (Morgan) were promoted to third and fourth after Mark Gillies



Walker and Griffiths in open Lotus (right) were top dogs in GT & Sports Car Cup

(Aston Martin) was penalised for gaining two places before the green flag after a safety car interlude, called when Trevor Swete's Invicta struck the Camp tyre wall on lap one.

"Well, that's a first, but the Nortons will come flying past if it's dry this afternoon," grinned John Chisholm, who slithered his oft-recalcitrant Arnott-JAP to 500cc F3 pole – by 3.609s – in horrid rain. It was, and they did, Darrell Woods and Xavier Kingsland jostling through to record a tremendous one-two for Staride cars. That Jon Erskine, son of constructor Mike, witnessed the marque's finest historic hour made the result extra special. Stuart Wright's JAP-engined Cooper Mk11 took third while Chisholm's Arnott expired, having run sixth.

The Norman Dewis Trophy Jaguar race also started from a topsy-turvy grid, with 2016 winner Kevin Zwolinski's XK140 on pole, hemmed-in by saloons, with Grant Williams fifth on his E-type debut. Williams made a demon start to lead by Folly, but Harry Wyndham hustled his trusty FHC through from ninth to second in two laps, then clawed past the clutchless Williams to win. Chris Milner snared fastest lap in beating

Tilley (right) beat poleman de la Roche in Junior scrap



Jamie Boot to third. Richard Butterfield shaded Pete Dorlin among the saloons, with Jim Dean best of the XK brigade.

The Jon Gross Trophy Aston Martin race again fell to Steve Boulton Brooks and his wonderful Kangaroo Stable DB3S, presaging a third successive Autumn Classic double. What Boulton Brooks wasn't expecting, however, was a gritty performance by Martyn Corfield, whose pace in a rare Mk2 Frazer Nash Le Mans Rep kept him focused. Chris Woodgate upheld family honour – father Rex is a legendary figure in AM circles – bringing his lofty DB MkIII left-hooker home third, ahead of Mort Morris-Goodall Cup pre-war winner Mark Gillies.

The FiSCar finale was a belter, Boulton Brooks having to fight race-long to repel the Lotus Elites of Richard Fores – starting Barry Dye's example – then Robin Ellis. Fores impudently dived ahead for three laps, but their challenge faded after the stops. Ellis took up the cudgels thereafter, with Nick Matthews finishing a fine third in his pretty Austin-Healey 100/4. Marc Gordon (Elite) was charging until two spins dropped him behind the well-matched Frazer Nashes of Corfield and Martin Hunt.

Edged for Formula Junior pole by rainmeister Peter de la Roche, tenacious teenager Benn Tilley used the Ford power and disc brakes of Paul Smeeth's Lotus 22 to trump the Californian-built BMC Mk2 – with British BMC A-Series engine and drums – either side of a full-course caution after Ralf Emmerling pranged his Gemini at Quarry. Westie Mitchell (de Tomaso) and Mark Woodhouse (Lotus 20/22) spun trying to get on terms, leaving Richard Smeeton (Wainer) and front-engined ace Stuart Roach (Alexis) to chase the youngsters.

MARCUS PYE



## RESULTS

### GT & SPORTS CAR CUP (45 LAPS)

**1 Philip Walker/Miles Griffiths (Lotus 15);**

2 Ben Adams (Lola Mk1 BR-33) +53.337s;

3 Mark Williams (AC Cobra); 4 Chris Milner/

Nigel Greensall (Jaguar E-type); 5 Martin

Hunt/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (E-type);

6 Chris Wilson/Nigel Williams (Cobra).

**Class winners** Adams; Williams; Milner/Greensall; Rick Bourne/Malcolm Paul (TVR Grantura MkIII); Marc Gordon/Nick Finburgh (Lotus Elite). **Fastest lap** Griffiths 1m17.941s (85.44mph). **Pole** Milner/Greensall.

**Starters** 39.

### VSCC PRE-WAR SPORTSCARS (11 LAPS)

**1 Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash**

**Super Sports);** 2 Eddie Williams (Super Sports)

+5.365s; 3 Tim Kneller (Riley TT Sprite); 4 Sue

Darbyshire (Morgan Super Aero); 5 Mark Gillies

(Aston Martin Monoposto Speed Model);

6 Theodore Hunt (Frazer Nash TT Replica).

**CW** Gillies; David Lewis (Alvis Firebird Speed 25); Richard Bradley (Aston Martin Ulster).

**FL** Blakeney-Edwards 1m33.542s (71.19mph).

**P** Blakeney-Edwards. **S** 27.

### 500cc F3 (10 LAPS) 1 Darrell Woods

**(Staride-Norton Mk3);** 2 Xavier Kingsland

(Mk3) +9.755s; 3 Stuart Wright (Cooper-JAP

Mk11); 4 Roy Hunt (Martin-Norton Special);

5 Nigel Challis (Cooper-Norton Mk8); 6 Roy

Wright (Cooper Flash Special-Norton).

**CW** Kingsland; Duncan Rabagliati (Comet-JAP Mk1). **FL** Woods 1m31.331s (72.92mph).

**P** John Chisholm (Arnott-JAP). **S** 11.

### NORMAN DEWIS TROPHY: PRE-1966

**JAGUARS (18 LAPS) 1 Harry Wyndham**

**(E-type FHC);** 2 Grant Williams (E-type

FHC) +0.200s; 3 Chris Milner (E-type);

4 Jamie Boot (E-type); 5 Richard

Butterfield (Mk2); 6 Peter Dorlin (Mk2).

**CW** Milner; Butterfield; Jim Dean (XK120).

**FL** Milner 1m21.038s (82.18mph).

**P** Kevin Zwolinski (XK140 FHC). **S** 22.

### JON GROSS MEMORIAL TROPHY: HISTORIC

**ASTON MARTINS & INVITED SPORTSCARS**

**(14 LAPS) 1 Steve Boulton Brooks**

**(AM DB3S);** 2 Martyn Corfield (Frazer Nash

Le Mans Replica Mk2) +5.048s; 3 Chris

Woodgate (AM DB MkIII); 4 Mark Gillies

(AM Monoposto Speed Model); 5 Peter

Dubsky (AM 15/98 2-seater); 6 Simon

Jefferies (AM DB MkIII). **CW** Gillies; Corfield.

**FL** Boulton Brooks 1m26.716s (76.80mph).

**P** Boulton Brooks. **S** 16.

### SPENCER LANE-JONES TROPHY: FISCAR

**(21 LAPS) 1 Steve Boulton Brooks (Aston**

**Martin DB3S/104);** 2 Robin Ellis (Lotus Elite)

+3.165s; 3 Nick Matthews (Austin-Healey

100/4); 4 Martyn Corfield (Frazer Nash Le

Mans Replica Mk2); 5 Martin Hunt/Patrick

Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash Le Mans

Replica); 6 Richard Fores/Barry Dye (Elite).

**FL** Fores 1m23.409s (79.84mph).

**P** Boulton Brooks. **S** 28.

### FORMULA JUNIOR (13 LAPS) 1 Benn Tilley

**(Lotus 22);** 2 Peter de la Roche (BMC Mk2)

+3.751s; 3 Richard Smeeton (Wainer 63);

4 Stuart Roach (Alexis Mk2); 5 Jim Blockley

(Caravelle Mk2); 6 Andrew Wilkinson

(Lynx T3). **CW** de la Roche; Roach; Andrew

Taylor (Cooper T56). **FL** Tilley 1m15.760s

(87.90mph). **P** de la Roche. **S** 28.

Bates overcame Lilley/  
Tucker Sierra for  
Future Classics win



## Porsche power prevails in pouring rain

TIM BATES IMPROVED ON HIS SECOND-place double at Donington with his first Future Classics victory of the season at Oulton Park.

From third on the grid, his Porsche 911 transmitted its power to the wet track more effectively than the cars around it to give Bates a big lead by Cascades. Brian Lilley, however, set a string of fastest laps in his Ford Sierra Cosworth and took the lead on lap five. Bates and Mark Chilton (Porsche 928) pitted from second and third on lap seven, with Chilton getting the jump in the stops. When Lilley lost time handing over to Aaron Tucker, the Porsches were left in the top two positions.

Although Bates overshot Hislops chicane on lap 12, he took the lead on the run to the same corner a lap later as the leaders encountered a slower car. Bates eventually finished comfortably clear of Chilton, who won the 1980s division, with Tucker more than 30s back.

The Swinging Sixties contest was slashed to 20 minutes after a race-stopping first-corner shunt. Solo driver Mark Campbell won the restarted race from the front row in his Triumph TR5, despite making two stops rather than the mandatory one. "The first time I got told that my penalty [for wins at earlier events] didn't apply, but I hadn't done my actual 'driver change', so I needed to come back in," he explained. The Ford Mustang of Martin

Sledmore had charged into the lead at Hill Top, three laps before early leader Malcolm Johnson retired his smoky Lotus Europa. Campbell retook the lead on the same lap, while Sledmore's grunt fended off Ian Everett's nimble BMW 1502.

The safety car made two appearances during the combined New Millennium and Modern Classics race, the second time to allow treatment to a marshal who had been taken ill, but the rules for pitstops under caution rendered it a disappointing sporting contest. A BMW M3 pair was worst affected: Dominic Malone led before the driver change, but the pit lap took almost nine minutes as Arran Moulton-Smith waited for the pit exit lights to turn green, although the track was empty. He rejoined 22nd, climbing back to 13th. Piers Reid had pitted earlier and, although he was penalised for a faulty stop, he ran out a comfortable winner in his E46 M3 from Mark Smith's E36.

Nic Grindrod was a convincing victor in Magnificent Sevens in his Caterham R300, immediately pulling clear of a three-way battle for second. Gary Bate (CSR) took the position from Tim Davis (C400) at Cascades early on, but the places were reversed after the stops and Jonathan Mitchell (CSR) eventually lost touch. Davis won the programme-closing Open race, which was flagged early in dark conditions.

Tin Tops poleman Lee Williams was swamped on the run to the first corner, spun at Old Hall a lap later and eventually retired his Honda Civic. Tom Mensley had a much more successful race in the wet, winning by more than a minute in his Renault Clio 172 — rendering the success penalties of the three cars ahead of him on the grid irrelevant. The Peugeot 206 of Colin and Steve Simpson and the Ford Fiesta ST of Paul Mensley were the only other cars on the lead lap at the end.

IAN SOWMAN



➔ P72 FULL RESULTS





**SILVERSTONE**  
BARC OCTOBER 7-8

Palmer (2) passed  
Colburn on the final  
lap for race-two victory

# Palmer takes title and last-gasp win

GOING INTO THE FINAL CLIO CUP Series round of 2017, all Ben Palmer had to do was finish in the top six in both races to claim the title from season-long rival Anton Spires. Problems for the challenger ultimately made Palmer's job easier and he celebrated the crown by winning the second encounter.

His cause was assisted by a throttle issue that plagued Spires' qualifying session and relegated him to a mid-pack start for both races, while Palmer claimed a brace of poles.

He converted his first pole to second place in race one, beaten by a returning James Colburn, but that was enough to claim the title as Spires finished third despite a recurrence of his throttle problem. In the second race, Palmer got the better of Colburn on the last lap to finish the season with victory.

In the Road Class, Nic Harrison overcame his car going into 'limp home' mode in the opener to beat race-one winner Shanel Drewe to the class crown in race two, thanks to a hard-fought third-place finish behind Finlay Robinson and Sean Thomas.

Four class titles were decided in the Caterham Graduates Championship. In the Mega class, Declan Dolan won twice to beat Glenn Burternshaw, while outgoing Mega class champion Oliver Gibson continued his run of success



in the Sigmax category, his podium and fourth enough to wrap up the championship. Adrian Russell and Mark Johnson shared the victory spoils.

Two wins in the Super class for Toby Briant was enough to overturn a 39-point deficit to Barry White and secure the honours, while Graeme Smith took a second and a first to win the Classic title from race-one winner Robin Webb.

James Clarke lamented that he didn't manage to lead every single lap as he took a hat-trick of victories in the Clubmans Championship to end his title-winning season in style.

The biggest grids of the weekend were in the amalgamated Classic Touring Car Championship races, with more than 30 cars in each of the six events. In the

Johnson leads frantic  
Sigmax pack as Gibson  
(hidden) heads for title

combined Classic Thunder, BOSS, Classic VW and VTEC races, Dale Gent took a double victory in his Subaru Impreza, while Andrew Harrison did the same in his rapid Jaguar XJS in the Pre-'66 & Pre-'83 races. Craig Jamieson and David Griffin shared victories in the Pre-'93, Pre-'03, Pre-'05 and 4Two races.

In the Hyundai Coupe Cup, Alex Cursley took a pair of wins to finish the season with seven as Steven Kite – who came into the weekend with five wins – finished second in the opener before retiring with a clutch issue in the closer.

Kevin Denwood secured the only Kumho BMW class championship still to be decided as he claimed two CC Class wins, while James Card took both overall victories in his BMW M3 E46.

John Halliwell claimed the top Class C title in the MaX5 Championship with a win and a podium to beat John Loversidge, who came into the weekend tied on points with Halliwell.

In the two MG Owners Club Championship races, Alan Forster took a double victory in his MG ZR to round-off an exemplary season with the Class Z title. Simon Kendrick and David Amphlett took the crowns in Class F and A respectively.

JOE HUDSON

➔ P72 FULL RESULTS



# O'Hara holds on in Donnelly Trophy thriller

PRESSURE AFFECTS PEOPLE IN different ways. Some crumble under it, others thrive. Kevin O'Hara falls into the latter category and he proved that in no uncertain manner at Kirkistown, becoming the first three-time winner of the Martin Donnelly Trophy. In a titanic 21-lap FF1600 battle, he fought off a series of determined attacks all the way to the flag.

O'Hara clinched pole in an earlier qualifying race, with victory over James Roe. Noel Robinson and Jordan Dempsey lined up on the second row and, with both showing strong pace all day, nothing was certain heading into the final. O'Hara got the drop as they ran down to Colonial for the first time with the pack close behind, Robinson getting shuffled down the order by a fast-starting David McCullough.

Roe mounted the first attack, getting alongside O'Hara several times, but left the door open too long and allowed Dempsey to slip into second. Dempsey applied intense pressure to the leader, setting fastest lap in the process and even getting ahead briefly, before the cool O'Hara re-established himself at the front. Robinson and McCullough had their own battle for position, but soon joined the top trio, creating a five-car battle for the lead, until the latter's adventures caused him to fall back. Robinson then passed Roe and Dempsey, to become O'Hara's latest tormentor, drawing alongside several times but never quite managing to grab the lead.

At the flag O'Hara, Robinson, Dempsey



DEMPSEY

and Roe were covered by just 0.8 seconds. Ivor McCullough, in his first race for more than a year, took fifth ahead of Alan Davidson, whose Mondiale had earlier followed winner Roe home in the Northern Irish FF1600 finale.

If anything, Formula Vee produced an even more intense battle for the Emerson Fittipaldi Trophy. Race-one winner Ray Moore took the honours, despite the best efforts of a 10-car train, which changed every lap until the flag. Adam Macaulay took second ahead of Dan Polley, Anthony Cross and Gavin Buckley.

Even the normally placid Roadsports gang got in on the Kirkistown battles, with Jim Larkham and Mike Johnston enjoying plenty of side-by-side action. Johnston got ahead a few laps from the finish, only to spin at the Hairpin on the final tour and hand the win to Larkham.

Race two might have been quieter, with

O'Hara (13) staved off fierce pressure to win his third Martin Donnelly Trophy

Larkham going out in the early stages, but the fast-starting Paul Conn fought hard to keep Johnston honest.

James Turkington led the first Libre Saloon race all the way, only to be removed from the results due to a 'dead' transponder. Ulick Burke, driving a Honda Integra, inherited the victory. Turkington reappeared in his SEAT Leon for race two, but spun on the opening lap. He carved his way back towards the head of the field, but Burke held him off to win again.

Brendan Fitzgerald took the honours in both Ford Fiesta races, beating Paul Stewart in the first and Mark Stewart in the second. Dan Conlon and Eorann O'Neill filled the podium positions.

All three Legends encounters went to Paul O'Brien, despite the best efforts of Ian Conroy, Jonathan Taylor and several others to unseat him.

**RICHARD YOUNG**

## RESULTS

### MARTIN DONNELLY TROPHY

#### QUALIFIER (10 LAPS) 1 Kevin

O'Hara (Van Diemen RF01); 2 James

Roe (Van Diemen RF99) +0.259s;

3 Noel Robinson (Van Diemen

JL012K); 4 Jordan Dempsey (Van

Diemen RF00); 5 David McCullough

(RF01); 6 Ivor McCullough (RF01).

**Fastest lap** Robinson 1m01.193s

(88.95mph). **Pole** Roe. **Starters** 19.

#### FINAL (21 LAPS) 1 O'Hara;

2 Robinson +0.383s; 3 Dempsey;

4 Roe; 5 I McCullough; 6 Alan

Davidson (Mondiale M89S).

**FL** Dempsey 1m01.340s

(88.74mph). **P** O'Hara. **S** 18.

#### NORTHERN IRISH FF1600

(13 LAPS) 1 James Roe

(Van Diemen RF99); 2 Alan Davidson

(Mondiale M89S) +0.454s; 3 David

McCullough (Van Diemen RF01);

4 Ivor McCullough (RF01); 5 Ryan

Campbell (Reynard FF89); 6 Henry

Campbell (FF89). **Class winner**

Davidson. **FL** Roe 1m01.723s

(88.19mph). **P** Roe. **S** 17.

#### IRISH FORMULA VEE (11 LAPS)

1 Ray Moore (Leystone JH004);

2 Dan Polley (LOH Sheane) +0.253s;

3 Adam Macaulay (Sheane FV);

4 Anthony Cross (Sheane FV); 5 Ken

Brown (Sheane FV); 6 Stephen Morrin

(Leystone JH004). **FL** Gavin Buckley

(Sheane FV) 1m06.351s (82.03mph).

**P** Moore. **S** 15.

#### EMERSON FITTIPALDI TROPHY

(12 LAPS) 1 Moore; 2 Macaulay

+0.215s; 3 Polley; 4 Cross; 5 Buckley;

6 Jack Byrne (LOH Sheane).

**FL** Cross 1m06.732s (81.57mph).

**P** Moore. **S** 15.

#### ROADSPORTS (BOTH 13 LAPS)

1 Jim Larkham (Radical PR6);

2 Mike Johnston (Opel Tigra)

+14.706s; 3 Paul Conn (Crossle 47S);

4 John Benson (Crossle 37S);

5 Paul Thompson (Stryker Honda);

6 John McCandless (Crossle 47S).

**CW** Johnston; Thompson.

**FL** Larkham 59.686s (91.19mph).

**P** Larkham. **S** 9.

**RACE 2 1 Johnston;** 2 Conn +1.099s;

3 Thompson; 4 Maurice McClay

(Westfield SE1); 5 McCandless;

6 Wesley McCreary (Westfield

Honda). **CW** Conn; Thompson.

**FL** Conn 1m00.675s (89.71mph)

**P** Larkham. **S** 9.

#### LIBRE SALOON (BOTH 13 LAPS)

1 Ulick Burke (Honda Integra);

2 Stephen Potter (Integra) +0.448s;

3 Ciaran Denvir (Honda Civic);

4 Stephen Traub (Integra); 5 Donal

O'Neill (SEAT Cupra); 6 Francis Allen

(BMW 330i). **FL** Potter 1m02.335s

(87.32mph). **P** James Turkington

(SEAT Leon). **S** 12. **RACE 2 1 Burke;**

2 Turkington +0.912s; 3 Potter;

4 O'Neill; 5 Paul Sheridan (330i);

6 Aidan Byrne (Toyota Celica).

**FL** Turkington 1m01.469s

(88.55mph). **P** Turkington. **S** 12.

#### FORD FIESTA ZETEC (BOTH 11 LAPS)

1 Brendan Fitzgerald; 2 Paul Stewart

+0.606s; 3 Daniel Conlon; 4 Michael

Fitzgerald; 5 Eorann O'Neill; 6 Ricky

Hull. **FL** M Fitzgerald 1m17.369s

(70.35mph). **P** Conlon. **S** 14.

#### RACE 2 1 B Fitzgerald;

2 Mark Stewart +1.695s;

3 O'Neill; 4 Conlon; 5 P Stewart;

6 M Fitzgerald. **FL** Conlon 1m17.481s

(70.25mph). **P** Conlon. **S** 14.

#### LEGENDS (ALL 8 LAPS) 1 Paul

O'Brien; 2 Niki Meredith +1.264s;

3 Jonathan Taylor; 4 Ian Conroy;

5 Greg Richardson; 6 Richard

Kearney. **FL** Conroy 1m07.981s

(80.07mph). **P** O'Brien. **S** 9.

**RACE 2 1 O'Brien;** 2 Taylor +3.261s;

3 Kearney; 4 Conroy; 5 Geoff

Richardson; 6 Lawrence Davey.

**FL** Conroy 1m07.297s (80.88mph).

**P** O'Brien. **S** 10. **RACE 3 1 O'Brien;**

2 Conroy +1.066s; 3 Taylor; 4 Kearney;

5 Geoff Richardson; 6 Greg

Richardson. **FL** Conroy 1m07.195s

(81.00mph). **P** Gordon Brown. **S** 9.





**KNOCKHILL**  
SMRC OCTOBER 8

Geraghty won  
race two and the  
Scottish Mini title

## Geraghty's Cooper coronation

MARK GERAGHTY OVERCAME a 12-point deficit during a trio of action-packed races to clinch the Scottish Mini Cooper title in the season-finale at Knockhill. Geraghty, in his second year of car racing, took a win and a second before sealing the championship with 10th in race three.

"It's amazing," he said. "I never thought I'd be able to achieve this in my first year in the series!"

Five drivers arrived at the Fife circuit with a mathematical chance of taking the title. At the start of the opening race one of them, Ian Munro, forcefully seized the advantage into Duffus, as poleman Robbie Dalgleish and long-time points leader Morgan Murray collided. Dalgleish was able to continue out of the Leslie's gravel trap, but Murray's race was run owing to a broken driveshaft.

Second for Geraghty moved the Perth driver into the points lead, which he subsequently extended with victory over Dalgleish in an enthralling race two. The 19-car field embraced panel-rubbing with such alacrity that three-abreast battles into Duffus and the Hairpin were the norm during the nine-lap encounter, with Geraghty beating Dalgleish and Dylan O'Donnell by 0.5s at the flag.

Murray started on pole for the reversed-grid third race by dint of recovering to eighth in race two. He duly took his seventh win of the season, but it wasn't enough to usurp Geraghty, whose top 10 finish meant the title was his by six points.

Lee Elrick claimed the Scottish BMW Championship after a pair of nail-biting races won by interloper Ally Smith. Elrick was fourth behind chief rival Gary Clark in race one and knew a repeat result in the second would be enough to secure the title. His cause was helped massively by David

McNaughton, himself an outside bet for the championship. In an attempt to wrestle second from Clark into Duffus, McNaughton tapped the reigning champion into a spin at Leslie's, dropping him to last and allowing Elrick, who finished third, to take the title.

Disqualification from the opening Scottish Legends race due to an underweight car delayed John Paterson's title celebrations, but the defending champion didn't have to wait long to be crowned for the fourth successive year. 'Wee Pat' took race two victory from pole, before surging ahead of the field in the final race, winning by a staggering 12s in just eight racing laps. Race one victor Ivor Greenwood crashed out in scary circumstances after a collision with Colin McNeil launched him into a sickening barrel roll exiting the Hairpin.

Ross Martin ended the Scottish Formula Ford 1600 season how he started it back in April, claiming two lights-to-flag victories. Jordan Gronkowski stroked his Van Diemen to a brace of second places, with Seb Melrose completing both podiums and consolidating runner-up position in the championship.

Fresh from securing the Scottish Classic title last month, Alastair Baptie gave his new MGB GT V8 car a winning debut with a comfortable race two victory. Baptie's guest-entry car headed race one winner Tommy Gilmartin (Morgan Plus 8) to the flag by 3.1s.

Ron Cumming (Nemesis Kit Car) and Kenneth McKell (Mitsubishi Evo 8) split the Scottish Saloons and Sportscars Championship wins.

Honours in the Scottish Ford Fiesta races were shared by Steven Gray and Barry Farquharson.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

➔ P73 FULL RESULTS

# RESULTS

## OULTON PARK

CSCC

### FUTURE CLASSICS (18 LAPS)

**1 Tim Bates (Porsche 911SC);**

2 Mark Chilton (Porsche 928)

+7.895s; 3 Brian Lilley/Aaron Tucker

(Ford Sierra Cosworth); 4 Aston

Blake/Joshua Waddington (Porsche

944); 5 Paul Dingle (944); 6 Tony

Maryon (944). **Class winners**

Chilton; Blake/Waddington;

Sam Smith (Mazda MX-5); John

Hammersley/Adam Brown (Vauxhall

Astra); Martyn Adams (Triumph

TR7); Mark Luccock (Ford Escort

Mk1); Matthew Molineaux/Stephen

Gilbey (Porsche 944). **Fastest lap**

Dingle 2m12.537s (73.12mph).

**Pole** Chilton. **Starters** 27.

### SWINGING SIXTIES (9 LAPS)

**1 Mark Campbell (Triumph TR5);**

2 Martin Sledmore (Ford Mustang)

+8.715s; 3 Ian Everett (BMW 1502);

4 Phil Otley (Reliant Scimitar);

5 Andy Southcott (Lenham GT);

6 Mel Taylor (Lotus Elan).

**CW** Sledmore; Everett; Southcott;

Taylor; Steve Chapman (Triumph

TR4); Michael Wade/Steve Kirtton

(Ford Anglia). **FL** Campbell

2m00.872s (80.17mph). **P** Malcolm

Johnson (Lotus Europa). **S** 35.

### NEW MILLENNIUM/MODERN CLASSICS (17 LAPS)

**1 Piers Reid (BMW M3 E46);**

2 Mark Smith

(BMW M3 E36) +27.439s; 3 Matthew

Evans (M3 E46); 4 Lee Frost

(M3 E36); 5 Lucky Khera (M3 E46);

6 Edward Leigh (M3 E36).

**CW** Leigh; Paul Livesey (Porsche

968); Kevin Bird (Aston Martin V8

Vantage); Robert Williams (Honda

Integra); David Beatty (Ginetta

G50); Tina Cooper/David Sharp

(Lotus Elise); Dale Albutt (Mini

Cooper S); Howard Hunt/Jon

Warburton (MG ZS); Tom Barley

(BMW 325i); Chris Etheridge/

Andrew Etheridge (SEAT Leon).

**FL** Reid 1m50.598s (87.62mph).

**P** Evans. **S** 36.

### MAGNIFICENT SEVENS (17 LAPS)

**1 Nic Grindrod (Caterham R300);**

2 Tim Davis (Caterham C400)

+13.731s; 3 Gary Bate (Caterham

CSR); 4 Jonathan Mitchell (CSR);

5 Simon Smith (CSR); 6 Mike Aikens

(CSR). **CW** Davis; Stephen Riley (MK

Indy); Matthew Gibbon (Caterham

Tracksport); Pete Basterfield

(Caterham Supersport); Peter

French (Caterham Superlight).

**FL** Grindrod 1m57.313s (82.61mph).

**P** Stephen Nuttall/Darren Burke

(Caterham Supersport). **S** 19.

### OPEN SERIES (10 LAPS)

**1 Tim Davis (Caterham C400);**

2 Jonathan Mitchell (Caterham

CSR) +4.196s; 3 Colin Watson

(C400); 4 Ryan Edmonds (Ariel

Atom); 5 Lee Frost (BMW M3);

6 Lucky Khera (M3). **CW** Mitchell;

Edmonds; Frost; Pat McBenett

(Lotus Elise); Ian Haire/Andrew

Greenwood (Caterham Supersport);

Michael Oakes/Paul Turner (Honda

Civic). **FL** Rich Webb (MK Indy)

2m01.568s (79.71mph).

**P** Watson. **S** 27.

### TIN TOPS (18 LAPS)

**1 Tom Mensley**

**(Renault Clio 172);** 2 Colin Simpson/

Steven Simpson (Peugeot 206)

+1m07.229s; 3 Paul Mensley

(Ford Fiesta ST); 4 Tim Evans

(Honda Civic); 5 Vic Hope/Billy

Hardy (Civic); 6 Andrew Windmill

(Civic). **CW** Simpson/Simpson;

P Mensley; Evans; Mark Alexander-

Williams (Citroen Saxo); Wayne

Rushworth (Ford Puma); Lisa Selby/

Toby Harris (Puma). **FL** T Mensley

2m10.680s (74.16mph). **P** Lee

Williams (Civic). **S** 27.

## SILVERSTONE

BARC

### CLIO CUP SERIES (BOTH 14 LAPS)

**1 James Colburn;** 2 Ben Palmer

+0.251s; 3 Anton Spire; 4 Ben

Colburn; 5 Simon Freeman; 6 John

Hamilton. **CW** Shanel Drewe.

**FL** Palmer 1m15.282s (88.51mph).

**P** Palmer. **S** 17. **RACE 2** **1 Palmer;**

2 Colburn +0.131s; 3 Spire; 4 Tyler

Lidsey; 5 Hamilton; 6 Freeman.

**CW** Finlay Robinson. **FL** Colburn

1m15.263s (88.53mph).

**P** Palmer. **S** 17.



Davis slithered  
through Cascades  
to Open Series win

JONES



# ROUND-UP

## CATERHAM GRADUATES CLASSIC, SUPER, MEGA, SIGMA (BOTH 17 LAPS)

**1 Declan Dolan (Mega);** 2 Glenn Burtenshaw (Mega) +0.326s; 3 Roger Ford (Mega); 4 Toby Briant (Super); 5 Andy Molsom (Super); 6 Barry White (Super). **CW** Briant; David Morris (Sigma); Robin Webb (Classic). **FL** Dolan 1m17.120s (86.40mph). **P** Burtenshaw. **S** 33.

**RACE 2 1 Dolan;** 2 Simon Longman (Mega) +0.484s; 3 Burtenshaw; 4 Briant; 5 Molsom; 6 Christopher Benfield (Mega). **CW** Briant; Morris; Graeme Smith (Classic). **FL** Benfield 1m16.757s (86.80mph). **P** Burtenshaw. **S** 31.

## CATERHAM GRADUATES SIGMAX (BOTH 17 LAPS)

**1 Adrian Russell;** 2 Mark Johnson +0.393s; 3 Oliver Gibson; 4 Tom Hayman-Joyce; 5 Jason Gale; 6 Jonathan Curry (310R). **FL** Gareth Cordey 1m16.136s (87.51mph). **P** Johnson. **S** 21.

**RACE 2 1 Johnson;** 2 James Russell +0.009s; 3 Harry Cramer; 4 Gibson; 5 Jamie Ellwood; 6 Samuel Wilson. **FL** Gibson 1m15.798s (87.90mph). **P** Johnson. **S** 20.

## CLUBMANS CHAMPIONSHIP (ALL 15 LAPS)

**1 James Clarke (Mallock Mk27);** 2 Steve Dickens (Mallock Mk29) +33.476s; 3 Peter Richings (Mallock Mk30 PR); 4 Mike Evans (Mk27); 5 Alex Champkin (Phantom P94); 6 Alze Fulco (Mallock 24B). **CW** Evans; Champkin; Clive Wood (Mallock Mk20B). **FL** Clarke 1m06.866s (99.65mph). **P** Clarke. **S** 21. **RACE 2 1 Clarke;** 2 Richings +31.552s; 3 Adrian Lester (Mallock Mk35); 4 Champkin; 5 Evans; 6 Fulco. **CW** Champkin; Evans; Wood. **FL** Clarke 1m05.182s (102.22mph). **P** Clarke. **S** 20.

**RACE 3 1 Clarke;** 2 Dickens +47.901s; 3 Richings; 4 Champkin; 5 Kevin Burnham (Mallock Mk31); 6 Steve Everson (Mallock Mk21). **CW** Champkin; Everson; Wood. **FL** Clarke 1m05.830s (101.21mph). **P** Clarke. **S** 20.

## CTCRC CLASSIC THUNDER, BOSS,

## CLASSIC VW & VTEC (BOTH 13 LAPS)

**1 Dale Gent (Subaru Impreza);** 2 Dave Cockell (Ford Escort Cosworth) +15.614s; 3 Garrie Whittaker (BMW E36); 4 Steve Scott (Ford Sierra Cosworth); 5 Steve Putt (Mazda RX-7); 6 James Mumbray (BMW M3). **CW** Whittaker; Dan Roberts-Jefferson (VW Mk4 Golf); William Casswell (Honda Civic); Ken Lark (VW Corrado); Richard Askham (Jaguar XJR); Alexander Tait (Ford Fiesta); Andrew Mizzi (Civic); Chris Brown (Fiesta XR2). **FL** Gent 1m10.076s (95.08mph). **P** Gent. **S** 42. **RACE 2 1 Gent;** 2 Cockell +6.742s; 3 Putt; 4 Mike Hibbert (E36); 5 Andrew Wilson (Holden Monaro); 6 Martin Davies (Sierra). **CW** Putt; Roberts-Jefferson; Lark; Chris Sparks (Civic); Askham; Tait; Mizzi; Brown. **FL** Gent 1m10.203s (94.91mph). **P** Gent. **S** 39.

## CTCRC PRE-'66 & PRE-'83 (BOTH 12 LAPS)

**1 Andrew Harrison (Jaguar XJS);** 2 Mark Osborne (Triumph Dolomite Sprint) +5.243s; 3 Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1); 4 Jim McLoughlin (Ford Capri); 5 Stephen Cripps (Ford Escort Mk2); 6 Mark Cholerton (Escort). **CW** Osborne; McLoughlin; Malcolm Jeffs (Alfa Romeo Alfesud); David Hall (Ford Lotus Cortina); Tim Dodwell (Volkswagen Scirocco). **FL** Harrison 1m19.094s (84.24mph). **P** Harrison. **S** 37. **RACE 2 1 Harrison;** 2 Primett +4.269s; 3 Osborne; 4 McLoughlin; 5 Cholerton; 6 Cripps. **CW** Primett; McLoughlin; Jeffs; Hall; Tom Abbott (Skoda 110R). **FL** Harrison 1m19.021s (84.32mph). **P** Harrison. **S** 31.

## CTCRC PRE-'93, PRE-'03, PRE-'05 & 4TWO (BOTH 12 LAPS)

**1 David Griffin (BMW E36 M3);** 2 Craig Jamieson (Ford Sierra Cosworth) +2.726s; 3 Karl Cattliff (M3); 4 Simon Ward (Vauxhall Astra GTE); 5 Luke Allen (Honda Civic Type R); 6 James Tracey (Honda Civic EG). **CW** Cattliff; Ward; Alistair Lindsay (VW Golf); Steve Barber (Renault Clio 182); Andrew Smith (Civic).

**FL** Ray West (M3) 1m15.166 (88.64mph). **P** Griffin. **S** 42.

**RACE 2 1 Jamieson;** 2 Griffin +2.785s; 3 Ray West; 4 Alexander Owen (Civic); 5 Cattliff; 6 Ward. **CW** West; Ward; Lindsay; Barber; Smith. **FL** Jamieson 1m14.877s (88.98mph). **P** Griffin. **S** 42.

## HYUNDAI COUPES (BOTH 11 LAPS)

**1 Alex Cursley;** 2 Steve Kite +0.244s; 3 Wayne Rockett; 4 William Taylforth; 5 Kevin Middleton; 6 Jon Winter. **FL** Cursley 1m23.466s (79.83mph). **P** Rockett. **S** 18.

**RACE 2 1 Cursley;** 2 Taylforth +1.708s; 3 Rockett; 4 Winter; 5 Simon Miles; 6 Eddie O'Kane.

**FL** Cursley 1m23.807s (79.50mph). **P** Cursley. **S** 18.

## KUMHO BMW (BOTH 17 LAPS)

**1 James Card (M3 E46);** 2 Ian Crisp (1M E82) +7.334s; 3 Lee Frost (E90 V8 WTC); 4 Lucky Khara (M3 E46); 5 David Griffin (E36 M3); 6 Kevin Denwood (E46 Compact). **CW** Crisp; Griffin; Denwood; Peter Miller (M3).

**FL** James Macintyre-Ure (M3 E46) 1m11.523s (93.16mph). **P** Card. **S** 20. **RACE 2 1 Card;** 2 Crisp +8.175s; 3 Frost; 4 Khara; 5 Macintyre-Ure; 6 Ben McClelland (E36 M3).

**CW** Crisp; McLelland; Denwood.

**FL** Macintyre-Ure 1m11.857s (92.72mph). **P** Card. **S** 18.

## MAXS (BOTH 12 LAPS)

**1 Jon Halliwell;** 2 Paul Roddison +4.289s; 3 Ian Loversidge; 4 Jeremy Shipley; 5 Andrew Pretorius; 6 Lee Hollin. **CW** Pretorius; Daniel Grist. **FL** Halliwell 1m20.217s (83.06mph). **P** Roddison. **S** 20.

**RACE 2 1 Roddison;** 2 Halliwell +0.374s; 3 Loversidge; 4 Shipley; 5 Matthew Tidmarsh; 6 Pretorius. **CW** Tidmarsh; Michael Kirk. **FL** Roddison 1m19.555s (83.75mph). **P** Halliwell. **S** 20.

## MG OWNERS CLUB (BOTH 15 LAPS)

**1 Alan Forster (ZR);** 2 Martin Wills (F) +5.342s; 3 Michael Weidner (ZR); 4 Phil Walker (ZR); 5 Mark Baker (F); 6 Darryl Davis (ZR). **CW** Wills; Jim Baynam (B). **FL** Forster 1m22.291s (80.97mph). **P** Weidner. **S** 21.



Greenwood was a Scottish Legends winner

**RACE 2 1 Forster;** 2 Simon Kendrick (F) +10.232s; 3 Wills; 4 Weidner; 5 Stuart Plotnek (F); 6 Davis. **CW** Kendrick; Baynam. **FL** Forster 1m21.895s (81.36mph). **P** Weidner. **S** 21.

## KNOCKHILL

SMRC

## MINI COOPERS (11 LAPS)

**1 Ian Munro;** 2 Mark Geraghty +1.081s; 3 Dylan O'Donnell; 4 Hannah Chapman; 5 John Duncan; 6 Dominic Wheatley. **CW** Geraghty; Chapman; Craig Dillon. **FL** Munro 1m03.335s (72.01mph). **P** Robbie Dalgleish. **S** 19.

## RACE 2 (9 LAPS)

**1 Geraghty;** 2 Dalgleish +0.118s; 3 O'Donnell; 4 Duncan; 5 Wheatley; 6 Chapman. **CW** Dalgleish; Chapman; Dillon. **FL** Duncan 1m03.289s (72.06mph). **P** Munro. **S** 19.

**RACE 3 (9 LAPS)** **1 Morgan Murray;** 2 O'Donnell +1.705s; 3 Munro; 4 Chapman; 5 Duncan; 6 Dalgleish.

**CW** Chapman; Duncan; Dillon. **FL** Chapman 1m03.416s (71.91mph). **P** Murray. **S** 19.

## BMW CHAMPIONSHIP (BOTH 12 LAPS)

**1 Ally Smith;** 2 David McNaughton +0.424s; 3 Gary Clark; 4 Lee Elrick; 5 Liam McGill; 6 Greig Sutherland. **FL** Smith 1m02.273s (73.23mph). **P** Smith. **S** 11.

**RACE 2 1 Smith;** 2 McNaughton +6.348s; 3 Elrick; 4 Cliff Harper; 5 Sutherland; 6 Clark. **FL** Smith 1m02.566s (72.89mph). **P** Smith. **S** 11.

## LEGENDS (ALL 8 LAPS)

**1 Ivor Greenwood;** 2 David Hunter +4.265s; 3 Stewart Black; 4 Steven McGill; 5 Ryan McLeish; 6 Jordan Hodgson. **CW** Hodgson; Paul O'Brien. **FL** Black 59.365s (76.82mph). **P** Mark Beaty. **S** 18. **RACE 2 1 John Paterson;** 2 Hunter +2.130s; 3 O'Brien; 4 Black; 5 Ben Mason; 6 Greenwood. **CW** O'Brien; Hodgson. **FL** Black 59.466s (76.69 mph). **P** Paterson. **S** 18.

**RACE 3 1 Paterson;** 2 O'Brien +12.207s; 3 Hunter; 4 McGill; 5 McLeish; 6 Black. **CW** O'Brien; Hodgson. **FL** Paterson 59.678s (76.42mph). **P** Pino Palazzo. **S** 12.

## SCOTTISH FORMULA FORD (10 LAPS)

**1 Ross Martin (Ray GR17);** 2 Jordan Gronkowski (Van Diemen JL012K) +0.383s; 3 Sebastian Melrose (Ray GR14); 4 Michael MacPherson (GR14); 5 David Hourie

(Van Diemen JL013); 6 Neil Broome (GR17). **CW** Gronkowski; Ivor Mairs (Ray GR15). **FL** Gronkowski 54.943s (83.01mph). **P** Martin. **S** 9.

## RACE 2 (12 LAPS)

**1 Martin;** 2 Gronkowski +0.978s; 3 Melrose; 4 MacPherson; 5 Broome; 6 Ross Howe (Van Diemen RF99). **CW** Gronkowski; Mairs.

**FL** Gronkowski 54.985s (82.94mph). **P** Martin. **S** 9.

## CLASSICS (BOTH 12 LAPS)

**1 Tommy Gilmartin (Morgan Plus 8);** 2 Alastair Baptie (MGB GT V8) +1.995s; 3 Harry Simpson (Ginetta G4R); 4 Andrew Smith (Plus 8); 5 Raymond Boyd (Porsche 911); 6 Bruce Mitchell (Lotus Europa). **CW** Baptie; Simpson; Boyd; Mitchell; Mario Ferrari (Alfa Sprint Trofeo). **FL** Gilmartin 56.849s (80.22mph). **P** Gilmartin. **S** 12.

**RACE 2 1 Baptie;** 2 Gilmartin +3.113s; 3 Simpson; 4 Smith; 5 Boyd; 6 Mitchell. **CW** Gilmartin; Simpson; Boyd; Mitchell; Ferrari. **FL** Baptie 56.838s (80.24mph). **P** Gilmartin. **S** 12.

## SALOONS & SPORTSCARS (14 LAPS)

**1 Ron Cumming (Nemesis Kit Car);** 2 Colin Simpson (Marcos Mantis) +14.113s; 3 Kenneth McKell (Mitsubishi Evo 8); 4 Paul Brydon (BMW M3); 5 Andrew Morrison (SEAT Leon Eurocup); 6 William Robson (Ford Focus RS).

**CW** Simpson; McKell; Brydon; Robson; Oliver Mortimer (Mini Cooper R53); Andrew Paterson (BMW E36 318i). **FL** Cumming 52.052s (87.62mph). **P** Brydon. **S** 17.

## RACE 2 (12 LAPS)

**1 McKell;** 2 Simpson +0.594s; 3 Brydon; 4 Morrison; 5 Thomson McIntyre (Subaru Impreza); 6 Lowell Forsyth (Lotus Exige). **CW** Simpson; Brydon; McIntyre; Mortimer; Paterson. **FL** McKell 53.921s (84.58mph). **P** Simpson. **S** 14.

**FORD FIESTAS (11 LAPS)** **1 Steven Gray (ST);** 2 Jim Deans (ST) +3.920s; 3 Barry Farquharson (ST); 4 Peter Cruickshank (ST); 5 Russell Morgan (ST); 6 Nicholas Forsyth (ST).

**CW** Farquharson; Kristian Leith (XR); Duncan Fox (XR). **FL** Farquharson 1m02.445s (73.03mph). **P** Gray. **S** 12. **RACE 2 (14 LAPS)** **1 Farquharson;** 2 Wayne MacCaulay (ST) +1.487s; 3 Deans; 4 Cruickshank; 5 Morgan; 6 Forsyth. **CW** Deans; Leith; Fox. **FL** MacCaulay 1m02.074s (73.47mph). **P** Gray. **S** 13.



Jamieson led home Griffin in second Pre-'05 CTCRC bout



# Citroen C1 Challenge

## Motorsport that *really* is value for money



A Citroen C1 may not be an obvious choice for a club racing car, but there's much more to this one-make series than first appears

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

**B**efore I drove one for myself, I could see no point in racing a Citroen C1. There is no part of it that looks suitable for this pursuit. Racing is meant to be fast, exciting and cool – everything the Citroen C1 is not.

Then I spent several hours racing one around Cadwell Park, and suddenly it all made sense. Now, Cadwell Park is the finest circuit in the UK, in my opinion, so if any track is capable of showing a car in a good light, it's this one, but there's more to it than that. The Citroen C1 Challenge, in defiance of conventional logic, is right on the money.

And money is the key point here. Motorsport is endlessly and rightly criticised for being too expensive. Plenty of series talk about offering cheap racing at entry level, and wear such claims as a badge of honour, but racing rarely ends up costing less than a small fortune.

Endurance racing has long been a neat way to square the circle – splitting the singular costs of competition between several drivers. In this, the Citroen C1 Challenge is nothing ground-breaking. But the devil, as so often the case, is in the detail. Details that have been painstakingly poured over by the intrepid 2CV racers behind this venture.

"We saw costs going up in that and thought, 'Is there an alternative?'" explains Meyrick Cox, who runs the show with fellow racers Phil Myatt, Nick Paton and Caryl Wills. "We talked about converting a C1 to a race car. Caryl just put his money where his mouth was, stuck some cheap springs from eBay on it, threw the interior away, put a rollcage in, and it was just great fun.

"There appeared to be a gap in the market for low-cost endurance racing. If you built a car and did a whole season, it would cost about £10,000. You get 107 hours of racing for that, including everything apart from the cost of getting to and from the circuits."





1 2  
3 4



Cox says second-hand donor cars are changing hands for “between £600 and £1000”, after which you’ll need a conversion kit – a rollcage and suspension mods, including driveshafts, to make the car handle, well, less like a shopping trolley, and improve tyre life. That costs £1700.

“Then you’ve got to get a seat, harnesses, safety kit on top,” adds Cox. “So, people report costs of around £3800 and £4000 all-in to build the car if they do it themselves. If you pay someone else to build the car, people are reporting anything between £1500 and £2000 on top of that.

“For a worst case, you’re looking at a build cost of somewhere around £5500 to put the car on the track. You’ll need to buy spare wheels on top of that, but the wheels are just £24 each...”

Or £50 if you buy them ‘race-prepped’ from the club (scrubbed on a machine to reduce the depth of the tread blocks), which Cox says is a necessity to get the most from the Nankang rubber. You’ll need “between eight and 12” of them to complete a 24-hour race (the rears can last the whole event), so double that if you intend to also contest the three sets of four and two-hour races that make up the British Automobile Racing Club’s UK calendar. Let’s call it a round £2000 for tyres.

If you’re entering October’s 24-hour race at Spa, for which the C1 club has pledged 40 cars to the Belgian organisers, that will set you back another £3900 (£2500 entry fee, plus £2000 running costs, minus the tyres already accounted for). That takes us over Cox’s 10-grand rough sum, but not by much. Get yourself some fuel and away you go. Spare engines can be sourced for £250 on eBay, according to Cox, so even with travel costs on top it should be realistic to

**1. Scrutineering is thorough to ensure there’s no cheating**

**2. All of the C1 Challenge races are endurance contests**

**3. Cars can be driven to and from the circuit, as well as on it**

**4. Anderson enjoyed his stint in the C1 at Cadwell Park**

contest the first season on £15,000 or less.

Split between four drivers (the race format is built around teams of this size, with three mandatory pitstops per race), that’s a first season’s racing for less than £4000 each, and the following years should cost £2500 per driver – including that 24-hour race at Spa – which is insanely cheap for car racing.

“For a season it should work out at about £100 an hour,” adds Cox. “You’d be struggling to find some kart races at that price.”

And the C1 Challenge plans to stick rigidly to its low-cost ethos. This is more than just empty words. It is enshrined in the regulations. No performance modifications are permitted. You’re not even allowed data loggers, just a single GPS lap timer and a standard rev counter. You can swap the steering wheel for a removable one, but the pedals must be standard and so must the engine. The cars also must be capable of being driven to the circuit – so road legal with a valid MoT.

“In the 2CV club, we found a lot of the younger guys didn’t have trailer licences,” explains Cox. “It’s £1500 to get a trailer licence, then you’ve got to get a trailer, then you’ve got to have something that will tow it, so we wanted a car that you could literally throw your stuff in the back of and arrive at the circuit, take it out, race, then drive it home again.”

But more importantly, doing so will not be to your competitive disadvantage. That’s the absolute key appeal of this series. It’s not for the tinkerers, the engineers, or the big spenders. It’s proper, basic, turnkey racing. If you know how to change a wheel, add fuel and check your engine’s oil level – things all road users should be capable of – you can race one of these cars competitively. ➤➤



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Series has attracted a lot of interest in its inaugural season

The only set-up parameter to play with is tyre pressures. There is no advantage to be gained by obsessing over your car's handling and set-up. That's pointless. All you do is drive as fast as you can, then hand it over to your mate to drive as fast as they can, then park it up in the paddock and relax until the next session.

Many club championships have become deadly serious and expensive at the sharp end, as people chase performance and trophies. Not here. You have fun on track, then you go home happy. The beauty is in the simplicity.

"The four of us have got a very strong vision — we want to keep this as low-cost racing," insists Cox. "We launched at Autosport International. Here at Cadwell we've got 14 [cars] but we've got 64 cages sold, so there are presumably 64 cars in build. It's taken us completely by surprise. To give you an example of how nervous we were, the deal we did with BARC was break-even if we had seven cars on the grid. We had no idea how many were going to turn up. It's caught some zeitgeist, what we're doing."

There are inevitable teething troubles to iron out — the fact that three different makes of suspension can be used for conversions at present creates needless inequality (a legacy of initial experimentation to find the best solution), and driving

standards will need stringent policing as the grid grows.

But there is absolute determination to homogenise the car specs, rigorously enforce driving standards — one wayward soul was ejected from the meeting after our first Cadwell race — and deter cheats with meticulous eligibility scrutineering.

"Phil and I have won 12 championships between us," says Cox. "We know how to cheat and we're good at spotting it!"

But the important thing is that the raw ingredients are

in place. Cheap cars, cheap to run, fun to drive, lots of track time for your money. This is the closest thing to arrive-and-drive endurance pro-karting you will find on fully fledged race tracks.

"It's good, cheap fun that you can get people into," says

Mazda MX-5 ace Paul Roddison. "Smiles per pound, it's the cheapest racing I've ever done."

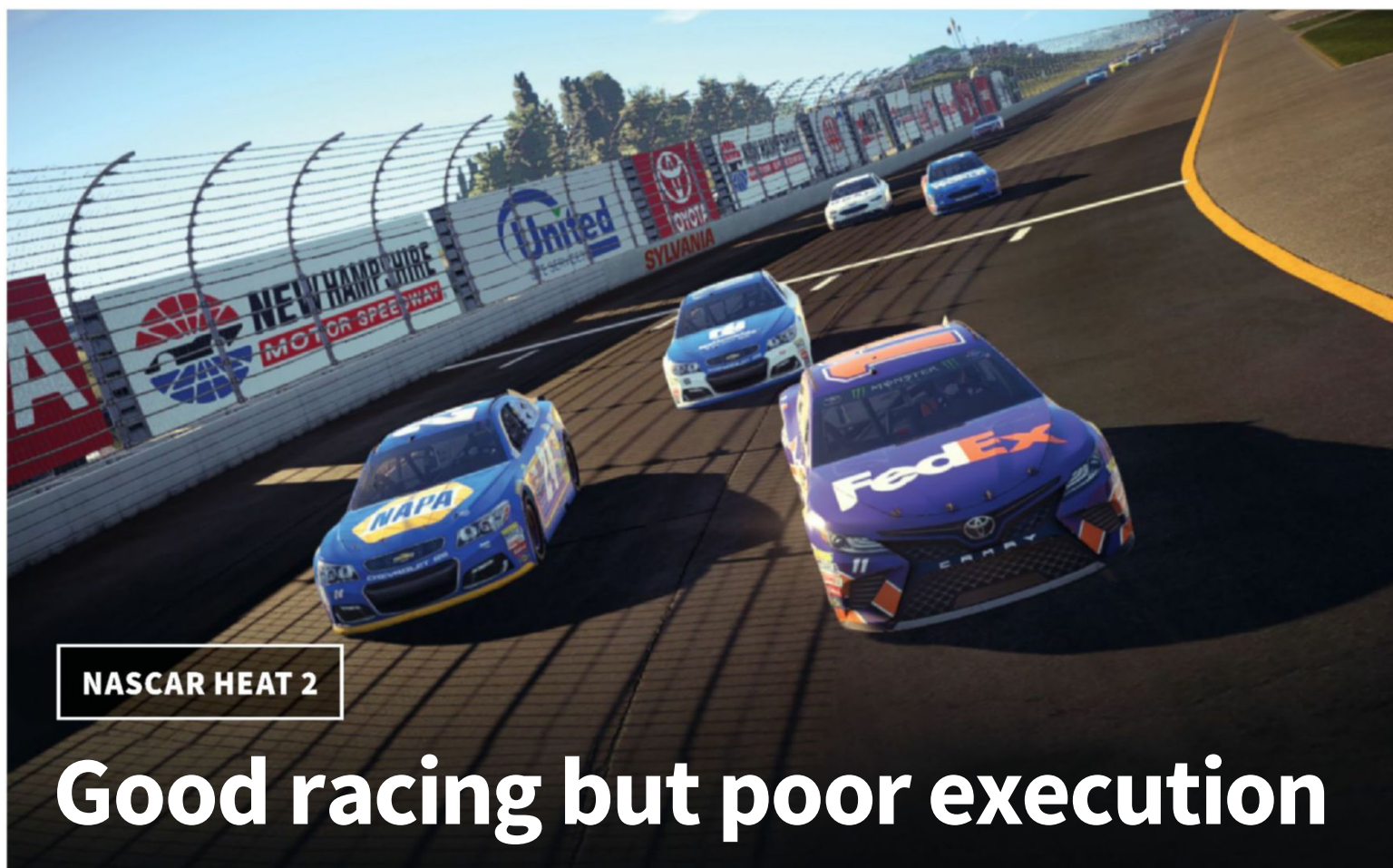
The grid I encountered contains several experienced UK club racers, like Roddison and multiple 750MC Locost champion Declan McDonnell, enticed by a cheaper and more accessible way to go racing.

"We can bring friends in as third drivers, so there's a huge social element to it as well," says McDonnell. "Everything that Phil and Caryl are saying about the cars, the driving standards, if they can stick to that ethos I think it'll be absolutely mega." ❄

**"For a season it should work out at about £100 per hour of racing"**



# WHAT'S ON



NASCAR HEAT 2

## Good racing but poor execution

THERE ARE SOME GRIPPING AND gratifying races under *NASCAR Heat 2*'s uninviting skin, but its striking lack of features and frills, and some grating technical issues, mean it takes a lot of work to enjoy this game.

It's puzzling to see such a poorly executed product, when joint-developer (with Monster Games) 704Games, who sent Autosport an Xbox One copy to review, has made several NASCAR titles

and Monster Games produced the much-loved *NASCAR Dirt to Daytona*.

Team Penske's 2017 playoff contender Brad Keselowski is on the studio's board of directors and introduces the game's career mode. Other drivers such as Ryan Blaney appear in short cut scenes, while most of the other virtual recreations just send text messages complaining about your aggressive driving. But there's no way to reply or start a

Quiet spotter calls make pack racing tricky, while Xfinity cars (below) don't handle very differently to their Trucks and Cup counterparts

post-race pitlane brawl, even though Kyle Busch is on *Heat 2*'s cover.

At face value, *Heat 2* has a salivating amount of content. It has all three National Series – Cup, Xfinity and Trucks – and 29 circuits, including Eldora, host of the 'Dirt Derby'.

In comparison, *F1 2017* just has the top single-seater series in its career mode – albeit with a handful of classic F1 cars available. But while *Heat 2* seems to have more to offer on this front, its three series prove to be a superficial inclusion and the tediously long career mode quickly becomes stale.

The first season of your career is spent waiting for various Truck Series teams to hand you a 'Hot Seat' while the licenced soundtrack and looping background video begin to grate. There is little in the way of explanation when you get out on track, either, and setting up our car required a grudging trip to YouTube owing to the lack of an in-game tutorial.





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The 29 circuits on offer include road courses



The actual racing is hard and unforgiving

Once the understeer or 'tightness' that makes your first Truck almost immovable is corrected, improving on that existing set-up is difficult as small changes can throw things completely out of balance. With a single button press resetting your changes to default, set-up is an unavoidable chore.

The most significant caveat to being excited about having three series in the game is that the handling isn't wildly different between the categories, and graduating from series to series doesn't feel like the step-up or achievement that it really should be.

The racing in *Heat 2*, filled with close scrapes and crashes, offers some consolation. Fuel saving, damage and tyre wear require your constant attention. In *F1 2017*, it's possible to skate past the rest of the field through Turn 1 and keep them behind you throughout. In *Heat 2*, one move out of line can send you right to the back of the field – or even worse, cause a

comically huge pile-up, particularly in the high-speed Cup races.

It's all too easy to wipe out a group of 20 cars, as your spotter Brett Griffin – who spots for Xfinity veteran Elliott Sadler and Cup Series racer Clint Bowyer – makes his frustratingly quiet calls far too late.

Sound design is a problem throughout, as the engine notes sound flat. Visuals are also bland across the board, but the graphics become poor at many tracks, such as Pocono, where you're greeted by a distracting mess of jagged lines from catchfences and barriers in the distance.

*Heat 2* offers some suspenseful, satisfying racing at times, and bugs that previously ruined frame-rates and game-saves are slowly being ironed out, but a lack of career mode depth or any serious attempt to emulate NASCAR's affinity for fanfare, fury and fireworks make it a forgettable experience.

**SAMARTH KANAL**

## INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

### WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

**Rd 7/9**

Fuji, Japan

**October 15**

**TV Live** BT Sport 3, 0300.

Motorsport.tv, 0245.

Eurosport 1, 0730

### WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

**Rd 7/10**

Ningbo, China

**October 15**

**TV Live** Eurosport 2, Sunday

0730. Eurosport 1, Sunday 0915

### EUROPEAN FORMULA 3

**Rd 10/10**

Hockenheim, Germany

**October 14-15**

**TV Live** fiaf3europe.com

### NASCAR CUP

**Rd 31/36**

Talladega, Alabama, USA

**October 15**

**TV Live** Premier Sports, Sunday 1830

### DTM

**Rd 9/9**

Hockenheim, Germany

**October 14-15**

**TV Delayed** BT Sport 3,

Saturday 1330. BT Sport 1,

Sunday 1400

### MOTOGP

**Rd 15/18**

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**October 15**

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## UK MOTORSPORT

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**October 14**

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### SILVERSTONE BRSCC

**October 14-15**

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### SNETTERTON MSVR

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GT Cup, Lotus Elise, Lotus Trophy, Mini Challenge, Production BMW, Racing Saloons, Radical Challenge

### PEMBREY BARC

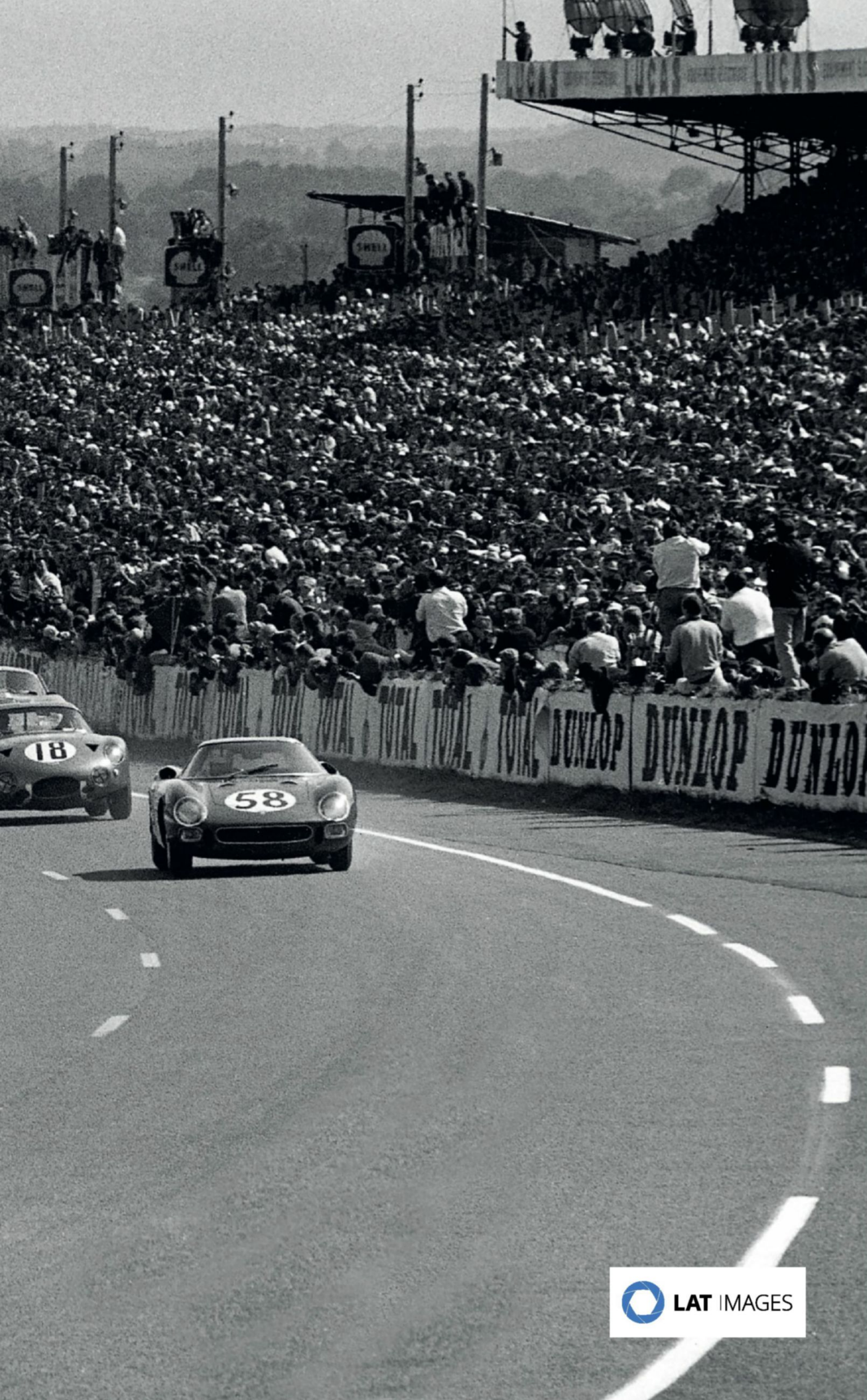
**October 14-15**

Trucks, Mighty Minis, Formula Academy, Renault Clio Junior, Welsh Sports/Saloons









## FROM THE ARCHIVE

Pedro Rodriguez makes a lightning start to the 1964 Le Mans 24 Hours, after qualifying third. Rodriguez's NART Ferrari 330P, shared with Skip Hudson, was forced to retire after 58 laps with a head gasket failure. The race was won by the factory Ferrari 275P (#20, in the midst of the melee) of Jean Guichet and Nino Vaccarella.



# INTRODUCING



## JOEY MAWSON

HARD-CHARGING AUSSIE F3 RACER WITH JAMES HUNT SPIRIT

**R**esults don't always tell the whole story, and that's certainly the case for Joey Mawson in the Formula 3 European Championship this season. The Australian is 13th in the points – with one podium, taken recently at the Nurburgring in the wet – but has often looked capable of much more. Born in the Sydney suburbs and of part-Peruvian descent, Mawson followed his amateur-motocrossing father onto two wheels at the age of five and then switched to karting, winning numerous titles at home before moving to Europe in 2012, when he rivalled Charles Leclerc, Anthoine Hubert and Ben Barnicoat in the Under-18s world title. Under the wing of the PODIUM group of investors that supports him to this day, he made the switch to cars in the centrally run French Formula 4 in '14, before two seasons with Van Amersfoort Racing in the German equivalent, culminating in beating Mick Schumacher to the '16 title.

"I made some rookie mistakes in my first year in Germany," he says. "But we came back stronger the year after. I had the pressure to be champion but I managed to achieve that, and that gave me the possibility to step up to F3 this year. I'm very fortunate to have PODIUM back me and believe in me. But if I didn't win last year, they'd say we gave it a crack but it was basically going to be the plug pulled."

Mawson has aimed for the rookie F3 title but, with most of his rivals having vastly more test mileage, that was always going to be a tall order. Furthermore, VAR hasn't had an established F3 ace in its line-up this year: "That's not ideal, and hasn't made the learning process easier."

Things started brightly with a fifth at Silverstone, but since then it's been glimmers: a frantic scrap for third at Pau with fellow rock-hard-but-fair racer Jake Dennis (they crashed); a brilliant pass on Callum Ilott at the Hungaroring; then that soggy podium: "That's why I enjoy the wet – it relies on the driver."

It would be a great shame if he can't return in 2018. Mawson is a terrific little racer, with a James Hunt-inspired helmet to boot. He has veteran F3 team boss Alan Docking helping out with his profile at home, but it's all down to funds... "Once this season is over, that's when the stress starts, but F3 is Plan A." ❧

MARCUS SIMMONS



CV

<b>Age</b>	21
<b>2017</b>	13th in FIA F3 European (Van Amersfoort Racing)
<b>2016-17</b>	2nd in MRF Challenge, 3 wins
<b>2016</b>	1st in German F4 (VAR), 10 wins; 2nd in BRDC F3 Autumn Trophy (Douglas)
<b>2015</b>	3rd in German F4 (VAR), 5 wins
<b>2014</b>	4th in French F4, 3 wins
<b>2012</b>	4th in CIK-FIA U18 World Karting
<b>2003</b>	Started karting – won 19 state and three national titles in Australia

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